

# 3

## The Way Forward

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This chapter outlines nine areas where adherents to the DAC Recommendation could focus strategic attention in the future based on the review of progress. These include adopting best-fit co-ordination for every context; implementing inclusive financing strategies; promoting nexus literacy and widening the cadre of nexus-specific profiles; empowering leadership for cost-effective co-ordination; enabling and incentivising behaviour through financing; integrating political engagement into the collective approach; improving prioritisation against the collective outcomes; investing in national and local capacities and systems; using the humanitarian-development-peace nexus as an integrator for other policy priorities; and enlarging the roundtable of stakeholders.

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### 3.1. Adopting best-fit co-ordination in every context

Co-ordination cannot mean the same thing everywhere. While co-ordination is a central and familiar term, there is no shared definition that humanitarian, development and peace (HDP) stakeholders can refer to. Diverging interpretations of co-ordination explain in large part the different expectations and anxieties about the nexus. The appropriate model of co-ordination will need to be collectively determined in a responsive and context-sensitive manner, taking into account the need to preserve humanitarian space in relevant settings (OECD, forthcoming<sup>[11]</sup>).

Despite investments in various new tools for joint analysis, a common framework is still missing. The general enthusiasm for developing a new generation of collective diagnostic tools has not resolved the lack of clarity about the common choice of tools across contexts or the standardisation of the collective decision-making process. To address this persistent bottleneck, it is necessary to streamline and rationalise the use of various joint diagnostic tools, as the DAC-UN Dialogue has started to through the activities of its “Co-ordination in Countries” work stream. In addition, more discipline in capitalising on what already exists would limit the redundancy of tools and the duplication of analysis exercises.

Collective outcomes can provide useful intermediate targets and benchmarks for a given country or context if more consistently interpreted. Developing collective outcomes that are truly collective, with joined-up approaches to planning and programming agreed by all key stakeholders in a given context would meaningfully advance coherence and complementarity. (OECD, forthcoming<sup>[11]</sup>).

### 3.2. Implementing inclusive financing strategies

Even when organisations rigorously establish priorities internally, clearly prioritised strategies have been difficult to achieve collectively in the face of demand for funding that outstrips supply across all pillars of the nexus. Without central, co-ordinated decision-making (OECD, forthcoming<sup>[2]</sup>; Hövelmann, 2020<sup>[3]</sup>; Fanning and Fullwood-Thomas, 2019<sup>[4]</sup>), significant gaps between funding asks and response have become endemic. At the same time, existing financing is not necessarily aligned to collective outcomes and donors express the desire to participate in the dialogue and priority setting process as partners, not merely funders.

Financing across the nexus needs to move away from a traditional fundraising model and towards strategic, coherent partnerships between financing providers and implementers across the three pillars of the HDP nexus. This strategic process should include bilateral and multilateral agencies, as well as international financial institutions (IFIs). While nearly 90% of the DAC’s humanitarian aid is channelled through multilateral agencies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), over 70% of official development assistance for development and peace is channelled through mechanisms other than multilateral agencies and NGOs such as governments and IFIs. (OECD, 2022<sup>[5]</sup>) Depending on the context, consideration should also be given to resources such as remittances and foreign direct investment flows and to transitioning to government financing over time.

To be most effective, financing strategies should help bring together decisions on joint priorities, sourcing of funds and strategic programming. This creates coherence and reduces friction and wasted personnel resources by ensuring programming is fundable. This allows donors to invest more predictably through a pipeline of well-designed, transformative programmes presenting reasonable chances for success. Yet with few exceptions — for example, the area-based approaches in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) — collective outcome processes have either not included consideration of financing questions or have left such questions to a second stage, divorced from the determination of programming priorities.

There are existing methodologies that can be tapped into, among them the OECD financing for stability methodology as well as public financial management approaches, integrated national financing

frameworks and national strategy processes. The OECD is taking steps to further develop and pilot financing strategies using fragility analysis and financing data to inform key financing and strategy processes. The United Nations (UN) Resident Coordinator (RC) system, UN entities, Bilaterals and IFIs all have a role to play in building broad coalitions around collective outcomes and financing strategies.

### **3.3. Promoting nexus literacy and widening the cadre of nexus-specific profiles**

Enhancing both mutual understanding and information sharing among HDP actors remains a critical challenge to better connecting short-term interventions to peace and development objectives. Improving what can be termed “nexus literacy” across these actors is fundamental to address this challenge.

In addition, in the immediate term, building co-ordination and fostering collaboration will also demand dedicated staff time and focus. At country level, clearly fostering a nexus approach requires more than a side job of a few individuals. Dedicated capacity remains important, at least in the initial phases.

Investing in staff with a specific nexus-focused profile has proven important for catalysing and supporting collective efforts, both within donors and institutions at global level and in co-ordination platforms at country level. The growing number of deployed nexus advisors, as described in Box 3.1, is notable in this regard. Nevertheless, there remains a need to better ensure a match between the ever-increasing need for capacities and the limited pool of deployable candidates.

The newly established Nexus Academy<sup>1</sup>, a unique collaboration between bilateral and UN adherents to the DAC Recommendation, has the potential to accelerate the availability of trained capacities. Similarly, other initiatives related to institutional capacity building for the nexus approach are also at the starting block or have been launched to address nexus training needs of various categories of personnel.

### Box 3.1. The roles and experience of triple nexus advisors: a review of terms of reference

Different organisations deploy nexus advisors or nexus co-ordinators, as they are sometimes called, in a variety of contexts. Nexus advisors can have an external and/or internal focus, as shown by a review of a sampling of the terms of reference and the experience required for these positions.

**Inter-agency role.** Triple nexus advisors have been recruited by or seconded in support of UN Resident Coordinators / Humanitarian Coordinators (RC/HCs) to facilitate the development of collective outcomes and a nexus co-ordination architecture in, among other contexts, Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, South Sudan and Sudan. The descriptions of these positions highlight roles such as convening, facilitating and establishing fit-for-purpose co-ordination mechanisms for the nexus approach; setting HDP priorities; supporting joined-up planning and programming with partners; ensuring inclusion of government, donor, NGO and local actors in HDP priority setting and planning; (Inter-Agency Standing Committee, 2021<sup>[6]</sup>) and strategic advocacy.

The particular way in which roles and responsibilities are expressed depends of course on the context. In Yemen, for instance, a World Bank-UN advisor to the UN special envoy played such an inter-agency role and provided a triple nexus approach to finance in support of the peace negotiations and for humanitarian challenges. (Bosire, 2018<sup>[7]</sup>) Elsewhere, different arrangements are used for inter-agency nexus co-ordination. The position of co-ordinator of the Libya nexus working group was created by the World Food Programme and seconded by Switzerland in response to operational nexus co-ordination challenges in southern Libya. (Schreiber et al., 2021<sup>[8]</sup>)

**Intra-agency role.** Several DAC and UN members as well as other actors have deployed nexus advisors to facilitate and support activities of a more internal nature. These positions are focused primarily on internal programme oversight and policy, on contributing to the integration of resilience at all stages of programming, and on operational oversight of programmes with a strong triple nexus component. For example, the majority of Sida's nexus advisors fit this profile.

**Extensive experience generally required.** The different terms of reference reviewed featured similar requirements for nexus advisor positions in terms of skills and seniority. These include 7-15 years of experience on average; proven expertise across several pillars of the nexus; and, ideally, experience working in fragile or conflict-affected environments and knowledge of the specific context.

Source: Inter-Agency Standing Committee (2021<sup>[6]</sup>), *Mapping Good Practice in the Implementation of Peace Nexus Approaches: Synthesis Report*, <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/iasc-mapping-good-practice-implementation-humanitarian-development-peace-nexus-approaches-synthesis>; Bosire (2018<sup>[7]</sup>), *The UN-World Bank Partnership in Yemen: Lessons Learned from the Deployment of a UN-World Bank Adviser in the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General*; Schreiber et al. (2021<sup>[8]</sup>), *Co-ordination, Planning and Financing for Development in Libya: Findings and Recommendations of the Joint OECD-UN Mission* (unpublished).

## 3.4. Empowering leadership for cost-effective co-ordination

Ensuring appropriate resourcing to empower leadership for cost-effective co-ordination remains a challenge. DAC adherents can do more to jointly support the existing co-ordination architecture and identify the best-fit leadership in every context.

The DAC Recommendation recognises the primary responsibility of the state for shaping the path of a country or context towards peace, popular well-being and sustainable development as well as the role that affected societies and local communities play in achieving collective outcomes. The Recommendation further supports a central role for national governments in terms of co-ordination and leadership of the nexus and, over time, financing responsibilities. In practice, the government role in nexus approaches

varies, given that states also are not institutionally static and comprise multiple parts and complex relationships. A good HDP nexus implementation starts with tailored approaches that take into account national, subnational and institutional realities and bolster the active engagement of legitimate national stakeholders across society.

Expectations regarding the co-ordination role of the UN RC/HC should be made clear and backed up with adequate staffing and resources. The RC/HC function, supported by RCOs and OCHA, comes out of the Nexus Interim Report Survey and other recent studies (Inter-Agency Standing Committee, 2021<sup>[6]</sup>) as an important element of the HDP nexus co-ordination architecture. The DAC Recommendation explicitly calls on adherents to financially and politically support and empower appropriate UN leadership to enable this leadership to provide cost-effective co-ordination across the humanitarian, development and peace architecture. There is an identified need to ensure that suitable, strong leaders are appointed to RC/HC positions in fragile contexts and that expectations of these roles are commensurate with political capital and resources available to them (MOPAN, 2021<sup>[9]</sup>; UN, 2021<sup>[10]</sup>; Ryan, 2021<sup>[11]</sup>).

The usefulness of an empowered leadership model referred to in the DAC Recommendation can also apply to other actors who have convening power in a given context, such as diplomats, national co-ordinators and political leaders.

### 3.5. Enabling and incentivising behaviour through financing

Significant progress has been made to develop financing instruments, approaches and projects such as pooled funds, resilience funds, flexible mid-year funding allocations and long-term framework agreements for trusted implementing partners. However, financing also plays a strategic role, intentional or not, as a tool to enable and incentivise behaviour. How donors allocate funds as well as where they spend these will play a large part in the successful implementation of a nexus approach — for example, in how the fundraising industry approaches crises, in any fragmentation of pitches and competition for funds, and in how successfully implementers maintain focus on sustaining longer-term development approaches.

Some bilateral and multilateral agencies have reviewed or are reviewing their policies and processes to enhance the agility, predictability and coherence of their financing arrangements and reduce the sometimes-negative impacts of competition. INCAF members have found that while some structures and policies need to be adjusted, it is often culture and political economy rather than hard barriers that need to be addressed (OECD, forthcoming<sup>[2]</sup>).

Shifting these incentives requires a mix of staff expertise, proper institutional set-up and policy permission space, with targeted seed money playing a supporting role to encourage flexibility and collaboration. It is important that such incentives are seen as one part of a broader approach, rather than as specifically fundraising for the nexus. It is also important to address the political economy and narrative. This may include, for example, managing the tension between promoting flexible core funding and measuring so-called nexus financing; exploring how leaders can incentivise staff to use flexibilities that may already exist; and communicating around effectiveness, waste and accountability so that portfolio impact is seen as a key metric rather than solely transactional controls or incentives to disburse.

### 3.6. Integrating political engagement into the collective approach

Supporting change in partner countries is a political project. In this regard, the alignment of development co-operation and peace is the real breakthrough of the DAC Recommendation. However, political engagement and other tools, instruments and approaches remain underutilised resources in joined-up efforts across the nexus to prevent crises, resolve conflicts and build peace.

The response to humanitarian crises is not only development but also sustainable peace. Without peace, humanitarian needs will not decrease, and development objectives cannot be reached. Addressing the main drivers of crises is a generational endeavour that goes well beyond programming cycles. As a result, development co-operation in and of itself is not enough to create the domestic conditions to reach the Sustainable Development Goals. Development programmes cannot be expected to reduce humanitarian needs durably until a conducive environment is created for development gains to hold and be preserved. The DAC Recommendation recognises that political engagement and diplomacy play a role, alongside development co-operation, in reaching sustainable peace, while humanitarian assistance focuses on people's most critical needs.

The peace element in the HDP nexus is a reminder that the international community engages in contexts of conflict or rising tension to help reach a sustainable peace. Diplomatic and local mediation actors have unique mobility across the HDP nexus and can draw on their networks and skills to support sustainable peace, including by mobilising conflict-sensitive development co-operation in fragile contexts (OECD, 2020<sub>[12]</sub>). Yet, peace entails many different types of activities and mandates, and there are different understandings of what actually contributes to peace, including security operations (Barakat and Milton, 2020<sub>[13]</sub>). Real effort to enhance shared understanding among different stakeholders remains necessary.

### 3.7. Investing in national and local capacities and systems

Investing in national and local capacities and systems cannot be an afterthought (OECD, forthcoming<sub>[11]</sub>). Collective support and optimal use of public delivery systems for basic social services at national and local level must remain a priority, even in times of crisis. Development co-operation is not the extension of humanitarian assistance. Both urgent and longer-term actions are required in fragile or crisis contexts. Yet, humanitarian actors often become involved in social or physical infrastructure in the absence of alternatives. Those alternatives are traditionally linked to development co-operation. Not only do they require domestic government buy-in and sustainable resources, which can be challenging in fragile contexts; they also require considerable time for implementation.

As a result, international engagement in crisis contexts is over-reliant on extended humanitarian assistance mechanisms even when development co-operation principles could apply. There are still very few existing development mechanisms that are really fit for fragility. Some DAC members, among them Germany, have demonstrated that transitional development assistance and targeted peace interventions can be fit for fragility and provide structural support at local or national level. Those mechanisms can be powerful tools towards peace and recovery when designed as early development instruments rather than extended humanitarian assistance instruments.

Beyond the programming realm, there is also a need to include the stakeholders closest to the affected communities in a more meaningful way in joint analysis and planning processes, in particular local actors and national and international civil society organisations involved in implementing programmes.

### 3.8. Using the HDP nexus as an integrator for other policy priorities

The HDP nexus should integrate gender equality, climate change and other relevant considerations. It should not become a new, siloed policy area. The nexus approach can help enhance understanding of the interrelationships among various thematic perspectives and improve their coherence in addressing risks and vulnerabilities. For example, recent research by International Network on Conflict and Fragility (INCAF) and the DAC Network on Gender Equality on the articulation of gender across the triple nexus shows the value of a gender lens for nexus approaches (OECD, 2021<sub>[14]</sub>). In a similar fashion, the nexus approach can help address climate change (Daroca Oller, 2020<sub>[15]</sub>) — for instance, approaching climate change as

a risk multiplier in the fragility landscape and linking frameworks for prevention, disaster response and fragility. Decentralisation of competencies and resources in partner countries to subnational governments can also provide the institutional footing for area-based nexus approaches, as the local level is “a natural place for working beyond silos” (Barakat and Milton, 2020<sup>[13]</sup>).

### 3.9. Enlarging the roundtable of stakeholders

The HDP nexus approach has largely developed organically, and the DAC Recommendation provides an opportunity to set clear and measurable system-wide expectations. At both country and global levels, the most successful models have been largely driven by self-selecting coalitions of willing individuals and institutions that identify specific, practical opportunities. This is the obvious and best place to start; as such, opportunities allow approaches to be tested before moving to scale. It is now time for engagement by a wider set of actors and resources, particularly beyond the UN system.

The success of the DAC Recommendation hinges on the important role of additional stakeholders beyond its adherents. Global nexus co-ordination efforts have thus far gravitated towards the UN system, linking in particular to initiatives around UN development reforms and the New Way of Working. However, with 75% of development assistance to extremely fragile contexts being channelled bilaterally, relying on an UN-centric model might rapidly lead to partial implementation of a nexus approach. (OECD, 2022<sup>[5]</sup>)

Multilateral development banks are playing a growing role across the nexus in fragile and conflict-affected settings (Poole and Culbert, 2019<sup>[16]</sup>). Both loans and grants have been increasing, particularly with the engagement of the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and regional banks such as the African Development Bank. However, their co-ordination and linkages with other development actors are not always consistent and need to be strengthened.

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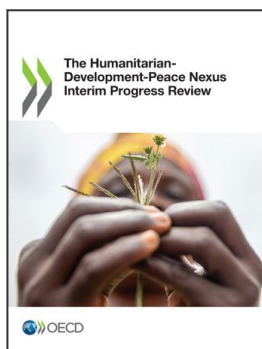
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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> The Nexus Academy facilitates joint learning and knowledge exchange to accelerate nexus approaches and promote complementary humanitarian, development and peace actions that tackle the root causes of crises and end need. It is an initiative of the DAC-UN Dialogue, delivered as a common good by UNDP SURGE Academy.



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