



Stabilisation Unit

Monitoring and Evaluation of Conflict and Stabilisation Interventions

What Works Series

Stabilisation Unit
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Acronyms

AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
ANDS	Afghan National Development Strategy
BEM	British Embassy Mogadishu
BSOS	Building Stability Overseas Strategy
CA	Conflict (also Content and Context) Analysis
CSSF	Conflict, Stability and Security Fund
DCE	Deployable Civilian Expert
DFID	Department for International Development
EK	Expert Knowledge
FCAS	Fragile and Conflict-Affected States
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
FGS	Federal Government of Somalia
HMEP	Helmand Monitoring and Evaluation Programme
HMG	Her Majesty's Government
IE	Impact Evaluations
LFA	Log Frame (or Logframe) Analysis
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MOD	Ministry of Defence
MPICE	Measuring Progress in Conflict Environments
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NSC	National Security Council
OECD DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development - Development Assistance Committee
OM	Outcome Mapping
PAT	Programme Advisory Team
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team
QD	Quantitative Data
SDSR	Strategic Defence and Security Review
S/PD	Survey/Polling Data
SST	Somalia Stabilisation Team
TFH	Taskforce Helmand
TFL	Taskforce Leatherneck
ToC	Theory of Change
UK	United Kingdom
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
UNDSS	United Nations Department of Safety and Security
UNSOM	United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USGAO	United States Government Accountability Office
USIP	United States Institute of Peace

Introduction

The Stabilisation Unit (SU) is an integrated civil-military operational unit which reports to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), Department for International Development (DFID), and the Ministry of Defence (MOD). It is designed to be agile, responsive and well-equipped to operate in high threat environments. It combines in-house staff expertise with the ability to draw on a larger pool of civilian expertise for specialised, longer term or larger scale taskings. It ensures lessons from practical experience are captured as best practice and used to improve future delivery by Her Majesty's Government (HMG).

The purpose of this "What Works" Series paper is to provide practical advice about conflict, stabilisation, security and justice activities with examples, evidence and tools, consistent with HMG's engagement on stabilisation and wider aspects of working in fragile and conflict-affected states (FCAS). It draws on what the SU has learned to date and is primarily designed for programme staff in country offices, project implementers, deployed SU staff and Deployable Civilian Experts (DCEs), and stabilisation practitioners generally. It is not a formal statement of HMG policy.

Readers should use this paper¹ to familiarise themselves with the process of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) in interventions funded by the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF).² It should be read alongside two other papers in the "What Works" Series, on [Analysis](#) and [Planning](#). An Issues Note (IN) [Analysis, Planning and Monitoring and Evaluation](#) draws together the key thematic issues across the papers and puts stabilisation considerations into a wider and longer term context relevant to fragile and conflict-affected states. The inter-relationships of these publications are described below.

¹ This paper has been written by Marla Zapach on behalf of the Stabilisation Unit.

² Announced in June 2013, for FY 2015-16 and as a successor to the Conflict Pool, the £1 billion Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF) pools new and existing resources across Government to prevent conflict and tackle threats to UK interests that arise from instability overseas. The National Security Council (NSC) will set priorities for the Fund, drawing on the most effective combination of defence, diplomacy, development assistance, security and intelligence.

Stabilisation Unit Publications

The Stabilisation Unit produces a number of publications in order to inform key stakeholders about a range of topics relating to conflict, stability, security and justice.

The publications can be found at our new [Publications web page](#).

A brief introduction to the different series and existing titles is below.

Stabilisation Series

Core guidance on the UK perspective on stabilisation; how it should be delivered.

[The UK Approach to Stabilisation \(2014\)](#)

[The UK Principles for Stabilisation Operations and Programmes](#)

[Security Sector Stabilisation](#)

Issues Note Series

Short papers aimed at policy makers, programme managers and deputy heads of mission to inform them about key issues in thematic areas.

[Analysis, Planning and Monitoring and Evaluation](#)

What Works Series

These are long paper intended for programme managers, project officers and deployees.

They include detailed tools and frameworks that can be applied to thematic or programmatic areas.

[Policing the Context](#)

[Analysis](#)

[Planning](#)

[M&E](#)

Deployee Guide Series

Practical guidance intended for first time or seasoned deployees.

[United Nations Missions](#)

[EU CSDP](#)

[Military Headquarters](#)

[OSCE](#)

Feedback can be sent to the SU Lessons Team at: SULessons@stabilisationunit.gov.uk.

Executive Summary

In the revised UK Approach to Stabilisation, stabilisation is defined as: “... one of the approaches used in situations of violent conflict which is designed to protect and promote legitimate political authority, using a combination of integrated civilian and military actions to reduce violence, re-establish security and prepare for longer-term recovery by building an enabling environment for structural stability”.

This paper is aimed at practitioners working on analysis, planning and reporting processes, with the objective of providing technical advice on how to approach monitoring and evaluation (M&E) in stabilisation contexts, and encouraging a broader understanding of the programming cycle as a whole. It is important to understand M&E as part of a continuous feedback loop, which includes analysis and planning, as an iterative part of stabilisation activities. M&E is an essential part of a stabilisation strategy. It can help policymakers determine whether government objectives have been achieved, and records how they were achieved for accountability purposes. It aligns visions, expectations and resources between various actors involved in a stabilisation activity, and provides learning opportunities, as well as lessons for replicating activities in future stabilisation contexts.

M&E in stabilisation environments often faces challenges not present in development or post-conflict contexts. Stabilisation engagements generally have a shortened time frame, and face high visibility and political expectations both domestically and internationally. It is expected that results will be shown quickly, even though the situation in the immediate aftermath of a conflict is usually more challenging, chaotic and complex, with multiple actors on the ground working to different mandates and reporting/accountability structures. Stabilisation contexts are often constrained by a lack of access to local beneficiaries due to insecurity, and missing data and baselines. Little time is available to think strategically, or develop a solid theory of change stemming from a thorough context analysis feeding into planning processes.

M&E helps you understand if your activities are working to promote stability, and contributing to HMG/international objectives. As M&E requires comprehensive monitoring of activities and revision of initial planning assumptions, M&E can be used to ensure that HMG-supported activities are conflict-sensitive³ and will adhere to the “Do No Harm” principle⁴ in

³ Conflict sensitivity (understanding that donors can do harm in almost as many ways as they can do good, and that interventions can have unintended consequences) is critical when implementing policies and programmes in fragile and conflict-affected states. See DFID guidance at <http://www.conflictsensitivity.org/publications/conducting-conflict-assessments-guidance-notes>. Date accessed 01 July 2014.

⁴ The “Do No Harm” principle encourages organisations to strive to minimize the harm they may inadvertently be doing by being present and providing assistance.

insecure environments. It also facilitates both upstream and downstream accountability to ensure the best use of financial and human resources. Finally, if planned and implemented well, M&E collects critical data from beneficiaries, including those difficult to access, to create an essential foundation for subsequent HMG/international development initiatives.

M&E must be integrated into the planning, implementation and reporting process—and effective M&E must have buy-in at senior levels, not only in the setting up of M&E systems, but also in ensuring that they are used effectively. This means that M&E should have dedicated human and financial resources, as well as broad participation and acceptance from key cross-government departments working on the issue. Data collection should entail a multi-disciplinary approach and include both quantitative and qualitative data, common definitions, and indicators of success. Regular reporting, ideally on a monthly basis, provides crucial information to guide and flexibly adjust both strategic and programmatic interventions, which is essential in fluid and fluctuating stabilisation contexts.

This paper uses case studies from Afghanistan and Somalia to demonstrate how the challenges of M&E have been addressed in two different contexts. The Helmand Monitoring and Evaluation Programme (HMEP) is an example of how an M&E system will struggle to demonstrate impact if its overarching purpose is ill defined. The Somalia case study shows how a relatively small programme can demonstrate success by catalysing broader engagement from the international community.

The paper ends with an explanation of some other tools that can support M&E in stabilisation contexts.

See http://wdronline.worldbank.org/worldbank/a/c.html/world_development_report_2011/abstract/WB.978-0-8213-8439-8.abstract. Date accessed 01 July 2014.

Section One: Background to Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

Why is M&E Important in a Stabilisation Context?

In addition to guiding and verifying strategic objectives, planning, programming, and resource, allocation, M&E can also highlight lessons from earlier stabilisation engagements that may be applicable to current and future activities. Those lessons can help policy makers visualise what success and effective programming may look like in a stabilisation context. M&E results help managers show value for money and decide what activities should or should not be funded in the future. M&E is essential within these contexts to help mitigate failure, ensure conflict sensitivity and prevent negative unintended consequences on host populations in high-risk operations.

Most importantly, M&E is not an activity to be undertaken at the end of a programme, but an ongoing endeavour throughout the life of the programme. Regular reviews of progress can guide programming both to ensure that plans remain on track and resources are allocated in the most effective way (or to adapt and reallocate if not), in support of HMG objectives.

Why is M&E Challenging in a Stabilisation Context?

Once the National Security Council (NSC) has determined that HMG will respond to a situation of violent conflict overseas by adopting a stabilisation approach, HMG departments will begin formulating appropriate strategic, political and operational options for engagement. As described in the revised UK Approach to Stabilisation, these options should ideally be: mutually reinforcing; developed through an integrated⁵ and civilian-led approach; be flexible and targeted; and decision-making should be informed by a clear and regularly updated understanding of the context and drivers of the conflict.

Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) is an independent line of activity within a continuous feedback loop, which includes analysis and planning. It is used to design and implement an information gathering process, and encourages reflective learning processes in order to generate insights on how to improve strategic planning and operations. M&E helps to inform policy and programme managers qualitatively and quantitatively whether HMG's stabilisation activities are making a

⁵ Integrated approach (as promoted by the 2010 Strategic Defence and Security Review) refers to people from different institutions (with particular reference to civilian and military institutions) working together at several levels to achieve common aims. An integrated approach recognises that no one Government Department has a monopoly over responses to the challenges of conflict and stabilisation contexts and that by making best use of the broad range of knowledge, skills and assets of Government Departments, integrated efforts should be mutually reinforcing. Other Governments and international organisations sometimes use "comprehensive" (e.g. NATO and EU) to describe similar collaboration. The intention behind HMG's shift from "comprehensive" to "integrated" approach in 2010 was to establish greater cross-Government collective analysis and coherent strategy development.

positive impact by measuring changes in attitude, behaviour, expectations and levels of participation. M&E ensures that activities achieve their intended effect through conflict-sensitive approaches, which is important when working in insecure environments that tend to change and shift rapidly. M&E is particularly important in stabilisation contexts when supporting the creation of sustainable and functioning institutions on which to build stable, democratic societies and reinforcing social cohesion.

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) as defined by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC):

Monitoring refers to a systematic collection of data and information to provide those involved in an intervention or programme with adequate information to monitor progress against objectives and outcomes. It is different from reporting in that monitoring refers to the collection and interpretation of information and not the delivery of information. Consistent monitoring of interventions allows you to assess progress against targets and milestones developed in the analysis and planning stages of the stabilisation process and detects when things may not be progressing as expected and where there may be need for corrective action to put activities back on track to meet defined objectives.

Review and evaluation are similar. An evaluation is a systematic and objective assessment of a completed intervention. Evaluation determines the relevance, appropriateness and fulfilment of objectives. It looks at efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. An evaluation should enable decision makers to judge the relative worth of an intervention and draw lessons for other and future programmes. A review tends to be less in depth than an evaluation and can (and should) be done more regularly and throughout the life of an intervention. Evaluation is concerned with the results, effects, impacts, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of an intervention as a whole and helps identify specific and generic lessons from the activities. It also enables you to align the human and financial resources necessary to complete the objectives outlined.

<http://www.oecd.org/derec/dacnetwork/35336188.pdf>

Measuring if and how a stabilisation activity has been successful is a challenging task. Metrics that can accurately gauge a change in people's perception and behaviour are difficult to develop. Change takes place over long periods of time in complex and dynamic environments where it is difficult to make causal links between inputs and outputs, outcomes and impact,⁶

⁶ Inputs are the resources that contribute to a project, programme or policy. Outputs are the products or services delivered through the activities of the project, programme or policy. Outcomes are the likely or achieved short-term and medium-term effects of an intervention's outputs. Impact is positive and negative, primary and

and to isolate the effect of a single line of activity. There are usually multiple international actors pursuing different agendas, which may have been developed without a clear prior consensus on what should be measured. Programmes are often implemented without clear theories of change. In these turbulent and rapidly evolving environments, there can be little appetite or time to measure one's activity.⁷ Many interventions suffer from a faulty or hastily undertaken initial analysis based on limited available information that may have overlooked the real drivers of the conflict and an incomplete understanding of the context.⁸ Immediate interventions not based on a solid understanding of the issues can also generate unhealthy dynamics and exacerbate conflict.

Analytical quality can suffer from a lack of hard, reliable and independent data. Political and programmatic objectives and milestones often change after stabilisation activities get underway. Initial baselines may become invalidated. With unreliable baselines it can be difficult to distinguish between strategic shifts in approach and shorter-term contextual fluctuations on the ground, in order to attribute cause and effect.

As the operating environment tends to be insecure, this can impede the collection of data and make it difficult to revise or adapt plans and strategies in response to evidence that stabilisation activities are not yielding results. Where HMG is working jointly with other governments or international partners, the lack of credible evidence can delay or obstruct UK efforts to gain broad stakeholder agreement on programme revisions.

The main challenge to carrying out M&E in a stabilisation context is often political, not conceptual. Stabilisation activities are frequently planned and implemented to have a positive political effect, or at least improve the political dynamics of the conflict environment. This can increase pressure on policy makers and programme implementers to demonstrate tangible outputs quickly at the expense of sustainable longer-term impacts. The political culture of some implementing agencies encourages them to report on success at implementing programmes, rather than describing the longer-term impacts of their activities.⁹

Political pressure to demonstrate results often leads to shorter and unrealistic implementation timeframes being set for stabilisation activities which risk false positives being generated during the reporting process in terms of real, sustainable, changes in attitudes and behaviour. Competing interests between government and multilateral organisations can prevent sharing of

secondary long-term effects produced by an intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended. See <http://www.outcomemapping.ca/resource/resource.php?id=189>. Date accessed 01 July 2014.

⁷ Becker (2011), p.146.

⁸ Here context could include a strategic analysis of historic, economic, regional, political, security, environmental and social factors at play.

⁹ Cohen (2006), p.1.

information and encourages isolated programming. This can have detrimental effects, as strong partnerships are necessary to comprehensively effect changes in behaviour and increase stability.¹⁰ There may be multiple actors on the ground - local, national and international - undertaking a range of concurrent activities to different mandates over different timescales.

Stabilisation activities do not always lend themselves to linear planning. For example, a simple assumption would be that providing a basic service to a community, such as building a well, would lead to acceptance and greater legitimacy of the local government. This is not necessarily the case. Simple assumptions need to be supported by a deeper understanding of perceptions, relationships and behaviours that, in turn, should be further understood through social/political contextual analyses.

In complex stabilisation contexts, there is usually a higher risk that activities do not always produce the intended results. This requires an open and honest management culture, willing to accept failure, and quickly identify and remedy problems that arise. Equally, the temptation to distort M&E systems, due to pressure to generate “good news” stories and communications, negatively influences how M&E could be used constructively to reinforce policy and programming decision making.

Insecurity can make it difficult to find the right people to interview, to ask the right questions, and to interpret the answers correctly. This is most acutely felt by implementing partners working on the ground. Indeed, deteriorating security conditions, fear of reprisal or perceptions of western intervention can place data gatherers, and local respondents, in danger. Social bias can also skew data being collected, especially if the data is not triangulated through other sources. And, too often, gender-specific methodology for collecting data is non-existent.

What is Effective Evaluation and What Underpins It?

For effective M&E, the process is as important as the outcome. Approaches to gathering information and data need to be flexible, and include the use of both qualitative and quantitative data. Descriptive, narrative and context-specific details are critical in providing a foundation for understanding the environment in which activities are taking place. Common indicators, metrics, as well as agreed definitions of concepts are important to develop in the analysis and planning phases, so that stakeholders agree on what needs to be measured and how best to prove success or determine what needs to be adapted within the programme. Periodic reviews/evaluations should be undertaken to allow corrective action where necessary.

Given the complexity of the stabilisation environment, and what is being measured - namely changes in attitudes and behaviours as well as response to conflict - a multidisciplinary and

¹⁰ Cohen (2006), p.3.

multi-faceted approach to gathering data is often necessary. This includes ensuring the process of the evaluation is as participatory as is feasible, to represent all views adequately and fairly. The use of media, focus groups, polls, experts, interviews, etc, are all valuable means to increase participation. The perceptions of women and youth, often invisible in stabilisation contexts, are critical to capture, and a specific methodology to include them in data collection needs to be considered.

An effective M&E system should have political and operational buy-in at the highest possible levels and the decision on what will be measured needs to be conducted in co-ordination with strategic planning at London and country-levels. Measures should be taken to communicate, publicise and de-politicise the results of the evaluation, and ensure the information produced is user-friendly, and accessible to non-practitioners, as well as shared broadly with key stakeholders.

How M&E Relates to the UK Principles for Stabilisation Operations and Programmes

The UK Principles for Stabilisation Operations and Programmes provide a framework for how stabilisation activities should be conceived, planned, implemented, measured and understood. Of the nine framework principles,¹¹ three apply directly to M&E in stabilisation contexts:

- Analyse continually;
- Deliver contextually;
- Engage broadly.

Analyse continually: The OECD DAC recommends that the evaluation process include its own conflict analysis to assess interventions.¹² A continual analysis that includes all stakeholders: encourages a common understanding; identifies gaps in knowledge; assesses the relevance of and impact of the programme; assesses the risks of negative effects and constraints imposed by the conflict on the evaluation design and implementation; and assesses the risks of the evaluation itself exacerbating the conflict.¹³ M&E can be used to either prove or disprove initial analysis, and assist in the revision of analysis should the results show that activities are not producing the intended results. Analysis, planning and M&E should be viewed as a reinforcing cycle, with the outputs from each feeding the inputs of the others.

¹¹ Namely: work within the political context; ensure local political sustainability; provide strong leadership and management; integrate and coordinate appropriately; plan systematically; analyse continually; deliver contextually; engage broadly; communicate coherently.

¹² OECD DAC (2012), p.28.

¹³ Gaarder and Annan (2013), p.11.

Deliver contextually: Following on from the context/conflict analysis and the results coming from the M&E process, a review of how activities have been implemented is critical. M&E must identify where processes need to be adapted, determining what works, what does not, and why or why not. Flexibility in re-designing activities will allow HMG-supported implementers to meet the needs of ever-changing contexts, provide a critical means to meet demands on the ground, and reduce the possibility of unintended negative outcomes and impacts.

Engage broadly: M&E processes should be broadly participatory to best gauge changes in perception and behaviour throughout the duration of the stabilisation activity. Equally important, engaging broadly with multiple stakeholders for M&E will help to improve understanding and manage any risks of negative impacts and unintended consequences on local beneficiaries. Engaging broadly also ensures that all views, especially those traditionally under-represented like women and youth, are adequately and fairly represented and recorded.

Section Two: M&E Basic Process - “What Works”

M&E is essential to a stabilisation response, as it ensures that activities achieve their intended effect and mitigate the risk of unintended consequences. Evolving good practice for M&E in a stabilisation context includes consideration of the following essential aspects.

Good Processes

Setting up a M&E strategy begins during the analysis and planning phases, and is an important strategic management and delivery tool. M&E mechanisms should be built from a solid analysis at the outset of the planning process, and aligned to strategic objectives allowing the Theory of Change (ToC) to be tested to clarify and align HMG expectations and assumptions during implementation. Given the challenges inherent in stabilisation activities, not including M&E in contextual design and planning processes risks a lack of broad acceptance of the activities to be undertaken and measured during the life of the activity.

Good process means collecting the right data and understanding how it is to be applied to ongoing processes. It means: regularly reviewing engagement; revising assumptions in the light of new data being collected; adapting approaches to an ever-changing context; ensuring broad participation and consultation within the implementation process as well as the monitoring of the activities; and revising activities based on whether or not they are having the intended impact. Early development and approval of a strategy and results framework during the planning stage contributes to strong M&E. Good processes attempt to be simply that: good and not perfect. Taking the time to use “good enough” data to understand and reinforce the rationale for engagement, and to refine objectives when necessary, goes a long way to ensuring success in challenging contexts.

Inclusive participatory processes are essential. They provide room for assessing the activity not only against its objectives, but also in the context of its dynamic environment so that unintended consequences, changing circumstances and other unexpected effects can also be taken into account.¹⁴ Taking the time to capture local accounts of change and what is causing the change is an important part of a narrative and participatory approach, especially one that also seeks to include gender perceptions as well as other less visible sectors of society.

Effective processes are also essential for HMG organisational learning. Openly sharing results from ongoing M&E reduces risk aversion as shortcomings from programming can be identified and remedied early on. Sharing knowledge enables more effective use of time and resources, as well as service delivery both internally and with other partners.¹⁵

¹⁴ de Coning and Romita (2009), p.6.

¹⁵ Ibid, p.14.

Using M&E effectively can also ensure that it becomes a valuable management tool, facilitating the regular review and adaptation of plans and policies. Ongoing M&E can: revise false planning and policy assumptions and uncertain causal chains; check for unintended consequences; adapt to the evidence that things are not going as planned; combine with other activities to amplify impact and demonstrate progress for political ends, and document important lessons from engagement.

Effective Management Structures for M&E

Following the 2010 Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) and the 2011 Building Stability Overseas Strategy (BSOS) a single, cross-Government Stabilisation Management Board was established to address violent conflict overseas. This gives considerable responsibility to UK Posts overseas for delivering results. Posts now have greater control over resources to respond quickly to unfolding events, to set up the most appropriate M&E systems, as well as monitor and review outcomes of stabilisation initiatives to maximise effectiveness, efficiency and visibility. Six-monthly updates stemming from information gathered through M&E systems are provided to the Prime Minister and National Security Council, and feed into an annual public statement on overall progress of HMG stabilisation engagements.

Country-level M&E management structures monitor at both the project and programme levels. At the programme level, strategic engagement informed by M&E systems is monitored and reviewed regularly to determine strategic impact. M&E provides critical information to assist the oversight provided by the Stabilisation Management Board, which directs the work undertaken on the ground and flags critical issues that may need to be passed up the management/responsibility chain. Information from M&E systems also feeds into the periodic checks conducted by the regional Conflict Pool Funds and Secretariat in its governance role as overseer of the portfolio, and approver of the stabilisation activities in country. At the project level, programme boards at Post function best if they receive regular monthly reporting to make decisions in regards to revising or adapting the projects so they achieve maximum benefit and contribute to the overall strategy defined for the engagement.

Theory of Change (ToC)

In a stabilisation context, a Theory of Change (ToC) seeks to illustrate how improving linkages within and between the key stabilisation actors can strengthen engagements that will produce legitimate political arrangements that will, in turn, lead to structural stability.¹⁶

¹⁶ At its most basic, ToC explains how a group of early and intermediate accomplishments sets the stage for producing long-range results. A more complete theory of change articulates the assumptions about the process through which change will occur, and specifies the ways in which all of the required early and intermediate outcomes related to achieving the desired long-term change will be brought about and documented as they occur.

ToC is developed through a consultative process with multiple stakeholders to develop descriptive intervention logic, identify milestones and conditions necessary to meet these milestones, consider probable and possible future realities, and essentially guide the M&E strategy. This process is necessarily more complex than the logical framework approached described later in this paper.¹⁷

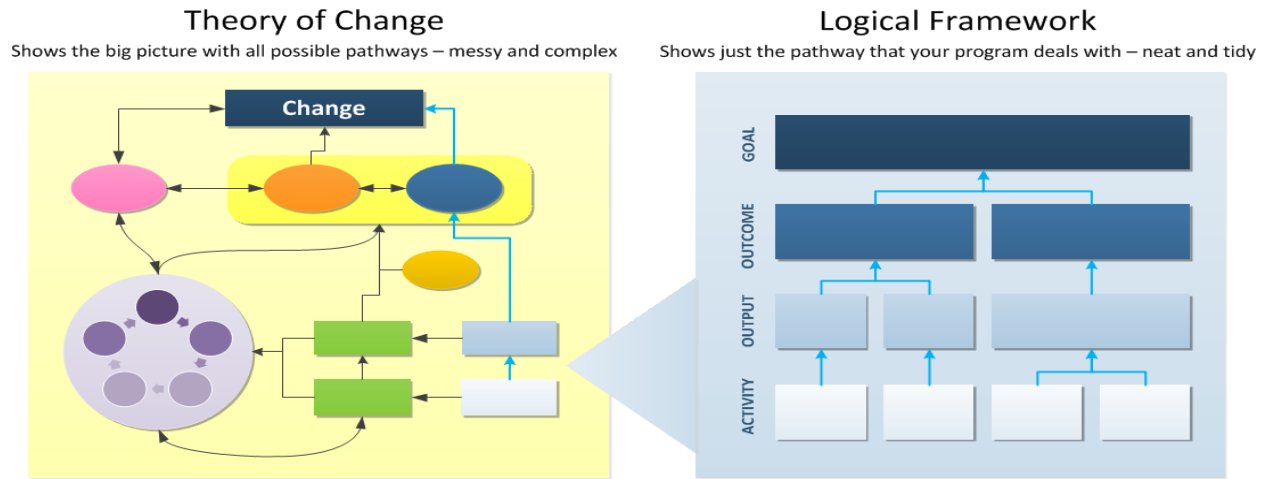


Figure 1 Relationship between Theory of Change and Logical Frameworks

ToC is particularly useful in conflict and stabilisation contexts where there are a multiplicity of actors.¹⁸ However, there are also some limitations to using ToC, as it does not necessarily provide a way to quantitatively measure the size of the contribution being made to the change, and has to be complemented with well-defined indicators of success/impact. In addition, it can be a challenge, as well as time consuming, to synthesise a wide range of views and information sources under the pressure of immediate stabilisation demands.

Developing a ToC begins in the analysis and assessment phase, and has to be factored into strategic planning before the design and implementation of activities begins.

Theories of Change:

- Inform the design of the M&E framework by providing a systematic way to think about inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, impacts of an intervention (causal pathway).
- Can address some of the challenges of the stabilisation context by simplifying intangible issues.

¹⁷ <http://www.tools4dev.org/resources/theory-of-change-vs-logical-framework-whats-the-difference-in-practice/>

¹⁸ Ahmar and Kolbe (2011), p.35.

- Can link objectives to activities by considering the logic of intervention, therefore helping to prioritise data collection and evaluate if activities are contributing to outcomes envisioned.

Different and conflicting ToC may exist at any one time and can be simultaneously pursued, as different actors (civilian and military, local and international, non-state, interagency, multinational, etc) will have different understandings and perceptions of change. Different ToC can describe how different interventions work at different stages, in different contexts, and with different perspectives to achieve different impacts. If multiple ToCs emerge and are strongly held, they may have to be tested against the evidence to see which theory best reflects the reality faced in the specific stabilisation context. But the process of jointly planning and articulating ToC from the outset should help: to establish a deeper common understanding of objectives; make visible implicit assumptions and beliefs about why change occurs; and reduce the likelihood of one intervention negatively affecting another.

The benefit of developing a ToC is that it requires a focussed discussion and participation of a wide group of stakeholders on the overall goals of stabilisation - preferably discussed during the analysis and design process - and an explicit account of how the proposed activities will lead to the desired outcome. Through this consultation, goals, inputs, and processes are identified, as well as the outputs required to achieve the aims. At this time, the “who, what, when, where, why and how” needs to be jointly understood and agreed. A well-developed ToC also helps define the criteria needed to guide evaluators’ judgment of evidence and prioritisation of performance metrics.

ToC in stabilisation contexts will inevitably be more complicated than a simple linear approach to causality (i.e. output-outcome-impact). They should also highlight areas of uncertainty and risk for cross-Government management boards to consider before approving the implementation of stabilisation programme proposals.

Ideally, the articulation of a ToC should include the following main areas, and include a detailed narrative in addition to the logical framework (logframe) or military operational plan:

- The objectives in terms of desired impact/end state/goal and outcome(s)/effect(s)/purpose of a programme/intervention;
- The inputs/activities and outputs expected to realise those activities;
- Essential assumptions underpinning the programme/intervention (highlighting critical causal links and areas of uncertainty and risk);
- Relationships/interdependencies with other related actors/programmes;
- Major risks (potentially undermining the success of the intervention).

Other potential unintended consequences/harms may include:

- Not achieving the goal/end state due to faulty assumptions, analysis/weakness in the plan, or due to unanticipated events;
- Unexpected outcomes, both harmful and beneficial, directly due to the intervention, some of which may not affect whether the desired impact/goal/end state of the intervention is achieved, but matter nonetheless in and of themselves;
- Unintended impacts on other programmes and priorities, locally and/or at the strategic level (as secondary impacts of the intervention).

What follows is an example of a ToC developed to support functioning institutions in a stabilisation context.¹⁹ This ToC focuses on liberal democratic approaches to formal and informal institutional performance within government, civil society and the private sector with the objective of increasing stability.

Desired impact/end goal	If formal and informal political institutions operated efficiently, impartially, and in the best interests of all, then the extent of core grievances and violent conflict would decline.
Essential Assumption	Increased institutional performance either by increasing effectiveness, legitimacy, or both, by prioritising activities with formal and informal political institutions because of the importance of being able to affect public decision-making.
Activities	Elections, constitutional reform, government decentralisation, power sharing, legislative support, informal community fora.
Relationships	Key formal and informal actors within and outside government participating in other stabilisation initiatives, negotiations and service delivery.
Major risks	Exclusion of key power brokers and spoilers to the process, lack of consensus on how to reform political institutions, insufficient resources to complete reforms etc.

Figure 2 Example of a developed Theory of Change

Data Gathering, Conflict Analysis and Interpretation

In stabilisation contexts where change is often the only constant, it is important to be pragmatic and recognise that sometimes “good enough” data and its collection will suffice. If a programme is flexible and adaptive, good enough data will be sufficient to monitor and adjust programming to ensure it meets its goals. Data collection should focus on data that is easy to

¹⁹ Adapted from USAID (2010).

collect as well as continually/consistently available. Data collected should be relevant to the ToC developed, robust, collected systematically, based on legitimate evidence, both qualitative and quantitative²⁰ and cover all areas relevant to stabilisation, to best demonstrate causal relationships and intervening factors. Data will also help explain unintended consequences and identify interdependencies between different strands of intervention and how they relate and reinforce each other.

Systematic tracking of beneficiaries' and wider stakeholders' opinions and perceptions on the ground throughout the duration of the programme add an important dimension to understanding change. The data can be collected through perception and opinion surveys,²¹ observational analysis, focus groups, independent studies, the media, proxy measures,²² narratives describing human level experience, etc. However, given the subjective nature of the type of data being collected, and the relative speed in which activities take place in stabilisation contexts, data should always be triangulated²³ and used to monitor trends over time. The data collected should help build a picture of how relationships and behaviours are changing.

Primary data collection from direct beneficiaries of the stabilisation activity can be challenging in stabilisation environments due to insecurity. Local actors can sometimes be used, although care must still be taken not to put either researchers or those interviewed in danger. Any information gleaned must be handled with confidentiality, as well as verified by other means. Social desirability bias²⁴ when polling in conflict settings can be high and may mean that respondents are not answering truthfully for many reasons. Insecurity and political sensitivities - as well as, in some cases, expectations of material gain - can affect responses to questions. Who is asking the question (a familiar face or a foreigner with a gun) may also affect the response provided. Even with the best methodology, some bias is unavoidable, and needs to be understood and factored into the interpretation of results as far as possible, with different sources and types of data (hard and soft) used to corroborate results.

²⁰ Quantitative data is data that can be counted or measured and is also called discrete or continuous data. Qualitative data is data that deals with descriptions and can be observed but not easily measured.

²¹ Opinion and perception surveys measure what people think or feel and can produce information about: (a) Knowledge (e.g. levels of awareness and understanding of particular issues); (b) Experiences (e.g. in regards to service provision) (c) Beliefs and values (e.g. norms, beliefs and levels of tolerance of certain behaviours) (d) Attitudes and opinions (e.g. views of performance of actors, satisfaction with services); and (e) Expectations (e.g. fears and hopes).

²² Proxy measures determine outcomes using calculable and known quantities when you do not have the ability to measure the exact value. It helps to predict probable results.

²³ Triangulation is used in qualitative research to check and validate data by analyzing a research question from multiple perspectives.

²⁴ Social desirability bias is the tendency of research informants to respond to questions in a manner that would be viewed favourably by others.

Secondary sources - including information produced by Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs), international partners, and academics/research institutions - can be used. This helps to fill gaps where information cannot be gathered directly (and is more efficient than duplicating efforts), and is useful to triangulate information gathered directly. Quantitative methods of data collection are useful when processing linear data for statistical analysis. Qualitative methods are more appropriate for dealing with highly dynamic, non-linear data²⁵ and higher order considerations such as ToC and the relevance of a specific approach.²⁶ Both qualitative and quantitative methods should be used in a complementary manner to maximise their respective comparative advantages, especially in fluid and fluctuating contexts.

Ideally, a multi-agency and multi-sector database should be set-up to capture all the data that is being collected by various partners. This would facilitate analysis and information exchange, as well as the development of strategic and complementary interventions.

Real Time Indicators and Benchmarks to Measure Outcomes

Indicators need to measure the outcomes of stabilisation activities. Good indicators should capture the “why” as well as the “what”. This means they need to go beyond simple output measures (for example, number of forces trained and equipped), and gather information about quality and about the higher-level consequences of the activity. They are needed at impact/goal, outcome/purpose²⁷ and output levels to allow attribution or at least contribution to be identified.

The very process of identifying benchmarks and indicators requires prioritisation of competing goals, and can be useful in shaping joint understanding among those involved across HMG.²⁸ Standard benchmarks include: international commitments which could be the evidence of implementation and laws adopted; human rights reporting; standard of elections as reported by independent monitors; the number of crimes reported and/or solved; length or pre-trial detentions, etc.

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) argues that well designed output indicators are often effective and legitimate monitoring measures during early efforts at stabilisation.²⁹

²⁵ Non-linear data is data that cannot be explained as a simple, linear combination of its variable inputs and is a common issue when trying to explain cause and effect therefore requiring complex modeling and hypotheses to offer explanations.

²⁶ de Coning and Romita (2009), p.7.

²⁷ Referred to in military planning as measures of success, effectiveness and performance but are otherwise similar.

²⁸ de Coning and Romita (2009), p.8.

²⁹ USAID (2006), p.23.

Indicators should allow decision-makers to determine whether stabilisation is being achieved and if not, point towards mid-course corrections that could reduce political and financial costs of potential failure. Indicators need to be supported by committed leadership, co-operation across organisations, and willingness to revise activities and approaches as necessary.³⁰ The indicators selected must be able to make sense of a range of data available, while also taking into account its reliability and what the data can and cannot say. There are two approaches for prioritising the indicators used: pragmatic and focused on the objectives of the activity; and reductionist to mine the information already collected and assess this data set against independent criteria.

Stabilisation indicators will need to track changes in perceptions, attitudes and relationships. These are, by their nature, subjective and difficult to measure and will need to draw on social and political analysis to complement the information being collected. In addition, it may be helpful to corroborate them with “hard” data or measures of action to develop a more holistic picture of what is taking place (for example, balancing perceptions of confidence in the police with data on reported incidents and convictions). Indicators should also monitor for both intended and unintended consequences. The latter can be addressed in part by watching for the increase of the risks identified during the planning process. It may be helpful to monitor early warning thresholds (for example, numbers of or levels of violence in protests) to allow problems to be identified and responded to early, particularly in volatile environments. Triggers identified in the analysis process may be set to reflect changes in trends or strange patterns of activity. An adaptable and tailored framework that allows for the capturing of narratives to validate attribution of outcomes and consideration of unintended outcomes is important.

Indicators may also need to address different timescales, including short term, intermediate and longer-term goals, as progress may be slow and otherwise imperceptible. While they should be tailored to the specific intervention, and some may need to change as the plan evolves, a core set of indicators should remain constant - even if not perfect - to enable trends to be tracked over time. Indicators may also need to be disaggregated to identify differences between demographic groups and/or between regions, particularly where inequalities are a driver of instability. Country-level indicators, such as corruption or governance indices, may therefore be useful but will not be sufficient.³¹

³⁰ USIP (2006), p.3.

³¹ It is important to keep in mind the audience using the M&E framework and for what purpose it will be used. For example, if M&E is expected to support decisions over allocation of resources, material and human, or where the consequences of getting it wrong are severe, a higher standard of evidence may be required than if the indicators were to assess progress of a small and low-risk project.

It is also important to consider how realistic the indicators are - whether data is available or can be safely gathered at reasonable (proportionate) cost to support them, whether it can be routinely collected over time, and how reliable it is. Evidence needs to be actionable and sufficiently robust to support decision-making, and the number of indicators kept to a manageable level. Proxy measures such as availability and cost of “luxury goods” in the market or personal investments such as installing TV aerials may be useful, depending on the standard of evidence that is needed.³²

When consolidated, positive indicators measuring stability should illustrate such dimensions as: improved security; political participation and governance; rule of law and justice; economic vitality; and social well-being operating at the household, community and individual levels. Analysis should take place at the local and national levels.³³ Outcomes themselves can be both subjective and objective, and self-reported or observed. If approached flexibly, different ways of measuring the same outcomes can facilitate the triangulation and verification of data to synthesise evidence and prove results.³⁴

Finally, it takes time to develop capacity to measure progress in stabilisation contexts. Decision-makers must allocate sufficient resources to understand and assess progress, as well as devote the time necessary to integrate results into analytical and planning processes.³⁵ Transparency regarding how progress is being measured should be ensured through the inclusion of independent actors working alongside internal monitoring teams to undertake the actual measurement of progress.

Analysing and Interpreting Data

Analysis to support reviews and evaluations should focus not only on whether desired outcomes have been achieved, but also question what other unintended consequences and/or changes in the environment have occurred, and how they might affect the initial planning strategy. Data should be used to review strategic assumptions/theories of change/baselines and indicators and assess whether or not they remain valid. Helpful questions to ask may include:

- Have activities been carried out properly and outputs delivered based on the indicators developed?
- Have outputs led to outcomes being achieved, and has the impact been as expected? If not, why not? For example, were assumptions in the plan wrong; have any of the risks

³² See DFID (2011).

³³ Brown, Samii and Kulma (2012), p.26.

³⁴ Brown, Samii and Kulma (2012), p.32.

³⁵ Cohen (2006), p.2.

materialised; have other unexpected events taken place or; has the environment changed?

- Have there been other unintended consequences because of the intervention?
 - Has it done harm or produced negative consequences?
 - Have other priorities/objectives been undermined?
 - Have there been positive unintended consequences or other synergies developed?

Measuring trends over time and comparing across different areas is likely to be more useful than looking at specific numbers. Baselines are often difficult to establish, and may not be reliable in fluctuating circumstances. They should not be seen as absolutes but as comparators for trends. Particular findings may simply be an indication that more research or increased monitoring are needed.

Data needs to be analysed with the benefit of expert opinion and judgment to ensure it does not stand alone but “tells a qualitative story”. Local knowledge and understanding is essential, and engaging those involved in programme implementation will help to explain and contextualise findings (for example, perceptions of security measured on a particular day may have been affected by a specific, one-off, incident rather than representing a general trend). Expert panels are another possible means of verification and contextualisation providing deeper understanding of circumstances.

Results from the data collected can be presented in different ways. Popular methods include dashboards, scorecards and traffic lights to show progress against a handful of indicators. Care must be taken to ensure that the method for presenting results is not unhelpfully reductionist. Presentation of data should always be accompanied by a narrative explaining why certain trends or results have been observed, and provide additional information to highlight any unintended outcomes, either positive or negative.

Review and Adaptation

In addition to continuous or regular monitoring activity, substantive reviews should take place regularly throughout the life of the intervention. The data and analysis produced by the M&E system should be used to enable discussion and debate and support decisions on adapting the strategy, plans and allocation of resources. These should be owned and led by senior leaders/managers, with the participation of key stakeholders and those responsible for implementation. Developing an open and responsive organisational culture is necessary to facilitate honest discussions and implement strategic changes in programmatic interventions.

In the early stages of a stabilisation intervention, as more is being learned about the environment and about the impact of activities, it is likely that plans (along with the ToC) will adjust frequently. This may mean introducing new indicators, while at the same time retaining a core set of consistent indicators to ensure that change over longer periods can be tracked.

Even if initial indicators are not perfect, the temptation to change indicators on a regular basis should be resisted for the sake of consistency. However, it is entirely legitimate for a review process to identify areas of doubt in a plan or ToC, with the intent to revisit it at the next assigned review point. The process of refinement of strategy and ToC will reduce over time in later stages of implementation as the ToC is validated. Focus will then become maintaining the course set by the strategy and identifying significant changes in the external environment.

Evaluating and Learning Lessons for other Interventions

In-depth evaluations may be less useful during the life of the intervention, given the need to maintain flexibility in adapting implementation strategies. However, for accountability and lesson learning purposes, formal evaluations are essential. In most cases, people independent from the implementation of the intervention should carry out evaluations. They should be able to draw on much of the same data used for M&E during the intervention. This should be anticipated in advance so the quality and quantity of evidence gathered can facilitate a broader evaluation process.

Finally, lessons learned from the implementation of stabilisation activities will serve no purpose if they are not collected, analysed and applied to future engagements.

Section Three: Case Studies on Afghanistan and Somalia

Case studies from Afghanistan and Somalia are used here to provide examples of how the challenges of M&E have been addressed in two different contexts. The Helmand Monitoring and Evaluation Programme (HMEP) is an example of how one M&E system has struggled to be everything for everyone and to meet all M&E needs. Somalia faces the challenges of developing an M&E system that will monitor very different indicators of successful stabilisation - namely how a relatively small programme can prove success through catalysing broader engagement of the international community. Information for these case studies was gathered through interviews with HMG policy and programme officials, who have worked within these evaluation systems and/or have extensive experience in M&E, as well as a review of reports compiled from activities and experiences in Afghanistan and Somalia.

M&E Case Study: Helmand Monitoring and Evaluation Programme (HMEP)

“By interrogating assumptions inherent within programming, M&E enables those engaged in programmatic development at the grassroots level to better understand their contribution and impact to the wider goals and to effect mid-course corrections to programming where necessary. In an environment where successful development initiatives are bound to national and international security, impact and evaluation becomes increasingly linked to the protection of our national interests.”³⁶

Rationale for HMEP Development

Helmand has been the focal point for the UK’s defence, diplomatic and development efforts in Afghanistan and, as a result, has come under scrutiny to justify the activities pursued as well as the effectiveness of the interventions.

The Helmand Monitoring and Evaluation Programme (HMEP) was created to improve the delivery and effectiveness of stabilisation efforts and to develop programmes in Helmand to support the Afghan National Development Strategy (ANDS) and the Helmand Plan, with four main outputs:

- Undertake large quarterly waves of perception-based polling to establish baselines for Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) and DFID programmes in Helmand to monitor effectiveness and impact focused on indicators chosen by the PRT and DFID;
- Create an operational and up to date database covering DFID, PRT, Task Force Helmand (TFH), Task Force Leatherneck (TFL) and other donor activities;
- Develop new knowledge from quarterly reporting and up to four ad hoc reactive reports per year aligned to PRT/DFID reporting requirements;

³⁶ Ahmar and Kolbe (2011), p.7.

- Increased programme capacity in the PRT that standardises approaches and affords consistency in reporting across the PRT.³⁷

The HMEP was designed in late 2009 and focused on strategic and innovative data collection to be presented and used in strategic future planning, as well as daily PRT operations. The HMEP focused on collecting primary data, because baseline data did not exist, to help the PRT measure the results of its engagement. Data collection was built on the foundation of individual logframes that mapped the evolution of engagement from conception and rationale to outcomes and impacts. Qualitative and quantitative SMART³⁸ indicators were also developed to measure progress in the essential areas of Governance, Rule of Law, Infrastructure, Agriculture, Counter Narcotics, Health, Education, Growth, Livelihoods and Popular Engagement. Qualitative and quantitative data for these areas was collected by an Afghan research partner with a sampling size of 4,000 households per quarterly wave, at both provincial and district levels using a longitudinal approach. This was the largest survey ever carried out in Helmand. The information collected was then presented through an online database that held graphics, maps, reports and documents based on the logframe approach developed during the planning phase.

Challenges and Evolution of HMEP Usage

HMG invested a significant amount of effort into evaluating the challenges, evolution and use of the HMEP. It was seen as a noteworthy innovation in the field of M&E for HMG practitioners,³⁹ who believed lessons from its use could be replicated in other stabilisation contexts.

a. General Difficulties of M&E

M&E in stabilisation contexts faces specific problems not always encountered in development situations. The context in Helmand was not only challenged by the security environment but complicated due to the number of international actors involved, each working to their own political stabilisation mandate. There were multiple plans based on different timescales and methods for reporting up mutually exclusive chains of command. The international community faced a fractured Afghan Government with dysfunctional or non-existent systems. Data for developing baselines did not exist or, in the best case, were weak. Existing M&E systems based on development priorities or meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MGDs) were not applicable in a stabilisation context that measured outcome and impact on the ability to

³⁷ Ahmar and Kolbe (2011), p.8.

³⁸ Specific, Measureable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound.

³⁹ Hiscock and Saltmarshe (2011).

increase the political legitimacy of the Afghan Government.⁴⁰ The donor community and United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) produced untrustworthy statistics on the allocation, flow, management, auditing and success of aid programmes using partial metrics with a focus largely on the number and size of projects rather than impact. Furthermore, data on sustained effect was excluded even at the local level.⁴¹

Logistical and security challenges for data collection were also difficult to overcome. In addition to having little or no baseline data, there were differing opinions on what should be measured and for what purpose.⁴² Operational units on the ground in Helmand were staffed with a variety of people from the defence, diplomacy and development sectors - each with different skills and a different understanding, approach to, and acceptance of, M&E.

M&E also faced cultural obstacles. There was little understanding on how to gather women's views when they were largely inaccessible. It was also a struggle to find a way to work around the risk of social desirability bias and triangulate information to validate results from the data collected.

b. Initial HMEP Specific Challenges

Different organisational cultures and lack of planning and analysis: Teams deployed within the operational base of the PRT were often stretched to capacity with multiple demands. At the same time they were required to unite a disparate group of short-term actors engaged with their own specific agency mandates. Furthermore, they often had very different levels of knowledge and appreciation of M&E systems. While those coming from the development field are often more comfortable with M&E systems and the need to measure outputs and results, military culture measures the success of an intervention differently. This disconnect was evident from the beginning of PRT engagement in Helmand as M&E was not instituted within a robust management tool-like planning framework and lacked a strong link to the analytical process.

Confusion over the purpose of HMEP: Initially, the HMEP was constructed as a multi-purpose tool, and was seen as overly complex and not specific enough for each HMG actor's needs. HMEP was a hybrid of many different functions and tools. It was expected to generate information on defence, diplomatic and development efforts for HMG, as well as for other international partners, and ended up being pulled in different directions by a multitude of

⁴⁰ Within the "Clear, Hold, Build" mandate, activities undertaken by stabilisation fall squarely within the 'build' phase where they are meant to connect the Afghan population to its government and build a sustainable Afghanistan as envisioned in strategic goals.

⁴¹ Cordesman (2010), p.146.

⁴² Ibid, p.6.

actors on the ground. Was it to be a monitoring tool for development interventions? Should it be used to measure political change? Should it generate data for military purposes?

Evolution of HMEP

HMEP evolved and by 2012-2013 it was being used by most facets of HMG operating in Helmand, as well as by some international partners. Some of the reasons for its increased usage and acceptance were:

- A set of coherent priorities informed by the data coming out of the HMEP were put in place against which the PRT could deliver;
- Greater time and thought had been put into the mechanism of the HMEP to create a tool that people understood the value of and were willing to use;
- The HMG Helmand Plan had also been signed off, which produced a clearer framework with which results could be compared;
- There was clearer ownership of the HMEP between DFID and the PRT through joint cost-sharing, making the tool more accessible, appreciated and utilised.

HMG defence, diplomacy and development actors learned how the tool could be used for their purposes. For the MOD and defence purposes, the HMEP produced raw data that could be analysed to gain insight into atmospherics and the changing reality on the ground as interventions took place. For the FCO, the HMEP assisted in driving strategic decision-making, and provided a political overview and deeper understanding of the drivers of conflict and political settlement, as well as determining whether or not funding milestones were being reached. In a complex cultural and shifting environment it helped the FCO to understand the nature of legitimacy and how people related to the state. For DFID, the HMEP assisted programme management, programme reviews, and the development of baselines and indicators. External stakeholders also used the information coming from the HMEP for triangulation purposes and to compare with their own data being collected.

Lessons Learned from HMEP

- **M&E systems need to be developed at the beginning of a stabilisation intervention during the analysis and planning phase;**
- **Further analysis of the data collected through an HMEP system needs to happen.** Each end user needs to further analyse and triangulate the data produced to assure quality and reliability in regards to specific data and monitoring needs;
- **Intervention hypotheses based on a well thought out ToC should be tested through surveys and analysis to validate the intervention plan before undertaking the action or activities.** This, combined with the regularity of data collection and broad sample sizes accumulated in the quarterly waves of data collection, should produce enough information to suggest general stabilisation priorities;

- **Apply combined qualitative and quantitative data capture methodology.** Qualitative research must be carried out to complement the quantitative data, and enable the programme to unpack and understand observed trends in perceptions. More emphasis needs to be placed on capturing women’s perceptions through a qualitative methodology;
- **Strong data validation is important to create confidence in information and the resulting decisions taken.** Using similar questions and providing quality assurance through annual reviews, the project completion review, and a peer review group that scrutinised the products, data quality analysis and independent validation of survey procedures ensures due rigour in the process, and needs to be done from the start;
- **Visualisation and strategic presentation of information in accessible formats is helpful.** Information produced through HMEP data collection assisted in depicting geographic linkages between different departments of HMG, as well as partner mandates, through mutual information sharing and highlighting the interdependency of stabilisation initiatives in the province.

M&E Case Study: Somalia

Context and Rationale for HMG Stabilisation Engagement in Somalia

The UK Stabilisation Strategy for Somalia⁴³ responds to:

1. UK political commitment to Somalia as a national security priority;
2. The requirement to extend the reach, capacity and legitimacy of the new Somali Government;
3. The necessity of consolidating recent military gains across South-Central Somalia;
4. The need to establish early conditions in new areas to promote stability and recovery.

The UK Somalia Stabilisation Team (SST) is a dedicated, tri-departmental (i.e. FCO, DFID, MOD) stabilisation capability able to move responsively and flexibly to deliver short-term, targeted and catalytic assistance to help establish the conditions for longer-term recovery in South-Central Somalia. The SST aims to deliver effective stabilisation assistance through:

- Rapid implementation of small-scale, catalytic projects which respond to the needs of local Somalis in strategically important regions, and which increase the operability for HMG stabilisation partners;
- Delivery of HMG stabilisation advisory and advocacy efforts in support of international partners’ policies and programmes.

⁴³ UK Stabilisation Team Strategy for Somalia (2013-2014). The portfolio including the Stabilisation Mechanism and the Conflict Pool is around £12 million.

The underlying approach of the SST at the British Embassy in Mogadishu (BEM) is to strive for robust monitoring, verification and documentation of lessons learned to help inform and improve the delivery of other national and international actors' engagements in Somalia.⁴⁴

Challenges of M&E in Somalia

Like most fragile and conflict-affected states, Somalia presents familiar challenges for HMG engagement, not only in terms of delivery of interventions, but also the ability to demonstrate that the assistance provided has had a real and measurable impact and has produced strategic results. Specific to M&E in Somalia, HMG has the following challenges:

- The inability of donors to directly monitor the implementation of activities due to a lack of field presence and real (or perceived) security threats;
- Difficulty triangulating data coming from implementing partners, and a need to rely on local gatekeepers within the community and government for information;
- A lack of understanding of the Somali cultural/clan/political context;
- The absence of reliable verification systems by implementing partners, little rigour in data collection, as well as an absence of detailed baselines;
- Urgent activities implemented on short timeframes, resulting in an absence of M&E systems being put in place;
- A lack of unified systems amongst the donor community for accounting, reporting, management of funds and tracking of results as well as a lack of common baselines, indicators/metrics.

Lessons Learned

The M&E strategy developed by the UK in Somalia seeks to address some of the challenges listed above by applying lessons learned in regards to M&E from HMG engagements in other stabilisation contexts (especially Afghanistan). An additional benefit from M&E lessons learned through the HMEP is that the team in Somalia did not have to “sell” the importance of M&E across all HMG Departments, as it was already recognised to be a core requirement of engagement.

This considered approach to M&E was designed to ensure that HMG stabilisation efforts systematically capture and disseminate lessons learned both for internal and external use to ensure broader impact of the resources dedicated to stabilisation by the international community. HMG engages through programmatic activities in discreet geographic areas, and policy influencing activities to shape wider international intervention through targeted inputs for the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) and AMISOM. Both programmatic and policy

⁴⁴ UK Stabilisation Team Strategy for Somalia (2013-2014).

engagement in Somalia are challenging and, as a result, measuring outputs and impacts requires a flexible and creative approach. Traditional “mechanical” or “technical” tactics for M&E in Somalia are too limited to be effective in this context. To manage this limitation, **the M&E strategy has developed locally appropriate means to address inconsistencies and problems within the following essential areas:**

Communication and reporting: The UK approach seeks to share critical information with key stakeholders to benefit from, and influence, stabilisation interventions. Communication takes place on three levels:

- a. Local public engagement is built into every project, where relevant, to improve transparency and accountability of local officials to their community;
- b. Dedicated communications projects which invest in discreet projects to improve Somali accountability and access to information;
- c. External public communications to inform the UK and Somali domestic public about HMG efforts.

An informal “stabilisation gathering” provides a key, regular forum for donors, UN and selected implementers to share lessons and consider key issues. The forum encourages a frank exchange of experiences and a mechanism to discuss possible solutions to shared M&E problems.

The SST has recognised the need to invest in a wide network of informal relationships. As a result, internal reporting mechanisms have been developed to capture informal information exchanges specific to the Somali context, to improve understanding and build a real time monitoring ability, and to influence policy and programming engagement and adaptation.

The SST has a system of robust reporting requirements that ensures programme updates are submitted every month. Reporting seeks to capture emerging impacts, as well as potential positive or negative consequences arising during implementation. Monthly reporting also functions as an early warning mechanism, capturing potential risks to programme implementation.

Monitoring of engagements occurs almost daily, and strategies have been developed to report on and review projects in an innovative way that includes informal discussions and assessments of the project/programme, combined with formal reviews of the project/risk assessment/due diligence, discreet monitoring and end of project reviews. Recognising that information is subjective and difficult to access, a variety of mechanisms are employed to evaluate, as realistically as possible, the outcomes of the project and potential negative consequences as they present themselves.

Risk: It appears to be understood and accepted across HMG that any programmatic engagement in Somalia is inherently risky. The SST has a deliberately high-risk tolerance, and

recognises the need to risk and fail in their programmatic engagement. There is an understanding of the need to capture, analyse and mitigate risks as well as moderate the consequences of failure and, most importantly, ensure that failure produces lessons to be learned. The SST recruited senior programme managers with proven records of accomplishment in stabilisation contexts, who understand how to communicate the cost/benefit of programming and build trust with other HMG colleagues. Along with a high degree of risk tolerance, programme managers are entrusted with delegated authority from the Conflict Pool. This allows for not only more risks to be taken, and so providing more interesting results and lessons learned from activities, but also more freedom and flexibility to set up the innovative M&E mechanisms needed to adapt programming to respond quickly in volatile contexts. The SST undertakes smaller scale projects, and accepts a higher exposure to risks to develop a better understanding of what approaches could potentially work to pave the way for larger, more extensive and expensive projects.

The team also outsources implementation to a limited pool of implementing partners. While remote management brings its own challenges, it is a means to ensure that programming can occur in areas that have been identified as essential to stabilisation efforts. The SST has a policy not to invest in projects that cannot be directly overseen by trusted partners.

Processes: All processes adopted by the SST were developed from a contextual analysis of the Somali situation, and from the ground up. There was no “cutting and pasting” of assumptions from other stabilisation contexts. Documentation to support all stages of the project cycle were built to respond to the needs on the ground, as well as priorities expressed further up the HMG management chain. Concept notes, project management plans, monthly reports and end of project completion documents all reflect the specific complexity of working in a fragile state, as well as the unique means by which management needs to support project implementation in Somalia.

The SST also employs a flexible approach to project management, recognising the need to adapt and respond to the ever-changing environment in which they operate. This allows for maximum customisation and creativity, understanding that project management systems can be made more robust, as partnerships evolve and capacity is built.

Results frameworks remain live documents able to be adapted and updated as the situation evolves. A “Do No Harm” lens was also informally applied to the selection of projects, and the SST draws on key experts in Somalia for real time information to apply to programme and policy development.

Data collection and verification: Somalia is a complex environment where a deep understanding of the culture and context is essential. The SST, recognising the that there is a continuing lack of data and an inability to collect and verify information coming from

implementing partners, has tried to augment their understanding by collating relevant United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) and AMISOM reports, as well as other donor conflict analyses and situation reports. Data is stored in an accessible way to facilitate evaluations and drawing of lessons for future engagement. The UN Risk Management Unit also conducts due diligence assessments on behalf of the SST.

The SST uses implementing partners that have an active field presence in areas of HMG interest. They also invest in third party mechanisms to both publically and discreetly monitor real time implementation of HMG programming. The SST uses an array of verification sources and has established a Programme Advisory Team (PAT) as one of the means to verify implementing partner due diligence and project delivery. The creation of the PAT has been set up to meet the information needs of the SST, as well as feed information back to HMG Department providing strategic support (see diagram below). The PAT delivers as required short, medium, long-term and ad hoc reports that focus on providing information in regards to: assessment of local needs and capacities; local conflict and clan dynamics; political economy analysis; status of project delivery including monitoring and verification; background information on local implementing organisations, as well as programmatic and delivery recommendations. By using local experts based in the field, information provided to the SST: improves access to newly recovered areas; increases project delivery and oversight, and strategic use of HMG resources; and informs wider HMG policy and engagement for HMG partners.

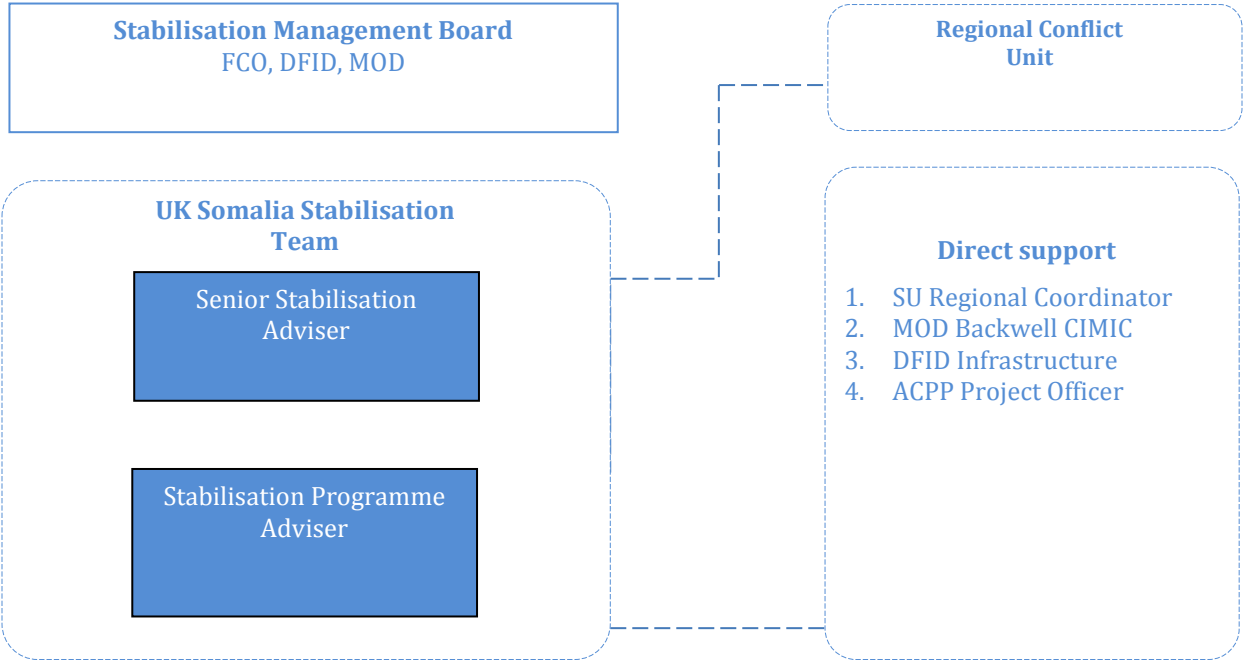


Figure 3 Wiring diagram of UK Somalia Stabilisation Team

Problems with missing data for M&E purposes are retrospectively recorded through the collation of relevant UNDSS or AMISOM reporting, and by working with other donors to use

pertinent conflict assessments or situational reports. Implementation reports from contracted agencies are also used, both as programmatic tools for reporting outputs, and also for updates on relevant issues affecting the local context, and emerging impacts they are seeing from the projects being implemented.

Policy Monitoring is accomplished through recording and archiving of meetings, emails, draft papers and the actual policies. However, determining attribution and impact is challenging because there are multiple actors on the ground attempting to influence policy, and there is often a delay between policy change and the visible impact of that policy on the ground.

Measurements of success are not simply considered in regards to programme implementation or policy uptake, but focus on measuring outputs/outcomes and increased levels of coordination with other stakeholders.

The SST has concluded that success can be determined by how effective it has been in catalysing efforts of other key partners. In an effort to capture the results of both programming and donor engagement, the SST is developing separate indicators and measurements of success for individual projects versus the overall stabilisation effort. Defining and measuring what are successful catalysts to encouraging more effective stabilisation approaches is accomplished through a consultative process involving all stakeholders at the local, regional and national levels.

It is critical to construct frameworks that attempt to balance flexibility with rigour, to provide an indicative picture of potential success in the Somali context taking into account the wider political-security-economic dynamics which will inform HMG’s understanding of the issues, their effect and impact. The SST recognises the need to continually monitor, evaluate and support the legitimacy of political authorities as their work underpins HMG’s policies and programming, and the credibility of HMG’s international position on Somalia.

By way of an example of the kind of projects being implemented by the SST, the following chart comes from the final report of the Sodonka Street Lighting project, September 2013.

Goal of Project	Improve stability in targeted areas of Mogadishu by improving community safety and security, increasing economic opportunities and quality of life and improving the capacity and legitimacy of the regional administration through the installation of solar lighting.
Theory of Change	If the authorities appear as the main driving force behind key development works, interventions will be more inclusive and serve to strengthen the legitimacy of the government and support long-term stability allowing practical cooperation between national and regional authorities thus boosting federal cohesion and national unity.
Selected	Increase in land value along lit streets. Reduction in number of crimes including

Outputs	rape. Public confidence in regional authority has increased. Business hours extended. Increased participation of women in decision making processes through community engagement for a. Increased number of shops/commercial activity in the street as well as increased freedom of movement during hours of darkness.
Selected Outcomes	Greater capacity and legitimacy of authorities. Improved public safety and security. Increased economic activities and quality of life. Creation of new industry providing investment opportunities, employment generation and commercial activities.

Figure 4 Excerpt from Somalia Stabilisation Team programme document

Section Four: Other Tools

Impact Evaluations (IE)

The United States Government Accountability Office (USGAO) argues that: "... randomized experiments are considered best suited for assessing intervention effectiveness where multiple causal influences lead to uncertainty about program effects and it is possible, ethical, and practical to conduct and maintain random assignment to minimize the effect of those influences".⁴⁵

For stabilisation initiatives where the operating environment creates uncertainty in regards to measuring the impact of interventions, IE are one means to measure the net change in intervention outcomes⁴⁶ - by measuring the impact of an intervention on a specific group that received the intervention. IE should be used to decide whether or not to fund, continue or expand an intervention, learn how to replicate, scale up or adapt a successful intervention to suit another context. Also, it can help ensure both upwards and downwards accountability in the use of funds while describing impacts.⁴⁷

IE seeks to investigate the causal attribution or plausible contribution of stabilisation interventions in three components:

1. **Factual:** Compare actual results of the intervention to those expected, and verify if the ToC was true (to whom, where and when did impacts occur through case studies, benefit attribution, etc);
2. **Counterfactual:** What happened in the absence of the intervention (through logical construction or before/after differences);
3. **Investigate and rule out alternative explanations for the results achieved** (through elimination or confirming evidence) thus providing the effectiveness of the intervention.⁴⁸

The IE approach applies experimental or quasi-experimental methods to prove impact. Quantitative analysis of the counterfactual supplemented by a factual analysis using qualitative data tests the ToC, and examines the differences between the two groups to understand why the results achieved are what they are. Results gained from this type of evaluation benefit from specific attribution to an intervention, and are often more specific than traditional

⁴⁵ USGAO (2009).

⁴⁶ Samii, Brown and Kulma (2012), p.2.

⁴⁷ Rogers (2012), p.2.

⁴⁸ Ibid, p.9.

“Before/After” evaluations where it is hard to identify which intervention produced what result, especially in a context where there are multiple organisations and interventions.⁴⁹

To conduct quality IE there are certain M&E considerations that need to be addressed during the planning phase. IE must:

- **Develop a set of indicators** that can meaningfully and reliably define and measure project inputs, implementation processes, outputs, intended outcomes and impacts;
- **Develop logically sound counterfactual** presenting a plausible argument that observed changes in outcome indicators after the project intervention are in fact due to the project and not to other unrelated factors such as an increase in the local economy or programmes organised by other agencies;
- **Determine whether a project has contributed to intended impacts** and benefitted a significant proportion of population, in accordance with accepted statistical procedures;⁵⁰
- **Be timed correctly.** If IE are done too soon during the lifespan of the intervention, there may not be enough evidence to prove impact. Alternatively, if done too late, attribution may be difficult and the intervention will not be able to influence future planning.

IE generally have seven stages of processes, as depicted below.

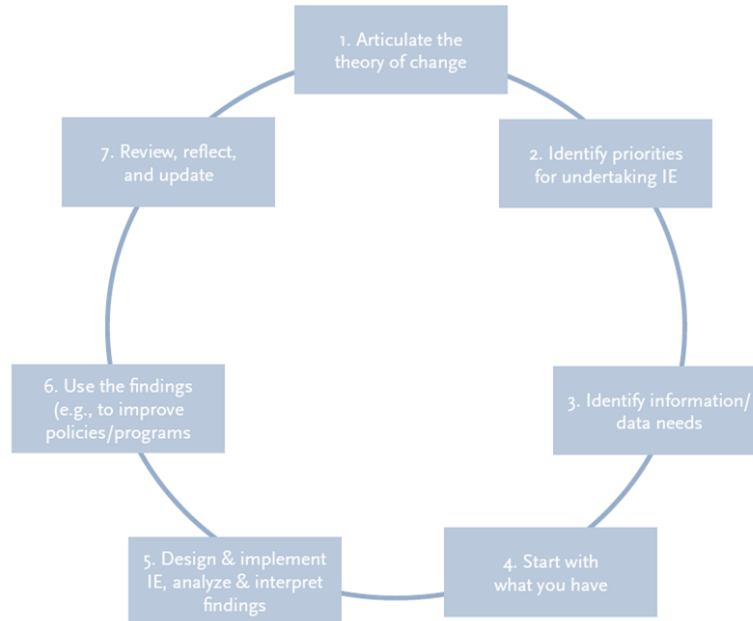


Figure 5 Impact Evaluations taken from (Perrin (2012), p.8.)

⁴⁹ Gaarder and Annan (2013), p.13.

⁵⁰ Bamberger (2006), pp.2-3.

1. **Articulate the theory of change** to clarify the values that will underpin the evaluation and what success looks like in terms of achieving positive impacts, avoiding negative impacts and achieving the desirable distribution of benefits.⁵¹ This is accomplished by articulating a consensual and participatory ToC to explain the results pathway expected from the intervention.
2. **Identify priorities for undertaking IE** to gauge the interest of essential stakeholders and donors, as well as the availability of funding and collaboration to determine the timing of the IE. It should be undertaken when it is likely to contribute useful information which will guide future programming. M&E indicators should be used to understand how far interventions have progressed, and when the intervention may be ready for IE.
3. **Identify information/data needs**, as demonstrated in the following table.

Examples of key evaluation questions for impact evaluation	
<p>Overall impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did it work? Did [the intervention] produce [the intended impacts] in the short, medium and long term? • For whom, in what ways and in what circumstances did [the intervention] work? • What unintended impacts (positive and negative) did [the intervention] produce? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What helped or hindered [the intervention] to achieve these impacts?
<p>Nature of impacts and their distribution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are impacts likely to be sustainable? • Did these impacts reach all intended beneficiaries? 	<p>How it works</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did [the intervention] contribute to [intended impacts]? • What were the particular features of [the intervention] that made a difference? • What variations were there in implementation? • What has been the quality of implementation in different sites? • To what extent are differences in impact explained by variations in implementation?
<p>Influence of other factors on the impacts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did [the intervention] work in conjunction with other interventions, programs or services to achieve outcomes? 	<p>Match of intended impacts to needs</p> <p>To what extent did the impacts match the needs of the intended beneficiaries?</p>

Figure 6 Example questions for evaluations taken from (Rogers (2012), p.4)

4. **Start with what you have.** Look at what information is available from M&E and other sources. Use evidence from existing M&E to understand what it is revealing about the outcomes of an intervention, and consider verifying this through a reflective discussion with essential stakeholders, while eliminating rival plausible explanations.

⁵¹ Rogers (2012), p.5.

5. **Design and implement IE, analyse and interpret findings** to provide plausible explanations for the why and how of the impact of an intervention. A context analysis also should be applied to the data collected to understand how local factors might affect outcomes.
6. **Use the findings** to improve policies and programmes as well as to apply to other stabilisation contexts where applicable.
7. **Review, reflect and update** to regularly test the ToC and watch for unintended consequences or to adapt and refine programming as the situation evolves.⁵²

To plan for an effective IE, one must be aware of the challenges inherent in this form of evaluation that are often exacerbated in stabilisation contexts. IE require certain regularity in the implementation and data collection in stabilisation programmes, and often interventions are improvised and implemented rapidly, which does not allow for the planning required to set-up the counterfactual. IE usually require careful and very specific primary data collection. Data collection is often challenging and given a lower priority than the actual implementation of activities during stabilisation efforts in the immediate aftermath of a violent conflict. It can be tricky and politically challenging to choose which participants should be the beneficiaries of the activities, or choose one group over another when needs are often great within all communities.⁵³ There may also be other challenges faced such as: variations in implementation and the environment across different sites making comparison difficult; diverse components of an intervention and lack of a common ToC to unite these components and agencies; long timescales of the interventions, the influence of other donor programmes; and resources constraints. Understanding the constraints and planning measures to mitigate such potential issues will help ensure a solid IE.

Gathering basic information from routine M&E is essential, so it is important to collect baseline data, monitor outputs and chart the progression of an intervention regularly. **Challenges to data collection for M&E purposes can be met by applying a variety of different means to correct data limitations, such as:**

- The use of secondary data where possible (national surveys, censuses, administration records from schools and clinics, etc);
- Recall by individual participants and Participatory Rapid Assessment (PRA) using communities to reconstruct estimates for baselines;
- The use of essential informants;

⁵² Perrin (2012), pp.9-15.

⁵³ Brown, Samii and Kulma (2012), p.9.

- The use of mixed method data collection that includes both quantitative and qualitative data should also be used.⁵⁴

It is important to ensure that all reconstructed baseline data is triangulated, and weaknesses are assessed and taken into consideration.

Reducing costs and time in data collection can be achieved, where possible, by:

- Deciding with stakeholders to focus, and only collect critical data useful to the evaluation;
- Decreasing the number of interviews conducted, and using small sample sizes;
- Replacing individual interviews with community-led data collection;
- Reducing interview costs by using students, hospitals and self-administered questionnaires;
- Conducting electronic data collection, where possible;
- Sharing costs with other interested stakeholders.⁵⁵

While these are good examples of how to overcome some constraints in conducting IE, stabilisation contexts provide many additional challenges that have to be considered. This is a reminder of the need to be creative in approaches to evaluation, in order for IE to be successfully applied.

Measuring Progress in Conflict Environments (MPICE)

MPICE⁵⁶ attempts to address some of the consistent problems faced in setting up M&E systems in stabilisation contexts. MPICE “... is structured to measure the drivers of violent conflict against the ability of indigenous institutions, both formal institutions of government and informal societal practices, to resolve the conflict peacefully”.⁵⁷

The premise of MPICE is that if you reduce the drivers of conflict, and increase government institutional performance, you will increase stability. This puts MPICE as an M&E tool squarely in the stabilisation context. MPICE also attempts to measure changes in attitudes and behaviours.

MPICE is a catalogue of outcome measurements for stabilisation, grouped into five essential “sectors” deemed essential to the resolution of conflict:

1. Safe and secure environment;
2. Political moderation and stable governance;

⁵⁴ For more information see Bamberger (2012).

⁵⁵ Ibid pp.16-24.

⁵⁶ Agoglia, Dziedzic and Sotirin (2010).

⁵⁷ Ibid, pp.xii-xiv..

3. Rule of law;
4. Sustainable economy;
5. Social well-being.

Each of these sectors is divided further into two sub-sectors - Conflict Drivers and Institutional Performance - to which measurements are attached. Possible data collection methods are then assigned to guide how measurements in the five sectors can be collected. Some possible methods are: **Content Analysis (CA)** through media to track essential issues over time and determine trends that also can serve as an early warning function; **Expert Knowledge (EK)** based on evaluation criteria and data gathering methods to ensure reliability and repeatability; **Quantitative Data (QD)** using statistics to measure change in essential areas; and **Survey/Polling Data (S/PD)** comprised of qualitative information gathered through public opinion surveys.

Once collected, the data is then aggregated and analysed over time to establish trends. The measures are then assigned “-”, “+” or “d” where “-” is negative or declining; “+” is positive or increasing; and “d” indicates the trend depends on other conditions, and requires supplementary contextual analysis to identify positive or negative trends over time. An example is given in the following table.

Sector	Political Moderation and Stable Governance
Sub-sector	Diminish the Drivers of Conflict
Goal	Delivery of Essential Government Services Strengthened
Indicator	Are public expectations for provision of essential public services and utilities being met?
Measures	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Perception of quality of life following international intervention: data gathered through S/PD and assigned. + 2. Level of public satisfaction with accessibility to essential government services and utilities: data gathered through S/PD and assigned. + 3. Number of essential government functions undertaken by international actors: data gathered through Quantitative means and assigned d.

Figure 7 Example of MPICE indicators

The indicator states the concept that is to be evaluated, while the measures describe the empirical data to be collected. If more than one measure is used per indicator, they are aggregated to produce an indicator score. The indicators inform users about whether or not the goal is being realized over time.⁵⁸ Indicators and measurements must be tailored to reflect the policy goals of the intervention, and the conflict dynamics, as well as the cultural context.

⁵⁸ Ibid, p.xvi.

Measures will also need to take gender into consideration in the data collection methodology. This analysis will further fine-tune the measures used to collect information, and understand the information collected within the cultural context. It is critical that there is knowledge of the context, regular or consistent availability of data, and a relative applicability of existing and prototype data collection methodologies to be able to make realistic statements about the progress of an intervention.⁵⁹

The MPICE framework is particularly helpful in: identifying potential obstacles and conflict; tracking progress from the point of intervention; gauging the capacity of state institutions; and establishing realistic goals and increased ownership across government departments by bringing to bear adequate financial and human resources to ensure they are strategically focused. However, like most M&E tools, MPICE struggles to measure causality.⁶⁰

Lessons from MPICE application in Haiti⁶¹ illustrate essential factors that should be considered before applying this M&E tool to stabilisation interventions:

- **Ensure prior agreement between departments on goals and indicators** specific to the context of the interventions. To apply MPICE effectively, there has to be consensus amongst all partners on what the end state of stabilisation would look like through a well-defined and jointly agreed ToC. It cannot simply be a reduction in the drivers of conflict, as that is often easier to achieve than increasing institutional strength and capacity;
- **Increase visualisation of your M&E results and data** to capture information that cannot always be done qualitatively or quantitatively. A multi-disciplinary approach is essential. Also, consider capturing narratives and stories as part of the data collection process;
- **Work with essential stakeholders to assign weightings to goals and rank interventions** for planning purposes to aid the prioritisation of programme implementation goals, and support monitoring;
- **Use the community to help evaluate results to increase ownership and transparency;**
- **Find a way to determine causality for attribution by using a counterfactual.**

Logframe Analysis (LFA) and Outcome Mapping (OM)

Logframe Analysis

A logical framework (logframe) is a basic analytical tool that maps the conceptual journey of a specific stabilisation activity, by looking at the inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes/impacts, in order to evaluate and measure progress over the lifetime of the project. It works best when

⁵⁹ Becker and Grossman-Vermaas (2011), p.149.

⁶⁰ Ibid, p.152.

⁶¹ Ibid.

deliverables are discreet and specific to a well-defined programme. If used flexibly, it has the capacity to facilitate discussions which will identify obstacles to change.⁶² Logframe Analysis (LFA) is a formal procedure, a conceptual framework and a planning mechanism, as well as an M&E framework. It helps to distil essential information to ensure that programmes are being implemented efficiently, and that the results can be measured against targets. LFAs need to be dynamic, flexible and adapted during the life of the programme to identify lessons on what has and has not worked, direct and indirect benefits of an intervention, and ensure greater upstream and downstream accountability.⁶³

There are significant benefits to using LFA in M&E. Processes are strengthened by ensuring broad participation and consensus in the development of defining realistic objectives, which are linked to clear goals and a well-defined ToC. Working through the LFA ensures the commitment of all stakeholders to take ownership of the expected results, as well as the processes to achieve them, and a strategy for managing risks. The LFA is a good tool to work through the identification of problems, and how to solve them. It also increases the conditions for relevance, feasibility and sustainability of the programme.⁶⁴

However, the success of the LFA approach is dependent on the inputs and, more importantly, the willingness and creativity to flexibly adapt and revisit the LFA during the lifetime of the intervention, especially in rapidly changing environments. Other potential weaknesses that need to be overcome are the development of indicators that can be used for continuous monitoring purposes that would be able to capture unintended consequences of the intervention.⁶⁵ This can be addressed by ensuring that qualitative achievements are included in the logframe. Lessons from Somalia suggest that one way to achieve this would be to disaggregate indicators to create a series of ranked stages against which progress can be marked.⁶⁶

There are nine steps⁶⁷ in constructing a logframe that would lend itself to an M&E framework:

1. Context analysis;
2. Stakeholder analysis;
3. Situation analysis;
4. Objectives analysis;

⁶² Ahmar and Kolbe (2011), p.4.

⁶³ DFID (2011/2013), p.23. This Guidance note on how to use the Logical Framework provides a step-by-step approach for application in FCAS contexts as well as an explanation on how to revise and update the LFA.

⁶⁴ Örtengren (2004), p.24.

⁶⁵ Bakewell and Garbutt (2005), pp.10-19.

⁶⁶ Saltmarshe (2012), p.19.

⁶⁷ Örtengren (2004), p.7.

5. Plan of analysis;
6. Resource planning;
7. Indicators linked to objectives;
8. Risk analysis and management plan;
9. Analysis of assumptions.

A common method of capturing the results of this process is through a results chain/logical framework covering impact/goal, outcome/purpose, output and input, and assumptions. A risk matrix is also produced separately, but is linked to the logframe and should be undertaken during the analysis process. Military planning processes produce a similar result, including an end state, effects and supporting effects, but do not tend to capture the supporting logic to the same extent. In both cases, the level of control exercised by those implementing the intervention decreases in the move from inputs and outputs through to impact.

There are many forms a LFA could take. One example is provided below.⁶⁸

Narrative Summary	Expected Results	Performance Measurements	Assumption/Risk Indicators
Project/programme goal to which this initiative is to contribute.	Impact or long term result that is the logical consequence of achieving the specified outcomes.	Performance indicators provide evidence that the programme/project has contributed to the stated impact.	Assumptions are the necessary conditions that must exist for the cause/effect relationships between outcomes and impact to behave as expected. Risk indicators will measure the status of the assumptions defined above.
Project/programme purpose is the objective that addresses the priorities of the identified beneficiaries, and is achievable within the scope of the project activities.	Outcomes are medium term results achievable within the period of the intervention, and are the logical consequence of achieving specified outputs.	Performance indicators provide evidence that the programme/project has achieved stated outcomes.	Assumptions are the necessary conditions that must exist for the cause/effect relationships between outputs and outcomes to behave as expected. Risk indicators will measure the status of the assumptions defined above.
Resources are the inputs and/or activities required	Outputs are short-term results and immediate	Performance indicators that will provide evidence that	Assumptions are the necessary conditions that must exist for the cause/effect

⁶⁸ CIDA (2001).

to achieve the project purpose, planned budget for each type of resource and total project budget.	consequences of project activities and inputs.	the project has achieved the stated outputs.	relationships between inputs and outcomes to behave as expected. Risk indicators will measure the status of the assumptions defined above.
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Figure 8 Example of Log Frame Analysis

The rows represent different levels of analysis within the project/programme. The columns describe the vertical logic of the project’s strategic elements, the chain or results, and the uncertainties related to their realisation.

However, the typical LFA does not provide much guidance on what is useful to track, and needs to be revised to include essential information to assist in tracking and reporting on stabilisation initiatives. It also does not take into account unanticipated consequences. Therefore indicators of impact are needed that would reliably link the activities of the programme to progress towards achieving the goal. M&E information only really exists in two columns: indicators and means for verification.

Therefore, to make a LFA operational for M&E purposes, it needs to be developed one step further as indicated in the following matrix.⁶⁹

Outcome	Medium term results and in-term gains in performance because of changes in knowledge, behaviour or attitudes.
Performance Questions	List of questions that need to be answered, to inform the extent to which you are achieving the programme goal.
Indicators and Information Needs	Determine input, output and impact indicators, and what type of information is needed, defined by the type of change the programme is trying to achieve.
Baseline Information	Determine what data exists, what is missing, and what you need to know.
Data Collection Methods	Qualitative and quantitative.
Implementation Support	Systems needed for collection, human and financial resources, and capacity assessment. Ensure systems are useful, feasible, legal, ethical and accurate.
Communication	Reporting schedule, and who will receive the reports. Informal as well as formal communication.

Figure 9 Operationalising Log Frame Analysis for M&E

⁶⁹ European Commission Civil Society Fund in Ethiopia (2011) Umhlaba Development Services, pp.10-12.

Each row of the matrix is completed for each outcome developed in the LFA. Data collection should be reduced to the bare minimum necessary to meet essential management, as well as learning and reporting requirements.

Outcome Mapping

The LFA can also be used in combination with Outcome Mapping (OM).⁷⁰ OM helps us learn about the influence or progression of change amongst direct partners as part of an intervention. It also helps assessors think systematically and practically about what they are doing, and adaptively manage variations in strategies, to bring about the desired outcomes.⁷¹ OM is introduced during the planning stage, and is a set of tools to design and gather information on outcomes defined as behavioural changes amongst “boundary partners”, or those with whom the project or programme interacts directly.

The principles of OM are based around four concepts: actor-centred development and behavioural change; continuous learning and flexibility in project/programme implementation; participation and accountability involving stakeholders and partners; and non-linear contribution to achieving goals. OM works best: in partnerships when there is a need to clarify the roles of stakeholders; in projects that focus on building capacity and; when there is a need for a deeper understanding of social factors. OM is also helpful in programmes where there is a need to promote knowledge, influence policy and tackle complex problems.⁷²

There are three stages to OM:⁷³

Stage One - Planning: Establish consensus on the macro level changes that the project or programme will bring about through development of a jointly agreed ToC, and plan the strategy that will be used to bring about these changes. It should answer the questions of why, who, what and how.

Stage Two - Monitoring: A framework for on-going monitoring of project/programme activities and boundary partners’ progress towards achieving outcomes. This is a self-assessment system that uses data collection tools like: outcome journals to track impact against progress markers; strategy journals to test and adapt the programme strategy; and performance journals to log organisational practices, and gauge the need for improvements for implementation of activities.

⁷⁰ Earl, Carden and Smutylo (2001).

⁷¹ Research to Action (2012), p.1.

⁷² Jones and Hearn (2009), pp.1-2.

⁷³ Research to Action (2012), p.1.

Stage Three - Evaluation Planning: Identification of the evaluation priorities, and development of the evaluation plan that makes good use of resources and timing to provide strategic benefits to the programme.

Combining the LFA and OM models (Fusion Model) ensures that the focus of M&E is oriented on the overall goal to be achieved, based on explicit consideration of changes in behaviour of project/programme partners.

Referring to the diagram below:⁷⁴

- **Overall Goal** seeks to provide a clear expression of what partners see for their future.
- **Programme Goal** describes the concrete changes the project is to achieve.
- **Indicators** are assigned to measure the achievement of project outcomes.
- **Impact Hypothesis** links programme goal to overall goal.
- **Outcome Challenges** allocate tasks, responsibilities and activities that need to be carried out to contribute to the overall programme goal. to partners Here qualitative and quantitative indicators are defined for each partner to monitor changes in behaviour.
- **Strategy Mapping** defines the outputs and activities to be undertaken.
- **Mission** describes the overall support provided by the external change agent.
- **Organisational Practices** are the internal strategies that the change agent applies to respond flexibly and creatively during the evolution of the programme.

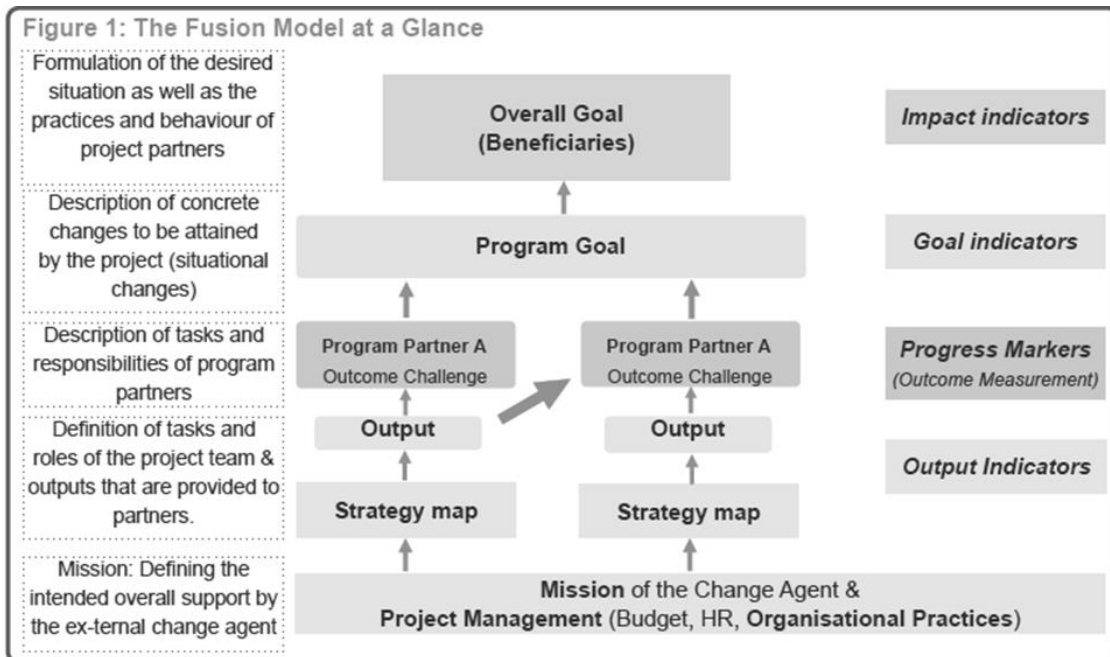


Figure 10 Fusion of Log Frame Analysis and Outcome Mapping

⁷⁴ Ambrose and Roduner (2009), pp.3-4.

This fusion of the LFA and OM methods creates a potentially powerful mechanism for conducting M&E in stabilisation contexts. Most programmes will necessarily produce a logframe. Combining the logframe approach with the OM mechanism provides flexibility and involves partners in the ownership of activities that track and monitor behavioural change through innovative data collection tools.

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