



Strengthening resilience. Creating new prospects.

How transitional development assistance strengthens resilience.

Time and time again, environmental, political, economic and social crises pose a serious threat to the populations they affect, particularly in countries with fragile governmental structures and high levels of poverty. The people in the areas where such crises occur are often insufficiently prepared to respond to them. Particularly vulnerable individuals are often hit the hardest, their livelihoods jeopardised by recurring conflicts and (external) shocks.

Since 2015, international development cooperation has been restructured and ambitious targets have been set with the goal of protecting vulnerable people and better equipping them to deal with crisis situations. Strengthening resilience has been a core focus in all relevant frameworks since then (cf. 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Action Agenda on Financing for Development, Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Stockholm Declaration on Addressing Fragility and Building Peace in a Changing World, among others). This is not without reason: impact studies show that every euro invested in strengthening the resilience of structures results in long-term cost-savings of around four euros.

This fact sheet supplements the [Strategy on Transitional Development Assistance](#) issued by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) in presenting the concept of resilience and outlining its importance in ensuring that BMZ's transitional development assistance projects are successfully implemented.

How is resilience defined?

The overarching goal of crisis management at BMZ is to strengthen the **resilience** of people and local structures to the impact and consequences of crises. They are empowered

- to cope independently with crises and
- to prepare themselves for recurring stresses in order
- to mitigate negative effects of crises and
- to gradually overcome them permanently through structural changes.

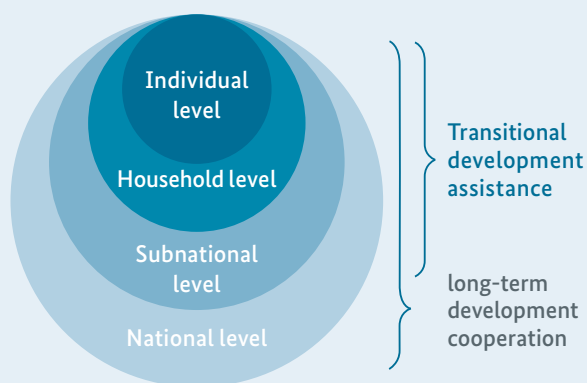
Following the principle of promoting participation and self-help, crisis management strengthens the development capacity of the people and structures affected, and promotes them in a targeted manner.

Transitional development assistance (TDA) aims to **strengthen the resilience** of the people and structures affected in an effective and sustainable manner, while also taking into account the particular challenges and interdependencies inherent to the **humanitarian-development-peace nexus (HDP nexus)**. This in turn guarantees the coherence and complementarity of the measures with those of humanitarian aid, long-term development cooperation and peace-building, and promotes strategic, content-related cooperation. To this end, certain goals shared by humanitarian aid and development cooperation (collective outcomes) may provide guidance.



Whose resilience is to be strengthened?

Determining whose resilience is to be strengthened is of vital importance when it comes to successfully designing a programme. Transitional development assistance aims to strengthen resilience at the **individual, local, regional or sub-national level**. Strengthening resilience at the national and supranational levels falls under the remit of long-term development cooperation and constitutes an important interface with the HDP nexus.



How is resilience to be strengthened?

Strengthening resilience is referred to as **capacity development in fragile contexts**. Capacity development relies on strengthening the following three resilience capacities:

Stabilisation capacities allow people affected by crises to meet their basic needs and enable important structures to retain their functionality, thereby ensuring survival during and after times of crisis.

Strengthened **adaptation capacities** empower people and structures to adapt to long-term changes, cope with negative impacts and, ideally, minimise them.

Adaptation capacities

Strengthened **transformation capacities** enable people and structures to address the root causes of problems and to promote structural change for sustainable livelihoods.

Transformation capacities

Crisis prevention and preparedness, meaning structural preparation for disaster situations, are also important in crisis management. They enable people and structures to analyse risks and prevent future crises.

In this context, **risk** is understood as the probability of crises occurring and their negative effects.

It is not always possible to clearly delineate resilience capacities; whether a given measure is transformative or adaptive depends on the **context** and the **target group**. The important thing is that they are analysed, taken into account and clearly indicated during planning and programme design.

What does that mean in practice?

In fragile contexts, which are often shaped by violent conflicts and the consequences of climate change – such as drought, desertification or water shortage – multi-layered, interdependent vulnerabilities exist. A **multi-sectoral approach** that successfully focuses on resilience capacities where they are lacking or weak could include the following exemplary measures:

Providing transfer services could help to satisfy basic needs in the short term, thereby strengthening **stabilisation capacities** by improving the food situation and making it possible to (re)construct productive infrastructure. **Adaptation capacities** could be strengthened by sharing knowledge and skills in the areas of food and nutrition, hygiene and dryland farming methods. **Transformation capacities** could be strengthened through holding training sessions on

peaceful conflict resolution and by promoting local dialogue as a means of boosting local social cohesion. Helping local health care centres to improve their skills could also ensure better long-term nutrition – particularly for mothers and children. The only way to strengthen resilience in an integrated way is to combine these measures into a multi-sectoral approach.

Resilience in the project cycle

To ensure that TDA projects make a meaningful contribution to strengthening resilience, the concept of resilience must be taken into consideration at every phase of the project cycle – from analysis to planning, programme design and monitoring, all the way to final evaluation.

Resilience analyses, which include *peace and conflict assessments (PCA)* and gender analyses, are of central importance for risk- and crisis-informed development cooperation.

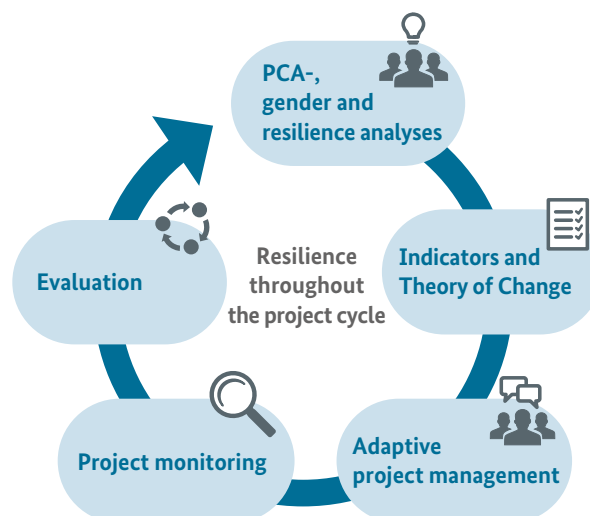
This makes it possible to gain a thorough understanding of:

- (i) existing **risks and crises** in context;
- (ii) the affected and responsible actors and structures, as well as their **strengths, potential and abilities** (resilience capacities) in coping with these risks and crises;
- (iii) the **needs and opportunities** for further strengthening crisis management (incl. prevention) capacities on a cross-sectoral basis.

The resilience analysis informs portfolio and project planning, and is created and used in the most participatory way possible. If there is already a planning tool that can be used as the basis for a project in a country or at a sub-national level, that tool should be used to guarantee complementarity, coherence and cooperation. These planning tools can be added to and optimised using the outcomes drawn from the resilience analysis.

The capacities and competences that are identified in the resilience analysis as to be strengthened (the *output level*), as well as their usefulness in coping with crises and risks (the *outcome level*) provide the starting point for **project planning and project design**. These are addressed in the *theory of change*, which outlines the desired

change process for the project. Moreover, it is used as the basis for steering and monitoring the project.



To make it possible to measure resilience strengthening, **indicators** are created to determine:

- whose resilience is to be strengthened (250 single mothers, for example), as well as
- which resilience capacity is to be strengthened, how and to what end (in the case of the 250 single mothers mentioned above, this could be their adaptation capacities; the women could organise themselves as seed producers, securing their family's livelihood by producing and selling seeds for drought resistant crops, while at the same time contributing to drought-resistant agriculture).

For projects, this means that these indicators often relate to specific activities that facilitate or improve not only the ability to make decisions or take action, but also ownership, participation and access. This approach ensures that the findings from the surveys and analyses are used to shape a programme that has resilience at its core.

The **monitoring and evaluation system** is designed to continually record possible changes to the context and adapt them accordingly in the *theory of change*. Depending on possible changes in the context, it may be necessary to adapt or expand on the measures and associated indicators that were part of the original project application. By adapting project activities to changing contextual conditions (including due to new/additional stress factors and/or shocks), it is ensured that the objectives remain achievable (**adaptive project management**).

The information gained through monitoring is used, along with other collected data, as the basis for evaluating the projects.

For BMZ, formulating *theories of change* that relate specifically to resilience and developing suitable indicators for presenting and measuring the progress made in strengthening resilience are part of a **collaborative learning process** within the framework of its expert dialogue with its implementing partners.

An example from our work

With the support of the BMZ, the World Food Programme (WFP) has launched the joint **Sahel Resilience Initiative (SRI)** an **integrated, multi-sectoral package of measures** designed to strengthen the resilience of people, households and both local and national structures across the G5 Sahel countries – Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger.

The aim of this multi-sectoral approach is to improve livelihoods and means of production, as well as education and nutrition. This will be

achieved by providing multi-year investments in close partnership with the governments in the countries and in collaboration with a number of different partners. To ensure that resilience is strengthened sustainably and to support the transformation processes, the SRI will work with the same communities over a five-year period. The programme focuses on people's needs, potential and capacities, who are involved in choosing and planning all activities through participatory processes. The programme has so far been able to reach 1.2 million people.

Partnerships are key to implementing an integrated approach to strengthen resilience. For this reason, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has been commissioned to work alongside the WFP in implementing measures to improve food and nutrition security, education, health, WASH (water, sanitation, hygiene) and child protection in jointly selected districts in Mali, Mauritania and Niger. This **joint implementation** is designed to create synergies and makes it possible to address the different causes of vulnerability with a comprehensive, multi-sectoral approach.



Published by Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) Division 222

As at: 06/2021

Contact: RL222@bmz.bund.de
www.bmz.de

Photo: © WFP / Aurelia Rusek; © WFP/ Benoit Lognone

Layout: EYES-OPEN, Berlin

Address of the BMZ offices:

BMZ Berlin
Stresemannstraße 94
10963 Berlin, Germany
T +49 (0)30 18 535-0

BMZ Bonn
Dahlmannstraße 4
53113 Bonn, Germany
T +49 (0)228 99 535-0