

RECOVERY AND PEACEBUILDING ASSESSMENTS

Conflict Sensitivity Guidance for RPBA

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PART ONE: AN OVERVIEW OF CONFLICT SENSITIVITY IN RECOVERY AND PEACEBUILDING ASSESSMENTS

Introduction

This document provides guidance to the leadership, staff, consultants and collaborators of governments and international organisations working on Recovery and Peacebuilding Assessments (RPBAs). RPBAs are undertaken by governments in conflict affected contexts, with support from the European Union, the United Nations and the World Bank, in line with the Joint Declaration on Post-Crisis Assessments and Recovery Planning¹. These are transitional assessments, designed to identify and address short and medium term recovery and peacebuilding requirements, while laying the foundations for the elaboration of a longer term recovery and peacebuilding strategy, in countries facing conflict, or transitioning out of a conflict related crisis.

Building on the general RPBA guidance,² this document explains why RPBAs need to be conflict sensitive to maximise their effectiveness, and how this can be achieved. It is issued against the background of an increased international commitment to peacebuilding, as reflected in the recent *Pathways for Peace* published by the World Bank and the United Nations.³ This in turn acknowledges the increasing need to operate effectively in situations of protracted conflict, and that peace and stability remain fragile in post-conflict situations. Governments, along with international institutions providing support, need to take care to avoid undermining recovery and stability, while delivering incremental progress towards more sustainable peace and development. In other words, they need to operate conflict sensitively, promoting peace, and avoiding doing harm.

RPBAs are complex, multi-dimensional processes, mobilising many different local, national and international organisations, in situations which are themselves highly complex and fragile. Their task is challenging. Every RPBA is different, depending on the circumstances. This document therefore avoids prescription, offering rather options and suggestions that can be adapted to the circumstances.

Part One is an overview of conflict sensitivity, in which the first section defines and explains conflict sensitivity, while section two explains why it is important in RPBAs. Section three argues that a conflict sensitivity lens should be deployed continuously during RPBAs, and lists the principles which underpin this.

Part Two provides more detailed practical guidance. It shows how conflict sensitivity can be put into practice at key moments in the RPBA process, by paying particular attention to how issues are framed, and decisions made, to the deployment of teams, and to data collection and analysis processes.

Annexes include an adapted peace and conflict analysis model, a summary of the main phases of an RPBA process, and sources of further guidance and knowledge.

¹ European Union, United Nations and World Bank (2008). Joint Declaration on Post-Crisis Assessments and Recovery Planning.

² Joint Recovery and Peacebuilding Assessments (RPBAs). A Practical Note to Assessment and Planning. European Union, United Nations, World Bank, 2017.

³ Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict. United Nations; World Bank, 2018.

1. Conflict Sensitivity

Conflict sensitivity is the simple idea that any intervention in a fragile or conflict-affected context is likely to interact with the peace and conflict dynamics there. This can not only affect the intervention, potentially undermining its implementation and effectiveness, but it can also alter the peace and conflict dynamics themselves, which may further influence the intervention in return. These interactions, and their consequences, can be positive or negative, direct or indirect, and large or small, intentional or not.

Conflict sensitive approaches take account of peace and conflict, deliberately and purposefully, by:

Designing and implementing interventions with an understanding of latent or actual conflict and peace dynamics, and how interventions might interact with these, for better or worse

- Using smart design, continuous monitoring and adaptive management, to avoid or mitigate any negative impacts, and maximise positive impacts, on either the context or the project.

When issues are identified through the conflict sensitivity lens, there are broadly two ways to respond:

- a) By changing the design or approach so that the issue is resolved
- b) By adopting a mitigation strategy and measures to minimise potential harms.

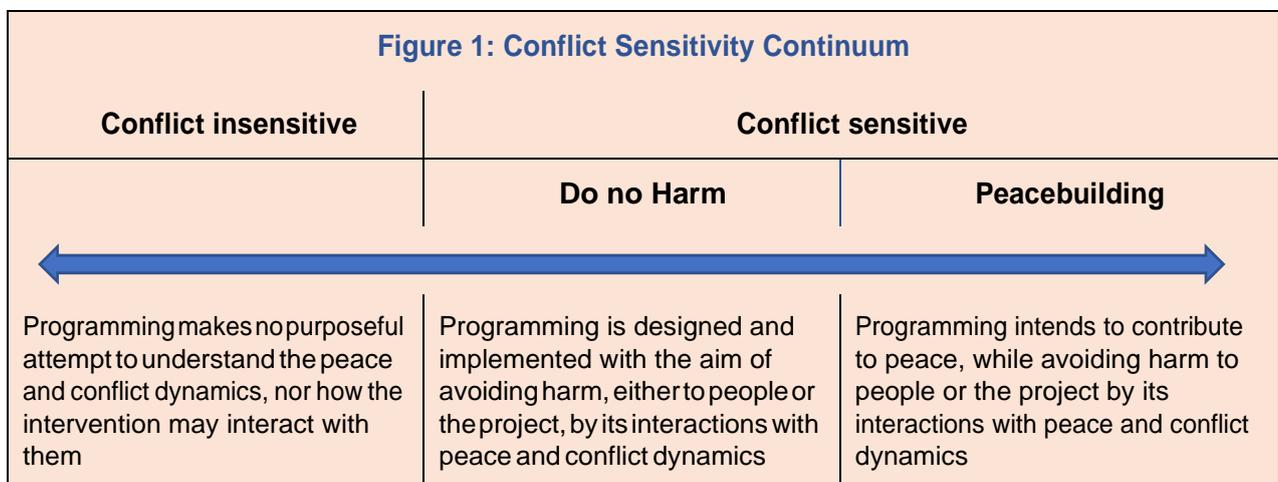
Conflict sensitive practice is largely about asking the right questions, generating a set of options, and working with a continuous eye on how the situation evolves. This implies a need for a thorough context analysis, and continuous monitoring and adaptation. Mitigation approaches are particularly important where there is no obvious solution.

Conflict sensitivity is often shown on a continuum, as in Figure 1. In this, a conflict insensitive (sometimes called a 'conflict blind') approach takes no account of conflict dynamics, nor therefore of likely interactions with them – just as in the water project example above.

Conflict insensitive water system rehabilitation

When water supply systems destroyed in a civil war are rebuilt, engineers may unwittingly encroach on land belonging to members of an identity group whose sense of exclusion had helped fuel the original conflict. If their sense of grievance is thus rekindled, this could undermine a fragile peace, and also prevent the project achieving its objectives. To make matters worse, if the water is being supplied mainly to an area where a more dominant identity group is located, this could be perceived as favouring them, further fuelling the grievances of the marginalised group, and potentially re-kindling conflict.

In another example of conflict insensitivity, but this time with positive outcomes, the project might – again unwittingly – choose to lay the water pipes on uncontentious land, and provide water supplies equitably to members of both groups, thereby contributing to a sense of fairness, garnering wide support, and making the project outcomes easier to achieve.



Conflict sensitive approaches can be more or less ambitious in terms of their intended impact on peace. The less ambitious interventions simply aim to ‘do no harm’, by minimising or mitigating any negative impacts on peace, while more ambitious interventions actively seek to build peace and address the underlying causes of conflicts.

In neither of the water project scenarios introduced above, had any attempt been made to understand the conflict and peace dynamics, nor how the project might interact with them. They were thus both, by definition, conflict *insensitive*, even though one of them had (albeit unintentionally) produced positive outcomes for peace. Had the project taken a Do no Harm approach, it would have considered and minimised the risks of conflict linked to unfair access to land and services. It could have done so by undertaking a local conflict analysis and a community consultation process, to avoid exacerbating underlying land conflicts by its choice of location for the pipeline or water supply points. If, for some reason, this change was impossible, then a mitigation approach might have included working with leaders from the aggrieved community to reduce tensions, and beginning a discussion about a second phase of the project, to meet their needs.

But the project could also have gone further, making a proactive contribution to peacebuilding, i.e. seeking to operate at the right-hand end of the continuum in Figure 1. For example, it could have engaged both communities in dialogue to inform the entire design of the water system, and established and trained a participatory water management committee, providing structured opportunities for the two communities to collaborate in managing resources, and reducing tensions between them. While some RPBA initiatives may focus more on recovery, rather than on peacebuilding, it is important to consider how these may go beyond Do No Harm, and make a positive contribution to peace.

PEACEBUILDING

Peace is the outcome of:

- addressing the potential triggers, and proximate and underlying causes of conflict,
- reduced violence and greater stability,
- an improved capacity to resolve differences non-violently, based on functional relationships among people, and between people and authorities, and
- fair and well-governed access to opportunities for livelihoods, well-being, security and justice, in line with human rights.

Thus, the absence of violence alone does not necessarily indicate the presence of sustainable peace, and violence all too often returns. While peace agreements are important, on their own they are insufficient. Ultimately, it is the absence of a capacity to resolve differences non-violently, accompanied by unfair access to opportunities and resources, that signals fragility and the risk of violence.

Peace is built incrementally over many years, and every contribution matters. Recovery initiatives in conflict-affected settings do not *automatically* build peace, but peacebuilding can often be integrated quite easily within sectoral projects. The water project example illustrates this, by providing an opportunity to

Conflict Sensitivity Capacity

Operating conflict sensitively implies that organisations—and their partners—have the capacity to understand their operating context, including the conflicts and potential for conflicts, and act on this understanding. This in turn implies having relevant expertise, as well as an institutional willingness to deal with dilemmas, and sometimes to make difficult decisions that seem to go against the organisation's short term interest. Many organisations fall short of this. It is outside the scope of this guidance to influence the institutional capacity of organisations engaged in an RPBA. However, it is important for those involved to recognise any limitations their organisations may have, and mitigate these, for example in selecting RPBA teams, as explained in section 4.2.

address one of the underlying causes of conflict (exclusion) and to improve the capacity to manage resources collectively for peaceful coexistence.

Building peace through other means

Examples of initiatives primarily seen as recovery initiatives, designed also to contribute to peace

Health and education services for returning refugees can be provided in partnership with local authorities, and include components to improve local governance, giving local groups a voice, including women and youth, and improving governance through better relations between people and authorities, and between returnees and local communities who had remained. Dialogue can help build understanding and trust among groups, and between local authorities and the population.

Reconstruction of severely damaged urban environments in the Middle East, post-ISIS, can include support for the rehabilitation of religious and cultural infrastructure for all the different communities in the city, and dialogue among them, accompanied by a careful process for the return and reintegration of refugees, so all communities from the city are once again represented.

Reconstruction projects can be designed to improve socio-economic opportunity in areas where marginalisation has fuelled conflict; construction and future maintenance can actively source labour and supplies from communities there, which also benefit from training and support to meet this demand.

Indeed, as explained in the general RPBA guidance, a contribution to peace can be made in almost any area likely to be covered in an RPBA, from political processes, through sectoral interventions in security, justice, economy, livelihoods, governance, health or education services, and on specific themes like gender and youth empowerment, social cohesion, cultural rehabilitation, displacement and return, physical reconstruction, environment and natural resources, or institutional capacity building. All that is needed is to identify opportunities either to address specific drivers and causes of conflict, or strengthen the openings and capacities for peace that have been identified in the context.

Peacebuilding initiatives are more likely to be conflict sensitive than others, since they are normally based on a thorough analysis of peace and conflict dynamics. But they too can unwittingly undermine peace and stability, through inappropriate design or implementation. Therefore, they also need to be viewed through the conflict sensitivity lens.

TRADE-OFFS

RPBAs are conducted rapidly, in complex circumstances. With the time and other resources available, they cannot answer every question, and are necessarily based on incomplete information. Because they bring together the government, major external agencies and other stakeholders around a shared analysis and prioritisation, they also represent compromises and trade-offs between different perspectives and preferences.

Examples of how conflict insensitive peacebuilding can undermine peace

When rebel armed groups involved in the illegal drug sector agree to a programme of demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration, a gap can open up in the drug trade. Unless this is understood, and a strategy to neutralise the drug value chain is put in place, along with interim security measures, another group – or a splinter group – is likely to move into this gap, perpetuating insecurity and instability.

Dialogue and reconciliation programmes frequently fail to include people with the most extreme views. This can create a false sense of security that reconciliation is happening, leaving open the possibility that extremists will foment further violence.

Giving ex-armed groups access to the benefits of RPBA-generated programmes, without an understanding of other latent conflicts that exist, can unwittingly create incentives for other groups to take up arms, on the basis that this is an effective way to be taken seriously.

Conflict sensitivity can help decision makers in making these judgements, weighing up the potential for good outcomes against the risks of bad ones. For example, analysis may show that a more inclusive political economy is needed for long term peace, but it may also suggest that moving ahead too quickly with transformation may undermine the fragile peace. In an RPBA in Ukraine, it was decided that the initial focus should be on improving human welfare while avoiding exacerbating the underlying causes of conflict, rather than addressing the latter explicitly, because the armed conflict in the east of the country was still active. Nevertheless, the priorities were framed so that they would align with and strengthen the ongoing decentralisation process, which was itself seen as a way to reduce poor governance, one of the causes of conflict.

Given the available options, there is often no choice but to proceed with priorities that entail some risk. In such cases, an awareness of the risks at least allows those involved to establish a monitoring system, keeping the situation under review, and being ready to adapt their approach when needed, rather than proceeding in ignorance.

WHY CONFLICT SENSITIVITY IS SOMETIMES IGNORED

Conflict sensitivity is an ethical approach because it minimises harm. It is also simple to understand, and increasingly accepted as good practice. But it is not always given the attention this implies. Sometimes people understand it as the province of specialised experts, requiring complex, specialised tools. It is true that conflict sensitivity does require an ability to understand potential and actual conflicts, and apply this knowledge to policy, strategy and programmes. In some instances, this rightly leads to major changes of approach. But conflict sensitivity is also quite intuitive, based on common sense, and sometimes only requires minor changes of approach.

A second reason it may be side-lined, is if it is seen as yet another demand on over-stretched teams, who are already dealing with complex challenges in difficult environments – when in fact it can often be integrated with minimal additional effort, provided it is factored into planning. Third, it sometimes appears to clash with the institutional incentives of governments and international organisations, which may be driven by politics, a desire to retain control of resources, a particular operating model, or the need for quick solutions. And finally, conflict sensitivity analysis can be off-putting when it highlights difficult, perhaps politically sensitive dilemmas, without providing neat solutions.

This guidance acknowledges these obstacles. It aims to demystify conflict sensitivity by showing that it is quite easy to put into practice, and that although it quite rightly raises difficult questions, these can usually be addressed through dialogue, informed by data and analysis.

Conflict sensitivity is not business as usual, but it does not necessarily slow things down, as it can be integrated into existing analysis and decision making processes. It also integrates other priorities, such as the need to focus on gender and youth and on human rights due diligence, since it reveals how different groups in society are affected by conflict, and how they might participate in peace. Above all, there is a strong ethical case for adopting a conflict sensitive approach, because it helps prevent harm and improves outcomes for beneficiaries, making programmes more effective, and governments and international organisations more successful.

Conflict sensitive returns

During the RPBA conducted in North Eastern Nigeria in 2016, one of the questions under consideration was when to support the return home of people who had been displaced by extremist violence. Returning home was important for livelihoods, for access to services, for political reasons, and to begin addressing some of the underlying problems of marginalisation, which had helped fuel the insurgency. But a premature return risked putting returnees once more in harm's way, contravening humanitarian principles, facilitating a resurgence of the rebellion, and further magnifying the sense of marginalisation that underpinned it.

Adopting a conflict sensitive approach during the RPBA allowed different parties, using dialogue, to consider the potential benefits and the potential risks of IDP returns. In this way, IDP returns remained an RPBA priority, but one that would only be put into action when circumstances were right.

2. Why Conflict Sensitivity Matters in RPBAs

The conflict sensitivity continuum in Figure 1 illustrates why conflict sensitivity is at the heart of RPBAs, which are concerned with both recovery and peacebuilding. Recovery priorities should as a minimum do no harm, and where possible should also contribute to peace. Peacebuilding priorities by their nature are at the right-hand end of the continuum.

RPBAs are undertaken in unpredictable situations of complex, often protracted and multi-faceted conflict, where there is no peace agreement in place. Where there is an agreement, it is often fragile, and difficult to implement. The risk of programmes doing harm, or being undermined by conflict dynamics, is therefore high.

RPBAs are rapid assessment and planning processes. They are not a substitute for the long term political dialogue needed to develop a shared vision for a peaceful future in a fractured society. The governments that lead RPBAs, and the international organisations that support them, are often under pressure to move ahead quickly. They aim to begin addressing the underlying causes of conflict, without necessarily having enough time to understand what these are, nor how best to do so. Political and societal deliberation mechanisms in conflict affected settings tend to be sub-optimal, while many of the grievances, political allegiances or biases that have contributed to the conflict are likely to have persisted. All this potentially undermines participation in setting priorities. There is a high risk that some voices will not be heard, potentially exacerbating or creating grievances.

There is often an understandable tendency to emphasise recovery activities over peacebuilding. This is partly because they are easier to explain, plan and monitor, and they are what most agencies and ministries are set up to fund and implement. It is perhaps easier to see the cumulative value in recovery activities: rehabilitating 10 roads instead of one may seem an obvious measure of success, even if the one road might have been more significant for peace and stability, because of its location. It can also take time to reach agreement on peacebuilding priorities—or even sometimes, that peacebuilding is a priority at all—for political reasons.

These factors can contribute to an oversimplified analysis, and a risk of drifting towards the conflict insensitive end of the continuum in Figure 1. To counter this, it is important to consider recovery and peacebuilding as inseparable outcomes: part of a unified whole (Figure 2). Recovery outcomes will only be sustained if they are accompanied by stability and progress towards peace, while peacebuilding will have no chance of success if basic needs remain unmet, and services and livelihoods are unrestored and unimproved. Thus, even though some agencies and ministries may see the context predominantly through the recovery lens, while others may see things predominantly through the peacebuilding lens, they are both essential parts of a broader whole, each of which requires the other. Conflict sensitivity offers an approach to ensuring this in practice.

PROCESSES AND OUTCOMES

Conflict sensitivity matters both for the process of undertaking an RPBA assessment, and for how the priorities and plans are later taken forward. Therefore this guidance covers not only how the RPBA assessment is done, but also how the RPBA report frames the resulting priorities and decisions, including what it says about implementation arrangements.

Figure 3 illustrates how RPBAs can be either conflict sensitive or insensitive, in terms of both the RPBA process, and later implementation.



Figure 2: Recovery and Peacebuilding as two parts of a whole

Figure 3: Generic illustrations of conflict insensitivity and conflict sensitivity in Recovery and Peacebuilding Assessments

Conflict insensitive

RPBA plans developed too early in a peace/transition process can make the government and international community seem over-optimistic, stimulating a negative reaction from other parties, potentially undermining the peace/transition process and the RPBA's legitimacy; rebels may target activities or communities they associate with the RPBA.

An RPBA initiated in a situation of unresolved, protracted conflict emphasises recovery, but fails to explain how security will be provided, nor identify the causes of the conflict accurately, including the government's own perceived role in perpetuating conflict. This suggests to directly affected communities and armed groups, a lack of political will to seek peace, thereby exacerbating the conflict and undermining community confidence.

RPBA prioritisation processes fail to include particular political or identity groups, excluding their voices and ideas, enhancing their sense of grievance, potentially contributing to instability and ineffective programmes.

Prioritising a geographic area linked to a particular ethnic group, or suggesting investments in an economic sector traditionally dominated by a particular group, can reinforce or create others' perception of exclusion.

An RPBA prioritises farming and livestock investments, but without explaining the conflict sensitivity risks linked to land tenure. The investments are later made while some local people remain displaced, and before local government is fully restored, unwittingly facilitating the misappropriation of land, which fuels further conflict.

Recovery initiatives in remote areas prioritise transforming women's and youth participation in livelihoods and decision making, without explaining the challenging social dynamics. Later programmes fail to improve the circumstances of either group, leading to unfulfilled expectations. Some young men return to armed violence and crime, and some women are harmed by men afraid of change, in a context where the risk of violence against women is already high.

RPBA-generated resources channelled through local government or NGOs affiliated to a particular political or identity group can fuel corruption, patronage and actual or perceived beneficiary bias, undermining good governance and stability.

Conflict sensitive

Recovery and peacebuilding plans are prepared in time for the signing of formal peace agreements, with the appropriate involvement of all parties, including armed opposition groups, thus enabling timely implementation and peace dividends, once the agreements are signed.

An RPBA initiated in a situation of unresolved, protracted conflict in a particular region, identifies ethnic marginalisation and repressive actions by security forces among the causes of conflict, and prioritises enhanced investment in the region, inter-ethnic reconciliation, security sector reforms, and support for dialogue with armed groups. This reinforces openings for peace, improving confidence.

RPBA processes are designed to give all relevant groups a voice, and the opportunity to understand why particular priorities have been chosen, reinforcing their sense of inclusion and ownership.

The deliberate choice of geographic area and/or target groups based on conflict analysis can help correct existing grievances caused by perceptions of earlier neglect and marginalisation.

The RPBA document explains the risks linked to land access. Farming and livestock investments are therefore designed and implemented through participatory processes, by teams who understand the risks. They take care to avoid land grabbing, and develop fairer, transparent land tenure systems.

The RPBA suggests that a commitment to improve the livelihoods and political participation of women and youth should begin with a thorough study conducted with communities. This produces a tailored set of initiatives, working with women and young men to improve their economic and political participation, with the support of community leaders. Expectations of 'transformation' are tempered, in favour of a more realistic, steady and less threatening programme of social change.

RPBA-generated resources channelled through local government, accompanied by appropriate capacity building and oversight, can improve governance and the ability to avoid or resolve local conflicts.

3. Conflict Sensitivity as a Continuous Approach

Conflict sensitivity is not a precise science. It is as much about asking the right questions and taking care, as finding perfect answers. This means it is important to develop the habit of deploying a conflict sensitivity lens continuously, remaining alert to peacebuilding opportunities and conflict risks as they emerge, and responding accordingly. It also implies the need for a spirit of openness, where people are encouraged and willing to challenge their own or others' perspectives, and be challenged by others.

For example, following the defeat of a religious extremist insurgency, rehabilitating local cultural and religious monuments damaged by insurgent zealots, may be agreed as a priority. The RPBA team initially sees this in relatively simple terms as an opportunity to rebuild social cohesion by restoring the status quo ante. However, a member of the team learns from conversations with local citizens that some people—currently keeping their heads down—still quietly sympathise with the extremists' view, and the community is effectively divided over the issue of restoring the monuments. Rehabilitation thus remains a potential opportunity to improve social cohesion, but also presents a risk for future stability. In these circumstances, it is important to challenge the consensus, and modify how the priority is framed in the RPBA report. The report would need to make it clear that the issue is contentious, and that further research and community dialogue is needed before moving forward.

Figure 4 contains a set of principles, to guide the continuous application of conflict sensitivity in RPBA.

Figure 4: Guiding Principles for Conflict Sensitivity in RPBA

Collective responsibility. The responsibility for conflict sensitivity is held and shared by all those involved in the RPBA process. Each has a duty to call attention to conflict sensitivity issues when they arise, and has access to the relevant knowledge and support to enable them to do so.

A continuous, light touch. Conflict sensitivity is considered from the start, sustained throughout, and applied with a light touch, to avoid over-complicating and over-burdening processes.

Responsiveness and adaptability. RPBA processes and outputs are adaptable by design, so that when conflict sensitivity issues are identified, they can be properly examined and addressed.

Well-informed, inclusive decision making, drawing on multiple perspectives. Designs and decisions are based on an understanding of peacebuilding opportunities and conflict risks, as seen from diverse perspectives, including different gender perspectives.

Balancing and integrating recovery and peacebuilding. Maintaining a balance between recovery and peacebuilding priorities, and integrating them, strengthens and enhances the sustainability of both.

Clear, sensitive communication. Transparency and clear communication enhances awareness and collaborative analysis of conflict risks and peacebuilding opportunities. Conflict sensitivity also requires consideration of how information will be received, thus the need for politically sensitive language and, where appropriate, confidentiality.

PART TWO: PRACTICAL GUIDANCE FOR IMPLEMENTING RECOVERY AND PEACEBUILDING ASSESSMENTS CONFLICT SENSITIVELY

4. Conflict Sensitivity at Key Steps in the RPBA process

The conflict sensitivity lens is deployed continuously, throughout the RPBA process, but with a different emphasis at different moments. These are shown in the road map – Figure 5 – which summarises the headline actions needed for conflict sensitivity at each step (see Annex 2. Scope and Phases of a Recovery and Peacebuilding

Assessment for the main phases of an RPBA). Following initial comments on timing, ownership, participation, gender and youth, sections 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 outline the approaches needed at these critical steps, under three sub-headings:

- Framing and decision making (steps 1, 4, 7 and 9 in Figure 5)
- Team deployment (steps 2 and 5)
- Data collection and analysis (steps 3, 6 and 8).

TIMING

The timing of RPBA has conflict sensitivity ramifications. It has to take account of other ongoing or likely trends and processes, such as elections, political transitions, peace processes, security actions or military campaigns, and seasonal community preoccupations. These can impinge operationally on the RPBA, and influence how it is perceived, how different actors may react, and the ideas that will be generated. In some circumstances it may make sense to postpone the RPBA, or parts of it; or to conduct a more rapid, highly strategic assessment, lighter on detail, and postpone longer term planning until conditions improve. Sometimes a longer, slower RPBA process may enable better communication, consultation and ownership.

PARTICIPATION AND NATIONAL OWNERSHIP

When governments request an RPBA, this in turn mobilises three major international aid institutions. The government is in the lead, but may be weakened because of fragility. The aid organisations contribute a major share of the financial and human resources, and can draw on prior experience of conducting RPBA. In these circumstances, the agencies may unwittingly exert a dominant influence, undermining national ownership. Moreover, fragile polities often lack effective systems for achieving consensus and national ownership – that is to say, ownership that extends beyond the government, to civil and political society across gender and other identities, local communities, and the business community. So it is important to maximise participation throughout the assessment and decision making process, through continuous dialogue and wide consultation, accessible processes that move at an appropriate pace, and the use of accessible language. RPBA processes and plans should also be matched with, and avoid overwhelming, institutional capacity.

GENDER, YOUTH AND DIVERSITY

Conflict sensitivity requires any proposed initiatives to be considered from the perspective of different social groups, disaggregated by sex, age, geography, class, religion, ethnicity, political affiliation, livelihood, education level or other factors. This is not just to maximise ownership. It is also because people's identity and status, and the nature of the relations between people of different identities, influence their ability to engage in peacebuilding, and how they will be affected by either peace or conflict. This is of particular importance for women and young people, indigenous peoples and minorities. RPBA processes should engage as widely as possible with women, men and other gender identities from different ages, geographies, classes, ethnicities and other relevant groups, and consider how they might be affected by and participate in the RPBA priorities. Consultation methods should ensure that different groups are able to speak freely and safely.

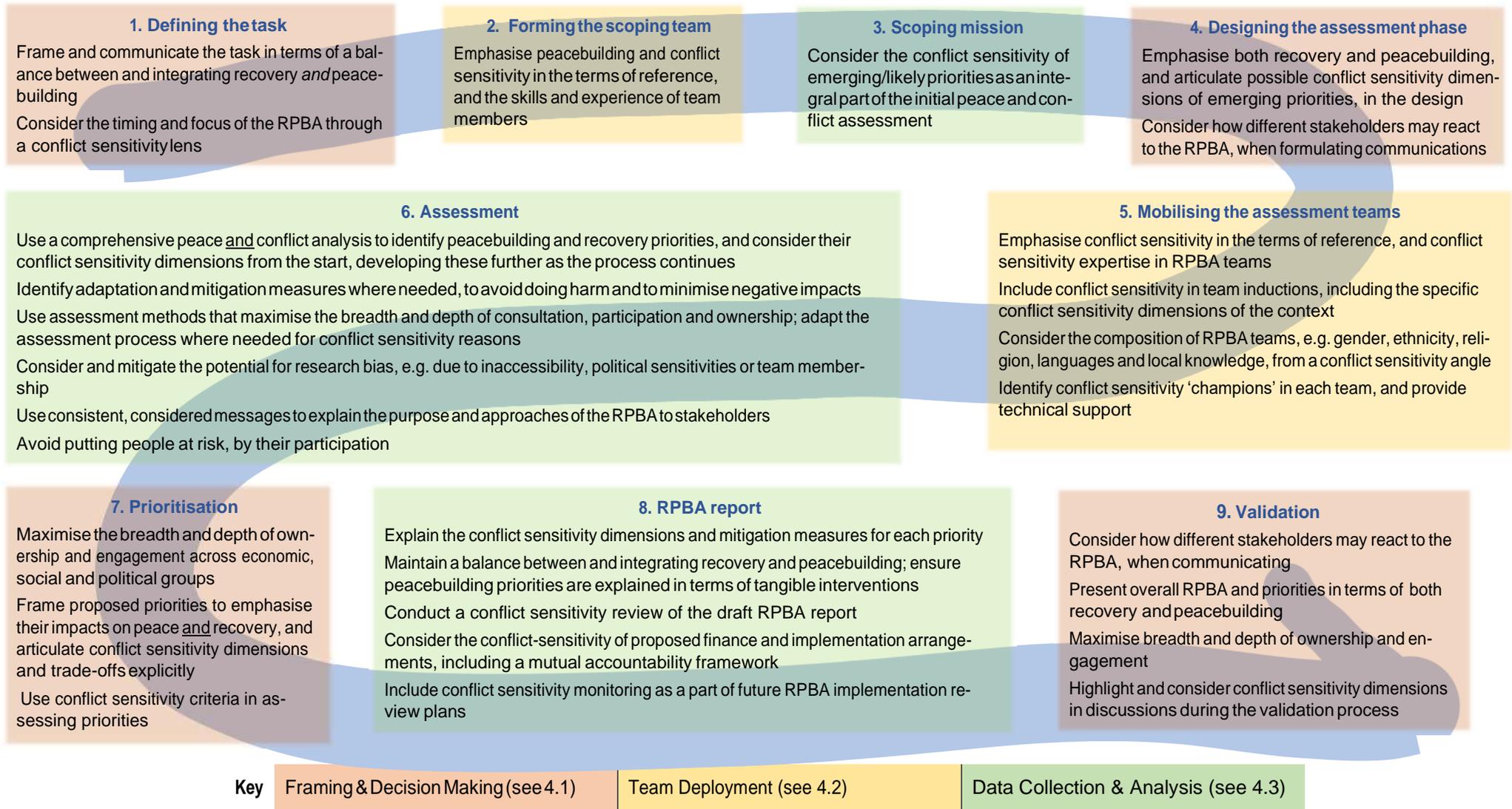
Building and handing on a narrative

An important feature of the RPBA process is the building of a core narrative, which becomes progressively clearer and more detailed, as the process unfolds. This brings the different priorities together within a coherent whole, and serves as a communication device.

The cast of characters involved in the development of an RPBA changes. New people come on board for different stages; growing numbers of people are involved. So aspects of the RPBA requiring attention because of conflict sensitivity need to be flagged as explicitly as possible in the documentation, to facilitate the handover of knowledge from one phase to the next.

This is also why it is helpful to engage as many staff as possible from national and local government, and the country programmes of international institutions, during the RPBA assessment process.

Figure 5: Conflict Sensitivity Road Map – Nine steps for conflict sensitising recovery & peacebuilding assessments



4.1 Framing and decision making

RPBA processes include several significant decision-making moments: when the RPBA is initiated, when it is further defined at the end of the pre-assessment phase, and when priorities are chosen and then validated (steps 1, 4, 7 and 9 in Figure 5: Conflict Sensitivity Road Map – Nine steps for conflict sensitising recovery & peacebuilding assessments). Any decision defines what follows, so it is particularly important to consider conflict sensitivity at each of these steps. This means pursuing three broad approaches: getting the framing and communication right, using conflict sensitivity criteria to guide decision making, and consulting and taking into account a broad and diverse set of perspectives. These are explained below, and guiding questions for this section are shown in Figure 6.

a) Get the framing and communication right

Framing matters, because it determines how issues will be understood and acted upon, especially as the audience continues to broaden as the RPBA process unfolds. The RPBA is a major initiative and investment on the part of government and the three largest aid agencies, therefore the very act of doing an RPBA, as well as how it frames the context, send major messages that can resonate widely.

How the RPBA is understood by others can shape their behaviour. If RPBA priorities are framed primarily as technical recovery initiatives, with little emphasis on equity, social cohesion, gender and human rights, human security or reconciliation, then stakeholders who see these issues as important may assume they have little to gain from the RPBA, or from peace and stability more generally. If on the other hand, the narrative is framed with an explicit and central emphasis on social cohesion, and this is clearly communicated, they will see it as more legitimate, and it will be more effective.

It is therefore important to consider how the RPBA looks from different perspectives, and:

- Frame the RPBA narrative as explicitly as possible in terms of both recovery *and* peacebuilding, right from the start, and maintain this all the way through, so it is clear to all stakeholders
- Articulate the conflict sensitivity dimensions of each priority, including any trade-offs and mitigation approaches, as they are developed throughout the process, from the scoping mission all the way through to the prioritisation and validation process and in the RPBA report, so they are well understood and carried through from step to step, all the way to implementation
- Take account of how different stakeholders may perceive and react to the RPBA process itself, as well as its narrative and detailed outputs, in how they are framed and communicated
- Ensure that gender analysis is fully integrated

The influence of the overarching narrative

It is important to consider the overarching RBPA narrative from a conflict sensitivity perspective.

For example, a narrative that frames a particular region of the country as somehow separate from the rest, as has often been done with northern Mali, may wrongly give the impression that the conflicts there are not linked to and partly caused by systemic national and sub-regional issues, as in fact they are. It can also reinforce the common impression throughout the country, that ‘the north’ is somehow separate from the rest of Mali, thus perpetuating a sense of division and alienation.

The Liberian government’s narrative of *Unity in Diversity* was designed specifically to inform Liberians’ sense of social cohesion, in a country which had been deeply divided by the manipulation of ethnic identity by political leaders during the civil war.

- Use continuous dialogue to negotiate any sensitive elements of the narrative, so it is as accurate and explicit as is politically possible, by the time prioritisation is completed.

There is often a tension between the need for transparency and clarity, and the need for political sensitivity. This has to be handled deftly and diplomatically. International agencies may prefer to address operational challenges between them behind the scenes. Governments may be unwilling to acknowledge the counter-productive impact of their economic policies, their security forces' behaviour, mismanagement or corruption in public services, or other issues. Fragile peace processes can be damaged by publicly calling out the behaviour of armed non-state actors in sustaining conflict. Careful language can help: sometimes it is politically easier to frame issues in terms of stability and social cohesion, rather than conflict sensitivity or peacebuilding. But while it makes sense to tread carefully, RPBA teams should try to avoid burying important dimensions of the analysis completely, in the interests of expediency. Internal structural factors in northern Cameroon had helped explain why the conflict there took hold, even if the public explanation was rather to shape the conflict as simply a 'Nigerian export' (because of the role of Nigerian militants who had crossed the border). But as the Cameroon RPBA process evolved, it became clear that there was also a home grown basis for northern communities' grievances, and addressing these eventually became a central and explicit feature of the RPBA response, and more widely accepted in government circles.

Conflict sensitivity not only clarifies the links between recovery and peacebuilding priorities, it often leads to adaptations in both

A 'purely peacebuilding' priority might emphasise the need for reconciliation between returning fighters and the communities they have threatened or harmed, while a 'purely recovery' programme might emphasise the restoration of livelihoods.

But a conflict sensitivity analysis of each might suggest that communities will reject attempts at reconciliation if they are unable to feed and protect their families, while a simple restoration of livelihoods may exclude and alienate returning fighters.

As a result, the priorities could be merged, and framed under a single banner: promoting social cohesion through economic improvement. This would use community-level dialogue to promote intra-community reconciliation and explore transitional justice, alongside livelihoods programmes that include those who were fighters and those who were not.

b) Use conflict sensitivity criteria to make decisions

Conflict sensitivity is one of many, often competing factors that RPBAs have to consider. Others include political considerations, diverse organisational mandates, humanitarian principles, human rights-based approaches, security, environmental concerns, and implementation constraints and bottlenecks. To avoid it being drowned out by these, it is important to keep conflict sensitivity in plain sight during decision-making.

Broadly, this means following the principles set out in Figure 4, as well as asking how any proposed programming priority may interact with peace and conflict dynamics, and whether this knowledge has been sufficiently taken into account. For example, what risk mitigation measures are planned, and whether peacebuilding opportunities are being seized. Generic guiding questions are shown in Figure 6 and 8, but it is also helpful to develop context-specific criteria for prioritisation processes. For example, some infrastructure investments proposed in the Central African Republic RPBA were not prioritized because their location failed to meet the criterion that new infrastructure should improve communications between the centre and the parts of the country most affected by conflict. To take another example, any proposals for improving livelihoods in rural areas where farmers and herders co-exist should consider their likely impact on the relations and terms of trade between them.

c) Consult and take account of different perspectives and interests

The example of herders and farmers is a reminder that conflict sensitivity requires a consideration of how diverse interests and perspectives will be impacted by decisions. For example, an RPBA conducted just prior to an election might be seen as a vote-buying tactic, leading to cynicism among the political opposition, and undermining popular support for the RPBA process or outputs. Initiating an RPBA might either support or undermine an ongoing peace process, depending on circumstances. Young men who are vulnerable to recruitment by armed groups because they feel historically marginalised due to their

identity or geography, may be less likely to join these groups if an RPBA prioritises helping them improve their political, social and economic participation in society, their livelihoods, dignity, a sense of belonging and security. On the other hand, their alienation may be reinforced if the priority is framed in starkly instrumental terms (e.g. 'to reduce armed group recruitment levels among young Muslim men'), rather than as a political response to their rights as citizens.

So it is necessary to consider the likely impact of decisions, *and the way they are framed*, on people in different sectors of society and how they impact women and men differently. In any conflict situation, the peace and conflict analysis will identify groups whose potential response is particularly salient: political spoilers with the potential to undermine progress towards peace and stability, and those whose sense of grievance is among the causes of conflict. Taking account of their perceptions is essential.

But it is important to include other groups too: people disaggregated by sex, age, geography, class, religion, ethnicity, political affiliation, livelihood, education level or other factors. Different government departments, and different levels of government from local to national, along with civil society groups representing particular interests or issues, should be as involved as possible. If the RPBA focus is on one part of the country, the perspectives of people from elsewhere are also important, especially in countries with historical geographic divisions. The participation of diverse groups not only helps enhance the conflict sensitivity of the proposals and decisions made, it also serves as a useful communication opportunity, broadening and deepening ownership of the process and its outcomes.

Where the possibilities of consultation during decision making are limited, perhaps due to insecurity, it is important to at least consider the likely implications of RPBA choices on different groups of people. This may involve using secondary data, or identifying proxy respondents.

Figure 6: Guiding questions for framing and decision making, of particular relevance when RPBA are being planned, and priorities chosen and validated (steps 1, 4, 7 and 9 in Figure 5)

How might conducting an RPBA affect the peace and conflict dynamics, or be affected by them?

How might it affect or be affected by elections, peace processes, political changes or security campaigns?

How might different stakeholders perceive it? Who will see it as an opportunity, and who will see it as a threat?

How might they react? How are women and men affected?

Are recovery and peacebuilding both explicit in how the RPBA is framed overall, and in how each priority is framed? Have peacebuilding outcomes been identified? Are peacebuilding opportunities sufficiently reflected in how sectoral recovery priorities are framed? Have the peacebuilding opportunities been sufficiently harnessed? Is it clear how these will be taken forward?

Have the conflict sensitivity dimensions of the priorities been considered and explained? If there is a risk of negative impacts either on the context or the RPBA priorities, is the risk acceptable? Are mitigation measures identified and sufficient?

Are RPBA proposals explicit and realistic? Is there a risk of raising expectations that will later lead to disappointment?

Have **prioritisation and validation processes** included outreach to and feedback from representatives of all important stakeholder groups?

See also the **conflict sensitivity principles** in Figure 4, and **Error! Reference source not found.** for more detailed questions which can be used to test the conflict sensitivity of RPBA priorities and plans.

4.2 Team deployment

The RPBA is very much a team process, and conflict sensitivity is influenced by how teams are deployed (steps 2 and 5, in Figure 5). It can be enhanced by getting the terms of reference right, paying attention to team composition, well-designed induction, and providing the right support.

a) Terms of reference

The conflict sensitivity principles outlined in Figure 4 emphasise the need to mainstream conflict sensitivity as a collective responsibility in RPBA teams, and to see conflict sensitivity as a thread running throughout the process. Conflict sensitivity should therefore be integrated in the terms of reference for the overall RPBA process, and also cascaded through the terms of reference for subsidiary teams and individual team members. This will help keep conflict sensitivity in view during team formation and deployment, ensuring that teams understand their responsibility for conflict sensitivity, and are held accountable accordingly.

b) Team composition

The main teams involved in RPBA assessments are:

- The **Steering Group**, usually made up of a government minister and the heads of the European Union, United Nations and World Bank country missions, which steers the project at a political level.
- A technical **Coordination Team**, typically made up of representatives of the government and each of the three international institutions, which delivers the RPBA project and plays an influential role in framing options and defining processes for exploring and prioritising them in the scoping mission and full assessment phase.
- **Task teams** – typically sectoral or geographic teams, exploring and shaping specific recovery and peacebuilding approaches with respect to technical sectors and/or regions.

Ideally, each of these teams includes at least one person with practical experience and expertise in peace and conflict analysis, applying conflict analysis to sectoral programming, and implementing programmes in conflict-prone environments. Teams also need facilitation skills, to enable fruitful, sometimes sensitive discussions about conflict sensitivity. These qualities are particularly important for the Coordination Team.

Members of the Steering Group may not have specific conflict sensitivity expertise, in which case they will need to rely on the Coordination Team, and on advisors available in their agencies or ministries. They may also decide to assign an advisor with conflict sensitivity expertise from one of the agencies to support them, if available.

Each task team leader – or another team member appointed by him or her – should act as a conflict sensitivity ‘champion’ within the task team, encouraging and helping colleagues to consider conflict sensitivity risks and peacebuilding opportunities throughout the assignment. This role is particularly useful in teams working on non-peacebuilding sectors, where peace and conflict opportunities and risks can easily be missed. Ideally, it will be played by someone with prior conflict sensitivity expertise. If not, the gap can be partly filled through induction and external support (see below).

It is of course essential for the RPBA team to include other expertise of importance to conflict sensitivity, such as gender and cultural expertise, as well as people with deep contextual knowledge. The identity of team members is also relevant, as a conflict sensitivity issue in itself. Where political affiliation or questions of identity such as ethnicity, language, religion, geographic origin, age or gender are relevant to the conflict, as they often are, then the identity of team members will contribute to how they and the RPBA are perceived. It may influence the confidence and trust of interlocutors, and their willingness to engage, and in extreme cases may put team members or their interlocutors at risk. While it may be

impractical to deploy teams whose collective identity is completely balanced, it is important to at least understand how this factor may influence the process, and take account of it in planning and executing the assessment phase.

c) Include conflict sensitivity as part of the team's induction

The detail and depth of this induction will depend on the team's role, seniority, etc. For the Steering Group, this will probably be a short briefing. For task teams, it might be a short workshop, included as part of the induction process. It is particularly valuable to bring members of all sectoral teams together for this workshop if possible, as this offers an opportunity to explore cross-cutting peace and conflict dynamics, and their implications. Key elements of such sessions would include:

- Definition of conflict sensitivity and conflict sensitivity principles, with examples from elsewhere
- How and why it is relevant in the current RBPA
- Specific conflict sensitivity concerns, relevant to the team's practical task and context
- The approach to be followed in the RPBA process, to maximise conflict sensitivity.

Some task team members are government or international agency staff who may be involved in later implementation. Hence, the more they can internalise and 'own' the conflict sensitive aspects of the priorities they will later be involved in, the better. Therefore any investment in helping develop this knowledge during the RPBA assessment process will pay dividends during implementation.

d) Provide conflict sensitivity support from outside the team

The Coordination Team can provide conflict sensitivity support throughout the process. For example, when they check in with task teams as part of their overall coordination mandate, they can provide a light touch conflict sensitivity review and challenge, and advise on appropriate corrective action. In addition, when task teams have a particular question about the conflict sensitivity of their approach or their findings, they can contact an appropriate member of the Coordination Team for advice.

Figure 7: Guiding questions on the conflict sensitivity of RPBA teams, of particular salience when scoping and assessment teams are being formed and deployed (steps 2 and 5, see Figure 5).

Do **terms of reference and role descriptions** for the overall RPBA team, task teams, and individuals include conflict sensitivity and gender sensitivity, and are they supported and held accountable for this?

Do teams include or have ready access to **people with experience and expertise** in:

- Local socio-economic, political and cultural knowledge
- peace and conflict analysis and strategy
- applying conflict analysis to sectoral programming
- implementing peacebuilding and sectoral programmes in conflict-prone environments
- gender analysis, and facilitation skills?

Are teams balanced, in terms of gender, age, and any other aspects of identity relevant to the context; will the team's identity mix have an impact on their objectivity, on their ability gain people's trust, or on the security of teams or their interlocutors?

Are the **conflict sensitivity principles** (Figure 4) being followed?

4.3 Data Collection and Analysis

Data collection and analysis is at the heart of the RPBA, and particularly in steps 3, 6 and 8 (Figure 5). It is an evolving process that begins with the development of a broad analytical narrative during the scoping mission. This is later crystallised, during the main assessment, and further articulated in the RPBA report, which also outlines the implementation and financing arrangements. Conflict sensitivity can be integrated in data collection and analysis processes in three ways:

- Consider the conflict sensitivity dimensions of peace and recovery priorities right from the start, as part of the peace and conflict analysis, and progressively thereafter
- Conduct the data collection and analysis processes in a conflict sensitive manner
- Embed conflict sensitivity into the RPBA report.

a) Consider the conflict sensitivity dimensions of peace and recovery priorities right from the start, as part of the peace and conflict analysis, and progressively thereafter

Basic context analyses generally identify the manifestations and causes of conflict accurately. But they often stop short of identifying opportunities and drivers of stability and peace, or analysing the conflict sensitivity of likely programming. If so, they provide insufficient guidance to teams developing peacebuilding options, or identifying conflict sensitivity risks. To be effective, RPBA teams should:

- **Conduct a combined peace and conflict analysis.** This considers not only the causes and manifestations of conflict, but also the openings and opportunities for peace. Doing so helps identify appropriate programming priorities right from the start, designed to address the causes of conflict and strengthen peace dynamics.⁴
- **Build on the initial peace and conflict analysis progressively,** bringing actors together to explore peace and conflict dynamics, and carefully develop a consensus about how to build peace in a conflict sensitive manner.
- **Identify peacebuilding priorities, and conflict sensitivity risks and mitigation / adaptation measures, from an early stage.** These will form the basis for a more detailed review, as teams develop each priority area further, and ultimately as a 'conflict sensitivity filter', to be used in reviewing and adjusting priorities, and to inform prioritisation and validation discussions.

Error! Reference source not found. outlines broad guiding questions which can be used in these processes. Annex 1 goes further, setting out a generic process for peace and conflict analysis, while annex 3 suggests other reference sources for further learning, many of which contain different analytical tools and guidance.

b) Conduct the data collection and analysis in a conflict sensitive manner

Conflict sensitivity applies to the RPBA process, as much as to its outputs and outcomes. The act of data collection and analysis itself can interact with aspects of the conflicts in the context, affecting both the context and the research. For example, unintended bias may favour – or be construed as favouring – one party over another in the conflict, and undermine the recovery and peacebuilding outcomes. To make the process conflict sensitive, RPBA teams should:

- **Engage with a range of stakeholders which is as broad, inclusive and gender-balanced as possible,** so as to include diverse perspectives on peace and conflict, understand how their lives are impacted by conflict, and by any proposed programming, and their suggestions for avoiding

⁴In some circumstances, it can be helpful to refer to the peace and conflict analysis in other terms, for example as 'context analysis', to take account of political sensitivities. Nevertheless, it remains important to identify and understand the causes of conflict and the opportunities for peacebuilding, if the RPBA is to be effective.

harmful impacts and maximising peace outcomes. The researchers should maximise their own contact with people in different local circumstances, but surveys can also be used to expand their reach.

- **Explain the RPBA consistently and accurately to stakeholders.** All engagements with people during the data collection and analysis phase are opportunities to explain the RPBA: its purpose, timeframe, likely outcomes, etc. Therefore it is important that this is summarised and shared with all participants in a coherent and consistent way, and consideration is given to how this might be construed by different target audiences, and how they might respond.
- **Minimise bias**, for example bias due to the identity of members of research teams, including interpreters; from research teams with a poor basic understanding of conflict issues in the context; or because insecurity or other constraints prevent access to certain areas or groups. Mitigating measures might include changing the make-up of teams, finding secondary sources of information about inaccessible populations, meeting representatives in a safer location, or using phone or other remote survey techniques.
- **Take care in the use and presentation of data.** Data, especially when used to create maps or other simplified but accessible formats, can exacerbate tensions, so care needs to be taken to avoid causing problems. In some contexts, even the language used to describe geographical features can be inflammatory. At the same time, it is important to be as accurate as possible, so that a complete and correct analysis is placed before decision makers. This implies the need to find a well-judged balance between tact and disclosure, using dialogue to open difficult conversations and allow space for sensitive data and analysis to be explained and absorbed.
- **Avoid putting people at risk of harm by their participation.** The processes of consultation and data gathering can attract the attention of spoilers: people wishing to undermine peace and recovery. Protection issues might apply to refugees, internally displaced people, women or human rights defenders. Therefore research teams should consider this risk before engaging in interviews, focus group meetings, surveys or other meetings.
- **Adjust the timing or methodology when new information or an improved understanding of the peace and conflict dynamics requires it.** Inevitably, the team's understanding will improve

Applying conflict sensitivity to an RPBA priority progressively, as the process unfolds

(An illustration, derived from several actual scenarios)

The scoping mission and the peace and conflict assessment suggest that a likely RPBA priority will include boosting the livelihoods of returning refugees through improved agriculture and the rehabilitation of market infrastructure, in semi-arid conditions far from the capital and major markets. This will involve introducing improved crop varieties, for sale in the growing cities. Other likely components include road construction, new irrigation schemes, technology improvements in agriculture, crop storage and processing, and marketing.

A conflict sensitivity review, also done as part of the peace and conflict analysis, suggests that a dormant but undefeated rebel group has taken control of large parts of the market in agricultural produce. They have agreed a ceasefire, and have taken advantage of it to expand and strengthen their domination of this lucrative market. It is thought likely they will try and capture the valuable new trade envisaged in this RPBA priority.

Historic disputes over land are also known to be among the causes of conflict. Systems for managing competing land uses, such as between communal pasture and private farming, have come under pressure due to population increase and environmental degradation. Land tenure in the areas to be irrigated is uncertain, especially where local families have been displaced for several years.

as the RPBA develops, and the context itself may also change. This may mean adapting the original research plan.

This leads to a concern that the proposed irrigation and other improvements will increase land values several fold, and may spark land grabs by well-connected elites, leaving the original land users worse off, and creating tensions between different ethnic groups.

These factors are identified and explored during the assessment phase of the RPBA, leading to a modified priority that emphasises improving clarity on land tenure, using detailed and participatory survey techniques, as a necessary first step in implementation. The initiative is also linked to the peace process: if the rebel group disarms, its members will be eligible to play a legitimate and legal role as cultivators or merchants of market produce, with potential access to land and technical assistance. This will need to be monitored carefully to ensure that they genuinely disarm.

When this idea is reviewed at the prioritisation stage of the RPBA, it is presented in full, including with this conflict sensitivity information. Reviewers can therefore use this information to ask the necessary questions about mitigation, and satisfy themselves that the priority is conflict sensitive, and is likely to be effective. They can also stipulate further conflict sensitivity measures to be taken during the detailed project design phase.

c) Embedding conflict sensitivity in the RPBA report

The RPBA report, including proposed financing and implementation arrangements, sets the near term recovery and peacebuilding agenda, and creates opportunities to explore a longer term vision for recovery and peace. If conflict sensitivity has been taken into account throughout the RPBA process, this will be reflected in the report. But many of the people and institutions who will use the report as the basis for their planning, will not have been involved in the RPBA process. Some of the conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding elements of the RPBA, as well as its overall coherence, may therefore become lost once the strategy is put into practice by a myriad of agencies and individuals. It is therefore important to ensure that conflict sensitivity issues are articulated explicitly. Ways to achieve this include:

- **Consider the conflict sensitivity of different financing and implementation channels**, such as the comparative speed of delivery or on-the-ground knowledge of different agencies, their capacity to monitor conflict sensitivity and adjust programmes accordingly, the advantages and disadvantages of programming through local or national government agencies or NGOs, including their perceived ethnic, religious or political affiliations. In some cases, the report may propose further due diligence, or mitigation measures, to be conducted before actual programmes are initiated.
- **Identify specific conflict sensitivity risks and mitigation measures in the RPBA report**, and flag them in the executive summary.
- **Review the draft RPBA documents from a conflict sensitivity perspective**, as part of the formal review process.
- **Articulate how the peacebuilding priorities – including cross-cutting elements – can be initiated** in year one, so they are not lost among more eye-catching higher budget recovery items.
- **Consider how the RPBA report will be communicated to different audiences**, and craft suitably accessible materials to facilitate this.
- **Include key conflict sensitivity concerns in any agreements based on the RPBA**, such as mutual accountability frameworks agreed between governments and international agencies.
- **Include a conflict sensitivity review as part of the regular (e.g. six-monthly) review** of RPBA implementation established by the government and its institutional RPBA partners. This could

be facilitated by proposing a short six-monthly conflict sensitivity report, to be drawn up and formally considered as part of each regular monitoring review.

Figure 8: Guiding conflict sensitivity questions for data collection and analysis (steps 3, 6 and 8, see Figure 5)

Gender and other identities, and conflict sensitivity principles (fig. 4), should be considered throughout

Peace and conflict analysis⁵

What are the main manifestations of conflict and peace, and how have these evolved? What are the likely peace and conflict scenarios in the near to medium term? Any expected shocks or major breakthroughs?

What are the main proximate and underlying causes and triggers of conflict?

Which actors or groups are contributing or might contribute to peace or conflict, and what are their interests?

What are the openings for peacebuilding, for example addressing the well-being, interests or grievances of different actors, or improving:

- the safety of different groups
- incentives to renounce violence and improve stability
- governance: relationships among and between people, and between people and the authorities
- fair access among different groups, to decent livelihoods, services and justice?

Conflict sensitivity analysis

How might each proposed peace or recovery priority contribute to or undermine the factors listed above?

How might peace and conflict dynamics affect the implementation of each RPBA priority?

How might different stakeholders perceive the RPBA or any particular priority within it? Consider different interest and identity groups. Who will see it as an opportunity, and who will see it as a threat? How might they react? Are RPBA proposals explicit and realistic? Might they raise unrealistic expectations?

Are any risks of negative impacts either on the context or the RPBA priorities acceptable? What mitigation measures should be taken? Are these sufficient?

Conflict sensitive assessment process

Do all team members use an accessible, succinct explanation of the RPBA purpose and process in stakeholder engagement? Does it communicate a message that supports peacebuilding, social cohesion, gender inclusion and equity?

Are there any risks of bias, or the appearance of bias, in the data collection and analysis process?

Has the data collection and analysis engaged different stakeholder groups?

RPBA report

Are conflict sensitivity risks and mitigation measures identified in the RPBA report? Is the report clear about how peacebuilding priorities will be taken forward?

Are the proposed implementation arrangements conflict sensitive?

- Are there any questions of political, religious or ethnic affiliation that could undermine trust or effectiveness?
- Any risks of corruption or bias in beneficiary selection?
- Do proposed arrangements offer sufficient on-the-ground knowledge and presence, can they mobilise at an appropriate speed, do they have the capacity to monitor conflict sensitivity and adjust programmes accordingly

⁵ See also Annex 1 for more details on peace and conflict assessments.

5. Conclusion

At the heart of the foregoing guidance, is the recommendation to:

- follow the conflict sensitivity principles in section 3,
- pay particular attention to framing the RPBA with conflict sensitivity in mind, and to maintaining a balance between, and integrating, peacebuilding and recovery priorities,
- deploy conflict sensitivity expertise across RPBA teams,
- integrate conflict sensitivity into the peace and conflict analysis right from the start, and
- clearly articulate explicit conflict sensitivity issues and mitigation strategies in the RPBA documents, and establish mechanisms for monitoring and adjusting the RPBA during implementation.

Every recovery and peacebuilding context is different, and the approach used to conflict sensitise each RPBA will reflect this. Ultimately, the conflict sensitivity and therefore the effectiveness of any RPBA will depend on the commitment, creativity and expertise of those involved.

Annex 1: Peace and Conflict Analysis Model

This is adapted from Figure 5, The basics of a Conflict Analysis, in *Joint Recovery and Peacebuilding Assessments (RPBAs): A Practical Note to Assessment and Planning (2017)*. The main adaptations are to clarify that the analysis should consider the drivers and opportunities for peace, as well as those for conflict, and the conflict sensitivity of likely RPBA priorities.

What is it? A peace and conflict analysis assists with analysing a specific context and developing strategies to reduce or eliminate the impact and consequences of conflict, and reduce the future risk of violence. It provides a deeper understanding of the issues that can drive violent conflict, and the dynamics and opportunities that have the potential to promote peace. In the context of an RPBA it helps determine what an RPBA needs to assess and address. It also helps to assess and ensure the conflict sensitivity of RPBA priorities, by identifying the potential for interactions between those priorities and the peace and conflict dynamics, and any likely effects either on peace and conflict dynamics or on the interventions themselves.

How to do it? There are several methodologies and tools to conduct a peace and conflict analysis. All provide a structured analytical framework to analyse the causes, actors, triggers and dynamics of the conflict, and capacities for peace at the local, national, regional, and international levels. Key elements of a peace and conflict analysis:

ANALYSIS OF THE PEACE AND CONFLICT CONTEXT

- **Situation analysis:** Current and emerging historical, political, economic, security, socio-cultural and environmental dynamics in a conflict-affected area at a specific point in time, complemented with a chronology of key facts and events.
- **Factor or causal analysis:** Identify 'conflict factors' and 'peace factors' across political, socio-economic, security, and environmental dimensions. These include: a) root/structural factors of conflict such as divisions in society; b) immediate/proximate factors i.e. the visible manifestations of the conflict; c) Triggers i.e. events/issues/shocks that could lead to further outbreaks of violence; and, d) opportunities and capacities for peace i.e. elements within the context that mitigate the emergence and proliferation of violent conflict, and strengthen the foundations for peace by drawing upon the resilience of a society, and likely opportunities to strengthen these and to prevent or reduce violence, such as functional connectors. Where applicable, the analysis should include factors that contribute to, and facilitate, phenomena such as forced migration, radicalisation, violent extremism and wider geopolitical influences and trends.
- **Stakeholder analysis:** Identify local, national, regional and international actors (individuals, groups and institutions) that influence - or are influenced by - the conflict. This should include an exploration of their interests, goals, positions, capacities and relationships, how they interrelate and reinforce opportunities for peace or instigate conflict.
- **Conflict dynamics and drivers of change:** Understand the interactions among context, causes and actors, the distribution of violence, its nature and triggers.
- **Scenarios:** An outline of possible future directions of conflict and opportunities for peace. Any likely internal/external shocks? What openings for peacebuilding does the context analysis suggest, for example addressing the interests or grievances of different actors, or improving:
 - the safety of different groups
 - incentives to renounce violence
 - governance: relationships among and between people, and between people and the authorities
 - fair access among different groups, to decent livelihoods, services and justice?

ASSESSING THE RESPONSES

- **Responses:** Identify existing and planned responses to the conflict - internal and external - taking into account all actors, including development, military and security, political, diplomatic, social and economic. Identify areas where there may be gaps or overlaps in programming, ensuring that all the relevant issues are effectively addressed, and that resources are not wasted on duplication of programming.

CONFLICT SENSITIVITY

- **Priorities:** Identify the likely recovery and peacebuilding priorities, and consider them from a conflict sensitivity perspective:
 - How might each proposed peace or recovery priority interact with the peace and conflict dynamics identified, e.g. contribute to or reduce them?
 - How might peace and conflict dynamics affect the implementation of each RPBA priority?
 - How might different stakeholders perceive the RPBA priorities? Who will see it as an opportunity, and who will see it as a threat? How might they react? Are RPBA proposals explicit and realistic? Might they raise unrealistic expectations?
 - Are any risks of negative impacts either on the context or the RPBA priorities acceptable? What mitigation measures should be taken? Are these sufficient?
- **Types of interaction:** The following categories may be helpful in considering ways that recovery and peacebuilding assistance interact with peace and conflict dynamics:
 - Distribution effects: where groups perceive that assistance is distributed along the lines of existing divisions or tensions
 - Recognition effects: where working with or alongside other actors can increase their perceived legitimacy, recognition or status
 - Economic market effects: where assistance undermines, replaces or enhances markets
 - Capacity effects: where assistance replaces existing structures or institutions
 - Theft/diversion: where actors steal or misdirect assistance to their own constituencies or to pursue their own interests
 - Modelling behaviour: where stakeholders see how assistance providers behave as a model for how to act

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Annex 2. Scope and Phases of a Recovery and Peacebuilding Assessment⁶

Whilst the scope of an RPBA will vary depending on the context, an RPBA will, at a minimum, focus on: the conflict and security situation; host government position and capacities; institutional interests; and available resources. The RPBA approach selected for each country will be informed by a thorough understanding of the causes and dynamics of the conflict, including its impact on different sectors (including political, economic and social) and population groups (e.g. women, youth, elderly and disabled). It will also provide a clear picture of key recovery and peacebuilding needs and priorities across different sectors, as well as the strategies and resources required to address them. Generally, the RPBA process will comprise of three phases:

Pre-assessment phase

This phase of the RPBA process seeks to understand the rationale for an RPBA, to confirm/ establish national ownership and leadership for the endeavour, and to lay the groundwork for broad and inclusive 'buy-in' for its outcome. This phase begins with a pre-assessment mapping and scoping mission, structured by a terms of reference (TOR) that outlines the scope of the RPBA, including its timeframe for completion, and the resources required to conclude it. The scoping mission is undertaken by a joint European Union (EU), United Nations (UN) and World Bank (WB) team in collaboration with national counterparts. During this phase a conflict analysis (that assesses the causes/drivers, stakeholders, dynamics of conflict as well as local peace capacities) should be conducted or initiated to inform the wider RPBA.

Assessment, prioritization, and planning phase

Based on the outcome of the pre-assessment, and if so decided, assessment teams will then undertake the full assessment to identify, prioritize and sequence different recovery and peacebuilding requirements. The outcome for this phase consists of a recovery and peacebuilding plan, a transitional results matrix, and an outline of implementation and financing options.

Validation and finalization phase

This phase focuses on reaching a formal agreement between the government and partners, both internal and external, on the recovery and peacebuilding plan and results matrix, implementation modalities (including coordination and monitoring), and financing arrangements.

⁶This annex is copied directly, from: Joint Recovery and Peacebuilding Assessments (RPBAs). A Practical Note to Assessment and Planning. European Union, United Nations, World Bank, 2017.

Annex 3: Further Reading

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