



Case study

Operationalising the ‘triple nexus’

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Cover photo: Alison John, a South Sudanese refugee in Imvepi settlement in northern Uganda, makes a beehive during training provided by Enabel under its EUTF-funded SPRS-NU project, which is part of the triple nexus-aligned Regional Development and Protection Programme (RDPP). © Enabel

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Executive summary

Introduction

This study aims to provide an overview of the humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) nexus, or 'triple nexus', in the geographic regions that are relevant to the European Union Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF). It draws from interviews with more than thirty key stakeholders, including global triple nexus experts as well as relevant representatives from the EU, the UN, OECD, the World Bank and leading INGOs.

The objective of the triple nexus is to maximise the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of coordination between humanitarian, development and peace actions. One of the most contentious aspects of the triple nexus is the definition of the 'peace' component, with some preferring to limit this to 'soft' interventions such as social cohesion activities, while others insist that it is crucial to ensure the participation of actors implementing 'hard' peace and security interventions. The EU has recently sought to clarify and harmonise its own understanding of the 'peace dimension' of the triple nexus through a 'non-paper'.

Initiatives to bridge humanitarian and development action date back to as early as the 1980s (including approaches such as 'linking relief, rehabilitation and development' [LRRD], 'resilience building' and 'disaster risk reduction'), but these were largely programmatic, rather than structural, in nature. By 2015, however, the increasing number, intensity and duration of humanitarian crises and conflicts had led to the observable rise of a 'nexus' discourse calling for comprehensive reforms to the architecture of the aid system. Two key developments in the evolution of this discourse include the adoption of 'Conclusions on operationalising the humanitarian-development nexus' by the Council of the EU in 2017 and the OECD Development Assistance Committee's (DAC) adoption of its 'Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus'.

EUTF strategy documents do not explicitly mention the nexus as they date largely from the launch of the Fund in 2015-6, when nexus terminology had only just started to gain momentum. However, the fundamental tenets of the nexus approach are clearly present in the EUTF's core philosophy, which describes 'a holistic, integrated and coordinated approach for maximum impact'. At the strategic level, the EUTF has served as a valuable 'bridge' between EU humanitarian and development funding, proving flexible enough to be capable of supporting interventions that span the triple nexus. However, pressure to disburse quickly and the Fund's project-based approach mean that valuable opportunities for bringing actors from across the nexus together at the strategic level were largely overlooked.

Triple nexus approaches in the Sahel and Lake Chad, Horn of Africa and North of Africa regions

Multiple protracted and complex crises in the Horn of Africa and Sahel and Lake Chad regions demand a layered approach that addresses short-term emergency needs (humanitarian) while at the same time breaking the cycle of dependence on humanitarian assistance (development). By extension, this includes addressing the root causes of conflict (peacebuilding) and thus requires collaboration between the humanitarian, development and peace sectors.

SAHEL AND LAKE CHAD

In the Sahel and Lake Chad region, nexus-oriented frameworks and initiatives have emerged at both the regional and national level to strategise, coordinate, fund, and implement HDP action. The primary framework for regional cooperation on security and economic development in the Sahel is the G5 Sahel (comprising Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger). The Sahel Alliance was established in 2017 to support stability and long-term development in G5 Sahel countries, and now comprises the fourth pillar of the Coalition for the Sahel, which is a global initiative launched in 2020 by heads of Sahelian countries and France. By bringing together relevant actors in the region, the Coalition for the Sahel and the Sahel Alliance facilitate action on 'priority intervention areas,' coordinating closely with the G5 Sahel¹ and the Partnership for Security and Stability in the Sahel (PS3). This integrated approach exemplifies a Humanitarian-Development-Peace nexus framework in action,² and the Sahel Alliance in particular is often cited as an effective³ multi-sector and multi-donor partnership.⁴

HORN OF AFRICA

In the Horn of Africa, failure to mitigate the crisis triggered by the 2010-2012 East Africa drought was partially attributed to the international community's focus on short-term humanitarian responses to previous climate-related crises instead of building long-term resilience⁵, triggering a serious reconsideration of the way the international community operates in the region. A concerted, effective push for a resilience agenda followed in the early to mid-2010s, which has naturally evolved into a triple nexus agenda in the second half of the decade.

Although the geopolitical context in the Horn of Africa does not lend itself to regional cooperation across the nexus in same way as the Sahel and Lake Chad region, there are numerous nexus-aligned or explicitly nexus-oriented efforts taking place at the country level. Perhaps most notably, the Global Compact for Refugees (GCR) and the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) offer a basis for a 'new way of working' for refugees that brings a range of actors from across the nexus into close collaboration at the national and local levels in several Horn of Africa countries, and perhaps most notably in Uganda.

NORTH OF AFRICA

Overall, the international agenda in the North of Africa region tends to be more focused on migration management and development than humanitarian assistance and peacebuilding. Across the region, Libya is the only country with serious multisectoral needs and where concrete attempts to implement the triple nexus are in place.

Triple nexus interventions in the EUTF portfolio

The EUTF portfolio in the Sahel and Lake Chad region includes a range of triple nexus and double nexus programmes. At the regional level, the PDU, RESILAC and Refugees' Resilience programmes are all resilience-building interventions that include a peace component (in the form of mediation and conflict prevention, social cohesion, and conflict-sensitive measures, respectively). Country-level programmes employing a nexus approach include the PROJES programme in Mali, which promotes stabilisation and socioeconomic recovery in Mopti and Ségou; the LRRD programme in Nigeria, which includes 'soft' peace components such as social cohesion, trust building between communities and the police force, and community dispute resolution mechanisms; and the completed PAIERA programme in Niger, which aimed to stabilise the migrant transit region of Agadez by combining judicial measures

¹ Sahel Alliance members provide €1.8B in funding to the G5 Sahel Priority Investment Programme (PIP) and €266M to G5 Sahel Emergency Development Programme (EDP) projects.

² Alliance Sahel, 'Results Report: 3 years of the Sahel Alliance', accessed December 2021. Retrieved [here](#).

³ Interview with independent triple nexus expert.

⁴ The partnership includes France, Germany, the European Union, the African Development Bank, the United Nations Development Programme, the World Bank, the United Kingdom, Italy, Spain, the Netherlands, Luxembourg and Finland.

⁵ The Guardian, 'East Africa's drought: The avoidable disaster', 18 January 2012.

against smuggling of migrants with support to short-term economic opportunities for populations formerly benefitting from the smuggling industry.

Efforts to integrate humanitarian, development and peace actions into EUTF programming in the Horn of Africa region include the multisectoral REINTEG and RESTORE programmes in Somalia, which both aim to strengthen stability and security through basic service provision, resilience building, and conflict resolution interventions; the SORUDEV programme in South Sudan, which seeks to leverage the peace-development nexus to strengthen resilience to shocks and conflict in rural areas; and the CRRF-supporting RISE programme in northern Uganda, which was designed through active collaboration between the EU's development and humanitarian departments (DG INTPA and ECHO).

In the North of Africa region, the 'Managing mixed migration flows in Libya' aims to provide basic protection services to migrants, foster socio-economic development at the municipal level, and strengthen local governance.

Lessons learned, perspectives and areas of opportunity with regard to operationalising the triple nexus

THE CHALLENGE OF INTEGRATING PEACE IN THE TRIPLE NEXUS

Peace is a prerequisite for development programming and for protecting the impact of humanitarian and development programming gains. However, while the humanitarian-development nexus tends to be reasonably well established, it is widely agreed that peace remains a poorly integrated component of the nexus in most contexts, due to the significant operational implications that it can have for humanitarian and development actors, and the risk (perceived or otherwise) that a highly integrated nexus poses to humanitarian neutrality.

Peace should therefore be systematically integrated from the beginning of any nexus discussion or joint planning process in conflict-affected contexts where a nexus approach has been deemed appropriate (as in some contexts it is absolutely paramount for clear distinctions to be made between humanitarian, development and peace actors for reasons of both safety and effectiveness). Donors could also support increased understanding between sectors (including the impact of peace and security activities on humanitarian and development interventions) by encouraging and facilitating discussions and joint brainstorming, particularly if they contract humanitarian, development and peacebuilding projects in the same area. Finally, programmes should ensure the active participation of local stakeholders in the analysis and implementation of peace activities.

HDP COORDINATION THROUGH JOINT ANALYSIS, PLANNING AND COLLECTIVE OUTCOMES

Maximising coordination between actors across the humanitarian, development and peace sectors is the core tenet of the triple nexus. Joint analysis and planning should be the foundation of triple nexus interventions, and will help to establish a common understanding for setting shared objectives. It is worth noting that this approach, though effective, requires the allocation of additional budget and time for coordination that must be realistically planned for.

FINANCING THE NEXUS: DONOR COORDINATION

Donors are well-placed to provide high-level, overarching guidance to ensure a cohesive nexus strategy at the country, regional or global level. Strategic donor coordination is therefore key to maximising collaboration and efficiencies across the humanitarian, development and peace sectors. Though it is widely agreed that there is a general lack of sufficient coordination between donors at the global level, donor coordination at the country level tends to vary significantly.

At the EU level, the first point of action in any country is to optimise coordination between the DG INTPA, ECHO and FPI workstreams. Despite reports of recent advances since the launch of the EU nexus strategy, there remains room for improvement with regard to collaboration between ECHO, DG INTPA and, when relevant, FPI, as the level of cooperation in each country depends largely on motivated individuals and the strength of personal relationships. Efforts to institutionalise mechanisms for

encouraging and facilitating collaboration, including joint assessments, trainings and missions, could be considered.

FINANCING THE NEXUS: NEXUS-SUPPORTIVE FINANCING PROCESSES

One of the core OECD DAC recommendations for the triple nexus is to shift away from siloed annual funding cycles and instead promote predictable, flexible, multi-year financing that brings humanitarian, development and peace stakeholders together. Many donors (as well as multilateral development banks such as the World Bank) have already made steps towards this type of funding through pooled funds and other new funding instruments that aim to provide implementing partners with more flexibility and adaptability than was previously possible, though significant work remains to be done to reflect a genuine shift in approach.

IMPORTANCE OF INTEGRATING BOTTOM-UP APPROACHES AND EMPOWERING LOCAL AND NATIONAL ACTORS

Some stakeholders consider the triple nexus to be a top-down concept that has been largely imposed by donors without effective communication or adequate resources, when it should instead actively encourage and facilitate bottom-up planning and the integration of lessons learned from implementing partners in the field. A successful triple nexus approach also requires strong engagement with national and local capacities, both to effectively prevent and respond to crises as well as to maximise the long-term impact of a response. However, flexibility and patience are required on the part of donors to ensure that implementing partners have the time and resources needed to build local and national capacities and to foster project ownership by local actors and communities.

IMPORTANCE OF GENDER CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE TRIPLE NEXUS

Gender inequalities, norms and discrimination are often intensified and reinforced during conflicts and other emergencies. Responding to these complexities in crisis settings requires cross-cutting efforts that span the triple nexus – indeed, gender equality is one area where humanitarian, development and peacebuilding priorities significantly overlap. By promoting structural change, facilitating interlinkages, and engaging a wide range of stakeholders, an effective operationalisation of the triple nexus creates opportunities for more integrated and transformative approaches to gender considerations, particularly if linked up with existing initiatives such as the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE TRIPLE NEXUS

As the triple nexus approach promotes joint analysis, local empowerment and ownership, and increased cooperation between humanitarian, development and peace actors, it is particularly relevant in areas that are significantly affected by climate change and climate-related shocks (as is the case for many countries receiving EUTF funding) – not least because climate-related shocks and conflict often intersect and exacerbate one another. Like gender equality, climate change represents a shared area of commitment for the humanitarian, development and peace sectors, and therefore offers an opportunity to bring actors from across the nexus together towards a common agenda. Involving local actors in these efforts will help to ensure the design of tailored and cost-effective strategies for climate adaptation.

1. Introduction

This study aims to provide an overview of the humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) nexus, or 'triple nexus', in the geographic regions that are relevant to the European Union Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF). It seeks to highlight relevant contextual dynamics, challenges and barriers, and operational progress to date. The study draws from interviews with more than thirty key stakeholders, including global triple nexus experts as well as relevant representatives from the EU, the UN, OECD, the World Bank and leading INGOs.

This report represents a more comprehensive version of the chapter dedicated to the triple nexus in Altai Consulting's '[Learning lessons from the EUTF](#)' report.⁶ However, it is intended to serve only as an entry point to understanding the triple nexus in the context of the EUTF. Given the time and resources allocated to the exercise it was not possible, for example, to undertake an in-depth assessment of the application of the triple nexus approach in each of the 26 EUTF countries.

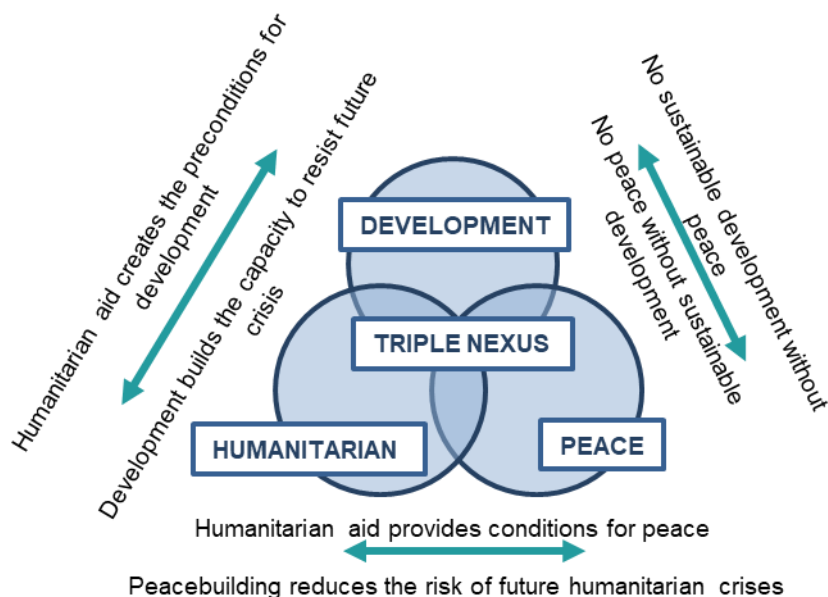
An executive summary of this report is provided in Section 1. Section 2 presents an overview of the triple nexus as a concept: it explains the relative absence of a common consensus around the precise definition of key aspects of the nexus approach, and also situates the triple nexus agenda within the history of efforts to better link development, humanitarian and peacebuilding actions. Section 3 offers a brief analysis of triple nexus initiatives in the geopolitical context of each of the EUTF windows, with a few example countries examined in further detail. Section 4 provides a visualisation of the EUTF portfolio in the context of the triple nexus, highlighting double and triple nexus interventions in each of the EUTF windows. Section 5 examines perspectives from EU and EUTF stakeholders with regard to operationalising the triple nexus, with a particular emphasis on internal EU coordination and on lessons learned from EUTF strategy and operations. Finally, Section 6 highlights areas of opportunity for future strategy and programming. These recommendations were largely designed with the EU in mind, but many may also be relevant for other donors and stakeholders.

1.1. Definitions

The objective of the triple nexus is to maximise the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of coordination between humanitarian, development and peace actions. In practical terms, for the purposes of this study and in accordance with the OECD DAC 'Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus', this means implementing joint analysis, shared strategic planning and programming, and collective outcomes among humanitarian, development and peace actors, all of which should be supported by predictable, flexible, multi-year financing and a comprehensive, adaptable and coherent donor strategy.

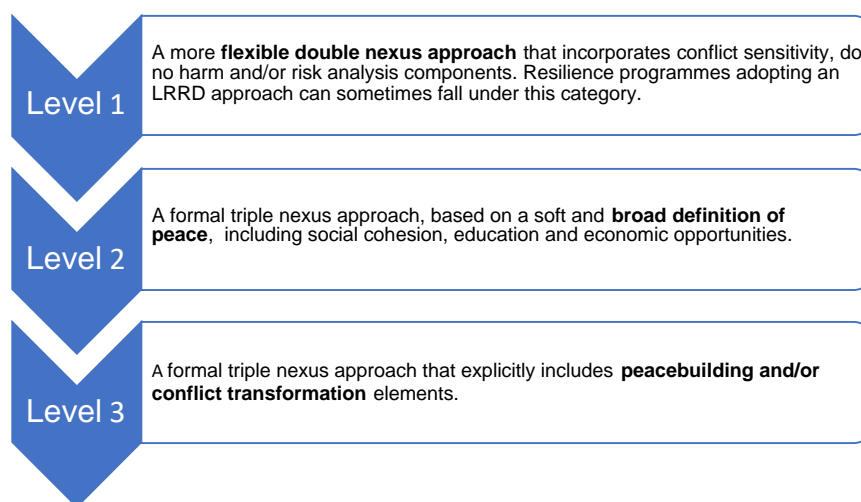
⁶ https://ec.europa.eu/trustfundforafrica/sites/default/files/learning_lessons_from_the_eutf_final_0.pdf.

Figure 1: Linkages between development cooperation, humanitarian aid and peacebuilding⁷



One of the most contentious aspects of the triple nexus is the definition of ‘peace’, and what some consider to be a misleading blurring of concepts between peacebuilding, security and stabilisation. Some stakeholders believe that there can be no genuine triple nexus without the full integration of ‘hard’ peace actors, such as those who implement security, counterterrorism and stabilisation activities, often pointing out that humanitarian and military actors have always worked together to exchange information, coordinate access to volatile areas, and avoid impinging on one another’s work. Others would prefer to refer to this type of collaboration as the ‘humanitarian-development-security’ nexus, and to limit the definition of ‘peace’ to ‘soft’ interventions such as social cohesion or community-level reconciliation.⁸ This is a reflection of the fact that although the triple nexus is widely agreed to be a highly relevant concept in complex crisis situations, a common understanding of what it means or should mean in practice is largely lacking across relevant stakeholders. Figure 2 below illustrates how a triple nexus approach to programming may look in practice, depending on the definition of ‘peace’ adopted by its implementers.

Figure 2: Programming approaches to the triple nexus⁹



⁷ This visual is based on a diagram from ECDPM, ‘Think local. Governance, humanitarian aid, development and peacebuilding in Somalia’, March 2019.

⁸ CHA, ‘Triple nexus to go’, February 2020, Retrieved [here](#).

⁹ This visual is based on the article by Centre For Humanitarian Action, ‘Triple nexus to go’. Retrieved [here](#).

The EU has recently sought to clarify and harmonise its own understanding of the ‘peace dimension’ of the triple nexus through a ‘non-paper’, although this document was only available internally, and in draft form at the time of drafting this case study. This proposed¹⁰ definition of ‘peace’ actions includes conflict prevention, peacebuilding, diplomacy, stabilisation and security support, and considers national and local authorities, international organisations, civil society, security forces, conflict parties (including national governments, non-state armed actors and third countries) and local communities as relevant ‘peace actors’.

1.2. History of the triple nexus

The term ‘silos’ is commonly used to describe the historical relationship between the humanitarian and development sectors. Agencies, departments, teams, project cycles and other processes are often inflexibly categorised as either pertaining to one field or the other, with funding streams and donor mechanisms allocated accordingly. These overly rigid categorisations tend to breed unnecessary competition, discourage crossover, and create communication and collaboration gaps on the ground, despite frequent overlaps in goals and objectives.

Initiatives to bridge humanitarian and development action date back to as early as the 1980s, and include approaches such as ‘linking relief, rehabilitation and development’ (LRRD), ‘resilience building’ and ‘disaster risk reduction’. However, these approaches were largely programmatic, rather than structural, in nature. As a result, they often did not entail an explicit vision of, or framework for, large-scale change to the architecture of the aid system in the way that the nexus discourse does.

This would change in 2015, when longstanding demands for a new approach to planning and financing aid gained strength as the number, intensity and duration of humanitarian crises and conflicts was steadily increasing on the one hand, while humanitarian and development funding stagnated on the other. As such, the need to achieve more with less – that is, to meet short-term emergency needs while also addressing the underlying crisis-causing conditions in order to improve long-term stability – had never been clearer or more urgent. These dynamics led to a concerted appeal to maximise efficiencies and promote collaboration between the humanitarian and development sectors, as reflected in the observable rise of a post-2015 rhetoric around a so-called ‘double nexus’.

The adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by UN member states in 2015, with its emphasis on reducing needs by addressing risk and vulnerability, fuelled the growing paradigm shift favouring closer collaboration between humanitarian and development actors. In 2016, the first World Humanitarian Summit promoted the idea of the ‘humanitarian-development nexus’ as the future of strategic planning, funding and programming. UN Secretary General António Guterres’ oath-taking remarks to the UN General Assembly later that year, in which he framed the humanitarian, development and peacebuilding sectors as ‘three sides of the same triangle’, established what is now referred to as the ‘triple nexus’, whereby peacebuilding is added to the humanitarian-development nexus when context-appropriate. From these developments the UN’s ‘New Way of Working’ (NWoW) was born. (It should be noted that although the NWoW approach remains highly relevant, it appears that even within the UN the term ‘nexus’ is increasingly preferred to avoid confusion over terminology.) In 2017, the UN and the World Bank launched the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Initiative (HDPI), which seeks to bring the two actors together ‘in new ways across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus in countries affected by fragility, conflict and violence.’¹¹

Also in 2017, the Council of the EU adopted ‘Conclusions on operationalising the humanitarian-development nexus’. The conclusions recognised ‘the linkages between sustainable development, humanitarian action and conflict prevention and peacebuilding, as well as the importance of diplomatic and political solutions to support peace and security’¹² in its opening paragraphs, but did not explicitly

¹⁰ At the time of drafting.

¹¹ World Bank, ‘Brief – The Humanitarian-Development-Peace Initiative’, 3 March 2017.

¹² Council of the European Union, ‘Operationalising the Humanitarian-Development Nexus - Council conclusions’, 19 May 2017.

include peace in its conceptualisation of the nexus. The European Commission then identified six countries facing protracted crises to pilot the EU's approach to operationalising the nexus: Chad, Iraq, Myanmar, Nigeria, Sudan, and Uganda. In 2018, the EU informally endorsed the triple nexus approach, and in 2020 the European Commission Services and the EEAS jointly produced an internal document to clarify the EU's position on the concept of 'peace' in the context of the triple nexus. The document was shared with EU delegations in relevant countries and is included in programming guidelines, but had yet to be published at the time of drafting.

Figure 3: A history of the triple nexus



Finally, one of the most critical developments in the conceptualisation of the triple nexus occurred in 2019, when the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) adopted its 'Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus'. In a reflection of the perceived importance among key stakeholders of a harmonised understanding of, and approach to, the triple nexus, it is the first ever OECD legal instrument with UN agency adherents.

1.3. The triple nexus and the EUTF

EUTF strategy documents do not explicitly mention the nexus as they date largely from the launch of the Fund in 2015-6, when nexus terminology had only just started to gain momentum. However, the fundamental tenets of the nexus approach are clearly present in the EUTF's core philosophy, including a structure that 'allows for a joint and flexible response', 'complementarity with development programmes (...), humanitarian assistance, stabilisation and crisis response assistance', and 'a holistic, integrated and coordinated approach for maximum impact'.

At the strategic level, the EUTF has served as a valuable 'bridge' between EU humanitarian and development funding, proving flexible enough to be capable of supporting interventions that span the triple nexus. However, pressure to disburse quickly, particularly in the beginning, as well as its highly project-based approach mean that valuable opportunities for bringing actors from across the nexus together at the strategic level were often missed.

At the programme level, the EUTF has funded numerous nexus-oriented or -aligned interventions. For example, in the Horn of Africa region, several EUTF projects have been designed i) through an explicit nexus analysis (such as the Decentralised Disaster Risk Management programme in Ethiopia), ii) to feed into the EU's nexus action plan for a given country (as with the HealthPro programme in Sudan), or iii) through active collaboration with ECHO country counterparts (as with the RISE programme in Uganda). A comprehensive list of EUTF nexus interventions can also be found in Section 4.

2. Triple nexus approaches in the Sahel and Lake Chad, Horn of Africa and North of Africa regions

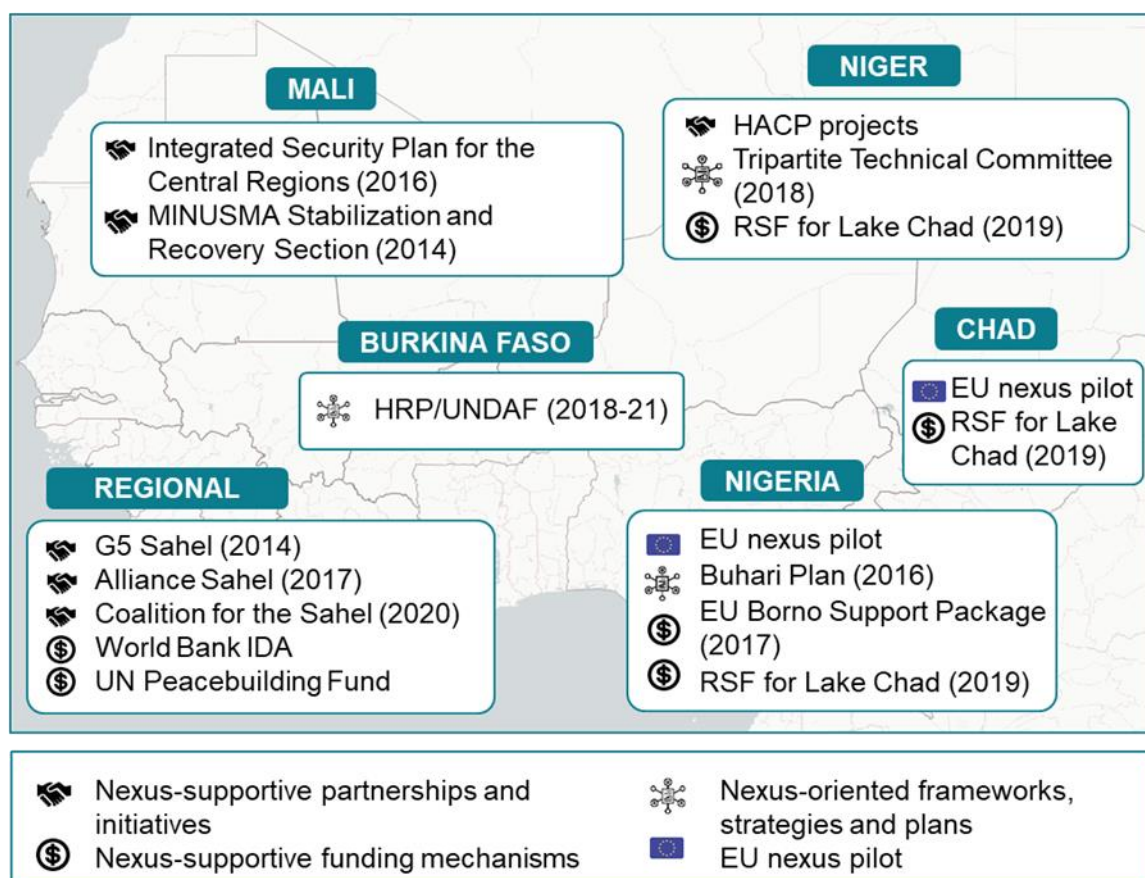
This section aims to situate the geopolitical dynamics in the regions relevant to the EUTF within the context of the triple nexus, along with a brief overview of relevant nexus initiatives in selected countries, including EUTF programming.

In the Horn of Africa and Sahel and Lake Chad regions, recurrent humanitarian crises triggered by climate-related disasters and conflict are often intimately linked to barriers to development such as state fragility, unemployment, lack of infrastructure, and poor access to basic services. In the North of Africa, Libya has been wracked by protracted conflicts and by the fragmentation of state institutions, affecting both the local population as well as a growing number of IDPs and stranded migrants.

Multiple protracted and complex crises in all three regions demand a layered approach that addresses short-term emergency needs (humanitarian) while at the same time breaking the cycle of dependence on humanitarian assistance (development). By extension, this includes addressing the root causes of conflict (peacebuilding) and thus requires collaboration between the humanitarian, development and peace sectors.

2.1. Sahel and Lake Chad

Figure 4: Non-exhaustive selection of nexus initiatives, frameworks and funding mechanisms in SLC



The combination of the First Libyan Civil War in 2011, the political crisis in Mali in 2012 and the ongoing Boko Haram insurgency led to a significant destabilisation of the Sahel and Lake Chad region in the early 2010s. As terrorist activities spilled over from Mali to neighbouring Niger and Burkina Faso, unprecedented waves of forced displacement and humanitarian needs emerged in 2019. Protracted conflicts, coupled with recurrent droughts and food crises, increased the need for stronger cooperation between humanitarian, development and peace actors, leading to a push for nexus approaches among the three sectors.

As shown in Figure 4 above, nexus-oriented frameworks and initiatives have emerged at both the regional and national level to strategise, coordinate, fund, and implement HDP action. The primary framework for regional cooperation on security and economic development in the Sahel is the G5 Sahel (comprising Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger), which was established in 2014. The international community has sought to support stability and long-term development in G5 Sahel countries through initiatives such as the Sahel Alliance, which was established in 2017 by bilateral and multilateral development partners. The initiative actively employs an integrated triple nexus approach, and has a project portfolio of €11.6B.

The Sahel Alliance now comprises the fourth pillar of the Coalition for the Sahel, which is a global initiative launched in 2020 by heads of Sahelian countries and France to: 1) coordinate military action against armed terrorist groups, 2) strengthen the capacities of state armed forces in the Sahel, 3) support state internal security forces, administration, and basic service provision, and 4) coordinate development aid, primarily through the G5 Sahel and the Sahel Alliance.¹³ By bringing together relevant actors in the region, the Coalition for the Sahel and the Sahel Alliance facilitate action on 'priority

¹³ Alliance Sahel, 'Results Report: 3 years of the Sahel Alliance', accessed December 2021. Retrieved [here](#).

intervention areas,' coordinating closely with the G5 Sahel¹⁴ and the Partnership for Security and Stability in the Sahel (PS3). This integrated approach exemplifies a triple nexus framework in action,¹⁵ and the Sahel Alliance in particular is often cited as an effective¹⁶ multi-sector and multi-donor partnership.¹⁷

The EUTF portfolio in the Sahel and Lake Chad region also includes a range of triple nexus and double nexus programmes. At the regional level, the PDU programme promotes the stability of border areas between Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger through mediation and conflict prevention, resilience support, and access to basic services in communities impacted by insecurity, climate change, and long-standing tensions. RESILAC is a flexible resilience programme that supports economic development, social cohesion among local actors, and the institutional strength of authorities in Niger, Nigeria, Cameroon, and Chad. Finally, UNHCR implements the Refugees' Resilience programme in Mali, Burkina Faso, Mauritania and Niger to support displaced populations and host communities with a conflict-sensitive humanitarian-development nexus approach.

The following sections outline contextual considerations and key nexus initiatives for selected Sahelian countries experiencing high levels of conflict and vulnerability that necessitate a triple nexus approach.

MALI

Before the 2012 political crisis, Mali was widely considered to be a successful example of democracy and stabilisation across the Sahel, and had benefitted from decades of development programming. However, following the collapse of the central state as well as the eruption of jihadist activities in the north, the country faced an unprecedented security and humanitarian crisis. The resulting conflict prompted continuous displacements and disruptions to livelihoods, and these conditions were further aggravated by chronic hunger and poverty.¹⁸

At the national level, the country launched the Integrated Security Plan for the Central Regions (PSIRC in French), which aims to strengthen security, prevent conflict between communities and support livelihoods and the provision of basic services.¹⁹ Relevant government counterparts, such as the Dedicated Ministry of Social Cohesion, Peace and National Reconciliation, can help to support coordination between humanitarian, development and peace actors for a robust triple nexus approach.

The *Pôles sécurisés de développement et de gouvernance* (PSDG) is an EU effort to operationalise the PSIRC by helping Malian forces to restore state authority and security in targeted areas of Konna. The PSDG is also supported by EUTF programming – notably the PROJES programme, which promotes stabilisation and socioeconomic recovery in Mopti and Ségou. It is carrying out emergency programming in areas with weak government presence and targeting zones that complement the PSDG in Mali's central regions.

The EUTF also funds the KEY programme, which comprises thirteen projects focused on the creation of economic opportunities, migrant and returnee protection, management of border areas, and community resilience in Mali's fragile northern areas. PDU, another resilience programme, promotes social cohesion and conflict prevention in areas with tension between pastoral and agricultural communities, while also improving local socioeconomic conditions for sustainable peace through improved basic services and resilience. Finally, the Refugees' Resilience programme works in volatile areas of Mali to address causes of instability and create economic opportunities for populations affected by displacement.

However, an important barrier to the effective operationalisation of the nexus in Mali is the perception that the involvement of actors engaged in peacekeeping and supporting the Malian security sector may lead to the politicisation of development and humanitarian assistance – as actors supporting the

¹⁴ Sahel Alliance members fund €1.8B to the G5 Sahel Priority Investment Programme (PIP) and €266M to G5 Sahel Emergency Development Programme (EDP) projects.

¹⁵ Alliance Sahel. 'Results Report: 3 years of the Sahel Alliance', Accessed December 2021. Retrieved [here](#).

¹⁶ Interview with independent triple nexus expert.

¹⁷ The partnership includes France, Germany, the European Union, the African Development Bank, the United Nations Development Programme, the World Bank, the United Kingdom, Italy, Spain, the Netherlands, Luxembourg and Finland.

¹⁸ ODI, 'Security and humanitarian crisis in Mali', March 2014.

¹⁹ PSIRC Description of Action document.

government may not be considered neutral actors in the conflict by a large segment of the population, particularly in the context of counterterrorism efforts. Furthermore, when security actors are involved in decision-making around humanitarian and development activities, as seen with the G5 Sahel operations as well as MINUSMA, it presents a potential threat to the humanitarian principle of neutrality.²⁰ For example, when MINUSMA's stabilisation unit began coordinating an important international steering committee (the Technical and Financial Partner Coordination, or PTF) along with the French embassy in 2013, many humanitarian actors expressed concern that this represented a conflict of interest that undermined the neutrality of humanitarian interventions.²¹

NIGERIA

In Nigeria, the triple nexus approach is mostly relevant in the north-eastern regions, where violence perpetrated by Boko Haram has caused a deterioration of the humanitarian situation since 2014, resulting in the internal displacement of 2.8 million people in the Lake Chad Basin as of December 2020.²² However, structural drivers of the crisis are longstanding and rooted in a context where poverty, unemployment and food insecurity are aggravated by the impact of climate change.²³

The triple nexus allows for the humanitarian, development and social needs of communities to be addressed simultaneously, while also ensuring greater access to beneficiaries. Indeed, as north-eastern Nigeria is the epicentre of the Boko Haram conflict, security actors hold the key to most operational decisions and access to beneficiaries in this area. For example, a large proportion of IDPs are living in camps set up in garrison towns established by the Nigerian military.²⁴

Major donors seem to have embraced the nexus approach in Nigeria, with the EU choosing it as one of the six pilot countries to operationalise the humanitarian and development nexus. The EU also launched the EU Borno Support Package in 2017, an initiative blending ECHO, EUTF, and EDF funds to improve the resilience of conflict-affected populations.²⁵ Within the EUTF, the LRRD programme in Nigeria supports a triple nexus approach in the north-eastern regions. It is comprised of three projects promoting softer peace components such as social cohesion, trust building between communities and the police force, and community dispute resolution mechanisms, while simultaneously supporting access to livelihoods and basic services.

Though the benefits of the triple nexus are clear in Nigeria given the intersecting humanitarian, development and security needs, operationalising it remains challenging in the context of a complex and protracted conflict, where actors may have different interpretations and understandings of the conflict dynamics in the country.²⁶ Some interlocutors claim that national authorities tend to support a 'negative' definition of peace that focuses on the absence of violence, the prevention of terrorism and the promotion of security measures, rather than actions (including possible dialogue with Boko Haram) that could create and sustain a 'positive' peace that explicitly aims to create an environment in which local communities and economies can thrive. Conversely, aid actors advise against certain counterterrorist and security measures advocated by the government, as they may adversely affect the population by facilitating human rights abuses or weakening the local economy.²⁷

²⁰ Interview with independent triple nexus expert.

²¹ Andrea Steinke, 'The Triple Nexus in Mali', March 2021, Retrieved [here](#).

²² DTM, Lake Chad Basin Crisis, December 2020, Retrieved [here](#).

²³ Rural 21, 'The nexus, joining forces, peace building, humanitarian assistance and development cooperation', 2019. Retrieved [here](#).

²⁴ Humanitarian Outcomes, 'A survey of affected populations on the coverage, operational reach and effectiveness of the humanitarian sector', January 2020. Retrieved [here](#).

²⁵ IOM, 'Operationalizing the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus', 2019.

²⁶ European Union, Lessons learnt from the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus approach, June 2020.

²⁷ Interview with independent triple nexus expert.

NIGER

Much of the population of Niger is affected by long-term humanitarian needs that are compounded by natural disasters, such as droughts and floods, which can often disrupt the agricultural season.²⁸ Conflict spill-over from neighbouring Mali and Nigeria have also worsened both the security situation and the displacement crisis in the country, with more than 250,000 IDPs reported as of November 2021.²⁹

International and national actors have thus strengthened their efforts to improve cooperation between humanitarian, development and peace actors in order to respond to the multisectoral crisis in the country. For example, at the national level, the Nigerien government established a Comité Tripartite de Haut Niveau in 2018, bringing together high-level official government stakeholders and key representatives of the development and humanitarian sectors. Furthermore, the work of the High Authority for the Consolidation of Peace is often cited as an example of Niger's commitment to properly address and understand the root causes of conflict. It could therefore be an effective national counterpart for implementing a triple nexus approach, as it supports projects across the humanitarian, development and peace sectors, including work on food security, military-civilian dialogue and local economic development.³⁰

At the international level, the Regional Stabilisation Facility (RSF) for the Recovery & Resilience of the Boko Haram-affected Areas of the Lake Chad Basin (UNDP) was launched in 2019 to promote the nexus agenda in Niger. It is a financing mechanism that seeks to promote community safety, restore essential infrastructure and basic services, build resilience, and provide livelihood opportunities for affected households.

EUTF nexus interventions in Niger include the completed PAIERA programme (2017-2019), which aimed to stabilise the migrant transit region of Agadez by combining judicial measures against smuggling of migrants with support to short-term economic opportunities for populations formerly benefitting from the smuggling industry.

CHAD

Chad faces chronic humanitarian crises and recurrent food insecurity, and also hosts 482,601 refugees fleeing conflicts in the Central African Republic, Darfur and the Lake Chad Basin area. Adding a social cohesion component to humanitarian and development programming, as EUTF-funded programmes and other interventions aim to do, may ease tensions between refugees and host communities, Arab and non-Arab communities, and other identity-related divides.³¹

The EU selected Chad as one of its six pilot countries to operationalise the humanitarian-development nexus. Within the EUTF portfolio, this strategy is exemplified by the RESTE programme, which aims to reinforce resilience in the volatile Hadjer-Lamis region, and by the DIZA programme, which promotes inclusive development among refugees and returnees in fragile areas.

Most initiatives in the country tend to focus on humanitarian-development cooperation, but flexible funds coordinated by nexus-oriented initiatives such as the Alliance Sahel could help to support a triple nexus approach.

BURKINA FASO

Burkina Faso is affected by seasonal and chronic vulnerabilities, including floods, droughts and, since 2018, a significant deterioration of the security situation due to the spill-over of jihadist activities in Niger and Mali. The resulting violence has led to the internal displacement of more than 1.5 million people as of December 2021.³² The country is struggling to adapt to these developments, and to shift from decades of development programming to the type of assistance required in an emergency context. Instead of following the traditional continuum from humanitarian assistance towards development

²⁸ OCHA, 'Five things you need to know about the crisis in Niger'. Retrieved [here](#).

²⁹ UNHCR, 'Niger – Operational Update', November 2021. Retrieved [here](#).

³⁰ Haute Autorité à la Consolidation de la Paix, Projets archivés. Retrieved [here](#).

³¹ Interview with key informant from EUTF implementing partner.

³² Humanitarian Data Exchange, 'Burkina Faso: Situation des personnes déplacées internes'. Retrieved [here](#).

activities, development actors are trying to implement an extremely flexible resilience approach in close coordination with humanitarian actors. Some programmes also include a social cohesion component, with activities such as community dialogue and civil-military mediation. They aim to strengthen the social fabric of communities, and to limit the risk of local recruitment and the spread of jihadism in rural and remote areas of the country.³³

A joint Humanitarian Response Plan / UN Development Assistance Framework has been adopted to coordinate funding and strengthen the humanitarian-development nexus, and in 2017 five collective outcomes were developed in consultation with relevant partners, including national authorities and civil society actors. The UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator (RC/HC) in Burkina Faso also leads a 'nexus forum' to facilitate nexus discussions between relevant stakeholders.³⁴

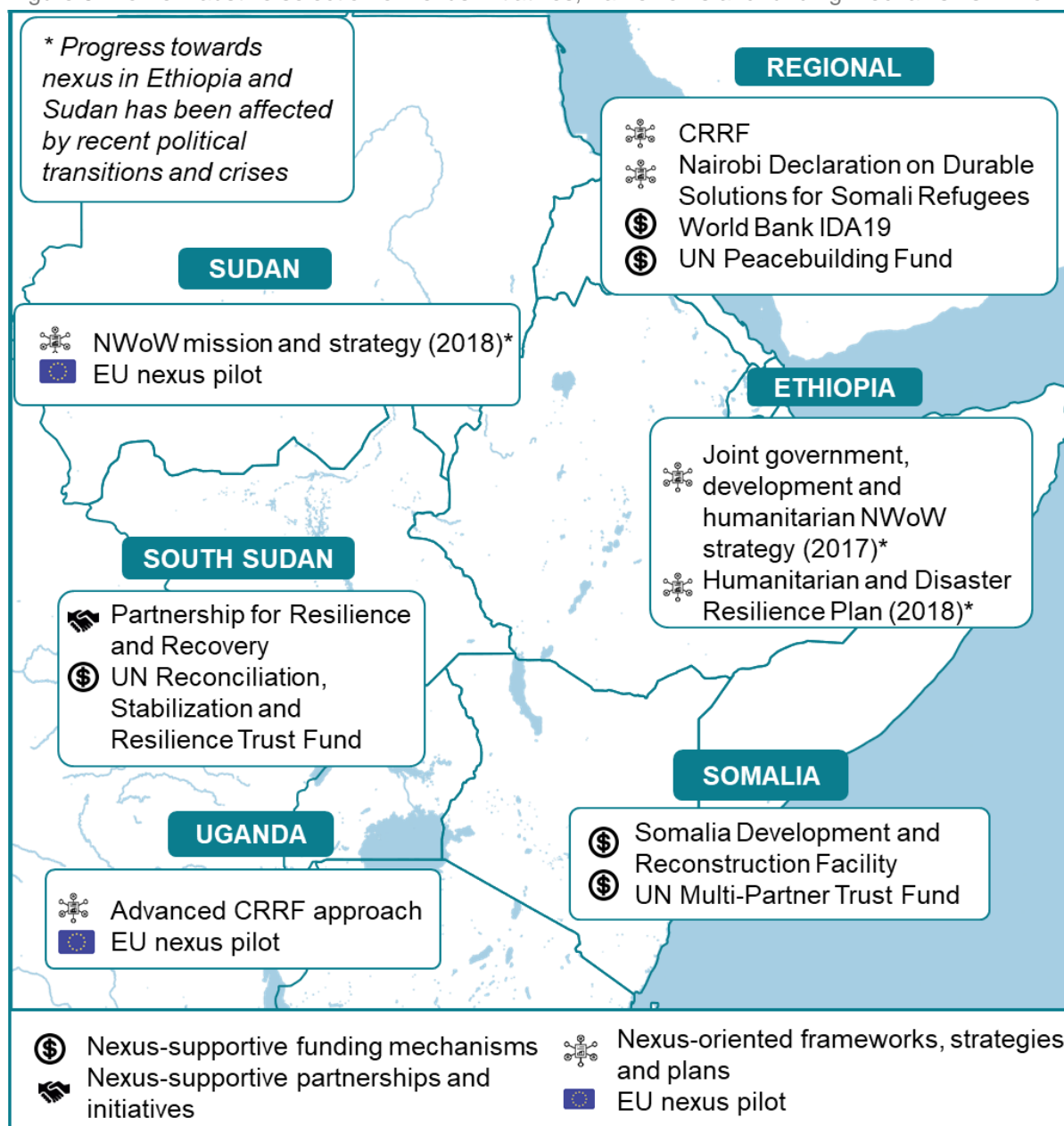
Multiple EUTF-funded programmes in Burkina Faso employ a double or triple nexus approach. For example, the PEV programme aims to promote peace and development by combining community dialogue and mediation with support for income-generating activities in order to stabilise border regions. The regional programmes PDU and Refugees' Resilience are also active in Burkina Faso, working to build peace between transhumant pastoralists and host communities and to support resilience among displaced populations, respectively.

³³ Interview with key informant from EU.

³⁴ Inter-Agency Standing Committee, 'Country Brief on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus: Burkina Faso'. Retrieved [here](#).

2.2. Horn of Africa

Figure 5: Non-exhaustive selection of nexus initiatives, frameworks and funding mechanisms in HoA



The 2010-2012 East Africa drought was a humanitarian disaster that contributed to the deaths of over 250,000 people in Somalia alone. Failure to mitigate the crisis was partially attributed to the international community's focus on short-term humanitarian responses to previous climate-related crises instead of building long-term resilience,³⁵ triggering a serious reconsideration of the way the international community operates in the region. A concerted, effective push for a resilience agenda followed in the early to mid-2010s, which has naturally evolved into a triple nexus agenda in the second half of the decade.

With regard to forced displacement, the Global Compact for Refugees (GCR) and its companion, the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), offer a basis for a 'new way of working' for refugees that demands improved flexibility, joint planning and coordination on the part of the humanitarian, development and peace sectors. The GCR/CRRF agenda has provided both a guiding framework and a forum for donors and other stakeholders to discuss and implement nexus approaches

³⁵ The Guardian, 'East Africa's drought: The avoidable disaster', 18 January 2012.

to refugee response. It also brings a range of actors from across the nexus into close collaboration at the national and local levels in several Horn of Africa countries, and most notably in Uganda.

Contextual dynamics and nexus initiatives in Horn of Africa countries in which a nexus approach is particularly relevant are described further below.

SOMALIA

Over the past few years, increasing stability in Somalia has given rise to a shift away from an entrenched cycle of short-term humanitarian action towards a longer-term, state- and resilience-building approach. As a result, the UN system, donors and the Federal Government of Somalia alike have become increasingly willing and interested in developing a triple nexus approach in the country. In June 2020, a UN-led task force proposed to set up a triple nexus steering committee, which is expected to include representatives from key government ministries, UN agencies and donors, although the terms of reference were still in development at the time of writing. It remains to be seen precisely what the responsibilities of this steering committee will be and how it will be positioned within the aid architecture in Somalia.

Efforts to make planning more integrated, coordinated and supportive of a nexus approach range from the Resident Coordinator's office's (RCO) piloting of a PBF-funded multisectoral analysis product that combines humanitarian, development and peace data, to area-based planning and programming that aims to bridge interventions spanning the nexus, such as the UN Joint Midnimo Programme (led by UN HABITAT and IOM).

Efforts to develop collective outcomes are also suggestive of an emerging nexus-oriented approach, such as the Regional Durable Solutions Secretariat's (ReDSS) work with the RCO to develop outcome-level indicators across the humanitarian-development-peace spectrum that establish a common basis for monitoring progress in solving the protracted displacement crisis. Collective outcomes have also been included in Somalia's Humanitarian Response Plans for 2019-22, although the peace pillar is not clearly represented.

However, numerous barriers to an effective operationalisation of the nexus remain in Somalia. For example, many bilateral donors provide just a small fraction of their funding through the Somalia Development and Reconstruction Facility (the main mechanism for coordinating financing in Somalia), and some often decline to report bilateral activities to the facility at all, although a commitment to begin doing so has recently been secured from some donors. Conflicting interests among international donors and regional Troop Contributing Countries also tend to undermine coherence and collaboration across actors.

Finally, there is the problem of over-coordination: there are currently so many coordination structures and frameworks in Somalia 'that some staff have to take part in more than 30 meetings per week where similar issues are discussed in slightly different configurations with the same group of people.'³⁶ A restructuring of this architecture is needed to maximise efficiency and optimise linkages across the nexus, with key informants for this study highlighting the UN as having the most legitimacy to lead such a process.³⁷ This would be a positive outcome of the planned triple nexus steering committee described above.

Efforts to integrate humanitarian, development and peace actions into EUTF programming in Somalia include the multisectoral REINTEG and RESTORE programmes, which both aim to strengthen stability and security through basic service provision, resilience building, and conflict resolution interventions (though it should be noted that the conflict resolution component in both programmes is comparatively small).

SOUTH SUDAN

South Sudan would benefit from a cohesive triple nexus approach, particularly with the relative stability

³⁶ IOM, 'Operationalizing the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus', 2019.

³⁷ Interview with key informant from EU.

provided by the 2018 peace agreement and a transitional government of national unity in place. However, the absence of certain pre-conditions for such an approach leaves room only for an ‘imbalanced’ nexus, as the majority of actors and interventions focus on humanitarian assistance and support to the peace process. In particular, the absence of an effective national government counterpart for development actors means that most collaboration and capacity building work with the state is taking place only with local and regional authorities, while genuine collaboration with the national authorities remains superficial at best. On the other hand, it has also been suggested that this legitimate lack of government cooperation may be serving as a pretext for the absence of a strong coordination architecture for development work in South Sudan, which in turn contributes to the lack of concrete efforts to optimise strategic coordination across the humanitarian, development and peace sectors.³⁸

Although the idea of the triple nexus has become an important buzzword for the aid landscape in the country, some stakeholders cautioned that it has become more of a ‘box to tick’ in project documents than a robust agenda that is being effectively integrated into planning and programming. As a result, the Partnership for Recovery and Resilience (PfRR) may be the only example of a strong nexus initiative in South Sudan. It is a multi-donor initiative, of which the EU is a member, that works with regional governors to implement a coordinated area-based programming approach. It brings together actors from across the humanitarian, development and peace sectors through joint analysis and planning and a common results framework.

EUTF nexus programming in South Sudan includes the SORUDEV programme, which seeks to leverage the peace-development nexus to strengthen resilience to shocks and conflict in rural areas, with core result areas around peace and gender, livelihood diversification, resilience and natural resource management.

SUDAN

Since 2017, the UN (in collaboration with other key actors such as OECD) has undertaken significant efforts to advance the New Way of Working (NWoW) in Sudan, as the shifting context at the time seemed ripe for repositioning Sudan towards a combined humanitarian and development approach.³⁹ This work included a joint NWoW mission to the country, the identification of sustainable development goals (SDGs) for inclusion in the government’s national development plan as well as the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), and the inclusion of collective outcomes for both humanitarian and development actors in the 2018 and 2019 Humanitarian Response Plans, the identification of sustainable development goal (SDG)-based indicators for each collective outcome, and a collective mapping exercise of humanitarian, development and peace projects and actors in the country. However, although these efforts were extremely promising, much of this progress has stalled with the impact of the fall of President Omar al-Bashir and the need to recommence efforts with the transitional government.⁴⁰ These efforts are likely to be further complicated by the impact of the military coup that took place in October and November 2021.

Sudan is also one of the six EU nexus pilot countries. The action plan that was developed following the first humanitarian-development nexus workshop in 2017 elected to focus on undernutrition and forced displacement, and was operationalised through six EUTF projects. The selection of Sudan as one of the pilot countries was rather surprising at the time because under al-Bashir’s leadership, Sudan was not an EU priority.⁴¹ However, the revolution and political transition has opened significant possibilities for mainstreaming the full spectrum of the nexus in collaboration with the transitional government counterpart⁴², making it an exciting context for operationalising the nexus, despite the inevitable stalling of earlier progress described above.

UGANDA

The nexus policy agenda in Uganda is perhaps most clearly represented by the rollout of the CRRF

³⁸ Interview with key informant from EU.

³⁹ UN and OECD, ‘From funding to financing: Financing Strategy Mission Report – Sudan’, May 2017.

⁴⁰ Interview with independent triple nexus expert.

⁴¹ Interview with key informant from EU.

⁴² Interview with key informant from EU.

and by the EU nexus action plan for the country. Uganda serves as an exemplary model for the CRRF approach not only because of its comparatively comprehensive refugee policy, but also because the CRRF enjoys strong national buy-in from the Ugandan government as well as high levels of community acceptance. Indeed, nowhere is the 'whole of government' approach to refugee integration more advanced than in Uganda, where the government has used the CRRF as a galvanising framework to bring a diverse range of actors under a common platform, making it one of the key multi-stakeholder coordination mechanisms in the country.⁴³ Furthermore, according to one expert, the nexus is gaining prominence in the internal discourse within the CRRF secretariat in Uganda, potentially creating room for further complementarities between the CRRF and nexus approaches.⁴⁴

Like Sudan, Uganda is also an EU nexus pilot country, and the main aim of the EU's nexus action plan for the country is to contribute to the rollout of the CRRF. Although it is sometimes referred to as a plan to operationalise the 'EU Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus', the action plan is mainly humanitarian-development-focused, while 'integrating conflict sensitivity [to] create a bridge with the peace component of the nexus'.⁴⁵ The original action plan from 2018 was later considered to have been extremely ambitious, and concrete efforts to operationalise it were only undertaken in 2020 as there was a realisation that DG INTPA and ECHO would need to prioritise and focus on specific sectoral interventions where the nexus could be implemented. Operational progress is thus most apparent in the EU's DRR programming, which was chosen as the first priority sector for implementing a nexus approach. For example, as ECHO has particularly strong DRR expertise in Uganda, it was actively involved in the preparation and planning of the DRR aspects of the EUTF-funded RISE programme.

2.3. North of Africa

Overall, the international agenda in the North of Africa region tends to be more focused on migration management and development than humanitarian assistance and peacebuilding. Across the region, Libya is the only country with serious multisectoral needs and where concrete attempts to implement the triple nexus are in place.

LIBYA

In 2018 the UN, in coordination with other key stakeholders, began to conceptualise a triple nexus strategy focused on the southern region of Libya. This work included joint data collection and analysis, the inclusion of nexus themes in the 2019/2020 Humanitarian Response Plan as well as in the Strategic Framework (UNSF) for the country, the organisation of a Humanitarian Senior Officials Meeting on how to operationalise the triple nexus, the creation of a dedicated working group, and a nexus pilot project launched in the southern municipality of Sabha by WFP, UNFPA and UN WOMEN.

The EU has also strengthened its triple nexus approach in Libya through some of its EUTF-funded community stabilisation programmes, which seek to address drivers of instability and vulnerability by contributing to the restoration of normal social and economic life for Libyan communities and migrants. 'Managing mixed migration flows in Libya' is one such project, and it aims to provide basic protection services to migrants, foster socio-economic development at the municipal level, and strengthen local governance. It also supports social cohesion between migrants and host communities through anti-discriminatory and inclusive approaches to local economic development.⁴⁶

One barrier to the operationalisation of the nexus in Libya is the politicisation of humanitarian action, as the Libyan context is highly polarised and there have been cases of reduced humanitarian access to certain areas due to the perceived association of humanitarian and development actors with political and peacebuilding actors.

⁴³ Interview with key informant from research institution.

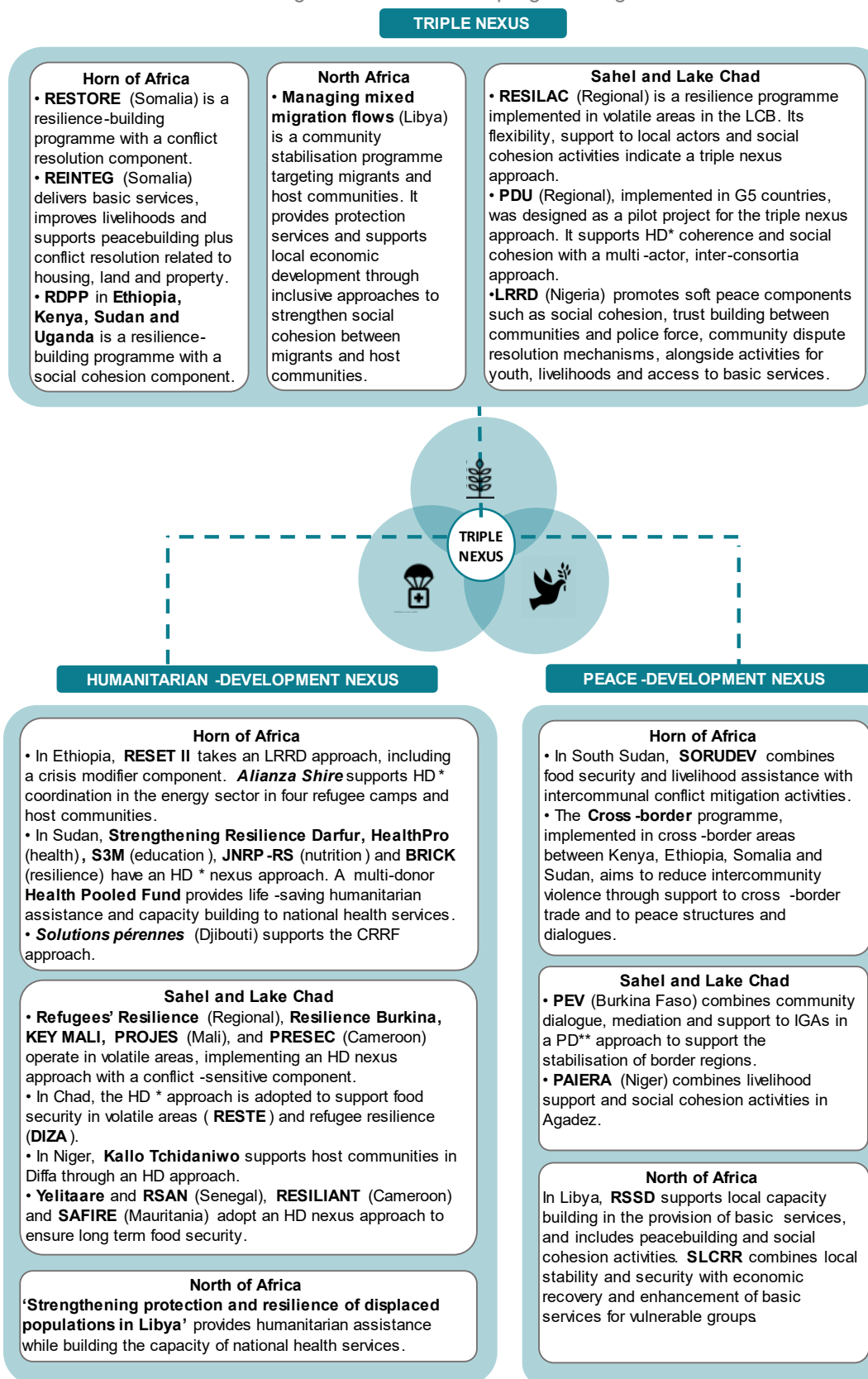
⁴⁴ Interview with key informant from EU.

⁴⁵ Publications Office of the EU, 'How Uganda implements the EU Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus', 2019.

⁴⁶ 'Managing mixed migration flows in Libya through expanding protection space and supporting local socio-economic development' project Description of Action.

3. Triple nexus interventions in the EUTF portfolio

Figure 6: EUTF nexus programming



4. Lessons learned and perspectives on operationalising the triple nexus

This section summarises the key lessons learned and perspectives on operationalising the triple nexus identified by key informants for this study. Although key informants mainly focused on the EU as a donor and on the EUTF as a strategic, financial and programming tool, many of the perspectives highlighted below will also be relevant for other donors and stakeholders.

4.1. The challenge of integrating peace in the triple nexus

Peace is a prerequisite for development programming and for protecting the impact of humanitarian and development programming gains. However, while the humanitarian-development nexus tends to be reasonably well established, it is widely agreed that peace remains a poorly integrated component of the nexus in most contexts.

One factor may be that the peace dimension can have significant operational implications for humanitarian and development actors, and its inclusion, depending on how it is defined, may compromise enthusiasm among certain actors to engage with the nexus approach. Stakeholder definitions of peacebuilding interventions can range from ‘soft’ (conflict-sensitive and do-no-harm approaches, as well as social cohesion interventions) to ‘hard’ peace actions (such as interventions related to security and defence). Some argue that an effective triple nexus approach requires the full integration of ‘hard’ peace, security and defence actors, noting that humanitarian and military actors have always worked together to exchange information and avoid impinging on one another’s work. However, some actors have concerns with regard to the inclusion of these ‘harder’ elements of peace in the nexus, of which most are related to the notion of the politicisation of aid and to the humanitarian principle of neutrality.

One frequently raised concern is that the politicisation of aid resulting from an overly integrated approach could limit humanitarian access to certain areas and beneficiaries, and threaten the safety of humanitarian staff on the ground. For example, in Mali, the UN and the EU support security interventions like MINUSMA, EUCAP Sahel and EUTM Mali, as well as humanitarian and development activities. This leads to confusion between security and humanitarian actors on the ground,⁴⁷ because local populations see the same logo and name associated with all three types of activity. Similarly, if an area in Somalia is newly liberated by AMISOM or the Somali National Army (SNA), ECHO is reluctant to be seen as implementing an immediate service provision response as this could be confusing and perceived as partial by the local population, which complicates ECHO’s ability to participate in stabilisation efforts in the country.⁴⁸ In Borno, Yobe and Adawama States in northeast Nigeria, aid actors have advocated for IDP camp management to be handed over from the military to civilian administrations in order to avoid IDP sites being targeted by Boko Haram.⁴⁹ Similarly, aid actors sometimes advise against travelling with national security escorts in Burkina Faso and other countries in the Sahel and Lake Chad region, as state actors are the main targets of jihadist attacks.⁵⁰ Finally, interviewees in Libya reported that association with UNSMIL has repeatedly limited humanitarian access in some areas.⁵¹

Furthermore, concerns raised by humanitarian actors are also often relevant for ‘softer’ peace interventions. Supporting the state through peace and development activities, such as capacity building of national institutions or civil-military dialogue, can threaten aid actors’ neutrality, especially in the Sahel. States are sometimes perceived as predatory by their own populations,⁵² and attempts to

⁴⁷ Interview with independent triple nexus expert.

⁴⁸ Interview with key informant from EU.

⁴⁹ IOM, ‘Operationalizing the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus’, 2019.

⁵⁰ Interview with key informant from EUTF implementing partner.

⁵¹ Interview with key informant from EUTF implementing partner.

⁵² Interview with key informant from research institution.

implement the triple nexus can be interpreted as support to an actor that has contributed to the fundamental underlying problems affecting the region. In Niger and Mali, some EUTF implementing partners also reportedly struggled to gain the trust of beneficiaries, as the Trust Fund was often perceived as a mechanism to contain migration in exchange for humanitarian and development funds, rather than a tool for the benefit of local populations.⁵³ In Somalia, as FPI and ECHO often use the same implementing partner (such as IOM), there are concerns that the potential lack of any perceived distinction between the EU's stabilisation and humanitarian work may threaten ECHO's humanitarian principles.⁵⁴

4.2. HDP coordination through joint analysis, planning and collective outcomes

Maximising coordination between actors across the humanitarian, development and peace sectors is the core tenet of the triple nexus. At the programming level, interventions designed with an explicit triple nexus approach should naturally facilitate collaboration between humanitarian, development and peace actors. One positive example of this is the EUTF-funded SORUDEV programme, led by FAO, IRC and World Vision in South Sudan, which leverages the peace-development nexus by encouraging and reinforcing complementarities between food security and peacebuilding interventions, as well as facilitating capacity building among implementing partners. Partners learn and benefit from each other's expertise through regular knowledge sharing meetings on relevant thematic areas (such as protection, gender, food security, conflict mitigation and DRR), during which partners are also often able to identify further areas of potential collaboration.

Joint analysis and planning should be the foundation of triple nexus interventions, in order to establish a common understanding for setting shared objectives. Indeed, the increased sharing of analysis between humanitarian, development, and political peace colleagues was identified by key informants as an area where the six EU nexus pilots have shown the most progress.

Robust joint planning and analysis requires a shared understanding of the objectives among all actors implementing the intervention or response in question. This is otherwise referred to as 'collective outcomes', which are also essential for nexus-oriented programme design and financing. The concept of collective outcomes is central to the UN's New Way of Working, and as a result the UN has made significant progress towards developing collective outcomes in various countries. For example, in Sudan a workshop was held in 2018 with approximately 60 humanitarian and development actors, following which four collective outcomes were identified for achievement by 2023. By contrast, the EU has been more programmatically focused in its nexus approach, leading to concrete nexus-oriented interventions but possibly less strategic cohesion, as reflected by a comparative absence of work on collective outcomes for its programming. This is one area in which the EU's triple nexus approach and the UN's New Way of Working are said to diverge most significantly.

Joint analysis and collective outcomes for the design of the PDU

The EUTF-funded *Programme d'urgence pour la stabilisation des espaces frontaliers du G5 Sahel* (PDU) is an example of how joint planning allows for better cooperation between humanitarian, development and peace actors. It was elaborated in coordination with the G5 Permanent Secretariat within the framework of the Sahel Alliance, with inputs from its members.⁵⁵ It aims to improve access to basic services, strengthen the livelihoods of agricultural and pastoralist populations, and support local communities with conflict prevention in the most fragile regions of the G5 countries.

It was launched in 2019 and designed as a pilot project for the implementation of the triple nexus. Consortia of humanitarian, development and peace actors worked together for twelve months on the

⁵³ Interview with key informant from EUTF implementing partner.

⁵⁴ Interview with key informant from EU.

⁵⁵ EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa website. Retrieved [here](#).

concept note to design activities around key concepts such as resilience, development, social cohesion and security. They also established a common logical framework and jointly agreed on the beneficiary targets and their age groups.⁵⁶

4.3. Financing the nexus

4.3.1. Donor coordination

Donors are well-placed to provide high-level, overarching guidance to ensure a cohesive nexus strategy at the country, regional or global level. Strategic donor coordination is therefore key to maximising collaboration and efficiencies across the humanitarian, development and peace sectors. Though it is widely agreed that there is a general lack of sufficient coordination between donors at the global level, donor coordination at the country level tends to vary significantly. For example, in Uganda, the CRRF has provided a robust framework for donor coordination on refugee response, and serves as an example of where the EU has ‘come together’ better with other donors, as most EU and EUTF programming aims to directly support the CRRF.

At the EU level, the first point of action in any country is to optimise coordination between the DG INTPA, ECHO and FPI workstreams. In several Horn of Africa countries included in this study, stakeholders reported an improvement in EU coordination in the last year or two. For example, in Uganda, the EU nexus pilot launch appears to have directly encouraged and facilitated increased collaboration between DG INTPA and ECHO, particularly in the field of DRR, as described in Section 3.2 above.

In South Sudan, significant progress can be observed with regard to coordination between DG INTPA, ECHO and FPI, albeit with considerable room for improvement. These advances may be partially attributable to a concrete push by the respective Directorate-Generals towards a nexus approach, but is thought to be more significantly driven by a bottom-up push to improve cooperation.⁵⁷ Progress can be most clearly observed in the health and education sectors, as well as with regard to policy work, such as that related to political stability in Abyei. In these areas, DG INTPA, ECHO and FPI coordinate closely to avoid overlap and redundancy. However, one of the main barriers to coordination in South Sudan, where all EU development funding is channelled through the EUTF, is the misalignment of planning and funding cycles. ECHO responses are planned on an annual basis, whereas EUTF decisions are made throughout the year, with little predictability as to the amount of funding that will be allocated to any given country.

In the Sahel and Lake Chad region, collaboration between DG INTPA and ECHO can be challenging due to the security context and the increased risk of politicisation of aid (perceived or otherwise). In such contexts, ECHO representatives may not wish for ECHO to be perceived as closely associated with other EU activities if these include peacebuilding or similar initiatives. For example, ECHO reportedly asked one EUTF implementing partner that had also received funds from ECHO to explain why they had accepted EUTF funds in a region where the EU is not perceived as a neutral actor.⁵⁸

It may be worth noting that many stakeholders cited the importance of individual personalities and personal relationships in shaping the nature and extent of cooperation between DG INTPA and ECHO in any given country, which may be indicative of insufficient institutionalisation of cooperation structures and mechanisms.

Finally, with regard to the EUTF in particular, pressure on the EUTF to disburse quickly, particularly in the period immediately following its launch, appears to have left limited space for considered coordination with ECHO, Member States or other donors.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Interview with key informant from EUTF implementing partner.

⁵⁷ Interview with key informant from EU.

⁵⁸ Interview with key informant from EUTF implementing partner.

⁵⁹ Interviews with key informant from EU and independent triple nexus expert.

Donor coordination in northeast Nigeria

National and international actors intervening in northeast Nigeria demonstrate a strong commitment to the implementation of the triple nexus approach.

A coordination and advocacy group (comprised of key donors and ambassadors from the EU, US and UK, among others) has been formed at the ambassadorial level to promote respect of International Humanitarian Law and access for humanitarian actors, as well as to strengthen an integrated approach for the next phase of programming.⁶⁰

The EU also supports a strong nexus approach in northeast Nigeria. EUTF programming in the area has adopted a multisectoral approach, with a strong resilience component combined with social cohesion activities. The LRRD programme promotes soft peace components such as social cohesion, trust building between communities and police forces and community dispute resolution mechanisms, alongside activities reinforcing access to livelihoods and basic services. In parallel, ECHO launched the EU Borno Support package in 2017, funding 11 programmes that mainly focus on education, resilience and livelihood opportunities.

The EU Delegation in Abuja pooled its humanitarian, development and peacebuilding specialists into a geographically focused working group to design the funding package for Borno State. The delegation also promoted area-based approaches through a combination of political negotiation with states and local authorities and a capacity, willingness and ability assessment of local partners.⁶¹

During the same period, EDF and IcSP also funded peace projects. ECHO, EUTF and EDF representatives regularly discussed and coordinated on areas of interventions through the 'northeast' cluster, though their coordination on the ground was sometimes limited due to the security context.⁶²

The UN Strategic Framework for northeast Nigeria also aims to support a triple nexus approach to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. It therefore focuses not only on humanitarian assistance (such as cash transfers and food distributions) but also on development activities. It supports national health systems to implement their own COVID-19 response, provides immediate livelihood support to cover financial losses during the pandemic, and supports early recovery peace activities to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on the security situation.⁶³

4.3.2. Nexus-supportive financing processes

One of the core OECD DAC recommendations for the triple nexus is to shift away from siloed annual funding cycles and instead promote predictable, flexible, multi-year financing that brings humanitarian, development and peace stakeholders together. Many donors (as well as multilateral development banks such as the World Bank) have already made steps towards this type of funding through pooled funds and other new funding instruments that aim to provide implementing partners with more flexibility and adaptability than was previously possible, though significant work remains to be done to reflect a genuine shift in approach.

This is perhaps the area above all others where the EUTF positively stands out, as it is a flexible funding mechanism capable of both responding to emergency situations and financing longer-term development action (including within the same project). ECHO is highly flexible, but has a limited budget and operates on an annual funding cycle, while conversely there is no built-in flexibility in traditional DG INTPA funding to facilitate a transition to humanitarian action when needed. As such, the EUTF has served as a valuable 'bridge' between EU humanitarian and development funding.

⁶⁰ Interview with key informant from EU.

⁶¹ IOM, 'Operationalizing the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus', 2019.

⁶² Interview with key informant from EU.

⁶³ Joint Support Framework for Multi-Sectoral response in Northeast Nigeria, June 2020.

For example, in the Sahel and Lake Chad region, one implementing partner reported that the EUTF's flexibility allowed them to implement a nexus approach to protection, an area traditionally funded by ECHO according to strict humanitarian criteria. With the EUTF, they were able to link their humanitarian protection activities (such as the provision of health, food and shelter) to a longer term, development-oriented approach with capacity building and livelihood support activities.⁶⁴

Similarly, the EUTF was described by one key informant as a 'game changer' in Somalia, as it offered an opportunity to provide long-term support for communities in a way that had never been done before, and also allowed for close collaboration with the government to develop legal frameworks and strengthen coordination and management around migration. The EUTF-funded REINTEG programme, which combines basic service provision and livelihood interventions with a small conflict resolution component, was cited as being particularly impactful as its success has led other donors to follow suit with programmes that are based on REINTEG principles and that embrace the triple nexus even further by factoring in a stronger emphasis on peacebuilding.⁶⁵

On the other hand, while the flexibility and responsiveness offered by innovative funding mechanisms such as the EUTF are generally welcomed by stakeholders, there are some concerns that this flexibility may also be manipulated for political or otherwise self-interested ends if there is insufficient accountability and oversight to safeguard against this. Also, as mentioned above, the EUTF's flexible, project-based approach creates a lack of predictability at the country level, which in turn inhibits higher-level coordination and joint planning with ECHO.

4.4. Importance of integrating bottom-up approaches and empowering local and national actors

Some stakeholders consider the triple nexus to be a top-down concept that has been largely imposed by donors without effective communication or adequate resources, when it should instead actively encourage and facilitate bottom-up planning and the integration of lessons learned from implementing partners in the field. Several interviewees complained that NGOs were not involved in critical strategy discussions for the EU nexus pilots, and one EUTF implementing partner in the Horn of Africa region argued that the calls for proposals from the EUTF did not allow for bottom-up planning and building on lessons learned from previous EUTF programming. For example, they had considered that given the underachievement of the programme with regard to peacebuilding, the follow-up programming should have focused more on peace. However, the second call for proposals did not allow for effective interlinkages from a bottom-up perspective to be made.⁶⁶

On the other hand, one implementing partner in Uganda asserted that the EUTF's flexibility and longer-term perspective has allowed them to develop and integrate lessons learned as well as to link their programming strategy to the country's national development plan. In northern Uganda, where few actors are able to look beyond six to twelve months due to the almost exclusively humanitarian focus in refugee-hosting areas, the ability to take a longer-term, more development-oriented perspective has proven to be extremely positive in terms of facilitating a more nexus-oriented approach than is generally possible in the region, as reflected in an external evaluation of the programme.⁶⁷ Measures could be implemented to ensure that these types of linkages and opportunities to integrate best practices and lessons learned are replicable across all programming.

A successful triple nexus approach also requires strong engagement with national and local capacities, both to prevent and respond to crises as well as to maximise the long-term impact of a response. However, flexibility and patience are required on the part of donors to ensure that implementing partners have the time and resources needed to build local and national capacities and to foster project

⁶⁴ Interview with key informant from EUTF implementing partner.

⁶⁵ Interview with key informant from EU.

⁶⁶ Interview with key informant from EUTF implementing partner.

⁶⁷ Interview with key informant from research institution.

ownership by local actors and communities. One implementing partner in South Sudan with a four-year contract from the EUTF noted that such long-term funding is unusual in a country in which the international community tends to be almost exclusively focused on humanitarian intervention, and that this has provided ample time for capacity building and engagement with both the community and the local authorities.

RESILAC: Empowering local and national actors

RESILAC is a regional programme (2018-2021) implemented in Niger, Nigeria, Cameroon and Chad. Its objective is to support economic recovery, stronger social cohesion and resilience to climate change in the territories of the Lake Chad Basin. It adopts the CARE approach to the triple nexus, which stresses the importance of being grounded in local realities through local ownership and capacity building, community participation, and adaptive management.

The CARE approach was developed on the basis of years of CARE programming experience, and was documented by thought leaders and practitioners from CARE's Regional Applied Economic Empowerment Hub for the MENA region. The following principles were identified by CARE as enablers of successful nexus programming.

- Draw on **local** actors and structures (such as civil society and the private sector). Target groups should have **ownership** and decision-making roles during project design, and should be empowered to lead their own recovery and resilience process. **Resilience** should include the ability of communities to adapt, anticipate, and transform their situation.
- Rapid and root-cause analysis using **real-time evidence** can strengthen project decisions and avoid unintended consequences when rapid action is needed or when social and political tensions are present. Understanding the local context, power dynamics and contextual causes of injustice also allows for **politically smart** programming.
- **Adaptive and agile management** are key for flexible nexus programming. Experimenting and **piloting** is highly encouraged, and strong MEAL systems will boost programme quality.⁶⁸

RESILAC beneficiaries praised the involvement and active participation of local partners and authorities, traditional and/or religious leaders and beneficiaries in the different phases of the programme. The constant presence of local teams on the ground facilitates this approach, which in turn reinforces the social fabric in the areas of implementation as members of different ethnic groups and religions and individuals across generations and genders are brought together through RESILAC activities.⁶⁹

Activities are also adapted to the local context. In Chad, for example, the practical learning in the *Champs Écoles Paysans* (CEPs) has supported livelihood recovery, increased the economic value of local crops and products, and facilitated the transmission of knowledge between community members.

RESILAC teams also try to respond to beneficiaries' feedback and revise activities accordingly. For example, in Chad, some people were confused about the low number of direct beneficiaries for high intensity labour (HIL) activities and how they were selected, and so awareness-raising and communication sessions were organised with the communities in order to discuss and clarify the selection process and criteria.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Anan Kittaneh and Antoinette Stolk, 'Doing Nexus Differently', September 2018. Retrieved [here](#).

⁶⁹ Interview with key informant from EUTF implementing partner.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

4.5. Importance of gender considerations for the triple nexus

Women and girls are among the most vulnerable and marginalised in conflict-affected contexts, not least because of the intersection between conflict and gender-based violence. Furthermore, gender inequalities, norms and discrimination are often intensified and reinforced during conflicts and other emergencies. Responding to these complexities in crisis settings requires cross-cutting efforts that span the triple nexus – indeed, gender equality is one area where humanitarian, development and peacebuilding priorities significantly overlap. However, interventions targeting gender equality, women and girls’ empowerment and gender-based violence are largely underfunded,⁷¹ and investment in the role of women in peacebuilding processes and crisis response remains insufficient. Achieving robust outcomes in this area requires that gender justice be treated not as an ‘extra’ to be ‘integrated’ but as a fundamental priority supported through dedicated strategic, coordination and financing mechanisms.

By promoting structural change, facilitating interlinkages, and engaging a wide range of stakeholders, an effective operationalisation of the triple nexus creates opportunities for more integrated and transformative approaches to gender considerations. Furthermore, the triple nexus’ emphasis on local actors and leadership (as outlined above) can be used to facilitate frameworks and structural incentives for empowering female participation and leadership at the local level, such as through partnerships with local women-led organisations.⁷² There is also plenty of scope to act on potential synergies between the triple nexus and the UN’s Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, as both seek to bring together actors from across the humanitarian, development and peace sectors.

More concretely, the OECD DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace nexus includes recommendations for incorporating gender considerations into nexus efforts, such as promoting gender expertise, ensuring focus on women’s leadership, and conducting joint gender-sensitive analyses. However, although DAC members are actively incorporating gender equality into their nexus strategies, clear and detailed guidance on how gender-sensitive analyses should be conducted appears to be lacking in most donor policies and strategies, as are efforts to integrate gender equality considerations into conflict and security strategies.⁷³

At the programmatic level, the EUTF-funded Women Empowerment programme in South Sudan exemplifies a nexus approach to gender programming, by implementing mutually reinforcing activities around female leadership, women’s rights, GBV prevention and livelihood support.

4.6. Climate change and the triple nexus

Climate change multiplies the threats to international stability and security, which especially affect people in already fragile and vulnerable situations. Climate change is increasingly recognised as contributing to underlying conditions that are conducive to violent conflict. As the triple nexus approach promotes joint analysis, local empowerment and ownership, and increased cooperation between humanitarian, development and peace actors, it is particularly relevant in areas that are significantly affected by climate change and climate-related shocks (as is the case for many countries receiving EUTF funding) – not least because climate-related shocks and conflict often intersect and exacerbate one another.

Like gender equality, climate change represents a shared area of commitment for the humanitarian, development and peace sectors, and therefore offers an opportunity to bring actors from across the nexus together towards a common agenda. A successful triple nexus approach also implies strong engagement with local and national actors, who can be extremely useful in supporting the implementation of effective ‘adaptation’ strategies to climate change. Communities often possess

⁷¹ Oxfam, ‘The Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus’, June 2019.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ OECD, ‘Gender equality across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus’, July 2021. Retrieved [here](#).

unique localised knowledge of their environment and can ensure that tailored and cost-effective climate adaptation strategies are adopted.⁷⁴

Joint analysis and planning are also the foundations of triple nexus interventions, in order to establish a common understanding for setting shared objectives. Including climate change considerations in shared risk analyses will allow for adapted and sustainable programming, whereas overlooking environment considerations in post-disaster contexts (such as the risk of groundwater contamination through the construction of emergency latrines or inadequate location of temporary shelters) can undermine the sustainability of programmes as well as the long-term resilience of communities.⁷⁵ The EU already has tools in place for guiding certain types of analysis, including [this](#) model Terms of Reference for conducting a Climate Risk Assessment (CRA).⁷⁶

At the strategic level, mainstreaming climate change considerations into the triple nexus agenda could include efforts to integrate conflict sensitivity into climate policy and action, as well as to ensure that a climate lens is appropriately deployed in conflict and security strategies. Human development and climate objectives should also be taken into account when building resilience in fragile, conflict-affected countries.

Programmatic considerations might include, for example, ensuring that those most vulnerable to climate change and natural disasters (such as pastoralists, displaced-affected communities, migrants, women and children) are actively involved in initiatives to promote local leadership and decision-making, or the incorporation of tools and systems for monitoring resource management and climate impacts at the outset of any nexus-oriented programme.⁷⁷ Adaptation strategies, programmes and projects should also be designed in a conflict-sensitive way to avoid aggravating existing tensions; this is important for reducing the risks of climate-related displacement and for better understanding and managing the interconnections between climate change, security and mobility.

One example of efforts to integrate climate change considerations into nexus strategy and programming is the EUTF-funded Decentralising Disaster Risk Management programme in Ethiopia. It aims to complement the objectives of the EUTF's flagship resilience-building programme in the country (RESET II) with high-level DRR policy support to national and local authorities, and includes an economic development component that employs conflict-sensitive measures to ensure equal access to opportunities for both host and displaced communities, and thereby avoid exacerbating ethnic tensions.

5. Areas of opportunity for future strategy and programming

This section summarises the areas of opportunity for operationalising the nexus in future strategy and programming identified by key informants for this study. Although these recommendations were primarily designed with the EU in mind, many will also be relevant for other donors and stakeholders.

- **Address the 'P' in HDP**

- Peace should be systematically integrated from the beginning of any nexus discussion or joint planning process in conflict-affected contexts. For example, the *Programme d'urgence pour la stabilisation des espaces frontaliers du G5 Sahel* is implemented in all G5 countries, and was designed as a pilot project for the implementation of the triple nexus. During a long twelve-month inception phase, IPs established a common logical framework, jointly agreed on beneficiary targets and included social cohesion actors from the beginning. The EU organised a workshop in Brussels with five pre-selected consortia (one for each country) to discuss targeting, age groups, and key concepts such as resilience and social cohesion, which ensured a common understanding of the 'peace' component of the programme's nexus

⁷⁴ Regional Climate Change Programme, 'Climate change adaptation: an integrated approach', 2014. Retrieved [here](#).

⁷⁵ Humanitarian Law and Policy, 'Climate, conflict and crises: first and foremost, do no harm', February 2020. Retrieved [here](#).

⁷⁶ <https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/public-environment-climate/documents/model-terms-reference-climate-risk-assessment>.

⁷⁷ FAO, CGIAR, CARE, 'Deploying a humanitarian-development-peace approach: exploring, strengthening and reviving dryland ecosystems', 2021. Retrieved [here](#).

approach among all stakeholders. The Burkina Faso consortium was present, and was composed of IPs who had previously worked on *Résilience* and *Prévention contre l'extrémisme violent* programmes, and thus had prior experience with the EUTF, humanitarian-development coordination, and implementing social cohesion activities.

- Humanitarian and development actors should be thoroughly familiarised with the different approaches to peace (from 'hard' security interventions to softer peacebuilding actions such as social cohesion), and similarly, there should be a strong understanding among peace actors of the impact of their activities on the humanitarian and development sectors. Donors could support this by encouraging and facilitating discussions and brainstorming, particularly if they contract humanitarian, development and peacebuilding projects in the same area.
- There is, however, no universally applicable triple nexus approach, and the inclusion of the peace component must be carefully adapted to each context. In some contexts it is absolutely paramount for clear distinctions to be made between humanitarian, development and peace actors in order to safeguard humanitarian access, maintain the effective provision of services and protect the personal safety of humanitarian staff. Programmes should also ensure the active participation of local stakeholders in the analysis and implementation of peace activities, particularly when funded or implemented by actors that also intervene in the security sector, in order to ensure credibility and legitimacy and to mitigate the politicisation of aid. Though these concerns are mostly related to what some prefer to call the 'humanitarian-development-security' nexus, which includes 'hard' peace actors and interventions, they are also relevant for 'softer' peace activities such as social cohesion and community-level reconciliation.
- **Support coordination across the nexus through joint analysis and planning and collective outcomes**
 - Several EUTF programmes strengthened cooperation among the humanitarian, development and peace sectors through a consortium approach, which brings together actors from across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus through the development of a joint response to the call for proposals, joint design and planning of the project, and a common logical framework. It is worth noting that this approach, though effective, requires the allocation of additional budget and time for coordination that must be realistically planned for.
- **Ensure that financing processes facilitate coordination instead of hindering it**
 - Where possible, funding cycles should be aligned to facilitate joint planning and coordination across the humanitarian and development sectors. When this is not possible, flexibility should be built into funding processes to allow for coordination.
 - Flexibility, adaptability and risk tolerance are key to effective nexus-supportive financing. This is one area where the EUTF stands out, by being flexible enough to finance projects that span the nexus, including in areas that have traditionally had a strong humanitarian or development focus, and by incorporating adaptive components into programming such as crisis response modifiers.
 - Promote predictable funding to facilitate coordination and collaboration.
- **Improve coordination between ECHO, DG INTPA and FPI**
 - Despite reports of recent advances since the launch of the EU nexus strategy, there remains room for improvement with regard to collaboration between ECHO, DG INTPA and, when relevant, FPI, as the level of cooperation in each country depends largely on motivated individuals and the strength of personal relationships. Efforts to institutionalise mechanisms for encouraging and facilitating collaboration, including joint assessments, trainings and

missions, could be considered. Another practical suggestion is simply to consider office space and location, as multiple stakeholders noted that it is significantly easier to promote collaboration between staff who work together physically.

- **Emphasise local and national capacity building**

- Flexibility and financing for longer-term programming may be required from donors to ensure that capacity building interventions are provided with the time and resources required to produce results. For example, the EUTF-funded programme RESILAC, which operates in the Lake Chad Basin countries, has adopted the CARE approach to the triple nexus (see the focus box in Section 5.4), which stresses the need for an intervention grounded in local realities and that integrates local responses. RESILAC conducts needs assessments with the most relevant local CSOs and CBOs across the humanitarian, development and peace sectors, and also reinforces their project management skills.⁷⁸

- **Increase research efforts on the implementation of the triple nexus in EU ‘pilot’ countries**

- Studies have been conducted on the triple nexus and its implementation across Africa, but more specific research on the EU nexus pilots appears to be lacking. Each of these countries – Chad, Iraq, Myanmar, Nigeria, Sudan and Uganda – were chosen because they face on-going, acute and protracted crises. Analyses of in-country EU operations, as well as joint assessments on risks, vulnerabilities, the types of partnerships established between actors across the nexus, and challenges faced with regard to financing the triple nexus, could support the development of valuable and operationalisable lessons learned, as well as conclusions on how best to implement the nexus going forward.⁷⁹

- **Ensure the prioritisation of gender and climate change considerations when implementing the triple nexus approach**

- As it promotes joint analysis and local empowerment, and also engages a wide range of stakeholders, an effective operationalisation of the triple nexus creates opportunities for more integrated approaches to climate change and gender considerations. Involving local actors can help to support women’s empowerment and leadership at the community level, as well as tailored and cost-effective strategies for climate adaptation.

- However, achieving such outcomes requires that climate change and gender be fully integrated in the joint analysis and planning phase of triple nexus strategies and programming, and treated as fundamental priorities supported by dedicated financing mechanisms. Linking such efforts to existing initiatives, such as the WPS agenda, can help to ensure that gender and climate change considerations are effectively centred within triple nexus initiatives.

⁷⁸ Interview with key informant from EUTF implementing partner.

⁷⁹ Red Cross EU Office and ICRC, The European Union Humanitarian-Development Nexus, December 2018.