



ENGAGING IN FRAGILE CONTEXTS

DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION **FUNDAMENTALS**

Fragility is the combination of **exposure to risk** and the **insufficient capacity of the state, systems and/or communities** to manage, absorb or mitigate those risks.

Poverty, violence and environmental degradation are concentrated in fragile contexts and fragility itself can also lead to other negative outcomes, including conflict.



WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Fragile contexts undermine the ability of individuals to live decent, secure lives and of communities to reduce poverty. As a result, the world is becoming increasingly unequal, with the furthest behind falling even further behind.

Fragile countries were home to an estimated 1.8 billion people in 2021, approximately 23% of the world's population. By 2030 this population is expected to increase to 2.2 billion (26% of the world's population).

A significant share of official development assistance (ODA) is spent in fragile contexts: equal to USD 61.1 billion or 59% of net country-allocable ODA in 2020. ODA is an especially critical resource in the 13 extremely fragile contexts, where the volume of ODA was 8 times greater than foreign direct investment (FDI) and 4 times greater than remittances in 2020.

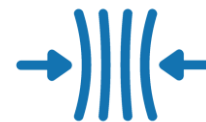
Addressing the root causes of fragility takes generations. It requires long-term partnerships that go beyond programming cycles to create lasting stability and prevent conflict.



Development actors engage early and coherently in fragile contexts for prevention, in support of [SDG 16](#) on peace, justice and strong institutions.



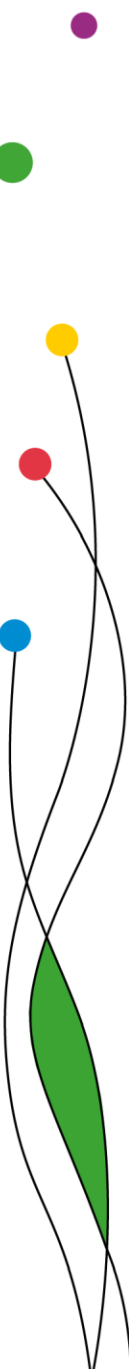
Organisations apply a [Nexus approach](#) to their engagement and adapt their systems and approaches accordingly.



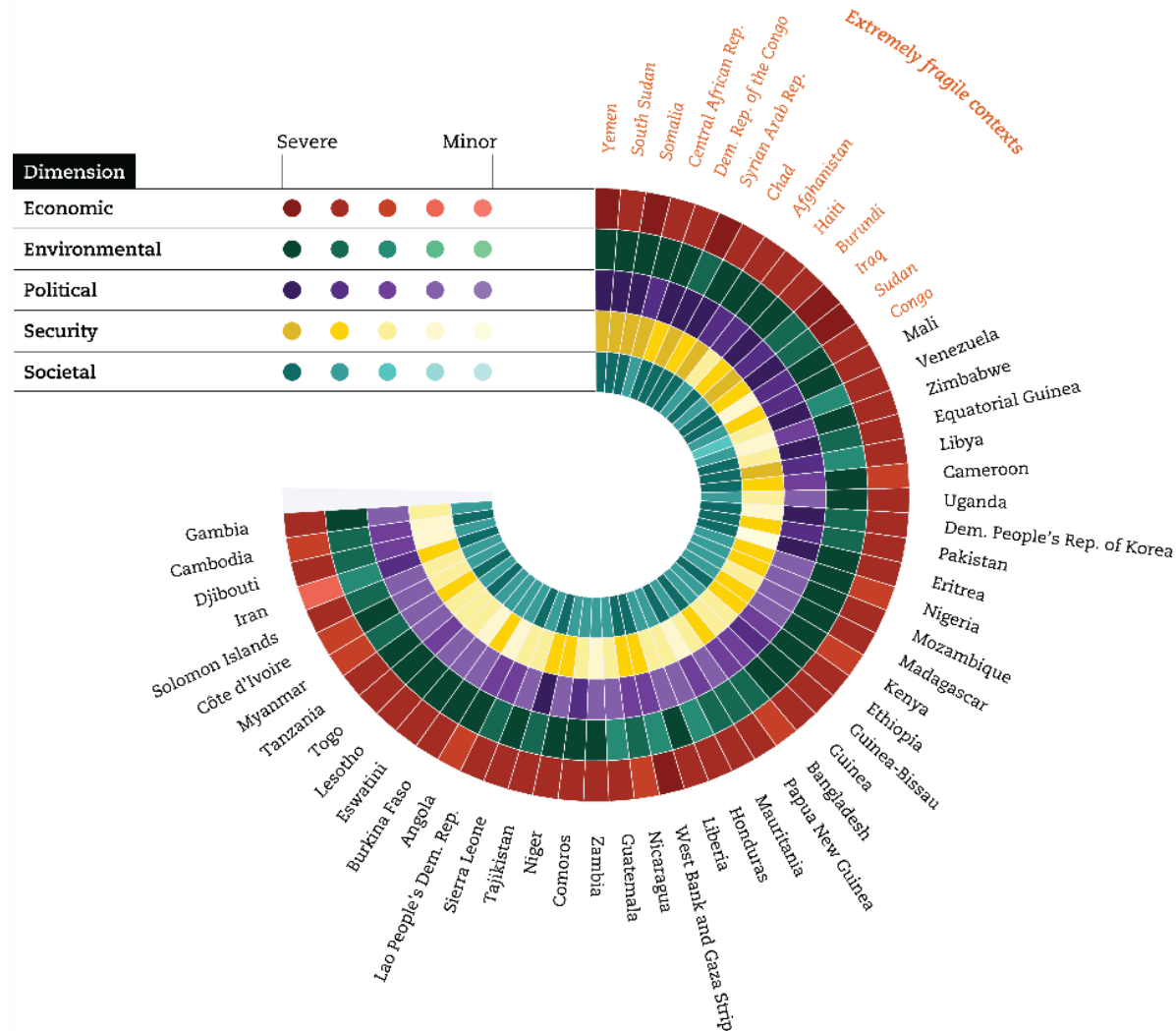
Engagement contributes to reducing the risk and impact of crises and conflict, supports resilience at local and national levels, and strengthens peace.



The root causes and drivers of humanitarian needs are addressed and reduced, improving stability, lives and poverty reduction.



FRAGILITY FRAMEWORK

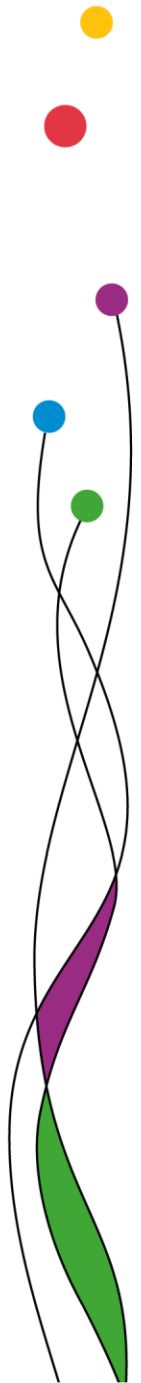


The [OECD Fragility Framework](#) analyses fragility in 175 contexts across the world.

The 57 contexts presented in the [2020 States of Fragility Report](#) (and shown opposite) are the most fragile. This includes 13 extremely fragile contexts. Extreme fragility reflects a very high to severe degree of fragility across all five dimensions in the framework.

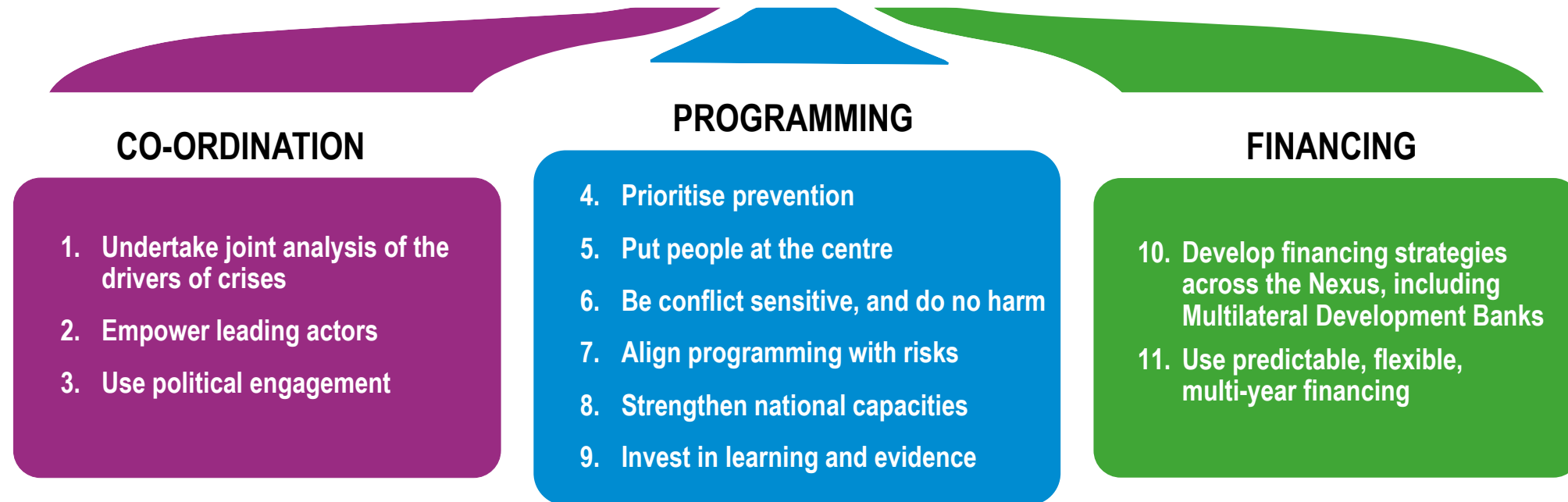
The framework measures fragility on a **spectrum of intensity** and expressed in different ways across **economic, environmental, political, security and societal** dimensions.

A sixth dimension – **human** – will be added in **2022**.



BASIC STANDARDS

The [Humanitarian Development Peace Nexus](#) DAC Recommendation outlines 11 principles for bringing more coherence and complementarity to peace, development and humanitarian international engagement in fragile contexts. The principles are grouped into three themes:



Pillar II (Section II.3) of the [OECD DAC Peer Review Analytical Framework](#) sets out basic standards for DAC members to ensure they are **fit for fragility and humanitarian contexts**. This includes that engagement should contribute to reducing the risk and impact of crises and conflict, support building resilience at local and national level and strengthen peace and conflict prevention.

GOOD PRACTICES



Co-ordination

Meeting the needs of crisis affected people and contributing to longer-term development and peace requires coherent efforts, informed by joint analysis, and backed up by relevant political engagement. Actors must also be empowered to co-ordinate across and within organisations.

- Belgium's [Fragility Resilience Assessment Management Exercise \(FRAME\) tool](#) has been used for common risk and opportunity analysis with stakeholders in Mali, Burkina Faso and the Democratic Republic of Congo.
- Sweden facilitates the nexus donor group in the Democratic Republic of the Congo through a nexus adviser based in the Swedish Embassy. The donor group covers a range of activities, from information exchange, co-ordinating office functions, and practical processes to map and track resourcing against needs.
- [Canada](#), Portugal and the [United Kingdom](#) use cross-departmental task teams for particular crises, building on different expertise across government (humanitarian, development, political, security).
- [Spain](#) takes peace and inequalities as an entry point for development co-operation, supporting co-ordination and coherent action across its development and peace efforts.
- The European Union, World Bank and United Nations together conduct joint peace and conflict analysis.



GOOD PRACTICES



Programming

Programming is inclusive, joined-up, people-centred, and prioritises prevention. It ensures collective outcomes, is aligned with risks and contributes to strengthening country-level capacities.

- Austria makes [training on conflict sensitivity](#) available to all staff, including those in partner countries, as well as local partners.
- Finland has created a [Finnish Fund for local co-operation](#), managed by embassies, that provides core and project support to local civil society organisations in crisis-prone countries and territories for up to two years.
- Japan coherently [links its efforts on disaster prevention, preparedness and response](#), and helps to set policy standards on disaster risk reduction in multilateral fora and through strong bilateral relations with partner country governments.
- Iceland makes [use of country systems](#) at district level, assisting some of the more marginalised and rural communities in low-income and fragile contexts. [Its programming](#) supports district budgets and uses district systems to monitor projects.



GOOD PRACTICES



Financing

Financing instruments and mechanisms are flexible, predictable and multi-year, and financing strategies are co-ordinated across different policy areas. Approaches to multilateral financing create incentives for the multilateral system to move beyond institutional divides and deliver results together.

- New Zealand has the option to carry over planned disbursements beyond the three-year government budget, thereby avoiding disbursement pressure at the end of a budget window.
- The United Kingdom has no fixed humanitarian budget, providing flexibility to respond to needs according to its own and its partners' analysis.
- Ireland channels a high share of bilateral ODA to and through civil society organisations (CSOs) with 21% allocated as core contributions. It also makes highly flexible humanitarian funding available to CSOs (over 50% is un-earmarked or only softly earmarked funding).
- Belgium is increasing the [share of non-earmarked funding](#) for humanitarian support.



GOOD PRACTICES



The Nexus Recommendation as a roadmap for managing change within and across organisations

Organisations have used the Nexus Recommendation to manage organisational change to support more coherent action in three main ways:

- **Grand strategies.** These involve re-wiring the institutional setup. For example: The United States' [US Global Fragility Act](#), and the World Bank Group's [Strategy for Fragility, Conflict and Violence](#).
- **Bottom-up approaches.** These involve incremental reform and cultivating internal coalitions for change. For example: Canada's Nexus Working Group, and Switzerland's Nexus Learning Journey.
- **Targeted measures.** These involve generating strategic impetus in critical areas, either within organisations (Nexus taskforces) or across them (inter-agency Nexus Coordinators). Examples include:
 - [International Network on Conflict and Fragility \(INCAF\)](#)
 - [UN Joint Steering Committee \(JSC\) to Advance Humanitarian and Development Collaboration](#)
 - [Inter-Agency Standing Committee \(IASC\) Results Group 4 on Humanitarian-Development Collaboration](#)
 - DAC-UN Dialogue of Adherents to DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus



MEASURING SUCCESS

How do we know if DAC Members are moving in the right direction?

- ▶ Development and peace efforts in partner countries are driven by a conflict-sensitive analysis informed by the different dimensions of fragility.
- ▶ Development partners take an adaptive programming approach and formulate relevant guidance for staff.
- ▶ Financial engagement, including humanitarian assistance in protracted crises, is based on an overall financing plan and not on compartmentalised sources of funding.
- ▶ Engagement focuses on crisis and conflict prevention always, development co-operation whenever possible and humanitarian assistance only when it is necessary. When used, humanitarian assistance is provided in line with the humanitarian principles.



RESOURCES

The [DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian Development Peace Nexus \(2019\)](#) provides a comprehensive framework for more collaborative and complementary humanitarian, development and peace actions, particularly in fragile and conflict-affected situations.

The 2007 [Principles for good international engagement in fragile states and situations](#) help international actors foster constructive engagement with national and international stakeholders in countries with weak governance and conflict, and during episodes of temporary fragility in others.

The [OECD Fragility Framework](#) measures fragility on a spectrum of intensity and expressed in different ways across economic, environmental, political, security and societal dimensions.

This recent [OECD working paper](#) draws on case study research from DAC member experiences and a secondary literature review to offer practical guidance on supporting fragile contexts.

Find relevant evaluations via the [DAC Evaluation Resource Centre \(DEReC\)](#).

Relevant topics in this series

[Risk management](#) should enable a shared understanding of and approach to managing risks.

[Effective multilateral partnerships](#) create incentives for the multilateral system to deliver in a joined-up way.

[People and skills](#), as engaging in fragile contexts draws out specific staff and human resource considerations for organisations.

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DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION FUNDAMENTALS

This series unpacks development co-operation standards and illustrates how DAC members are applying them. Applying standards can help all actors to fulfil their ambitions and commitments.

Each *Fundamentals* document introduces a key aspect of effective development co-operation, sets out *basic standards*, offers *good practice* examples, and identifies *relevant resources*.

Other topics in this series, which will be expanded and updated over time, can be found on the [Development Co-operation TIPs • Tools Insights Practices](#) peer learning platform. For comments, contact DCD.TIPs@oecd.org.

