



Working together to overcome crises

Transitional development assistance: an important BMZ nexus instrument

Crises such as violent conflicts, forced displacement, extreme natural events and epidemics are on the rise globally. They have not only increased in quantity but have also changed in nature: crises have multidimensional causes, have become more complex and thus also more protracted. In such contexts, the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) draws on a tried-and-tested crisis instrument: **transitional development assistance**.

The aim of **transitional development assistance (TDA)** is to **strengthen the resilience** of particularly affected people and local structures. In this way, TDA helps strengthen local crisis management capacities and reduces the risk of crises recurring.

TDA builds bridges from acute **humanitarian assistance** to long-term **development cooperation** and integrates **peacebuilding** activities. This makes it a relevant BMZ instrument for the implementation of the **humanitarian-development-peace nexus (HDP nexus)**.

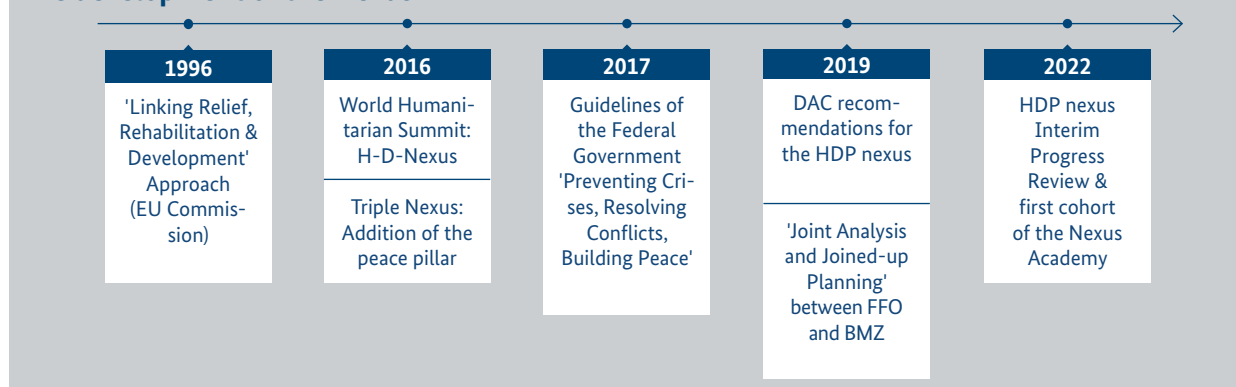
The **humanitarian-development-peace nexus (HDP nexus)** refers to the coherent link between humanitarian assistance, development cooperation and peacebuilding. The aim of the HDP nexus is to sustainably reduce the needs and risks of individuals affected by crises, to address their root causes and to strengthen the resilience of people and local structures. To this end, different actors pool their expertise, contribute their respective strengths and work together on collective outcomes.

Coordination, synergies, complementarity

The idea of a **better integration of humanitarian assistance and long-term development approaches** is not new. The European Commission already described the 'linking relief, rehabilitation and development' approach in a report published in 1996. The integration of the 'peacebuilding' pillar is a more recent development. It demonstrates that the engagement in countries with recurrent and long-standing crises requires a **coordinated approach**. The recommendations on the HDP



The development of the Nexus



nexus published in 2019 by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) represent the contemporary reference point for the HDP nexus. They call for **harnessing synergies and for complementarity** across the three pillars, particularly in countries affected by fragility and crises.

How does TDA contribute to the nexus?

The central objective of TDA is to **strengthen multi-sectoral resilience**, focusing on the local level and local partners. It operates in a participatory manner, reflecting a bottom-up approach and the 'leave no one behind' principle.

Paving the way for resilience

As a crisis instrument, TDA connects the three pillars of the HDP nexus. Complementary to humanitarian assistance, it can be deployed **quickly, flexibly and independently from governments** in acute crisis situations. This is facilitated by a separate TDA budget, which distinguishes it from usual bilateral development cooperation.

At the same time, as a development-orientated BMZ instrument, it pursues a **structure-building approach**. With project durations of usually three to five years, it goes beyond short-term emergency aid and lays the foundation for long-term development cooperation.

TDA projects **address structural causes of humanitarian crises and conflicts**, such as food insecurity. In this way, they also contribute to peaceful coexistence. In addition, they can implement explicit peacebuilding measures, strengthen local peace potentials and form strategic partnerships with

peace actors, for example within the framework of consortium projects.

Overall, it is evident that TDA **enables integrated approaches along the HDP nexus**. With the overarching objective of sustainably strengthening the resilience of the local population and structures, it quickly responds to humanitarian needs in fragile contexts, addresses structural causes of crises and lays the foundation for sustainable development and peace.

Nexus formats

The **HDP nexus** guides the **way of working in all TDA projects**. To link measures and partners from humanitarian assistance, development cooperation and peacebuilding even more efficiently and effectively, TDA promotes **various nexus formats**:

- **Joint Programmes** of two or more UN agencies, for instance of the World Food Programme (WFP) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).
- **Complementary commissioning** of projects from different organisations that work closely together, for example WFP and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ).
- **Nexus 'chapeau' projects** of non-governmental organisations that combine humanitarian assistance with structure-building TDA in two parallel projects of the BMZ and the Federal Foreign Office (FFO) under one collective outcome. Several non-governmental organisations can also form nexus partnerships via **consortium projects**.



In Niger, WFP and UNICEF are pooling their expertise to strengthen the population's resilience.

The application of the different formats depends on the **context-specific needs and partner constellations**. It is explicitly not expected that every organisation works in a humanitarian, development-oriented and peacebuilding manner. What all formats have in common is that they promote **cooperation** and a **coherent approach** between the various implementation partners of TDA in line with their respective mandates and strengths. This facilitates a more efficient crisis response and sustainably reduces humanitarian needs.

Nexus coordination

As a crisis instrument, structure-building TDA is always embedded in the **Federal Government's overall engagement**. Within the BMZ, TDA is coordinated on a country-specific basis with bilateral cooperation, the Special Initiative 'Displaced Persons and Host Countries', and civil society and multilateral approaches. In addition, the BMZ coordinates closely with other actors in the Federal Government, in particular with the FFO as part of the Joint Analysis and Joined-up Planning approach. This is complemented by coordination within the donor community and multilateral forums. Through various formal and informal formats at different levels, the BMZ enables the **integration** of TDA with bilateral cooperation, humanitarian assistance and peacebuilding by other actors and increases the effectiveness of interministerial and international HDP nexus implementation.

Learning processes

In order to continuously develop the implementation of the HDP nexus and enhance its efficiency, the BMZ is investing in **joint learning** from both internal and international experience. For example, a **study of the nexus 'chapeau' approach** has been conducted and **lessons learned** from the commissioning of Joint Programmes have been collected.

In addition, the BMZ is funding a [research project](#) by the Bonn International Centre for Conflict Studies in cooperation with various TDA-implementing non-governmental organisations. The focus is on the local implementation of the nexus and the integration of the peace pillar. International experiences with the implementation of the nexus have been published in a [literature review](#).

A key initiative at international level is the **Nexus Academy**, which is funded by the BMZ. It provides a platform for sharing knowledge on the practical implementation of the nexus approach and promotes networking between organisations. In tailored regional formats, the Nexus Academy can also specifically advise and train decision-makers on-site, thereby strengthening coordination along the HDP nexus. Various TDA implementation partners benefit from the offer, in particular from country-specific trainings in regions relevant to TDA, such as the Sahel.

What are success factors of effective nexus implementation?

- Allocate resources for close coordination and regular exchange
- Define own comparative advantages and systematically identify potential for synergies and cooperation (actor and context analysis)
- Conduct joint analyses to advance a shared understanding of the context and save resources
- Consider nationally defined collective outcomes in programming
- Joint programmes that implement at the same time and in the same community are more effective
- Sharing staff and implementation partners can increase the effectiveness and sustainability of nexus projects
- Jointly develop exit strategies for Joint Programmes and complementary commissions.

TDA in practice

Nexus projects for processing trauma in Ukraine

The NGO **Malteser International** has been implementing a nexus 'chapeau' project in Ukraine since 2023, providing **humanitarian assistance** in form of urgent supplies such as hygiene products, blankets and heaters for the winter. Psychological first aid services identify those most acutely affected by the conflict. These individuals are then referred to specialist psychologists and psychiatrists and can receive more in-depth trauma therapy, which is provided by the complementary **BMZ project**.

The project also equips health services and structures in liberated regions to provide more effective support to individuals locally. As people's mental health improves, this positively impacts the sense of cohesion between displaced persons and host communities. The complementary measures contribute to the collective outcome of mitigating the mental and physical stress caused by the war.



Malteser International provides psychological services in Ukraine to help people process trauma.

Partnership for resilience in the Sahel

The Sahel region is affected by multiple crises such as armed conflicts, extreme weather events and tensions caused by the scarcity of natural resources. This destroys livelihoods and leads to millions of people being displaced.

WFP, UNICEF and GIZ have joined forces within the framework of the so-called **Sahel Resilience Partnership** to address these crises. Drawing on their respective expertise, the partners work to strengthen the resilience of vulnerable population groups in Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger:

WFP promotes agricultural production and arranges the provision of school meals in areas where **UNICEF** is facilitating school attendance and improving water supply, sanitation facilities and health care services. **GIZ** supports local administrations in peaceful conflict resolution and assists in establishing dialogue processes. The complementary programmes thus meet urgent needs, strengthen long-term resilience and help to foster peaceful coexistence in the region.

The partnership is a Joint Initiative of the **Sahel-Alliance** donors.

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