

Summary: Conflict-sensitive climate action in practice

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The [Common Principles for Effective Climate Finance and Action for Relief, Recovery and Peace](#)¹ (launched at COP29) provide a practical vision for maximising the effectiveness of climate action and ensuring that it is conflict sensitive and peace positive, offering guidance for the implementation of the COP28 Declaration on Climate, Relief, Recovery and Peace. In alignment with the Common Principles, the '[Conflict-sensitive climate action in practice](#)' paper, written by members of the Environment, Climate, Conflict and Peace Community of Practice, seeks to demonstrate practical guidance and examples for how conflict sensitivity is highly relevant for climate action and is essential to support the sustainability and effectiveness of climate action across multiple sectors.

The Common Principles provide basic guidance for a conflict-sensitive approach:

1. **Understanding people and place for enduring, impactful outcomes:** Build an in-depth understanding of the specific context through participatory and inclusive processes, and apply this engagement and understanding in the design, implementation and evaluation of climate actions.²
2. **Be agile to maintain and boost resilience:** Ensure flexibility and adaptability based on continuous learning and evidence, anticipating and responding to changes over time. This requires adjusting project design, timelines and budget to respond to emerging challenges or shifting priorities to ensure that projects remain relevant and effective.

3. **Prioritise local ownership and leadership by affected groups:** Overall, climate action and finance should be accessible, fit for purpose, and tailored to local needs. All stages of action should prioritise local and traditional knowledge and experience. Finance and programming should support local agency, resilience and capacities.³
4. **Support collaboration and synergies:** Promote complementarity across governments, international and regional organisations, financial institutions, civil society, local communities, the private sector and other actors to tailor climate action to context and needs.

Conflict sensitivity offers essential tools and approaches for designing and implementing climate action while navigating the complexity of working in and across very different and fluid contexts.⁴ At its core, conflict sensitivity is about building an understanding of the context, understanding how an action might interact with that context, and seeking to tailor and adapt that action to achieve the best possible positive impact. Applying conflict sensitivity can help climate action to minimise the risk that initiatives may unintentionally contribute to negative consequences or cause harm. It can also help to identify how an action can support positive results beyond the original intention of the intervention, for example by contributing to social and economic benefits and strengthening cooperation, social cohesion and opportunities for peace.

While conflict sensitivity is particularly useful for navigating the specific challenges of working in fragile and conflict-affected settings, its application is relevant across all contexts. Every context has existing systems, histories and relationships that can result in either contention or collaboration, and any action or intervention will interact with these dynamics in different ways.

The paper explores how conflict sensitivity can be specifically applied in some different sectors of relevance to global climate action. For example:

1. **Climate finance:** Climate finance has tended to be risk averse and state-based, prioritising large multi-million-dollar projects in safe operating environments, which can further heighten inequality and vulnerability. Integrating conflict sensitivity can help to anticipate and navigate risk, identify co-benefits and help to prevent negative side effects of climate finance. A further step would be to integrate peace outcomes into the design of climate financing projects, to consider how climate finance can complement other funding mechanisms or projects with such objectives, or to consider a dedicated funding platform within current global finance agreements for fragile and conflict-affected settings.
 - Select considerations: Institutionalise multi-dimensional conflict analysis; Flexible operational protocols which enable higher risk tolerance; Decentralised funding mechanisms.
2. **Climate adaptation:** Climate adaptation projects and approaches can exacerbate conflict risks if they redistribute rather than more comprehensively reduce exposure to climate change risks, if they undermine existing coping strategies or peaceful relations, or if they only benefit select groups – all of which can contribute to inequality, grievances and division, which can increase the likelihood of conflict.
 - Select considerations: Adaptive management approaches; Prioritise locally led adaptation; Integrate conflict sensitivity into National Adaptation Plans.
3. **Green energy transition:** Green energy projects may have unintended negative consequences if they do not take into account the context, such as aggravating local grievances or inequality, which may in turn impact on projects by causing delays or obstructions, increasing the risk of damage to infrastructure and equipment or undermining long-term sustainability. Projects and associated processes (including land acquisition, supply chains or energy distribution) can be intentionally designed to minimise the risk of harmful consequences and instead aim to support shared socio-economic benefits and a just transition, and contribute to peace.
 - Select considerations: Integrate conflict analysis into due diligence and environmental assessments; Flexible contracts; Embed community engagement and accountability measures.
4. **Early warning and early action:** For an early warning system to have relevance and result in meaningful action for at-risk and affected communities, it must provide information in accessible ways (that are socio-culturally appropriate, understandable, and through relevant channels) and in a timely and actionable manner. Multi-hazard analysis and forecasting that integrates conflict and fragility can provide a much more comprehensive approach to better inform early action and conflict prevention.
 - Select considerations: Revisit and update plans, protocols and thresholds; Prioritise connecting with local knowledge pathways; Integrate climate and conflict early warning systems.
5. **Food security:** The combined impact of climate, conflict and fragility has compounding impacts on food security, while food security and climate change have been linked to the increased risk of conflict. In order to transform agriculture and food systems towards more environmentally sustainable practices, which shore up resilience while also ensuring equitable access to safe, sufficient, affordable and nutritious food for all, an approach that takes into account how food systems intersect with conflict and fragility is critical.
 - Select considerations: Analyse systemic causes of food insecurity and wider impacts; Resource and apply monitoring, evaluation and learning; Engage and empower marginalised groups.

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References

- 1 The full Common Principles for Effective Climate Finance and Action for Relief, Recovery and Peace are available [here](#).
- 2 General guidance can be found here: Saferworld and Conciliation Resources (2020) [Gender-sensitive conflict analysis: a facilitation guide](#).
- 3 The [Principles for Locally Led Adaptation](#), developed by the Global Commission on Adaptation, offers further important guidance.
- 4 The Conflict Sensitivity Consortium's [How to guide to conflict sensitivity](#) (2012) sets out guidance across all stages of the programme cycle.