EVALUATION

Adapting for Change: Country Strategy Approach in Fragile Contexts

Volume 2 • Case Studies

EVALUATION

EVALUATION OF SELECTED FINLAND'S COUNTRY STRATEGIES AND COUNTRY STRATEGY APPROACH FOR DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION WITH FOCUS ON FRAGILE CONTEXTS

Volume 2 – Case Studies

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2020/2B

Overall content

COUNTRY CASE STUDY ANNEX

AFGHANISTAN

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Contents

TABLES

FIGURES

Acronyms and abbreviations

ARTF	Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund
ANDSF	Afghan National Defence and Security Forces
CS	Country Strategy
EQRA	Education Quality Reform in Afghanistan
EQUIP	Education Quality Improvement Program
EUPOL	European Union Police Mission in Afghanistan
FLC	Finland Local Cooperation
FRC	Finnish Ref Cross
GIRoA	Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
GMAF	Geneva Mutual Accountability Framework
FNGO	Finnish NGO
INGO	International NGO
LOTFA	Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan
MDTF	Multidonor Trust Fund
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoIA	Ministry of Interior Affairs
MSI	Marie Stopes International
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NPP	National Priority Programme
NSP / CC	National Solidarity Programme / Citizens Charter
NUG	National Unity Government
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
SALAM	Support Afghanistan Livelihoods and Mobility
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNODC	United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
PEA	Political economy analysis
WP	White Paper
WPS NAP 1325	Women, peace and security National Action Plan 1325

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose and objectives

This case study comprises one of five prepared for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) Finland's Evaluation of selected Finland's country strategies and country strategy modality for development cooperation with focus on fragile contexts. The other four case studies are of Somalia, Myanmar, the State of Palestine and Syria/Iraq.

The purpose of each Case Study is to apply the overarching evaluation questions, design and methodology of the strategic level evaluation, while adapting their analysis for the specifics of the country context.

The specific objectives of each case study are:

- To provide a contributory evidence stream to the overall strategic evaluation
- To help interrogate the wider theoretical framework for the evaluation (see MFA, 2018) by generating evidence against it;
- To generate Lessons/Implications to help inform country stakeholders in their country-level programming, as part of the constructive approach adopted by the utilisation-focused model of the strategic evaluation.

The Case Study is explicitly not a full evaluation of Finland's country-level portfolio in Afghanistan, which would be beyond the remit of this evaluation. Accordingly, it does not provide Recommendations, but rather Lessons/Implications.

1.2 Approach, methodology and limitations

The approach and methodology for the strategic evaluation is fully described in annexes 2 and 3 of the synthesis report. This Case Study has applied the overarching evaluation questions, design and methodology of the strategic level evaluation, with limited adaptation for the contextual specifics of Afghanistan. The questions to which it contributes evidence are as follows:

Relevance	• To what extent did the Country Strategy modality support the alignment of Finland's Country portfolios and policy dialogue to address the causes of fragility?
	• To what extent did the Country Strategy modality support the relevance of Finland's assistance to the needs of stakeholders and beneficiaries, considering available resources?
	• To what extent did the Country Strategy modality support the relevance of Finland's assistance to the needs of key stakeholders, whether government, civil society or others?
	• To what extent did the Country Strategy modality enable assistance to adapt appropriately over time, including in relation to volatile conditions?

Effectiveness	• To what extent did the Country Strategy modality support the orientation of initiatives to best deliver results for key stakeholders and beneficiaries in the context?
	• To what extent did the Country Strategy modality provide an enabling environment for results in non-discrimination, including gender equality and the empowerment of women, and climate change?
	• To what extent did the selected aid co-operation modality, particularly multi-bi co-operation, support the delivery of results in the context?
	• To what extent have Finnish Country Strategies/Portfolios contributed to any reductions in fragility?
Coherence	• How/or does the Country Strategy modality support Finland in providing coherent assistance to the country, e.g. across MFA departments and multilateral influencing plans and funding?
	• To what extent did the Country Strategy modality support alignment with the plans and policies of other key donors/international actors in the context?
	• To what extent did the Country Strategy modality contribute to the realization of wider Finnish Development Policy objectives?
Connectedness	• To what extent did Country Strategies adhere to international commitments on human rights, the International Humanitarian Principles, Do No Harm and Accountability to Affected Populations?
	• To what extent did the Country Strategies take into account long-term and interconnected problems, e.g. through the humanitarian-development-peacebuilding nexus?

The theoretical framework for the evaluation combines theory-based evaluation (Chen 1991), with elements of contribution analysis (Mayne, 2001) and a utilisation-focused approach (Quinn Patton, 2008). It functions at aggregate level for the strategic evaluation and is applied to this case study through the structured tools applied (see Annex 2 of the synthesis report). This case study contributes to its specification, validation and interrogation as part of the wider evaluation.

The case study has adopted a highly structured and systematic approach, in accordance with the methodology for the wider evaluation. The main elements of the methodology applied (see MFA 2019a) are as follows:

• Quantitative analysis of Finnish assistance to Afghanistan for the period 2012–2018, generated from MFA statistics

• Interviews with key Helsinki-based stakeholders working currently/previously on the Afghanistan portfolio within MFA (see Annex 2 for list of persons interviewed)

• Systematic analysis of 14 MFA-funded projects implemented in Afghanistan during the evaluation's time period of 2012-current against a structured analytical framework (see Annex 3 for full list)

• A one week field mission, which took place from 20-24 October 209, including interviews with key stakeholders and partners in Kabul

Findings were discussed and validated with key stakeholders in MFA at a feedback meeting on November 8 2019 in Nairobi/Helsinki.

1.3 Limitations

Limitations of the case study are as follows:

- As a case study rather than a full evaluation, this report does not provide a definitive performance assessment of all Finnish assistance to Afghanistan during the period 2012-current. Rather, it offers limited insights, generated through a systematic approach, to inform a wider evaluative process.

- The case study is based on analysis of MFA statistics, review of project documentation (including external reviews and evaluations where feasible), and stakeholder/partner interviews. In accordance with the agreed methodology for the wider strategic evaluation, it has not included visits to individual projects or interviews/focus groups with direct beneficiaries.

- The case study includes findings up to November 2019, the point of field mission closure. The context in Afghanistan is highly volatile and may have experienced significant change since that time.

- Data availability from MFA was limited, although this was mitigated for the largest contributions through ARTF where documents are readily accessible on the website.

- The country is highly insecure and security guidelines for the Finnish Embassy staff are restrictive. The short duration of the mission was determined by the availability of accommodation for the evaluation team as well as the capacity of the Embassy team to participate alongside their routine activities during a busy period. In spite of this, participation was excellent and staff were keenly engaged. As the international members could not meet government officials in the ministries, the national consultant undertook those interviews separately. This had the advantage that officials spoke more openly on some issues.

2 Country context

2.1 Structural causes of conflict

There has been a general tendency in the international community (IC), including Finland in the White Paper, to define the conflict from two standpoints: the Soviet invasion of 1979 in the context of Cold War politics; and the overthrow of the Taliban regime in 2001 in the context of the attack on the twin towers in New York, which precipitated the War on Terror. These are useful starting points in that they mark the destruction of the state and the massive international intervention, respectively. But they obscure some of the structural causes of conflict that explain the persistence of conflict and fragility in the present.

Geographically, Afghanistan has been in a zone of conflict for centuries, situated between the strong neighbouring powers Iran, Pakistan, India and the former Soviet Union. Politically, a major source of conflict for at least the last century has been attempts to modernise and centralise the state in a context where power has been held locally by traditional elders, religious leaders, commanders or warlords. Socially, Afghanistan was and remains highly socially conservative with particular flashpoints relating to the role and status of women. Gender has historically been one of the most politicised issues in Afghan history with attempts at reform of power relations denounced as un-Islamic and a challenge to the sanctity of family and faith (Chris Johnson and Jolyon Leslie, 2004).

The long legacy of multiple conflicts has deeply affected the political economy of Afghanistan, creating entrenched actors and networks with deep links into government including related to the large illicit narco economy (Strand et al., 2017). The economic impact of opium has vastly increased to the extent that, in 2017 alone, the poppy crop generated an estimated $4.1 billion and $6.6 billion for Afghan farmers, refiners and traffickers, equivalent to 19–32 percent of Afghanistan's gross domestic product (Afghanistan Opium Survey 2017: Challenges to sustainable development, peace and security, 2018). The presence of foreign troops and the enormous contracts awarded for security and logistics up to 2014 bolstered economic growth to around 9 percent annually. Following the security transition, and in a context of drought, political uncertainty and election violence, growth slumped to around 2 percent annually and 1 percent in 2018 (World Bank, 2018). For all these reasons, exacerbated by the large amount of aid that has poured into Afghanistan since 2001, corruption has flourished and Afghanistan is ranked at 177 out of 180 countries in the Corruption Perception Index (Transparency International 2017).

In the present day, three historic fault lines continue to be seen: chronic contestation of power between the centre and the periphery by various opposition groups; the economic and fiscal sustainability of an aid-dependent state and a war-aid economy that favours the already powerful; and the role of religious institutions in governance and social life (Strand et al., 2017).

2.2 Context since 2012

Figure 1: Timeline of key events since 2012

2012	2014	2016	2018
Nato endorses exit strategy	Contested Presidential election leads to power sharing	Brussels conference commits donors to funding Afghanistan's reform agenda 2017–2020.	Civilian deaths at all time high. US starts peace talks with Taliban in Doha.
Tokyo Framework for Mutual Accountability	**End of 13 year ISAF operation**	EU and Afghanistan sign **Joint Way Forward** framework for returns and readmissions	Geneva Conference / GMAF
		End of EUPOL mission	

2013	2015	2017	2019
Finland signs Bilateral Partnership Agreement with Afghanistan	Resolute Support Mission replaces ISAF. Islamic State increases territory held	US and EU renew their Afghanistan strategies	Afghan Government holds parallel Peace Jirga in Kabul
	Massive inflows of migrants to Europe	**Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework (ANPDF)**	Presidential elections postponed twice, held, no result announced
	Start of Transition Decade / **Self reliance through Mutual Accountability Framework (SMAF**		

Source: Country Case Study Team

Figure 1 shows the timeline of key events in the assessment period 2012–2018. The context in 2012 was one in which the number of foreign troops, which had surged to a peak of around 140,000 in 2011, were gradually withdrawing after the NATO-endorsed exit strategy. 2014 was a pivotal year, which marked the end of the 13 year International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) operation and the start of the Transition Decade. It was also the year of a deeply contested Presidential election which resulted in a US-brokered power sharing agreement. Since 2015, the emergence of Islamic State affiliates, known as Daesh, added a new dimension of complexity. In 2017 the US and EU renewed their Afghanistan strategies. Subsequently the US entered into direct negotiations with Taliban in an attempt to forge a peace settlement and bring an end to the long war.

In 2018, the Afghan government's control or influence of districts reached the lowest level (55.5 percent) since tracking began in 2015 (SIGAR, 2018). During 2018, there were a record high 10,993 civilian casualties and 3,804 deaths due to the ongoing conflict, more than in any year since 2009 when systematic monitoring started (UNAMA, 2019). As well as attacks by the Taliban and other anti-government forces, civilians have also been killed by government and international military forces during anti-Taliban operations. (R2P, 2019). Violations of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and human rights abuses are common.

In addition to conflict related insecurity, there has been a rise in lawlessness and ordinary Afghans faced multiple threats due to increasing activities by criminal networks. These engage in the drug-trade, cross-border smuggling and kidnappings for ransom and are often interwoven with government networks or elites (Strand et al., 2017).

As a result of ongoing armed conflict, there are an estimated 6.3 million people in need of humanitarian assistance. Severe drought has also affected more than two-thirds of the country, devastated the agricultural sector and left some four million people across the worst-affected provinces in dire need. This resulted in a significant increase of displacement with an estimated 263,000 people displaced in the provinces of Badghis and Herat alone. New settlements in already stressed areas led to socio-economic pressure and inter-communal tensions, resulting in secondary displacement. Cross-border Influx Returns from Iran accelerated to an estimated 670,000 and reached unprecedented levels. (*Afghanistan Humanitarian Fund Annual Report 2018*, 2019)

Migration and displacement were therefore an important feature of the assessment period. In the six years from 2012–2018, 3.5 million Afghans were internally displaced due to armed conflict, generalized violence, human rights violations or natural disasters (IOM, 2019). In addition, an estimated 3.2 million Afghan migrants and refugees returned from abroad, the vast majority from neighbouring Iran and Pakistan, spiking in 2016 and 2017 at over a million in each year (UNHCR, 2018). 170,000 came mainly from Europe and Turkey in the context of the migration 'crisis' in Europe in 2016, which contributed to the EU and Afghanistan signing the Joint Way Forward, paving the way for returns of asylum seekers who had been denied illegal.

The political context was unstable in this period especially around the 2014 presidential election. With both sides of the Government of National Unity allocating positions on the basis of ethno-political affiliation, political partisanship permeated every level of the security apparatus, undermining the command structures of the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces (ANDSF) and their capacity to counter a growing insurgency (*Afghanistan: The Future of the National Unity Government*, 2017). Scheduled parliamentary elections have been long delayed, exacerbated in part by exclusion of the Afghan Government from bilateral peace talks between the US Government and Taliban. Consistently only around one third of Afghan citizens feel optimism about the direction the country is going in (Asia Foundation, 2018).

2.3   Key features of fragility

Reflecting the structural and current causes of conflict, Afghanistan has been one of 27 chronically fragile countries since OECD began gathering such data in 2008. On the 2016 OECD multi-dimensional framework of fragility, it showed the most extreme level of fragility in the political and economic dimensions, closely followed by the societal, environmental and security dimensions. It was also one of five countries with the most civilian deaths due to terrorism and one of the nine most violent countries (OECD, 2016 Fig 1.1). In 2018, using a slightly different classification, Afghanistan was at the most severe level in the societal, economic and security dimensions, closely followed by the political and environmental dimensions (OECD, 2018, fig 2.1). It had the second worst score on the terrorism impact indicator and was one of three countries with the highest levels of gender inequality. Along with Syria and South Sudan, Afghanistan contributes to 55 percent of all refugees worldwide.

In the Human Development Index, Afghanistan's ranking remains close to the bottom but with a modest improvement from 175/186 in 2012 to 168/189 in 2017 and with a gender equality index of 0.65 (UNDP, 2017). Inequality in life expectancy has reduced from 58.8 percent in 2010 to 28.4 percent in 2017 but education inequality has increased from 39.3 to 45.4 percent. In the

Multidimensional Poverty Index, 35.8 percent of the population live below the national poverty line and 25 percent are in severe multidimensional poverty (UNDP, 2018).

The Afghan Living Conditions Survey (ALCS) 2016–2017 paints a picture in which 30 percent of children must work, 34 percent of adults cannot find adequate work, 19 percent of the labour force is unemployed and 38 percent of youth (15–24) are outside economic activity, education or training (Central Statistics Organisation, 2017). One quarter of Afghans have no access to land and 9 million people are food insecure. Thirty-six percent do not have access to safe water and the percentage using safely managed sanitation is 40 percent. The 2017 Poverty Status Update showed poverty increasing to 39 percent and progress in human development outcomes slowing down, especially in rural and conflict-affected areas World Bank, 2017). In terms of attitudes, ordinary Afghans are concerned about the economic situation of their households and Afghanistan as a whole. Over 61 percent think the country is moving in the wrong direction and more than three-quarters cite economic concerns as the biggest problems facing youth.

Across all measures of marginalisation, vulnerability and exclusion, these reports show that young Afghan men, the disabled and women fare badly with a myriad of social factors preventing them from fully engaging in society. For women, there has been an improvement in access to education, employment and political position but their opportunities, power and influence remain limited. They are largely restricted to low-paid, unregulated employment and face widespread discrimination, harassment and human rights abuses as well as numerous obstacles to getting fair treatment from the justice system (*Gender Equality, 2019*). As security has worsened in recent years there are indications that the progress made toward the goal of getting all girls into school may be reversing (Human Rights Watch, 2017).

2.4   Aid architecture and national strategies

2.4.1 Framework for aid effectiveness

Since 2002, priorities for Afghanistan have been debated and agreed at a series of 13 annual conferences co-hosted by the Afghan government and as many as 85 international actors, including Finland and other donors, United Nations agencies and, more recently, civil society organisations. Most have resulted in signed declarations, increasingly oriented to improving aid effectiveness.

The period immediately before the evaluation period is important in contextualising the aid architecture. In 2009, in the face of increasing insecurity, there was a surge in the number of US and NATO troops deployed (*Chicago Summit Declaration*, 2012). When the insurgency continued to grow, and the presence of foreign troops was recognised as a contributing factor, the London Conference of 2010 marked the start of a new phase in the relationship between the IC and the Afghan government, including agreement of a timetable for the transition of security responsibility (London Conference, 2010). By the end of 2010 the Kabul Conference was held under the motto 'Afghan-owned and Afghan-led'. President Karzai launched the Afghan National Development Strategy along with 22 National Priority Programmes (NPPs) (Kabul Conference, 2010).

At the start of the evaluation period, the Tokyo Conference of 2012 further set the stage for the transformation of the relationship from recipient and donors to owner and partners. It launched the *Partnership for Self-Reliance in Afghanistan: From Transition to Transformation and the accompanying Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework (TMAF)*, which consolidated previously agreed aid effectiveness principles in a new set of benchmarks (*Tokyo Declaration: Partnership for Self-Reliance in Afghanistan From Transition to Transformation*, 2012).

On the basis of these mutual commitments to stability and sustainable development, Finland signed a *Partnership Agreement* with the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in 2013 and pledged to support Afghanistan in the long term through the Transformation Decade (2014 to 2024) by providing development assistance, subject to Parliamentary approval. (MFA, 2013). This would seek to strengthen Afghan democracy, promote good governance and the rule-of-law principle; and improve the conditions for Afghanistan's own economic activity and participatory economic growth. The agreement states that issues related to human rights and equality, as well as education and especially the education of girls, are high on the agenda. In line with aid effectiveness commitments to support the development priorities of the Afghan Government, and in accordance with the Tokyo Declaration and TMAF, the Finnish Government pledged to provide at least 50 percent of its assistance through the national budget and to align 80 percent of its assistance with the NPPs. In addition Finland would continue to channel some of its funding through NGOs and continue to provide a substantial level of humanitarian assistance. These commitments have remained in place.

In 2014 the newly elected President Ghani launched the Afghan Government's reform programme *Realizing Self-Reliance: Commitments to Reforms and Renewed Partnership* which provided the framework for a range of measures to improve security, the rule of law and respect for human rights, particularly in relation to women and girls; promote political and economic stability; advance good governance, fight corruption and the illicit economy including narcotics; and pave the way for enhanced private sector investments and sustainable social, environmental and economic development. (*Communique: Commitments to reforms and renewed partnership*, 2014).

In 2016 the *Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework (ANPDF)* and an updated *Self Reliance through Mutual Accountability Framework (SMAF)* was launched and Finland committed to provide 111 M€ worth of development assistance in 2017–2020 (*Brussels Conference on Afghanistan, Partnership for prosperity and peace*, 2016). In 2018 the 22 NPPs were consolidated into 10 under the ANPDF and the *Geneva Mutual Accountability Framework (GMAF)* aimed to improve measurement of results against the $15.2 billion committed by the IC (*Geneva Conference on Afghanistan*, 2018).

2.4.2 Aid to Afghanistan

Estimates of development and humanitarian aid to Afghanistan vary but over USD 61 billion US dollars between 2001 and 2016 is indicative. If security and counter-narcotics is also included the figure is USD 130 billion (OECD, 2017). In the period since 2002, Afghanistan has consistently been among the top recipients of official development assistance (ODA) and second in 2016–2017 (OECD DAC, 2018a). The peak was in 2011 at USD 6.866 billion, falling to 3.804 billion in 2017. The United States was and remains the largest donor by a long margin. The volume of aid and the top donors are shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Volume of aid and top donors to Afghanistan (2016–2017)

	2015	2016	2017
Receipts for Afghanistan			
Net ODA (USD million)	4,267.3	4,069.2	3,804.0
Net ODA/GNI (%)	22.0	20.7	18.1
Gross ODA (USD million)	4,328.7	4,173.3	3,858.5
Bilateral share (gross ODA) (%)	86.7	79.5	75.6
Total net receipts (USD million)	4,389.2	4,161.9	3,863.0
For reference			
Population (million)	33.7	34.7	35.5
GNI per capita (Atlas USD)	600.0	580.0	570.0

Top Ten Donors of Gross ODA for Afghanistan, 2016–2017 average (USD million)

United States	1,302
Germany	491
EU Institutions	407
United Kingdom	322
Japan	267
Asian Development Bank	192
International Development A..	122
Sweden	117
Canada	82
Norway	79
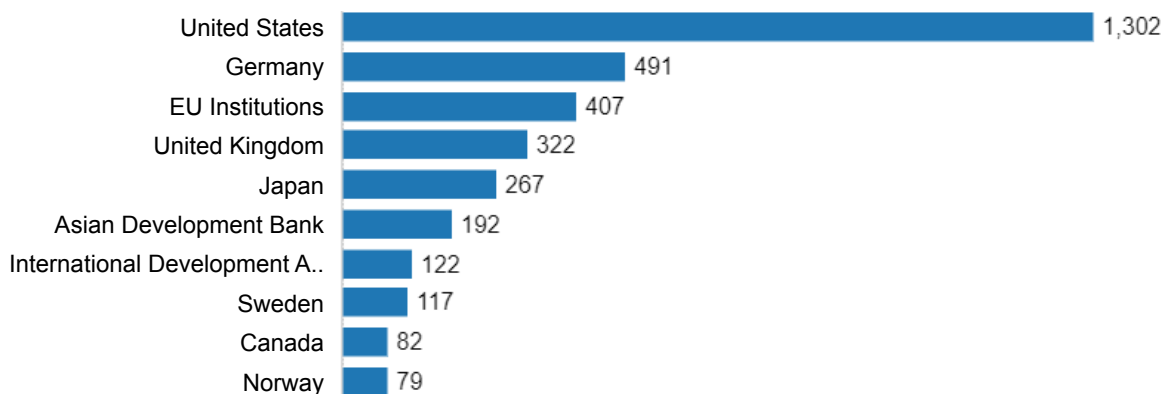
Source: Aid at a glance (OECD DAC, 2018b)

Various evaluations and lessons learned documents have repeatedly found that efforts to show short term results, with the belief that quick results would help stabilisation, have undermined long term development planning, often by side-lining key Afghan interlocutors (*Responding to Refugee Crises*, 2017).

Several factors have historically made aid effectiveness a challenging prospect in Afghanistan, especially in the decade from 2002. The development challenge is enormous, the problems are interrelated, and the government has limited capacity, especially for complex and ambitious approaches. Especially in the first few years a large number of donors and implementing partners worked outside the agreed structures using off-budget modalities (*improving the effectiveness of aid to Afghanistan*, 2008). Although there are now fewer development partners than in the period of huge military engagement, the same broad challenges remain and are exacerbated by the increasing fragility. In 2018 there were over 30 different international donors disbursing aid in Afghanistan, each with their own agenda and aid agreement with the government, creating ongoing fragmentation (Aid effectiveness in Afghanistan, 2018).

2.4.3 Trust funds

Key to achieving aid effectiveness commitments is the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF). It was established in 2002 within a World Bank-managed fiduciary and monitoring framework as the modality for pooling international assistance. It is supported by 34 donors, provides funding predictability for the endorsed NPPs and provides a coordination and policy dialogue mechanism with the Government. The Government of Afghanistan is the lead Fund entity and the Afghan Ministry of Finance (MoF) and the World Bank co-chair the Steering Committee. All funds channel through government systems, with ministries and government agencies responsible for project implementation. Implementation is monitored by an External Monitoring Agent and there is regular external evaluation of the mechanism.

The ARTF mobilized USD 10.5 billion between 2002 and 2017, for on-budget financing.(World Bank, 2018) Of this amount, Finland contributed USD 138.94 million for the period 2002–2019 (March). For the three-year period 2018–2020, Finland committed USD 34 million or USD 1.6 million annually. The contribution amount exceeds the USD 10 million threshold for membership of the Strategy Group, allowing Finland to be active in Fund governance and oversight.

The other important trust fund for Finland is the Law and Order Trust Fund (LOTFA), which is managed by UNDP and serves as the largest channel for engagement in the Police sector. It was initiated to manage the police payroll function and has evolved to a slightly wider capacity building remit, currently through the two projects Support to Payroll Management (SPM) and Ministry and Police Development (MPD).It is governed through a Steering Committee comprising donors (12 in 2018) and representatives of the Ministry of Interior Affairs (MOIA) and MOF.

3 Finland's cooperation since 2012

3.1 Overview of the White Paper

In Afghanistan, Finland's development cooperation is based on the White Paper (WP). Its purpose and scope is different from a Country Strategy in that parliamentary approval is necessary for Finland to provide support for security and stabilisation through NATO. It presents as a comprehensive approach incorporating objectives in political influence, bilateral relations, development cooperation, and military and civilian crisis management.

The preamble to the White Paper (WP) states that its purpose is to provide the Parliament with an overview of the situation in Afghanistan and Finland's support to Afghanistan, as well as to consult the Parliament pursuant to Section 3 of the Act on Military Crisis Management (211/2016). It states that the objective of Finland's support is to promote stability in Afghanistan, which is also important for regional stability and international efforts to combat terrorism. By continuing and extending its operations (currently as part of the NATO/US Resolute Support Mission), Finland promotes cooperation with its partner countries, including the United States, which is in charge of the coalition, and Germany, with whom Finland pursues close cooperation in Northern Afghanistan. It notes that the starting point for the international community is the necessity of finding a political solution for the conflict.

Finland's Afghanistan policy is based on a comprehensive approach, which combines political influence, bilateral relations, development cooperation and military and civilian crisis management as well as cooperation concerning returns of asylum-seekers who have received a negative asylum decision. The sections of the WP provide analysis in support of the approach.

Relevant to this case study is the fact that Afghanistan is Finland's largest bilateral development cooperation partner. The WP states that this enables Finland to promote human rights and the position and rights of women as one of the key goals of Finland's development cooperation.

The WP states that development funding is confirmed in regular donor conferences and places this approach in the context of Finland's policy to support local ownership and responsibility, starting from the country's own national development plans. It also describes the instruments used, noting the centrality of the ARTF and LOTFA as the largest and second largest co-funding channels. The choice of development cooperation projects and partners are based on their potential for development impact.

The three themes for development cooperation in the current WP are: 1) reforming the judicial and security sector, including police development, 2) developing educational and health services and improving their availability, 3) developing the economic base, especially in rural areas. These are determined by the wider development goals to strengthen the position of women and children, promote human rights and equality, strengthen democracy and capabilities in society, and manage migration as well as to support efforts to combat corruption. The WP also describes four key risks: 1) an unstable security situation, 2) political instability, due to which national partners change frequently and building the competence of civil service is slow, 3) broad corruption and

4) social inequality, which impairs opportunities to support people in the most vulnerable position, such as women, ethnic minorities, the disabled and the elderly. It contextualises these in the difficulty of the operating conditions and the long process required for achieving sustainable development results.

The White Paper does not contain a results framework although there is a section on monitoring and evaluation. Since 2016 there has been a Results Framework, updated annually.

At global level, Finland's objective of engaging in policy influence is enshrined in its Development Policy and Fragile States Policy. This includes increasing influence far beyond the reach of a small nation through working together with the other Nordic countries and as a Member State of the European Union. For fragile states it emphasises shared dialogue and agreement on the problems on which aid needs to be focused and emphasises long-term preventive measures as well as on peace- and state-building, as far as possible applying the framework provided by New Deal to avoid uncoordinated and fragmented aid.

At country level, the White Paper confirms the relevance of these policies and realises them principally through participation in the ARTF. In contributing the EUR 10 million annual payment share to become a member of the Strategy Group, Finland seeks to influence the strategic and development policy decisions made by the fund. ARTF is the mechanism to provide on-budget support that helps focus the state's resources on sectors that have the potential to reduce poverty. This modality also provides a key opportunity to comprehensively influence and engage in political dialogue with the country's leadership.

In 2016 the first Results Framework was introduced to the Afghanistan programme. It is structured around three impact areas: strengthened justice, security, good governance and human rights; improved basic public services; and diversified economic base. It is reported on annually and is acknowledged by Embassy staff to be complicated, with a degree of confusion between outcomes and outputs and several indicators for which there is no data or no regular data. In some cases it is clear that indicators are drawn from the projects but in other cases indicators appear to be introduced from Helsinki without a clear rationale.

## 3.2 Key features of the country portfolio

3.2.1 Portfolio analysis

The portfolio is framed by agreements between the IC and the Afghan government, including the target for donors to channel 50 percent of their funds on-budget and 80 percent alignment with the NPPs. Finland has adhered to these targets.

Figure 3 and 4 (below) show the number and volume of disbursements between 2012 and 2018.

Figure 3: Number of disbursements by year and aid modality
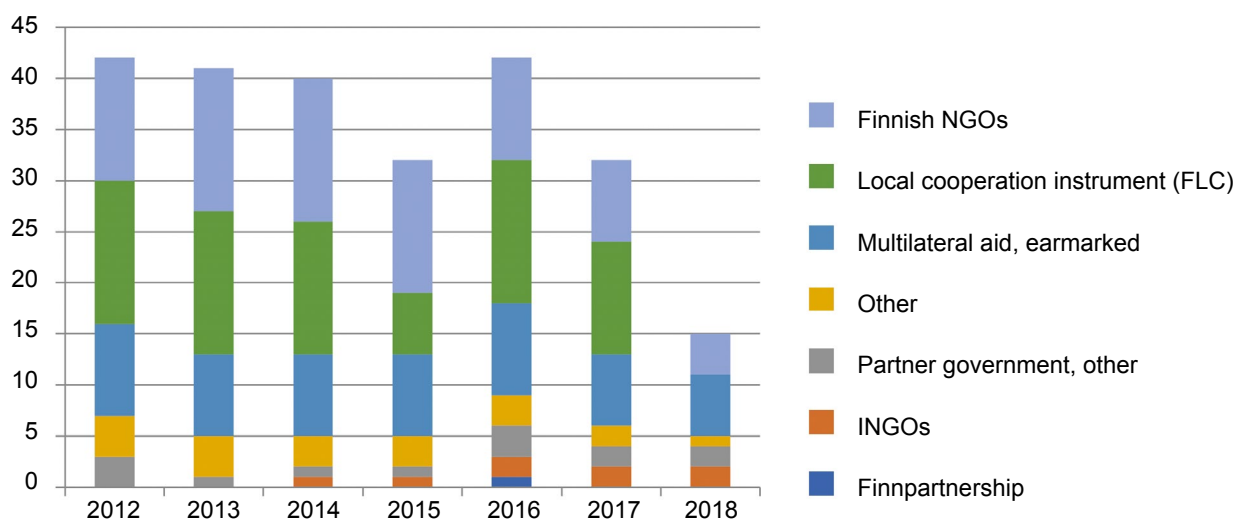
Source: (MFA, 2019)

In terms of number of disbursements, over most of the period more than half were to Finnish NGOs (FNGOs) and projects administered under the Fund for Local Cooperation (FLC). From 2017 the total number of disbursements almost halved from a range of 32–42 per year to 15 in 2018, due to discontinuation of the FLC when projects could no longer be monitored. There was also a slight decline for FNGOs, mainly due to the difficulty of operating as security worsened from 2016.

Figure 4: Volume of disbursements by year and aid modality (EUR '000)
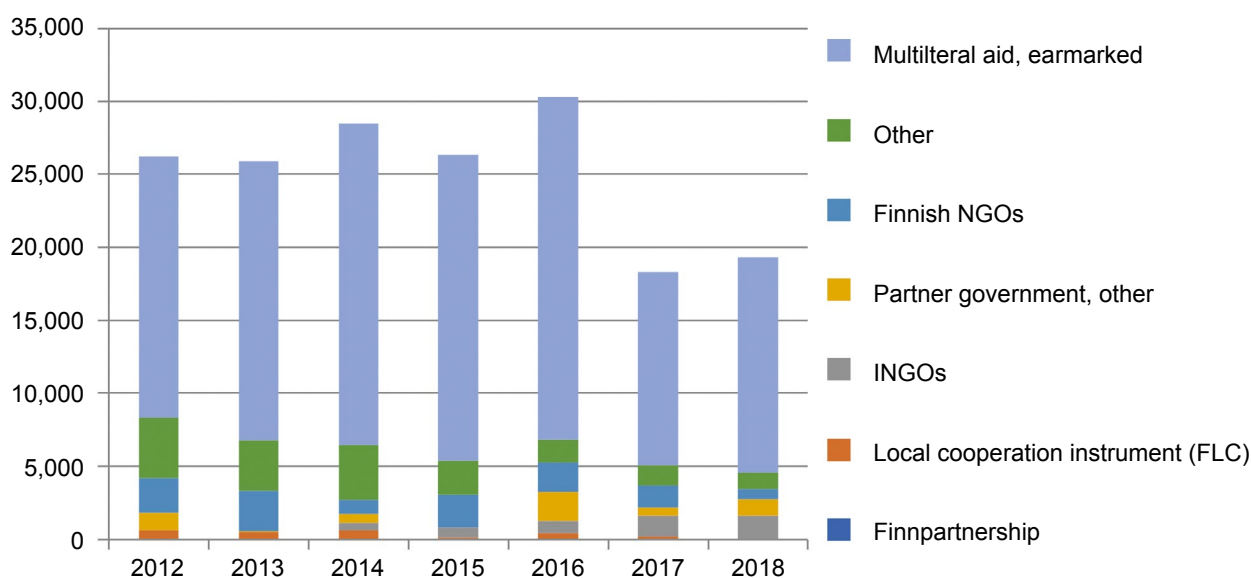
Source: (MFA, 2019)

By far the highest volume of disbursements was to multilaterals. Up to 2016 it was €17 to €23 million per year, reducing to €13 million in 2017. Disbursements to FNGOs were above €2 million until 2016, reducing to around €1.5 million in 2018. Although the FLC comprised a large number of disbursements, the volume was very small in comparison with other modalities.

Looking at the top 10 recipients, Figure 5 (below) shows the highest proportion is channelled through the World Bank to the ARTF. As the total volume of aid reduced, the proportion through ARTF rose to 75 percent of all disbursements in 2018.

Figure 5: Distribution by top 10 recipients and year

- World Bank Group
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- Embassy of Finland
- European Commission (EC)
- United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
- Finnish Red Cross
- UN Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
- World Food Programme (WFP)
- Geological Survey of Finland (GTK)
- UN office of Drugs and Crime
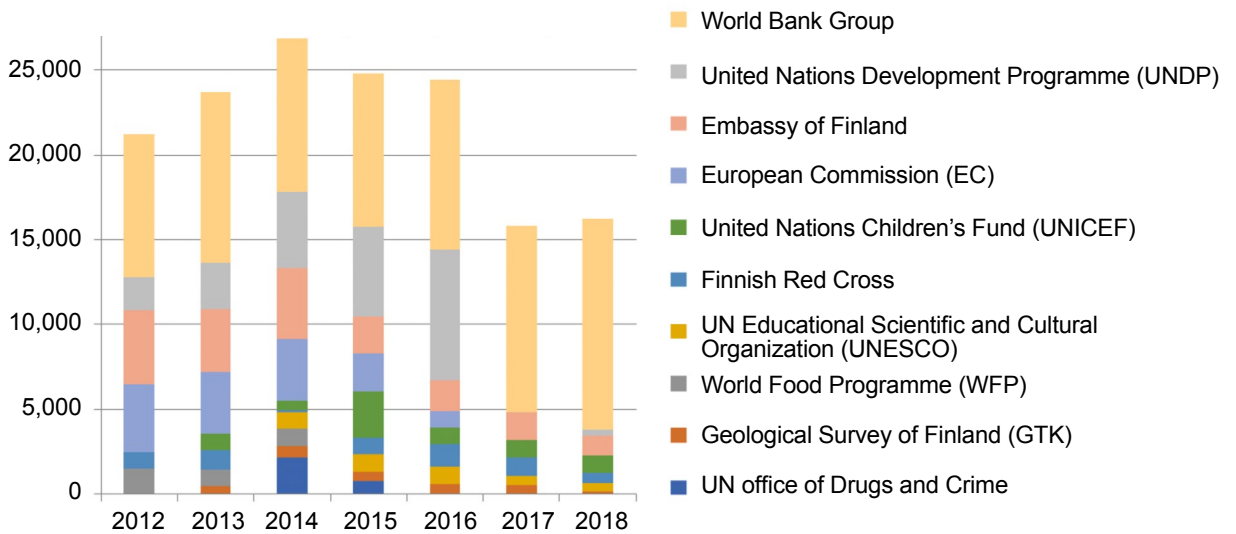
Source: (MFA, 2019)

The second highest was channelled through UNDP for LOTFA which, although off-budget, is the channel for supporting national priorities in the police sector. Until 2016, Phase VIII of LOTFA was in the top 10 and thereafter the contribution remained significant at €1.4 million in 2018. Other substantial funding was also to policing through the longstanding EUPOL mission (Civilian Crisis Support Management) until its closure in 2016.

Figure 6 (below) shows total disbursements by sector. Up to 2015 a large proportion appears as reconstruction, relief and development. In 2016, agriculture, forestry and fishing as well as education stand out as sectors. In reality all these were contributions through ARTF so the pattern across all years is very similar and the differences are simply changes in classification, probably related to the system of preferencing (earmarking) contributions.

Figure 6: Disbursements by sector and year (EUR '000)

- Government & Civil Society
- Reconstruction Relief & Rehabilitation
- Administrative Costs of Donors
- Emergency Response
- Education
- Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing
- Population Policies/Programmes & Reproductive Health
- Water Supply & Sanitation
- Other Multisector
- Industry, Mining, Construction
- Health
- Other Social Infrastructure & Services
- General Environment Protection
- Refugees in Donor Countries

Source: (MFA, 2019)

Overall, the largest contribution by far is to the sector government and civil society. Almost all is directed to government, which includes policing through EUPOL/EU and LOTFA//UNDP as well as the sectors of ARTF.

Humanitarian funding is not fully reflected in all the above data. Since 2002, Finland has issued humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan of EUR 30 million and, in 2018 the total was EUR 400,000, directed through the Red Cross for protection, health, water, and sanitation. In the portfolio analysis, only a total of EUR 3.5 million to WFP shows as emergency assistance. Along with contributions to UNHCR, which have some humanitarian purpose, Finland also supports humanitarian mine action. The contribution to HALO Trust for demining is EUR 3.25 million in the period 2016–2020.

3.2.2 Main interventions

In the years since 2016, Finland has defined the portfolio through three impact areas as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Main interventions by impact area

IMPACT AREA	MAIN INTERVENTIONS (* indicates mention in the White Paper)
Strengthened justice, security, good governance and human rights	• Policing through EUPOL/EC* • Policing through LOTFA/UNDP* • Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC)* • NAP 1325 through UNWomen*
Improved basic public services	• EQUIP/EQRA through ARTF (preferenced) • Adult literacy through UNESCO* • WASH in schools through UNICEF* • Inclusive education through Operation Mobilisation • Reproductive health through MSI* • Community health through FRC*
Diversified economic base	• NSP/CC through ARTF (preferenced) • SALAM through UNDP (migration/rural livelihoods)* • Afghanistan Geological Survey through FTK* • Drugs and crime through UNODC*

The dominant aid modality in Afghanistan currently is multilateral aid, earmarked in support of the trust funds (ARTF and LOTFA) and programmes implemented by UN organisations such as UNESCO, UNWomen, UNICEF, and UNODC for reasons discussed in other sections of the report. This is in line with policy for working in fragile situations.

It is important to note that ARTF has a project portfolio in five sectors: agriculture, infrastructure, human development, rural development and public sector capacity and governance. This means that, in addition to Finland's preferred contribution of up to 50 percent for human development (EQUIP/EQRA) and rural development (NSP/CC), the unpreferenced remainder still supports the NPPs in agriculture, infrastructure and public sector capacity and governance through the investment window as well as to government running costs through the recurrent cost window.

The total disbursed amount for NSP was USD 1,147,623,289 (World Bank, 2017).

4 Findings

4.1 Relevance

4.1.1 Alignment for fragility

The White Paper does not have an overarching analytical framework for understanding fragility, but it adequately describes features of fragility relevant to development cooperation. Finland's portfolio choices are well intentioned in terms of addressing fragility.

The level and quantity of analysis is appropriate to a high-level policy document that serves a variety of purposes. It refers to the poor security context, with its potential for an increase in terrorism and extremist movements as well as uncontrolled migration and mentions human rights 21 times. It describes political fragility in the context of state structures that are too weak to support the President's social and economic reform goals. It justifies the choice to deliver development cooperation through multilateral partnerships with the World Bank and UN because of their experience in fragile states and perceived effectiveness and efficiency in such contexts. The section on evaluation of effectiveness also references fragility in terms of realism about the delays and obstacles inherent in implementation of development programmes, the need to adapt goals to the prevailing conditions, and the inevitability of a slow and risky pace of progress. All projects in the sample had risk assessments of varying quality.

The WP does not contain a formal Political Economy Analysis (PEA) although there are elements which, combined with the separate Risk Management Framework, are indicative of PEA thinking. In particular there is acknowledgment that the scale of corruption poses a key risk to the effectiveness of development cooperation alongside frequent changes in national partners and a weak civil service.

Similarly, the WP does not have a detailed development needs analysis, but the content is appropriate to purpose in making purposeful use of data to justify the rationale for Finland's engagement in migration; human rights and the position of women; and the economy. This supports policy positions that have long been determined (see 4.1.2).

Finland's portfolio choices are well intentioned in terms of meeting needs and addressing fragility. As the deep causes of fragility have not changed significantly, the symptoms of poverty and inequality, which have their roots in human rights abuses, remain evident. This means that fundamental needs are not changing and, as the portfolio is oriented to meeting such needs, it remains relevant. Although some indicators of fragility are worsening, solutions lie outside the influence of development cooperation in the political arena, where Finland is active.

4.1.2 Alignment to beneficiary needs

Finland's assistance is relevant to the needs of beneficiaries (rights holders) in a context in which needs are enormous and no single donor, or the combined efforts of the international community, are adequate. In aligning with the Government as duty bearer, needs assessments are less well oriented to capturing issues of general relevance compared with sector or geographical relevance. Prioritisation of the

needs of women increases relevance of some projects but may undermine achievement of the higher purpose of reducing fragility in some Un-implemented projects where men are the appropriate target group.

The design of all projects within the development cooperation portfolio contains some assessment of beneficiary needs. Projects under ARTF have to meet World Bank standards so the quality and evidence-base of needs assessment is high for education (EQUIP/EQRA) and community driven development (NSP/CC). NSP was subjected to rigorous 'gold standard' evaluation which provided an evidence base for results unmatched by any other programme and enabled various lessons to be learned about establishing local governance mechanisms which were built into design of CC (UN-WIDER, 2015)acceptance of democratic processes, perceptions of economic wellbeing, and the participation of, and attitudes towards, women. The NSP worsened perceptions of the quality of local governance among men. Years of conflict have severely damaged social and economic opportunities in Afghanistan by severing ties between villages and the central, provincial, and district governments, offering little opportunity for representative or participatory governments. In addition, local governance in Afghan villages has often been dominated by village elders, thus offering little opportunity for representative or participatory decision-making. Afghan culture also has entrenched a limited social and political role for women. Afghan citizens go to the polls to exercise their constitutional right to vote in presidential and provincial council elections. © UN Photo/Eric Kanalstein The National Solidarity Programme (NSP.

The quality of beneficiary needs assessment in UN projects is more variable. SALAM (UNDP) has a good diagnostic of the factors leading to migration using illegal channels and UNICEF WASH is relatively strong. In contrast, UNWomen and UNESCO needs assessments are very general and have a weaker evidence base. For NGO projects, needs assessments are more tightly focused owing to the much smaller number of target beneficiaries and narrower scope. For the AIHRC, much of the work of the Commission is documenting and monitoring human rights abuses so the needs for protection are well known.

Finland's choice of projects indicates consistent priority for the needs of women. In NPP projects there is a rigorous gender analysis underpinning the design and this can be tracked through to disaggregated indicators for monitoring and evaluation. In the UN-implemented projects, there is some evidence that Finland's objective of prioritising women influences the selection of beneficiaries in a way that may undermine overall achievement of purpose. In the UNESCO adult literacy project, Finland and the Ministry of Education (MOE) have differing objectives. For Finland the objective is women's empowerment and the fact that 79 percent of beneficiaries are women is viewed positively even though the intended target group is young women with child-raising responsibilities and most attendees are older with different reasons for attending. For MOE, the objective is literacy for skill development and the target group is young men because of the link to unemployment and radicalization. A similar issue arises in the counter-migration project SALAM where Finland has set targets for inclusion of women and disabled people when the group most likely to migrate is young and able-bodied men (see 4.2.1).

Needs assessments for development projects are undertaken with a specific purpose in mind and they capture (to varying degrees of quality) the sector or technical information necessary to design projects that will be effective for that purpose. Needs assessments are less well oriented to capturing important aspects of general relevance such as disillusion and disappointment in the voiceless layers of society; misperceptions about the presence and purpose of foreign aid; and lack of confidence in the forms of governance available to them. In aligning in support of Government as duty bearer, assessments inevitably present a partial picture of the needs and desires of rights holders.

4.1.3 Alignment to national stakeholder needs

Assistance based on international aid effectiveness agreements, which aim to maximise government ownership, is highly relevant to the capacity development needs of government ministries for basic service delivery and the Human Rights Commission to deliver on its mandate. However, as not all needs can be met, individual programs are relevant to some needs but not necessarily responsive to Government's priority needs.

The White Paper states that choices about development cooperation flow explicitly from Finland's Development Policy, which emphasises local ownership and responsibility. Finland's development assistance has been consistently in line with aid effectiveness agreements between the International Community and the Afghan government (see 2.4.1) during and before the 2012–2018 evaluation period. The rationale for these agreements is also enshrined in Finland's Fragile States Policy of 2014, which references the New Deal and the five peace and state building goals (2014).

Finland is explicit in its support for trust funds as an essential mechanism enabling government to implement its own programs. The design of ARTF is in line with best practice, targeting 80 percent of support to NPPs that span five sectors, and therefore highly relevant to the needs of government especially in terms of basic service delivery (PSG5) and economic foundations (PSG4). In practice, there is some dissatisfaction on the government side about the lack of flexibility to meet changing priorities and the dysfunction present in the Government of National Unity (NUG) means that the NPPs are no longer always viewed as shared tools for delivering 'government' objectives. However, these are issues of effectiveness and efficiency which do not necessarily undermine relevance.

Although most projects in the portfolio have objectives relating to the needs of beneficiaries and government, some are more strongly oriented to institutional strengthening rather than the end user of the service. This applies to trust funds such as LOTFA (UNDP), which is mainly a mechanism for police payroll, as well as Finland's interest in the UNODC component on regional mechanisms for drug control. In LOTFA the issue of relevance to the creation of a civilian police service has been consistently raised by development oriented donors, including Finland, as well as UNDP, but has never gained traction owing to the dominance of the US military and NATO, with counter-terrorism objectives, at the policy table. On the government side, there is some concern about relevance when the balance of the program is weighted in favour of addressing systemic issues in MoIA rather than meeting the priority need for basic equipment for police in posts vulnerable to attack from well-armed insurgents.

In education, EQUIP and EQRA work on priority needs but the program works only in parts of MOE not across the whole. Government respondents raised this point during interview, commenting on the tension created during EQUIP resulting from implementation through a Project Implementation Unit because it created a parallel structure with preferential remuneration for non-establishment staff recruited on contract. EQRA has subsequently been designed differently.

4.1.4 Adaptation over time

Because development assistance has been consistently oriented to improving aid effectiveness, and the majority of programmes are working towards development with a long-term timeframe, there has been little need for adaptation over time in spite of steadily deteriorating security.

There is a high degree of consistency in the portfolio over time. This mainly reflects commitment to the NPPs, to projects implemented through UN agencies , and to the same NGO partners. Within ARTF the two projects preferred by Finland originated in 2003/04 and lasted for 13 years in two phases of EQUIP and three of NSP. EQUIP was redesigned based on lessons learned through routine monitoring and evaluation and transitioned into EQRA. NSP had been subject to 'gold standard' impact evaluation which promoted introduction of the High Risk Areas Implementation Strategy and provided more detailed evidence to incorporate in the design of Citizen's Charter. But both continued to work towards the same higher level education and community development outcomes with a focus on girls' access to education and women's participation in community level governance.

In the projects implemented through UN agencies, adaptation to context has been more variable. UNICEF have had the strongest equity focus, working in the poorest and often most conflict affected provinces since at least 2010. More recently, based on longitudinal evidence of development indicators UNICEF re-focused on different provinces. The WASH programme was also redesigned based on evaluation findings that implementation-driven programmes are not as effective as those that are oriented to integrated service delivery (*Evaluation Report: WASH in Schools (WinS)*, 2017). For Finland this meant a change from a project that had been specific to water, sanitation and hygiene in schools, which was classified as education, to a programme that worked across the WASH sector. This led to a discussion about whether to continue support as WASH is not a Finnish Development Priority. The example also highlights the tension for donors between supporting their own development priorities compared with those of the Afghan government.

Resolving this dilemma is complicated by a Results Framework that is organised around Finnish priorities and requires projects to be classified somewhat artificially relative to the context. For this reason, adult literacy sits awkwardly between education and women's empowerment and Citizen's Charter between service delivery and diversification of the economic base. This is further complicated by the choice of indicators which are not always drawn from the project design.

UNESCO has found adaptation more difficult with no significant change in the design in 10 years in spite of unpublished evaluation findings that the approach was not effective. During interviews for this evaluation MOE was critical of fundamental differences in approach to literacy (as described in 4.1.2). This is compounded by a perception that UNESCO is acting as a service deliverer rather than a capacity developer. Outside the Deputy Ministry responsible for adult literacy there is little ownership in MOE, with the overwhelming emphasis being on formal education, especially for girls.

Challenges in the context are frequently mentioned in relation to unachieved results and the need to remain flexible and adaptable. However, the evaluation of UN Women's support to National Action Plan 1325 observes that, although the programme remained broadly relevant, the balance of priorities has been driven more by funding availability than by a strategic or long-term vision of what is needed to respond to the specifics of the context.

4.2 Effectiveness

Finland has contributed to a range of results achieved through projects in the portfolio. Although there is no doubt that progress has been good on some measures, overall there is a degree of dissatisfaction among stakeholders about the pace of progress and the effect of poor governance, weak management and corruption in services delivered by government. At the same time there is a degree of recognition that this is an inevitable feature of fragility with which committed development partners must work.

4.2.1 Results for beneficiaries and other stakeholders

In this section, results for beneficiaries and other stakeholders (4.2.1) is combined with results for non-discrimination and climate change (formerly 4.2.2). Section 4.2.2 looks specifically at results related to policy dialogue because of its importance in the Afghan context.

Results in policing

Policing has been a priority for Finland, but it is embedded in the highly political security space, where the overwhelmingly dominant actor is NATO's Resolute Support Mission, the approach of which is military by design, dominated by counter-insurgency concerns. As even UNDP is excluded from the sensitive security sector reform space, which is dominated by the US, small donors such as Finland cannot aspire to any kind of influence on the development side.

Finland's results framework at outcome and output level is set at a very high level: enhanced capacity and quality of the justice and civilian security actors; and sustainable and effective civilian police force where the role of women is strengthened and the rule of law and human rights are respected. In spite of the huge investment by the international community, including Finland, these remain elusive.

Finland is supporting police reform in Afghanistan mainly through the Law and Order Trust Fund (LOTFA) and via the European Union Police Mission. Results of this support have been mixed and success stories are rather scarce (interviews). Through LOTFA, police officers have directly benefitted by increased transparency and accountability of the payroll as well as a complaints mechanism and Personnel Asset Inventory (PAI) which biometrically registers and physically verifies all staff (MFA Results Report 2018). Yet, few improvements could be observed in terms of service delivery and sense of security for the general population.

EUPOL Afghanistan has been one of the Finland's biggest contributions under the National Strategy for Civilian Crisis Management adopted in 2008 and updated in 2014 (see 4.2.4) and clearly achieved some visible results. It paved the way for the establishment of a civilian police system and contributed to developing better strategic planning capacity in the Ministry of Interior (MoIA). EUPOL enjoyed its arguably biggest successes in relation to training activities rather than in mentoring or advising (European Court of Auditors). However, effectiveness of EUPOL was hampered by the lack of coordination with other international efforts and the lack of an overarching European approach to policing (Government report to Parliament). Even further, the direct contrast of one of its main objectives – civilianisation of police forces – to the pre-dominant Resolute Support Mission (which favours an approach of militarisation in light of the omnipresent threat of counter-insurgency) severely reduced EUPOL's effectiveness.

In addition, EUPOL has put considerable effort on increasing the number of female police officers and improving the position of women throughout the police organization. Demonstrating commitment to that focus, Finland had the highest percentage of women at approximately 40% among all seconded EUPOL staff. Yet the number of women in the ANP is far behind the target of 5000 in the staffing plan and some provinces lack any female police at all. The working conditions of female ANP remain harsh and one study showed that more than half experienced daily sexual harassment and demands of sexual favours in return for promotions, permission to take leave or participation in trainings. (Oxfam and WPSO: "Afghan Women Police: Tomorrow's force for inclusive security", July 2018). AIHRC observed similar concerns in 2017 (AIHRC: "Situation of Women Employed in Defence and Security Sectors", Autumn, 1396). This raises serious questions about the EUPOL project design, underlying needs assessment and understanding of the cultural context. The comment of one experienced and senior interviewee was insightful:

"I achieved 97 percent of my mission implementation plan targets. I do not know, though, if this was what the Afghans themselves wanted and, whether the targets were ever discussed with them".

Results in Human Rights

Finland, along with other donors, funds the AIHRC on the understanding that it is an independent commission that will set its own agenda. Finland has understood this principle very well and has not set any indicators in the results framework relating to improvements in human rights. The indicators are a generic 'improved capacity' and that government increases its financial share of AIHRC's annual budget.

The mid-term evaluation of the strategy period of 2014–2018, cited in MFA's 2019 Annual Results Report, concluded that AIHRC is an influential human rights actor that has been able to take forward the human rights situation in the country remarkably. Particularly, there has been major achievements in the fields of women's rights, monitoring prisons and decrease in torture conducted by the police. Considering human rights abuses on all sides, the AIHRC, with the support of Finland and other donors, has positioned itself appropriately between the Government and civil society and has gone a long way towards gaining the trust of both.

Afghanistan has enormous regional differences, so the context and manifestation of human rights abuses varies accordingly and is reflected in AIHRC's work (interviews). In some places the focus is on education and curriculum development, in some on displaced people, drug addiction or torture. The most substantial progress has been in the legal framework and Afghanistan now has an anti-torture commission, a good access-to-information law and there have been improvements in the electoral mechanism.

AIHRC is recognized as the leading advocate for women's rights and the legal and framework is in place to advance women's rights and gender equality, including in the 2004 Afghan Constitution and law on the Elimination of Violence Against Women. However, within a societal context where dominating patriarchal norms continue to violate women's rights with impunity, and where justice is often locally determined according to different principles, the challenge is how to implement the laws, educate right holders, and provide access to justice.

For these and other reasons, AIHRC has faced a lot of resistance to their work (interviews). The AIHRC Herat office was burned and staff face personal security threats. Despite having to operate in a particularly difficult and volatile political and security environment, the International Coordinating Committee of National institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights (ICC) has given AIHRC the A status rating for its work. An external evaluation of AIHRC's work in 2014-2018 concluded that the commission is an influential human rights actor that has been able to improve the human rights situation in Afghanistan remarkably. Major achievements cited were women's rights, monitoring prisons and decreasing torture conducted by the police.

Donors, including Finland, have long been dissatisfied with AIHRC's capacity to plan, budget and report in an accurate and timely fashion. This reduced funding by 60 percent in 2015 and, by 2019 after several donors withdrew, the Commission was facing an existential crisis which affected its capacity to deliver services across the country. Although the Afghan government contribution to the budget increased from 8.5 to 15 percent in 2016, indicating strengthened government ownership, the Commission remains dependent on donors for its survival. Finland has remained a loyal supporter to AIHRC and its commitment to supporting human rights, as well as providing considerable practical operational support, has been greatly appreciated by the Commission itself and by UNAMA.

Despite the financial and human resources challenges, interview evidence from UNAMA indicates that the Commission is performing well in comparison with others in the region and is at the high end in the global context. AIHRC is recognized nationally and internationally as a visible, credible and well-functioning national human rights institution, which is trusted by its key stakeholders and on which they rely for expertise, information, advocacy and collaboration. It has increased relevance by prioritizing promotional activities likely to result in long-term improvements in the human rights situation through institutional change.

Results in Women, Peace and Security National Action Plan 1325

The government of Afghanistan launched its first (NAP 1325) of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) in July 2015.

The main responsibility for the development, monitoring and evaluation of the National Action Plan (NAP 1325), which emphasises women's participation in the prevention, management, and resolution of conflict as well as all matters related to peace and security lies within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA). This has not worked ideally as NAP 1325 is not a MoFA priority and it has been very difficult to get the necessary inter-ministerial coordination as it is also not high priority for other ministries on the Steering Committee. In addition, UN Women has not been strong in Afghanistan and has been criticized heavily by the Afghan government and donors, including during interviews for the case study. Finland was recognised for its role in promoting the NAP 1325 agenda during its period of co-chairing the Working Group. However, Finland's potential to be influential can no longer be taken for granted as some large donors are now increasing their attention and funding to the issues likely to face women under a Taliban-inclusive government, including in this space.

At political level, Finland has made engagement in the US-Taliban peace talks a high priority and has used the networks of women cultivated over the years to ensure the inclusion of ten women in recent peace negotiations.

Overall, given the slow pace of change and the lack of genuine ownership in government for the women, peace and security agenda, it is difficult to judge whether Finland's engagement, especially in NAP 1325, has yielded tangible results.

Results in education

Finland's largest contribution to education is EQUIP/EQRA and this is the only programme that is reported on in Annual Reports. The most appropriate indicators would be those of EQUIP which, at outcome level, are increased access and improved quality. EQUIP increased access for girls and boys from 6.1 million in 2009 to 8.7 million in 2016 at completion. Finland reports on access as an output, along with improved teacher capacity (180,000 teachers trained) and improved infrastructure (8,000 classrooms built). At outcome level, rather than following EQUIP/EQRA, it specifies improved quality of the general education system, for which there is no indicator, and decreased gender disparities, which can be reported on through EQUIP but as an access indicator. As there are no indicators appropriate to adult literacy and school WASH, these projects are mentioned in passing. Overall the results framework is complicated and makes the job of reporting against it unnecessarily difficult. This may be the reason why the Annual Results Report reads more like a situation analysis.

The results report has various mentions of corruption under outcome 1 but is not mentioned at all in the education section. This is surprising since there have been three high profile reports featuring corruption in education. The 2016 report of the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction highlighted the issue of ghost schools and ghost teachers (SIGAR, 2016).

In 2017, MEC highlighted 'widespread, country-wide appointment of teachers on the basis of influence, or nepotism and bribery' as the most serious corruption vulnerability (Independent Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Committee, 2017). In 2018, a perceptions survey highlighted the role of corruption in shoddy construction of schools and lack of access to textbooks as well as politicisation of teacher and administrator appointments (Integrity Watch Afghanistan, 2018). All noted the damaging effect on student learning and community loss of faith in the system.

During stakeholder interviews there was a degree of dissatisfaction with the results of EQUIP but also realism about what can be expected. Most mentioned corruption as the reason for dissatisfaction as, although corruption in EQUIP had been widely suspected, it was topical because in July 2019 a new World Bank initiative on transparency and fiduciary reviews provided evidence. Stakeholders had mixed views about the extent to which it should be tolerated. For some, it is an expected feature of fragility and the OECD fragility framework cites corruption as one of the biggest obstacles to strengthening governance structures. For one donor with a relatively high risk tolerance, the amounts involved in EQUIP were felt to be relatively small compared to the value of the whole investment. For others, there is zero tolerance. Finland's response was to issue a media release in the spirit of full transparency.

Compared with its recognised commitment to and lead donor role with the Human Rights Commission, Finland's influence in education is low owing to the dominance of very large players that have dedicated teams of international and Afghan education specialists.

Results in diversified economic base

Finland's major financial contribution is to NSP/Citizen's Charter through ARTF. These programmes are only indirectly related to the outcome of a diversified economic base as the development objective of NSP was to build, strengthen, and maintain Community Development Councils (CDCs) as effective institutions for local governance and social-economic development. NSP was an enormous program, disbursing more than USD 1.1 billion over three phases, establishing 32,000 CDCs across 361 districts in all 34 provinces and financing 65,000 development projects through block grants. Because of its high profile and ambitious objective, it was the only NPP that was evaluated rigorously, and this provided very detailed evidence which was much studied. At completion the overall efficacy was rated as Modest. NSP had been "remarkably successful in an extremely challenging context at establishing democratically elected CDCs for the first time after decades of conflict, extending their coverage across rural Afghanistan, and using them to deliver development efforts at the community level. However, the basic model of large and infrequent block grants, the lack of formal institutionalization and clarity about their local governance role beyond the project cycle, as well as insufficient cross-Government acceptance and continued dependence on donor funds constrained CDC effectiveness and sustainability." (World Bank, 2017).

In Finland's Results Framework, NSP/CC are categorised under outcome area 3 as contributing to increased job opportunities, especially for women with an indicator (3.1.1) relating to coordination of socio-economic development by CDCs. This does not correspond to any of the indicators defined or monitored in the World Bank design. A similar issue arises with the indicator for SALAM which is about improved support to rural and urban livelihoods. Although SALAM has an objective to establish durable employment solutions for displaced people, the Mid Term Evaluation, confirmed in interviews, found that the output of providing vocational and skills training to 800 beneficiaries would be unlikely to result in sustainable jobs because of poor local market conditions and the prevalence of recruitment through networks. Classifying SALAM under an outcome area that aims to increase employment opportunities for women may be responsible for the distortion of relevance to include women when, as is stated in another part of the Results Report, almost all migrants in search of work are men and especially young men.

Results for non-discrimination

Women and girls in Afghanistan continue to face systemic discrimination and human rights abuses. The majority of Afghan girls still do not attend school and the percentage facing forced and early marriage is estimated to be as high as eighty percent. Domestic violence is prevalent, and Afghanistan is one of the few places in the world where suicide rates are higher among women than men. Finland has been highly committed to the cause of women and girls in Afghanistan and this seems to be shared not only in MFA but across the government as a whole.

Finland follows a twin-track approach where gender is mainstreamed as a cross-cutting objective in all its programs but, at the same time, women and girls specific projects are also supported. One of the women specific interventions is longstanding support through MSI. In the Results Framework this appears as a basic services health intervention although, with health not a Finnish development priority, the rationale has been variously described in terms of sexual and reproductive rights and/or women's empowerment. Under Results for Women and Girls, Finland's Development Policy Results Report 2018 cites the work of MSI as an example of more people having access to contraception in Afghanistan. It states that about 3.7 million people benefited from family planning services between 2002 and 2017. The evaluation could not, and was not intended to, evaluate the results of Finland's funding, which is a contribution to a wider programme. However, the team found some of the claims of success during interview, especially in areas held by Taliban where women's rights are severely and harshly constrained and especially in such a sensitive and taboo subject area such as abortion, difficult to believe.

NSP made a strong contribution to an increased and more meaningful role of women in local level decision-making processes, through representation in gender-balanced CDCs and increased voice in determining community investments. This participation of women in village life was seen as important progress in a society where women are largely absent from public forums and after the Taliban era when their economic and social lives were restricted. Program indicators demonstrated a notable contribution towards closing the gender gap in Afghanistan (World Bank, 2017).

Results for climate change

Finland does not fund standalone projects related to climate change but its contribution to the ARTF supports policy and implementation interventions. The ARTF Incentive Programme Development Policy Grant (IP-DPG) incentivizes timely implementation of reforms to improve economic and fiscal self-reliance and improved conditions for sustainable use of natural resources. One of the policy reforms is Water Productivity and Climate Resilience which has indicators for development of a National Irrigation Policy and National Dry Land Agriculture Policy. Evidence provided by the Government has been meeting the Tranche Release Conditions (*Technical Review IP-DPG*, 2018). For implementation, Finland's contribution to ARTF preferences 50 percent for EQRA and Citizen's Charter but the remaining 50 percent supports all 10 NPPs, including agriculture. Climate change is one of the cross-cutting themes addressed in the ARTF Partnership Framework and Financing Program (PFFP) and has been high on the agenda following severe drought which has displaced an estimated 2.2 million people due to its impact on agriculture and livelihoods. Minutes of the September 2018 ARTF Strategy Group meeting, at which Finland was present, record presentation of the Climate Change Discussion Note by a World Bank expert.

4.2.2 Results in policy dialogue

Finland has sought to incorporate policy dialogue in its strategy for Afghanistan. However, in the spaces where Finland aims to be influential, dialogue is predominantly about matters of implementation rather than policy. In the absence of clear influencing objectives and with a large and wide portfolio, Finland does not have the human resources to engage effectively.

Finland's approach in Afghanistan is exemplary in terms of seeking to promote aid effectiveness. In terms of influence, the choice to work through multilateral implementing partners and the security restrictions on visiting government ministries combine to mean that Finland has very little direct contact with government partners.

The capacity of multilateral partners to engage in policy influencing, notably UNWomen and UNESCO, is relatively low and the counterpart government agency expresses some dissatisfaction (interviews). At the tables where Finland sits, interviews demonstrate that dialogue is dominated by issues of implementation rather than policy. This is partly because Afghanistan now has most development policies in place and partly because there are so many challenges delivering or reporting on results.

Over the last two years, three projects (SALAM, AIHRC, LOTFA) have consumed much of the management time of Embassy staff but, for different reasons, have resulted in little influence. SALAM and AIHRC were beset with internal problems with no space to influence. (interviews) For LOTFA, as policing is embedded in the highly political security sector reform space dominated by military actors in Resolute Support Mission and the United States, even UNDP is excluded, as evidenced during interviews.

The evaluation team would not wish to judge whether the results obtained justified the time and effort invested because there are many factors involved. But it highlights two points. One is that Finnish effort is oriented to implementation challenges that are a feature of working in a fragile context and Finland's perception of the need to engage intensively is a feature of the multilateral partner's weaker than expected capacity to deliver. This challenges the choice of the modality where aid is channelled through earmarked support to UN agencies assuming that they have the experience and capacity to be effective and efficient in fragile contexts. The second is that Finland does not have sufficient human resources to engage at implementation level to this extent. The rationale to engage is compelling in the face of demand for results but, when staff time is limited, there are opportunity costs.

In turn, this begs two questions: what are Finland's influencing objectives and is the portfolio manageable? In terms of influencing objectives, Finland sits at the relevant tables to deliver on its stated strategic priorities of human rights, women's rights and education. In the case of education, the sector is crowded with multiple donors, some of which support very large projects with at least one and sometimes several sector specialists working full-time. Stakeholders were clear during interviews that influence tends to correlate with size of donor and size of contribution so, for a small donor like Finland, with no technical specialist, presence at the education table is about learning and information gathering rather than contribution. Priorities for gender and inclusion in education are shared by all donors and the design of EQUIP/EQRA incorporates these perspectives so Finland can add little if any value.

The credibility of influence and the choice of which policy tables to sit at and for what purpose is limited by the fact that most of Finland's development staff are not permanent and change frequently. As they have no decision-making authority, they are more likely to focus on the portfolio in front of them rather than one of the future and more likely to sit at several policy tables than prioritise. For the same reason, one donor interviewed noted that the

agency no longer recruits from outside, having learned that the lack of understanding of national policy and institutions is a significant barrier to influence, especially in the face of long-term technical experts in the World Bank working in ARTF.

More generally, several stakeholders interviewed commented on the challenge for any donor to be influential when staff are on short rotations, out of the country frequently for rest breaks, and often prohibited from attending meetings because of security lockdowns in Kabul. This means that very few staff either have or can build up the kind of in-depth knowledge and understanding of the context and stakeholders that would enable them to make contributions at a level deeper than generality.

In terms of resourcing for influence, Finland lacks the capacity to engage because of the burden of managing a development portfolio that has such a large number of projects spread over a range of sectors. The burden to monitor and report reduced when LCF was discontinued but the number of development staff also fell from four to two. Other donors have similarly reduced their staff but also correspondingly reduced the size and scope of their portfolios to achieve focus and manageability. It is not clear why Finland has not done so but reasons include higher priorities, the need to relocate after an attack on the German Embassy which affected the Finnish premises, staff management challenges and difficulty recruiting (interviews).

Sitting at many policy tables reduces the quality of Finland's influence. In theory, the tool to consider the purpose of policy influence is the Results Framework but the current version is unhelpful. Embassy staff have indicated that they would prefer to focus on two priorities out of, for example, human rights, women's rights or education but they have been instructed from Helsinki to have three. A narrower focus, especially on women's rights, might enable Finland to commit the time and resources to retaining a leadership role. Now that Finland has handed over the Co-Chair of the Women, Peace and Security Working Group to Canada, and with some large donors entering the space because of the threat to women's rights under a Taliban-inclusive government, there is a risk that Finland's role shrinks.

Whilst there is little guidance on what the influencing priorities should be in the development portfolio, there has been strong and clear guidance in the political domain. During 2018/19 when peace talks were being held between the US government and Taliban, Finland prioritised considerable time to staying as close to the process as possible and, in line with its priority to support the participation of women in peace processes under agenda 1325, to facilitating women to participate in talks in Doha. Messages were discussed and agreed jointly between Kabul and Helsinki. Although there were various limitations in terms of which women could participate, without efforts like these the process would be entirely male. This work was undertaken closely with UNWomen and Finnish satisfaction with their performance on this agenda was considerably higher than that related to the project.

4.2.3 Contribution to reduction in fragility

Afghanistan remains highly fragile and the depth of the challenge is such that development cooperation, in the absence of a peace settlement, plays a small role. Therefore, there is a disconnect between Finland's well-intentioned portfolio and the reality of what is necessary to address the causes of fragility.

During the evaluation period some good results have been achieved through Finland's contribution but there has been no reduction in fragility overall and it is impossible to know whether progress has been made towards the PSGs as conflict and violence have worsened. During interviews UNAMA emphasised that human rights abuses – economic, social and political as well as exploitation and marginalisation of communities and women – are at the root of the conflict. Donors and the Afghan government recognise that ending the conflict requires a political

solution in the form of an inclusive Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace and reconciliation process, which must be based on a broad political consensus from across society, protect the human rights of all Afghans, and contribute to national unity and social cohesion (Geneva Conference on Afghanistan, 2018).

This means that, even if the White Paper supports alignment of programs and dialogue which aim to address the causes of fragility, the depth of the challenge is such that the vast amount of aid funding and the proliferation of programs from the international community has failed to make significant impact on poverty, injustice and inequality. There is considerable documentary evidence of this fact as well as the politicisation and militarisation of aid in relation to counter terrorism. Therefore, there is a disconnect between Finland's well-intentioned portfolio and the reality of what is necessary to address the causes of fragility.

4.2.4 Role of the aid cooperation modality

Given the complex and high-risk context of Afghanistan, a mix of aid modalities and a division of labour between Kabul and Helsinki is acknowledged as the only realistic way of managing Finland's overall contribution. Coordination of the various modalities has long been accepted by MFA to be challenging and previous evaluations have commented on the fragmentation and administrative burden this creates in, for example, project support.

Use of support channelled through UN organisations is mentioned in the White Paper. Section 4.2 of this case study provides examples of effectiveness under programs delivered by UNESCO, UNDP (SALAM), UNICEF, and UNWomen. For UNICEF and UNWomen, Finland has moved towards core contributions.

In the period 2007 to 2016, an important instrument was civilian crisis management, through which Finland supported EUPOL as coordinated expert action based on strengthening human rights, democracy, social and gender equality. Missions are financed through the EU common foreign and security policy (CFSP) budget provisions but the participating member states bear the costs of their seconded personnel. Globally Finland is amongst the biggest European contributors and has the highest numbers of seconded staff per capita deployed to missions.

Other, contributions are much smaller in comparison. Until 2016, the Local Cooperation Funds (LCF) instrument was a popular channel used by the Embassy to make small grants to local NGOs in a flexible and timely way. The Institutional Cooperation Instrument (ICI) modality is used to channel support through the Finnish Geological Survey (GTK) to the Afghanistan Geological Survey. This is classified in the Results Framework as economic diversification under the outcome aiming to improve the conditions for sustainable use of natural resources (3.2).

Twelve different Finnish CSOs have received MFA funding for Afghanistan, including KIOS Foundation, ABILIS Foundation, FIDA International, Finnish Lutheran Mission, Finland National Committee for UN Women, Women Journalists in Finland, Rotary Finland, Crisis Management Initiative, Operation Mobilisation, Finnish Lutheran Overseas Mission, FS Global /Frikyrklig samverkan, and the Finnish Red Cross. Half of these are larger, well-established development NGOs with rigorous project management systems, which are granted partnership status, making them eligible under the programme support instrument. The other half operate on project support, which is another discretionary government funding instrument based on the provisions of the Act on Discretionary Government Transfers (2001/688). Funding is also provided under the humanitarian modality.

4.3 Coherence

4.3.1 Role of White Paper in enabling coherent MFA assistance

Finland's policy on Afghanistan is based on a comprehensive approach, which combines political influence, bilateral relations, development cooperation and military and civilian crisis management. This requires coordination in Helsinki across the relevant ministries and departments, including immigration.

In Kabul, coordination with Finnish government agencies visiting from Helsinki is straightforward as security arrangements require residence in the Embassy. Where Finnish personnel are based in other agencies in Kabul, such as police officers in the EU mission or military working under RSM, has become increasingly constrained for security reasons and, as much of this was done informally or through 'sauna diplomacy', there is little opportunity to share information in this way.

In recognition of the political dimension of its development objective to increase participation of women in peace processes, Finland has sought to be influential by high level coordination from Helsinki and the allocation of a senior MFA official to lead in a political rather than development cooperation role in Kabul.

Aside from the crucial realm of security, Afghanistan's political fragility is manifested in a government that is hugely divided, conflicted and increasingly ineffective. This has been exacerbated by peace talks between the US and Taliban, which have largely excluded the government. In recognition of the political dimension of its development objective to increase participation of women in peace processes, Finland has sought to be influential through its political engagement.

4.3.2 To what extent did the Country Strategy modality support alignment with the plans and policies of other key donors/international actors in the context?

The White Paper fully supports the intention of the wider international community to provide support in accordance with the principles of aid effectiveness.

In terms of coherence, the use of a particular modality is not a main factor compared with issues of donor coordination. Owing to the number of donors and projects, and the relative weakness of government to take on the coordination role in the face of massive on and off budget projects, aid coordination has been a major challenge. Much has been written about the subject, but it is beyond the scope of this evaluation to assess.

4.3.3 Role of WP in contributing to wider Development Policy objectives

The White Paper is fully in line with and flows from Development Policy. It paves the way for aid effectiveness in emphasising that development cooperation, even in fragile states, should start from the country's own national development plans. Finland's aid is therefore in line with the ANPDF and its predecessor Afghan National Development Strategies, as laid out in the partnership agreement between Finland and Afghanistan. This is discussed in other parts of the report. The White Paper also has clear and strong orientation to human rights and gender equality.

The Afghanistan portfolio contributes to all Finnish development priority areas. The strongest focus is on the rights and status of women and girls, with projects that aim to address it directly as well as a cross cutting theme. Support through ARTF and UNDP SALAM were oriented to the priority of growth of developing countries' economies to generate more jobs, livelihoods and well-being and the general contribution to ARTF supports democratic and better-functioning societies. UNICEF WASH and GTK contribute to the fourth priority of food security, access to water and energy, and sustainable use of natural resources.

The WP is clear on the importance of aid coordination and, at the higher level of aid effectiveness, this is strong. At implementation level, donor coordination is deeply challenging owing to the ongoing proliferation of donors and projects, which exceed the government's capacity to coordinate. The scale of interventions and the size of portfolio have implications for Finland's ability to report on results. Donors such as Sweden manage this by keeping a watching brief and reporting back on issues of greatest political interest but not actively engaging in all projects, especially those funded under ARTF. Denmark manage their capacity limitation by sitting in the big forums of ARTF and LOTFA but focusing their influence on the single issue of anti-corruption. This means they gain understanding of the whole context but develop expertise in one element.

4.4 Connectedness

4.4.1 Adherence to international commitments on the IHPs, Do No Harm and AAP

No references to international human rights principles, do no harm, and accountability to affected populations were found in the development portfolio as far as the team could see and there is no indication that MFA explicitly required adherence to commitments on the IHPs, DNH and AAP for project approval. These would be more likely to be found in humanitarian projects.

4.4.2 Use of HRBA approaches

None of the documents consulted explicitly referenced the Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA) or used the terminology of duty bearers and the rights holders. This is not surprising as project documents are developed in and for the Afghan context and the aid effectiveness principle of harmonisation requires donors to forego their own agendas in favour of those jointly agreed by donors with the Afghan government.

The absence of the approach does not undermine the fact that the portfolio has a strong orientation to addressing human rights issues, notably consistent reference to women's rights and support to the AIHRC.

4.4.3 Consideration of the humanitarian-development-peacebuilding nexus

There is general agreement about the triple nexus in theory but its realization in practice is distant. Discussion of the double nexus has been ongoing in Afghanistan for many years. In 2002, immediately after the overthrow of the Taliban regime, agencies such as UNHCR and UNDP tried to develop joint programming in order to 'bridge the humanitarian-development gap'. Since the Grand Bargain of 2016, there has been much discussion about the triple nexus, which extends to include peace, but this mainly takes place in the humanitarian sector where longstanding concerns about the sustainability of results when such aid is discontinued are felt most acutely.

For Finland, there is recognition that humanitarian and development needs will both remain high for many years and that contributions through development cooperation, the humanitarian modality, and support to the peace process will remain relevant for years and perhaps decades. For this reason, staff at the Embassy try to follow discussions among providers of humanitarian aid where feasible but, given limited capacity, this has not been a priority.

From the perspective of the Afghan government, the NPPs and other projects aim to deliver priority services to all Afghans. In the face of financial and human resource capacity, a system that is not conducive to rapid delivery, and large swathes of the country inaccessible because of conflict, it is inevitable that the people most in need of humanitarian aid are the most challenging to reach from a development perspective.

5 Conclusions

Relevance

The White Paper appropriately places development cooperation for Afghanistan in the context of a comprehensive approach including the international military effort under NATO and pursuit of stability. It is not driven by an explicit fragility analysis but the causes of fragility, in a country that continues to be riven with conflict, are considered throughout and there is explicit attention to human rights. Finland's policy commitment to principles of aid effectiveness, in particular local ownership, is highly relevant to the largest portfolio choice of support of the ARTF, through which the Afghan government is empowered to implement large projects of national significance. Other choices also reflect donor harmonisation. To date, the White Paper has stood the test of time.

Finland's commitment to deliver on its priority related to equality and empowerment of women and girls is evident and impressive at all levels with support to projects where women are the target group as well as those where gender is a strong focus. However, in a context where the rights and status of women are high profile from the donor perspective, where projects are designed, monitored and evaluated to promote equality, and when the mantra 'especially women and girls' is ever cited, Finland's contribution is not necessarily distinctive from that of other donors and some, especially Nordic +, have the same or greater capacity to move the agenda forward in the same forums. An unintended consequence of Finland's dominant focus on women and girls is that it sometimes detracts at project level from attention to men at risk of violent extremism. In terms of factors contributing to fragility this is important.

Effectiveness

Although adherence to the principles of aid effectiveness meets relevance criteria it cannot guarantee effectiveness. It is a cliché that development takes a long time and, in a highly fragile context like Afghanistan, this means thinking in terms of decades rather than years. Finland's contribution has supported the achievement of a range of results both directly through programming and indirectly through policy dialogue. However, considering the vast resources committed by the international community since 2002 the results of development cooperation are not always impressive and not necessarily sustainable. In the big picture, insecurity, poverty and vulnerability have got worse and Afghanistan continues to be highly fragile, with ongoing conflict, violence and extremism. Afghans are profoundly disillusioned at the lack of improvement in the quality of their lives and the rampant corruption evident in government.

Recognition of the longevity of fragility, the difficulty of demonstrating results, and unwillingness to continue allocating vast resources have been major reasons why so many donors have already reduced the size and scope of their portfolios. This degree of realism about what can be achieved in Afghanistan is also manifest in Helsinki and the Embassy in Kabul but Finland has only just reached the point where the need is evident. It is a difficult task because one of the main drivers of a large portfolio, and a barrier to a manageable one, is the political imperative to justify the large investment by being present in the crucial sectors where everyone else is. However, the management of a large and diverse portfolio, as well as the necessity of engaging deeply in matters of implementation to deliver on the commitment to human rights and security through policing, detracts from Finland's ability to focus its effectiveness, especially in influencing.

Finland's niche in human rights is important, distinctive and recognised on a topic that underpins historic and continuing fragility.

The choice of UN agencies as implementing organisations is based on the assumption that they have the experience and capacity to be effective and efficient in fragile contexts. The evidence suggests that this assumption is flawed.

Coherence

The White Paper positions itself as a vehicle for coherence and, considering the general challenges of coordinating a diverse range of assistance types provided by multiple MFA departments the overall approach appears 'joined up' across actors and key initiatives. The difficulty of achieving coherence in Afghanistan is confounded by the political fragility of a government that is hugely divided, conflicted and increasingly ineffective. This has been exacerbated by peace talks between the US and Taliban, which have largely excluded the government. In recognition of the political dimension of its development objective to increase participation of women in peace processes, Finland has sought to be influential through its political engagement. Finland has also contributed constructively to donor co-ordination mechanisms at the higher level of aid effectiveness and at the project operational level, despite its limited human resources and within a context where the Afghan government's capacity to coordinate is stretched to its limit.

Connectedness

Finland is perceived by external actors as a prominent and progressive contributor to the human rights agenda and, implicitly an articulator of the human rights based approach, consistently the issue in policy dialogue in general and in its support for AIHRC in particular.

6 Lessons/Implications

The new Country Strategy is an opportunity to think through exactly what Finland's objectives are in influencing and how they can be meaningfully applied.

In the light of the case study findings and conclusions there are two main implications: whether and how the move to a Country Strategy can make a difference; and whether and how relevance can be improved by reducing the size and scope of the portfolio.

6.1 Moving to a Country Strategy

Developing a Country Strategy for Afghanistan is a potential pathway to improved effectiveness by clarifying Finland's objectives for development cooperation and approach to influencing. However, the assumption that working within the framework of RBM will increase focus and clarity of purpose which, in turn, will improve the specificity of the desired results and definition of measurable indicators of progress.

There is general evidence that RBM and the theory of change approach does not suit fragile contexts because of the impossibility of predicting, controlling and reducing hugely complex change processes into a few single or few overarching problems. This is a critical lesson of the last 18 years in Afghanistan where the massive resources of the international community have had little control over the direction of change. For this reason, the Nordic donors in Afghanistan, especially Sweden, are moving away from strict results frameworks into more flexible reporting arrangements. These have the potential to overcome the kind of difficulties experienced by Finland in distinguishing levels of results and appropriate indicators and enabling reporting on the important priorities.

As Finland is part of the international effort and has signed up to the series of agreements aimed at improving aid effectiveness, the value of developing a theory of change for a CS is unclear. In terms of RBM, the IC-Afghan government agreed GMAF (Geneva Mutual Accountability Framework) is the appropriate starting point for indicators rather than a specially created framework. In contributing significant resources to ARTF, Finland has accepted the fit of the NPPs with its own development priorities and should be able to rely on the indicators and reporting of each project.

6.2 Improving relevance

Finland's portfolio is already relevant to the development priorities of Afghanistan and Finland so the key issue arising from the case study is about whether it can become more relevant by focusing on challenges that are directly related to the causes of fragility rather than those facing any non-fragile developing country.

In theory, the process of developing a CS involves making choices about where Finland's investment can realise its highest priority policy objectives. One advantage over the White Paper as a framework is that the CS assesses priorities in relation to human resource capacity and this is critical in Afghanistan where the imbalance between size and scope of the portfolio and the available staff to manage it is obvious. However, attempts by the Embassy to reduce the number

of sectors from three to two and to cut programs that are not in line with Finnish policy priorities have been resisted in Helsinki. This suggests that there are motivations other than efficiency for continuing with business as usual. If this is the case, unless there is facilitation for objective decision making, the CS process is unlikely to result in a more manageable portfolio.

Suggestions include:

1. *Reduce the spread of the programme and clarify priority sectors*

   Discussion in Helsinki and Kabul about the choice of sectors has pointed to gender equality and education as the two main ones with human rights (including sexual and reproductive health rights) and economic development to be integrated 'in a meaningful way'. As gender equality is not a recognised sector, human rights would be a more appropriate choice given Finland's key role with AIHRC and the centrality of the issue as a cause of fragility.

   Gender equality is a cross cutting theme for ARTF, implicit in the mandates and programmes of UN partners, and enshrined in Afghan law and policy. Therefore Finland does not add value simply by being at general tables. The only programmes that are directly related to women's rights are AIHRC, NAP 1325 and MSI and AIHRC and MSI can equally be classified as human rights. There is some thinking to do in relation to WPS NAP 1325 because, with new players entering the space in order to try to protect the gains for women under a Taliban-inclusive government, Finland is not assured of a leading role. If it wishes to continue in the space, more thought will need to be given to how it can best influence even though its financial resources may be considerably less than other players. The fact that senior MFA officials in Kabul give considerable time to the inclusion of women in peace processes is a positive place to start.

   The current impact area defined as economic development is also not a sector. As the cluster of projects are only indirectly connected to economic development and have no common theme, it does not make sense to cluster them as a sector alongside the much higher priorities of education and human rights or on a par with gender equality.

2. *Distinguish between 'fund and watch' and 'fund and influence'*

   Education is a critical development priority but it is a crowded sector dominated by big donors with far more capacity and, with no education specialist in country, Finland is in a very weak position in terms of influence. As the main support to education is through ARTF for EQRA, fund and watch is appropriate. Finland's ability to 'watch' is greatly facilitated through Nordic + and Sweden's deep engagement in education.

   In contrast, human rights (AIHRC) and NAP 1325 (WPS) are appropriate to continue to influence because they are high priority and already consume considerable time and energy of staff. If SRHR is considered as human rights rather than health, the current arrangement of funding through MSI and watching from a distance is appropriate to continue because it requires little time.

   Finland cannot be influential in policing through LOTFA and, as policing is not a development priority for Finland, it makes sense to either withdraw completely or fund and watch but not continue to commit staff time.

3. *Increase explicit focus on HRBA*

   Considering the centrality of human rights abuse as a cause of fragility and Finland's demonstrated commitment, developing a coherent framework that articulates what a human rights based approach means for the portfolio and for influencing would be a worthwhile investment.

4. *Redesign the Results Framework*

    How sectors and themes are identified and classified matters in terms of a CS and RBM framework. If Finland is to improve on the current results framework, and to deepen its commitment to aid effectiveness, the appropriate way forward is to design the framework so that the specification of results and the associated indicators are fully in alignment with the GMAF indicators and those of ARTF and the relevant UN agencies. As Finland funds across ARTF as well as through preferencing, it contributes to results under all five ARTF sectors and can rely on reasonably satisfactory reporting.

Annex 1: Timeline of events in the context highlighting aspects of fragility

2012	NATO endorses exit strategy / Tokyo Framework for Mutual Accountability
2013	Finland signs Bilateral Partnership Agreement with Afghanistan
2014	Contested Presidential election lead to power sharing / End of 13-year ISAF operation
2015	Resolute Support Mission replaces ISAF / Islamic State increases territory held / Massive inflows of migrants to Europe / Start of Transition Decade / Self reliance through Mutual Accountability Framework (SMAF)
2016	Brussels conference commits donors to funding Afghanistan's reform agenda 2017–2020 / EU and Afghanistan sign Joint Way Forward framework for returns and readmissions / End of EUPOL mission
2017	US and EU renew their Afghanistan strategies / Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework (ANPDF)
2018	Civilian deaths at all time high / US starts peace talks with Taliban in Doha / Geneva Conference (GMAF)
2019	Afghan Government holds parallel Peace Jirga in Kabul / Presidential elections postponed twice, held, no result announced.

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COUNTRY CASE STUDY ANNEX

MYANMAR

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Contents

TABLES

FIGURES

Acronyms and abbreviations

AAP	Accountability to Affected Populations
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CPIA	Country Policy and Institutional Assessment
CPIA	Country Policy and Institutional Assessment
CSA	Conflict Sensitivity Analysis
DPP	Development Policy Programme
EAO	Ethnic Armed Organizations
EUR	Euro
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization
FELM	Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission
FLEGT	Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GEWECG	Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Coordination Group
GNI	Gross National Income
GoM	Government of Myanmar
GTK	Geological Survey of Finland
HRBA	Human Rights Based Approach
ICI	Institutional Cooperation Instrument
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
IHP	International Humanitarian Principles
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
JPF	Joint Pace Fund
MSDP	Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan
NCA	Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NLD	National League for Democracy
ODA	Official Development Assistance
PEA	Political Economy Analysis
PSD	Private Sector Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
USD	US Dollar
USDP	Union Solidarity and Development Party
WGF	Women and Girls First

1 Introduction

1.1 The country case study purpose and objectives

This case study comprises one of five prepared for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) Finland's *Evaluation of selected Finland's country strategies and country strategy modality for development cooperation with focus on fragile contexts*. The other four case studies are of Afghanistan, Somalia, the State of Palestine and Syria/Iraq.

The purpose of each Case Study isto apply the overarching evaluation questions, design and methodology of the strategic level evaluation, while adapting their analysis for the specifics of the country context.

The specific objectives of each case study are:

- To provide a contributory evidence stream to the overall strategic evaluation
- To help interrogate the wider theoretical framework for the evaluation (see MFA, 2018) by generating evidence against it;
- To generate Lessons/Implications to help inform country stakeholders in their country-level programming, as part of the constructive approach adopted by the utilisation-focused model of the strategic evaluation.

The Case Study is explicitly not a full evaluation of Finland's country-level portfolio in Myanmar, which would be beyond the remit of this evaluation. Accordingly, it does not provide Recommendations, but rather Lessons/Implications.

1.2 Approach and methodology

The approach and methodology for the strategic evaluation is fully described in annexes 2 and 3 of the synthesis report. This Case Study has applied the overarching evaluation questions, design and methodology of the strategic level evaluation, with limited adaptation for the contextual specifics of Myanmar. The questions to which it contributes evidence are as follows:

Relevance	- To what extent did the Country Strategy modality support the alignment of Finland's Country portfolios and policy dialogue to address the causes of fragility? - To what extent did the Country Strategy modality support the relevance of Finland's assistance to the needs of stakeholders and beneficiaries, considering available resources? - To what extent did the Country Strategy modality support the relevance of Finland's assistance to the needs of key stakeholders, whether government, civil society or others? - To what extent did the Country Strategy modality enable assistance to adapt appropriately over time, including in relation to volatile conditions?

Effectiveness	• To what extent did the Country Strategy modality support the orientation of initiatives to best deliver results for key stakeholders and beneficiaries in the context?
	• To what extent did the Country Strategy modality provide an enabling environment for results in non-discrimination, including gender equality and the empowerment of women, and climate change?
	• To what extent did the selected aid co-operation modality, particularly multi-bi co-operation, support the delivery of results in the context?
	• To what extent have Finnish Country Strategies/Portfolios contributed to any reductions in fragility?
Coherence	• How/or does the Country Strategy modality support Finland in providing coherent assistance to the country, e.g. across MFA departments and multilateral influencing plans and funding?
	• To what extent did the Country Strategy modality support alignment with the plans and policies of other key donors/international actors in the context?
	• To what extent did the Country Strategy modality contribute to the realization of wider Finnish Development Policy objectives?
Connectedness	• To what extent did Country Strategies adhere to international commitments on human rights, the International Humanitarian Principles, Do No Harm and Accountability to Affected Populations?
	• To what extent did the Country Strategies take into account long-term and interconnected problems, e.g. through the humanitarian-development-peacebuilding nexus?

The theoretical framework for the evaluation combines theory-based evaluation (Chen 1991), with elements of contribution analysis (Mayne, 2001) and a utilisation-focused approach (Quinn Patton, 2008). It functions at aggregate level for the strategic evaluation and is applied to this case study through the structured tools applied (see Annex 2 of the synthesis report). This case study contributes to its specification, validation and interrogation as part of the wider evaluation.

The case study has adopted a highly structured and systematic approach, in accordance with the methodology for the wider evaluation. The main elements of the methodology applied (see MFA 2019a) are as follows:

- Quantitative analysis of Finnish assistance to Myanmar for the period 2012–2018, generated from MFA statistics

- Interviews with key Helsinki-based stakeholders working currently/previously on the Myanmar portfolio within MFA (see Annex 2 for list of persons interviewed)

- Systematic analysis of 16 MFA-funded projects implemented in Myanmar during the evaluation's time period of 2012-current against a structured analytical framework (see Annex 3 for full list)

- A ten-day field mission in Myanmar, conducted October 21–31 2019,interviews with a wide range of stakeholders, including the Finnish Embassy, government ministries, implementing partners, civil society organisations, other donors and end beneficiaries representing all projects selected for the sample and additional interventions. Stakeholder consultations were carried out through individual stakeholder interviews and several group discussions in Yangon, Nay Pyi Taw and several locations in Kayin State. In Kayin the team accompanied a UNFPA mission (together with the Finnish and Swedish Embassies) to look particularly at the Women and Girls First Project which has established itself as an important pillar of Finland's country portfolio. The field mission served the dual purpose of triangulating findings of the desk review and gathering additional information.

Findings were discussed and validated with key stakeholders in MFA at a feedback meeting on November 8 2019 in Helsinki.

Table 1 presents the projects included in the desk review sample. The Column "Aid Modality" indicates which channel MFA has adopted to deliver aid to Myanmar. In the case of NGOs, a difference is made between projects that have been funded from the country programme and those that have received support through the Programme-Based Support instrument of the MFA.

Table 1: Project Sample (alphabetical order)

Implementing Organisation	Title of Intervention	Project Number	Duration	Aid modality	Budget Category	DAC Sector
Crisis Management Initiative (CMI)	Unlocking peace potential through the security sector in Myanmar	63501551	2019–2021	Finnish NGOs*	1–10m	Government & Civil Society
Eden Centre for Children with Disabilities	Early Intervention for Children with Disabilities (EICD) project	63501528	2016–2017	Local Cooperation Instrument (FLC)	< 1m	Human Rights
Embassy of Finland	Support for IDPs in Dawei and Palaw, a pilot project in the context of the Myanmar Peace Support Initiative (MPSI)	63501506	2013–2015	Local Cooperation Instrument (FLC)	< 1m	Government & Civil Society
Finnish Red Cross	Urban Risk and Resilience Programme	635SP360	2016–2019	Finnish NGOs**	< 1m	Disaster
Finnish Refugee Council	Enhancing Vocational Education for Youth in conflict affected Kayah state	130	2018–2021	Finnish NGOs**	< 1m	Education
Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO)	National Forest Inventory and National Forest Monitoring Information Systems for Myanmar	63501523	Since 2016	Multilateral, earmarked	1–10m	Agriculture
International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA)	MyConstitution: Constitutionalism in support of inclusive, peaceful and democratic Myanmar	63501552	2018–2021	Multilateral, earmarked	1–10m	Government & Civil Society
Political Parties of Finland for Democracy (Demo Finland)	Myanmar School of Politics	95, now 635DEM05	2013–2016	Finnish NGOs**	< 1m	Government & Civil Society
Save the Children Finland	Early Childhood Care and Education in Myanmar	63501518	2015–2017	Finnish NGOs*	1–10m	Education
The Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission (FELM)	Support to the Peace Process in Myanmar	63501530	2015–2018	Finnish NGOs	1–10m	Government & Civil Society
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)	Alternative Development and Establishment of Community Forests in South Shan (2014–2018); Sustainable Livelihoods and Forest Governance (2018–)	63501520	2014–	Multilateral, earmarked	1–10m	Agriculture

Implementing Organisation	Title of Intervention	Project Number	Duration	Aid modality	Budget Category	DAC Sector
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)	Support to Democratic development and Rule of Law building in Myanmar	63501515	2013–2017	Multilateral, earmarked	1–10m	Government & Civil Society
United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)	Strengthening Teacher Education in Myanmar	63501525	2016–2018	Multilateral, earmarked	1–10m	Education
United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)	Support to Myanmar Peace Fund	63501519	2015–2018	Multilateral, earmarked	1–10m	Government & Civil Society
United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)	Women's rights in Myanmar	63501531	2015–2018	Multilateral, earmarked	1–10m	Government & Civil Society
World Bank Group	Myanmar Decentralized Funding to Schools	63501535	Since 2017	Multilateral, earmarked	1–10m	Education

Source: (MFA, 2019d)

1.3   Limitations

Neither the desk phase nor the field mission were constrained by decisive limitations. The team was able to get access to all required and requested data, documents and personnel. Some limitations apply to evaluations in general and to development cooperation with Myanmar in particular. The main limitations of the case study are as follows:

- As a case study rather than a full evaluation, this report does not provide a definitive performance assessment of all Finnish assistance to Myanmar during the period 2012–current. Rather, it offers limited insights, generated through a systematic approach, to inform a wider evaluative process.

- The case study includes findings up to November 2019, the point of field mission closure. The context in Myanmar may have experienced significant change since that time.

- As expected, it proved difficult to disaggregate and attribute Finland's contribution to multi-donor trust funds. As a mitigating measure the team engaged with stakeholders outside Finland, incl. implementing partners, government entities, and civil society to obtain their perceptions of Finland's contribution and added value.

- A sizable proportion of Finland's engagement in Myanmar is in areas of the country affected by conflict and crisis. These areas could not be accessed by the case study team. The team visited accessible areas in Kayin State instead and results in the conflict-affected areas were assessed based on document reviews and interviews with stakeholders, partners and credible informants in Yangon and Naypyidaw.

2 Fragility context

2.1 Root causes of fragility

Located in Southeast Asia bordering Bangladesh, India, China, Thailand, and Laos, Myanmar has been an isolated country under military since independence from the British in 1948 and until recent years. Its population of around 53.4 million is characterised by high ethnic diversity with 135 officially recognised ethnic minority groups in addition to the majority Bamar ethnic group, making up more than 30% of the population living primarily in the uplands with their own states, i.e. the Chin, Kachin, Shan, Kayah, Kayin, Mon, and Rakhine. The ethnic minorities primarily comprise indigenous peoples.

Myanmar gained its independence from the British in 1948 with U Nu as its first prime minister. Prior to independence, General Aung San, the father of the present state counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi, had spearheaded the historical Panglong Agreement with ethnic leaders agreeing on full autonomy in internal administration in the "frontier areas" (the British term for the present ethnic states) once independence had been achieved. The ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples subsequently pursued federalism, but the military leadership staged a coup d'état in 1962, and since then, the country has been under military leadership under different names.

Since independence Myanmar has been gripped by an ethnic conflict which has continued through every political era. In the process, countless lives have been lost and millions of citizens were displaced. The longstanding nature of conflict and violence in-country is rooted in the lack of legitimacy and capacity of successive military regimes to address contested visions of what constitutes the nation-state among the country's ethnic groups and political factions. Several ethnic groups, such as the Karen, Mon, and Rakhine, took up arms to struggle for sovereignty immediately following independence. Other ethnic groups have fought against such insurgencies as part of the national army. However, by the 1950s and 1960s, ethnic groups originally aligned with the government, such as the Shan, Chin, and Kachin, were also in open revolt. Their motivations varied, from seeking greater autonomy and fair representation to outright secession. After the military coup in 1962, the junta tried to control ethnic opposition by employing the "Four Cuts" strategy, designed to eliminate four main links – food, funds, intelligence, and recruits – between insurgents, their families, and local villagers. This effort forcibly displaced a large number of people (The Asia Foundation, 2017).

In May 1990, the military government held elections, and the National League for Democracy (NLD) of Aung San Suu Kyi won 80% of seats, but the military junta refused to cede power, and Aung San Suu Kyi was placed under house arrest.

In 2008, the onslaught of cyclone Nargis in the first days of May took both government and villagers in the Irrawaddy Delta by surprise. It hit Myanmar a few days before the referendum on a new Constitution. This led to significant international criticism of conducting a referendum on the Constitution at a time of crisis with more than 130,000 dead in the Delta.

Moving from a highly centralised structure, the 2008 Constitution introduced 14 sub-national governments and parliaments. However, there was slow progress in rolling-out the decentralisation process due to a lack of policy, planning, and a clearly designated authority, but ethnic states had their own parliaments and line departments and sought more influence, e.g. in education

and land management (Egreteau, 2016). However, there can be no doubt that the sub-national bodies are important institutions for political decentralisation, which is a key issue in negotiations towards a peace settlement and broader reconciliation with ethnic minorities. They also play a significant role in service delivery in urban areas, as they approve municipal budgets and enact laws for local elections (Hein & Kean, 2016).

2.2   Overview and timeline of the context since 2012

In March U Thein Sein took office as president after the country's first election in 20 years in November 2010 and swapped his military uniform for a civilian outfit to form the political party of the Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP). His move signalled the end to military-authoritarian rule and the beginning of a more liberal and democratic era. Opposition leader and activist Aung San Suu Kyi, who received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991, had been released from house arrest in November 2010 and the NLD was re-instated for the by-election on 1 April 2012, in which Aung San Suu Kyi was elected to Parliament and appointed as chairperson of the Parliamentary Committee for Rule of Law and Tranquility (Bünte & Dosch, 2015).

A national election process endorsed by the USDP took place in November 2015. Aung San Suu Kyi with the NLD party won a landslide victory. The NLD formed a new government at the end of March 2016. However, despite a new NLD government, the army is still by law in charge of three important and highly political ministries: Defence, Home Affairs and Borderlands. At the same time, the NLD government still has problems in terms of significant capacity constraints, which are further exacerbated by the overwhelming national and international problems due to the rise of anti-Muslim Buddhist nationalism and violent attacks on Rohingya Muslim villages in Rakhine State. The escalation of violence in Rakhine state in August 2017 and subsequent events forced over 700,000 persons to flee into neighbouring Bangladesh. The events have had a serious impact on the international image of Myanmar and its government (Vakulchuck et al., 2018). The county also continues to be engulfed by incessant fighting between the Tatmadaw, the official name of the armed forces of Myanmar, and various Ethnic Armed Organisations (EAOs) from almost all sides.

Despite reforms since 2012, a civil war with the Tatmadaw is still ongoing, mainly in the Kachin and the Northern Shan States where alleged threats to national unity have commonly been used as a justification for the military holding on to power. Fighting in Arakan has intensified since December 2018 when the Tatmadaw declared a unilateral ceasefire in Kachin and Shan states but excluded Arakan. Control over natural resources (i.e. wood, minerals, oil, and gemstones) is a major cause of conflict in ethnic areas, where the majority of Burma's natural resources are located. In 2018, Myanmar ranked 104th out of 163 on the Global Peace Index (Institute for Economics & Peace, 2018).

2.3   Key features of fragility and main challenges to stability and development

Overall, despite progress in several sectors since 2011, many symptoms of state fragility are still present, including enduring political violence, low levels of development, state ineffectiveness, inter-ethnic violence and armed conflict. Myanmar is also prone to frequent natural disasters. However, "the country also contradicts many traditional concepts of fragility. In areas either without a state presence or home to an inefficient one, which are also frequently conflict-affected, public goods and social services are nonetheless often effectively provided by non-state actors and local religious, political, or economic power-brokers" (Egreteau & Cormac, 2018, p. 36).

Myanmar's HDI value for 2017 is 0.578, which put the country in the medium human development category, positioning it at 148 out of 189 countries and territories. Myanmar has a Gender Inequality Index (GII) value of 0.456, ranking it 106 out of 160 countries in the 2017 index. 28.7% of adult women have reached at least a secondary level of education compared to 22.3% of their male counterparts. Female participation in the labour market is 51.3% compared to 79.9 for men (UNDP, 2018a).

Table 2: Key Human Development Indicators

Life expectancy at birth (years)	Literacy rate, adult (% ages 15 and older)	Mean years of schooling (years)	Working poor at PPP $3.10 a day (% of total employment)	Population living below income poverty line, PPP $1.90 a day (%)	Gross national income (GNI) per capita (PPP $)
66.7	75.6	4.9	41.9	6.4	5,567

Source: (UNDP, 2018b)

Myanmar ranks 22nd on the Fragile States Index (The Fund for Peace, 2019), and 110th out of 113 countries in the Rule of Law Index in 2019 (World Justice Project, 2019). Myanmar is also included in the World Banks' Harmonized List of Fragile Situations, with a CPIA (Country Policy and Institutional Assessment) score of 3.15 for the financial year 2019 (World Bank, 2019). There is insufficient media freedom, restrictions on human rights (ranking 110 on fundamental rights), limited accountability of institutions, an inaccessible justice system (ranking 107 on criminal justice), corruption (ranking 61), institutional capacity constraints and insufficient delivery of services. The country is vulnerable to structural inequality based on ethnicity, religion, the human rights situation and a weak rule of law in addition to the many Rohingya refugees, civil war and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), natural disasters and, like other countries, climate change. In 2017, the Kofi Annan commission put forward recommendations to surmount the political, socio-economic and humanitarian challenges that currently face Rakhine State (Advisory Commission on Rakhine State, 2017). Established commissions or advisory boards on the Rohingya issues have been unable to work (Reuters, 2018).

2.4   Relevant national strategies, plans and programmes

A Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) with the ethnic groups was signed in 2015, with some, but not all, ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples signing. Seven of the fifteen armed groups invited declined to sign due to disagreements over whom the process should include and the call for a new major NCA and for a series of so-called 21st Century Panglong Conferences was implemented by mid-2018. There are still daily clashes between ethnic armies and the Tatmadaw causing major groups of Internally Displaced Persons (IDP), particularly in Kachin State. Finding ways to provide assistance through sub-national institutions to refugees and internally displaced people are impacted by the political economy of armed conflict in Southeast Myanmar.

The Government of Myanmar has embarked on a series of political and economic reforms in order to re-engage with the international community and carry out market-based policies. It has sought to improve the business climate, liberalise foreign exchange controls, open up to trade, encourage foreign investment, and reinforce its financial sector. A 12-Point Outline of Economic Policy (2016–2020) has been presented alongside a Private Sector Development (PSD) Framework and Action Plan, together with other policy documents and strategies adopted after the 2016 elections. Implementation has been slow, however, and the government has been criticised for lack of tangible progress on its economic agenda. The Government has a stated determination

to pursue reforms while paying additional attention to sustainability, equity, balance in society and the rule of law (EU, 2018). Almost every aspect of the Government's reform agenda and its implementation is supported by donors. In spite of the challenges, growth figures have overall been impressive since the beginning of Myanmar's political transition in 2011. Foreign direct investment has more than doubled since 2013/2014 and until 2015 economic growth hovered above 7% per annum.

2.5 Donor policies and aid architecture in the context

Myanmar is one of the world's largest recipients of ODA – 21st based on 2017 OECD DAC data (Tew, 2019). The country is the third-largest recipient per capita in the region – behind only Cambodia and Laos, which have far smaller populations. However, with a share of 2.3% of GNI (2017) and ODA contributing less than 10% to the national budget, Myanmar is not aid-dependent. Total net receipts of ODA in 2017 stood at USD 2.09 billion (2016: USD 1.99 billion; 2015: USD 2.46 billion) (OECD DAC, 2018b).

A history of underinvestment has left the country with the highest poverty rate in the region and critical deficits in infrastructure, social services and education, making it a priority for many development agencies. Debt forgiveness undertaken in 2012 and 2013 was an essential foundation for the restoration of aid relations with Myanmar. At this time, the country had an estimated US$10.6 billion of international debt that would need to be addressed for lending to restart. Japan had a central role in this process, forgiving USD 3.7 billion in April 2012, and a further USD 1.74 billion in May 2013. Myanmar's debts to the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, totalling approximately USD 900 million, were cleared using a bridging loan from Japan in January 2013. This was accompanied by an agreement with the Paris Club to write off approximately 50% of the Myanmar government's remaining debt and to reschedule the remaining payments over the next 15 years. That way space was created to quickly establish new concessional loans, with Japan providing USD 2.2 billion, the World Bank launching USD 520 million in new programs in 2013, and the Asian Development Bank starting with USD 572 million of new activities. At the same time, a significant expansion in the presence of bilateral donors and international organisations took place. Many foreign governments that had previously engaged with Myanmar through a regional office, such as in Bangkok, established new offices in Yangon (Carr, 2018).

There has been a significant change in the channels of ODA since 2011. From 2011 to 2012, multilateral organisations were the most common channel, followed by NGOs and civil society. Since the end of the economic sanctions and the debt relief and loans provided in 2013, public sector (government and state agencies) have been the main channel for support. Meanwhile, ODA through multilateral organisations and NGOs and civil society has increased steadily. ODA through NGOs and civil society has more than doubled, and ODA through multilateral organisations almost tripled since 2011. The presence of a number of multi-donor trust funds has contributed to this increase (Lövkrona, 2017).

Japan is by far the largest provider of ODA, most of which is for infrastructure. The EU and its Member States together contribute significantly to development (Figure 1). Finland restarted its development cooperation with Myanmar in 2012 and provides nearly half of the funding through multilateral arrangements (Figure 5).

With committed ODA of EUR 12.961 million (USD 14.437 million) in 2017, Finland was one of the smaller donors, outside the top 10. It is important to note that some of the Myanmar's biggest donors, particularly China and South Korea, do not report their ODA officially and are thus not included in figure 1 below which is based on OECD-DAC data.

Figure 1: Top Ten Donors for Myanmar, 2016–2017 average (USD million)

Donor	USD million
Japan	442,9
International Development Association	182,7
United Kingdom	150,2
United States	135,5
Global Fund	109,7
EU Institutions	102,2
Korea	62,5
Australia	57,4
Germany	46,0
Switzerland	41,2
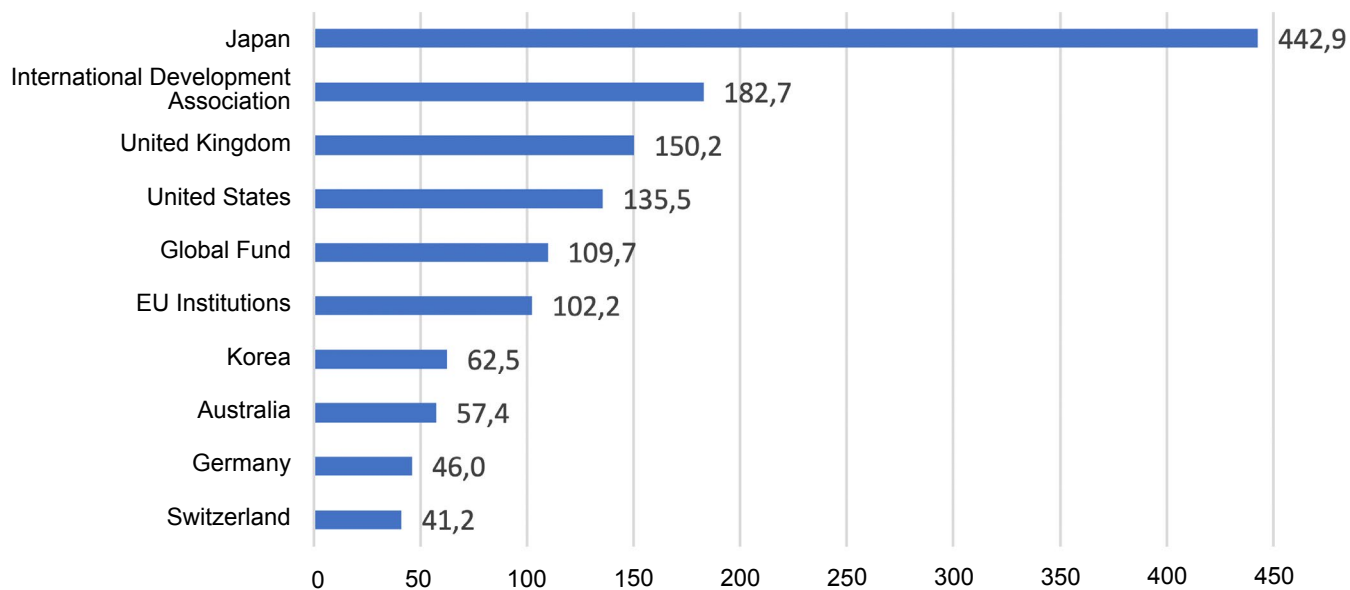
Source: (OECD DAC, 2018a)

3 Evolution of Finland's cooperation in country since 2012

3.1 Overview of Finnish development and humanitarian cooperation in country since 2012

In 2012, Finland re-initiated its development cooperation with Myanmar in response to the country's gradual opening up that started in 2011 and the historic opportunity this provided for political, social and economic reforms and development. Under its embassy in Bangkok, Finland opened a diplomatic mission in Yangon in 2014. The upgrade to a full embassy started in September 2017.

In its development cooperation since 2012, Finland initially focused on the peace process, which is still regarded to be the basis for all development. Key aspects of the support prior to the country strategy included for example:

- Women's and girls' access to sexual and reproductive health services as well as to services for victims of gender-based violence has improved in conflict areas
- The inclusion of different ethnic groups, civil society and women in the peace process and in the national policy dialogue
- The development of the mining sector
- Better environmental protection
- Support to farmers to abandon opium cultivation and transfer to coffee and community forestry (MFA, 2019a).

In 2015, MFA drafted a first Country Strategy for the period of 2015-2024 (MFA, 2015) which was replaced by a more streamlined version – the current CS 2016-2019 – a year later (see 4.1).

3.2 Policy dialogue emphases

There has been no political or policy dialogue with the Government of Myanmar (GoM) to-date and there were no official bilateral negotiations with GoM on the CS. However, some informal discussion on the individual sectors took place. Finnish government stakeholders have left no doubt that the CS is "our strategy" and not one supposed to be "owned" by the partner (Interviews). Yet, the CS is particularly broad in its description of the "partnerships and modalities in development cooperation". This has opened the door for diversification and expansion (for example, direct dialogue with, and support of, GoM) should the opportunity arise.

3.3　Finnish Co-operation beyond the Country Strategy

Interventions outside the CS implemented by Finnish INGOs (e.g. Felm, CMI) and funded directly by the MFA under the Discretionary Government Transfers Act, also support peace, democracy and education. In response to the Rohingya crisis some humanitarian aid was also delivered outside the CS modality

3.4　Any key evaluation/review findings to date

The country programme or the country strategy have not been independently reviewed or evaluated so far. However, a one-off self-assessment of the Country Strategy 2016–2019 (MFA, 2018c) took place, and Annual Results Reports on the Country Strategy for Development Cooperation Myanmar as well as Management Responses are available for 2016 and 2017 (MFA, 2017a, 2017b, 2018a, 2018b). There has also been a Conflict Sensitivity Analysis (CSA) of the Finnish Government's Contribution to the UN FAO's REDD+ intervention (FCG International, 2019) and most individual interventions (co-)funded by Finland have been regularly monitored and/or evaluated. The findings of the self-assessment and annual reports as well as programme and project evaluations have informed – and contributed to – the analysis in section 5, particularly on effectiveness.

4 Country strategy in the context

4.1 Overview & key features of the Country Strategy

Since Myanmar started to emerge from half a century of military rule, civil war and isolation from the international community in 2011, the country has not only embarked on a wide-ranging and challenging economic and political transition and a national peace process but also experienced a rapid influx of donors who all tried to position themselves in the country. Initial discussions on the Finnish cooperation strategy, supported by identification missions to Myanmar in 2012, focused on environmental governance and forests, the peace process and early childhood education; later, teacher education became a priority and environment received less attention.

Against this backdrop, the first Finnish strategy – CS 2015–2024 – was drafted in an attempt to provide a comprehensive framework for Finland's development cooperation (MFA, 2015c). It focused on three areas: Natural resource and environmental governance; Democratic governance and the rule of law; and Education, as well as three cross-cutting themes. About 10 MFA officials, supported by advisors of the Unit for Sectoral Policy (Keo), contributed to the 2015 strategy formulation process which involved intensive consultations with the Embassy in Bangkok – at the time Finland only had a diplomatic mission in Yangon under the Embassy in Bangkok. Niras prepared a background assessment, something that MFA staff would have done normally. As one key official noted, *"There was a hurry. In hindsight, we should have used more time"*. Finnish CSOs and their local partners that were already present in Myanmar provided an important entry point for the MFA (e.g. Save the Children, FCA, Felm). While some interlocutors described the strategy formulation as a truly participatory process, the majority view is that some CSO consultations took place which were, however, not as extensive as in the case of some other country strategies.

The process of thematic prioritisation was driven by the existing cooperation programme. Focal points and anticipated outputs/outcomes were chosen according to interventions which were already in place. The strategy was not primarily meant to be aspirational but feasible. It was thus designed to provide a stable framework – and a related narrative – for the cooperation in areas where projects were operational while giving the necessary flexibility to grow the portfolio particularly with regards to the peace process as the main focus of Finland's support. There was consensus that the peace process and democracy as an intertwined sector had to be maintained; education was uncontroversial due to ongoing support and strength in this area. However, finding an approach to natural resources was difficult and there was no clear vision on how to proceed.

The CS 2015–2024 was short-lived and replaced by the CS 2016–2019, comprising three "programming areas": 1) Good forest governance; 2) Democratic governance and rule of law; and 3) Quality education. The reason for the switch from a long-term to a short-term strategy was two-fold. First, there were concerns that a strategy covering a whole decade would be difficult to implement given the volatile and fragile situation in Myanmar. Second, the CS had to be a brought in line with the general approach to country strategies at the MFA. Furthermore, MFA budget cuts had to be taken into account. In addition to shortening the timeframe, the three programming areas were specified and streamlined, and the number of outcomes was reduced from six to three in an attempt to make the strategy more manageable.

Table 3: Focal Areas and Objectives of Finland's Development Cooperation with Myanmar

Good forest governance	Democratic governance and rule of law	Quality education
Myanmar's forest resources are governed in a more sustainable, equitable and transparent manner based on up-to-date forest resource information. Local communities progressively engage in sustainable forest management .	Institutions and processes of peace- and state-building are more responsive to the needs and rights of all people in Myanmar. Vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, particularly women and girls, have improved access to justice	The most disadvantaged girls and boys in Myanmar benefit from improved access to quality, inclusive pre-primary and primary education-

Source: (MFA, 2016a)

4.2 Key features of the Country Portfolio

Between 2012 and 2018 Finland's total disbursed ODA amounted to EUR 52.909 million, Finland's interventions in Myanmar were funded through 209 individual disbursements. The number of disbursement increased every year from 10 in 2012 to 44 in 2018 (Figure 2). Except for bilateral cooperation the country portfolio includes most aid modalities available at the MFA, i.e. multilateral aid, Finnish NGOs, Local Cooperation Instrument (FLC), Institutional Cooperation Instrument (ICI) and Finnpartnership. ODA was channelled through 36 implementing organisations (multinational organisations, INGOs and NGOs) as well as the Finnish Embassy and the Government (see also Figure 6).

Figure 2: Number of disbursements by year and aid modality
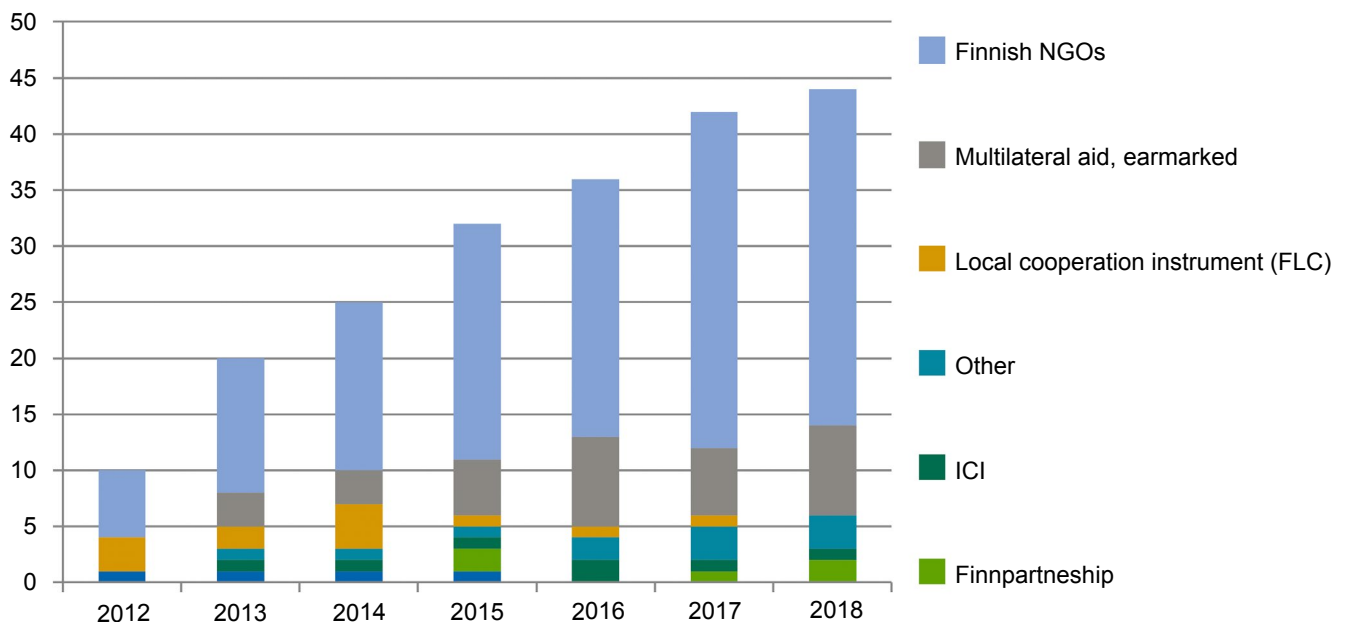
Source: (MFA, 2019d)

The five main sectors supported by Finland accounted for 80.1% (EUR 42.369 million) of the total disbursed ODA with the thematic focal point government and civil society (EUR 22.759 million) receiving the lion's share of 40.7%, followed by education (EUR 7.206 million, 12.9%), emergency response (EUR 4.6 million, 8.2%), agriculture, forestry, fishing (EUR 4.384 million, 7.9%) and population policies programmes & reproductive health (EUR 3.42 million, 6.1%) and (Figure 3 and Figure 4).

Figure 3: Disbursement by sector and year (EUR '000)
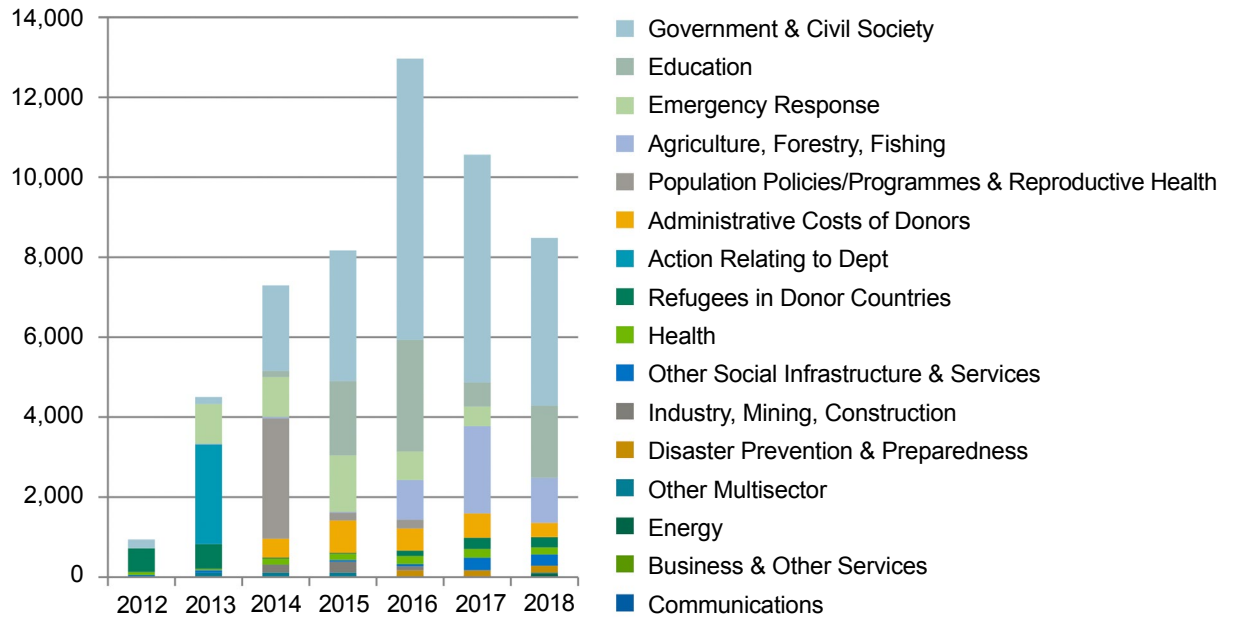
Source: (MFA, 2019d)

Figure 4: Disbursements by Sector
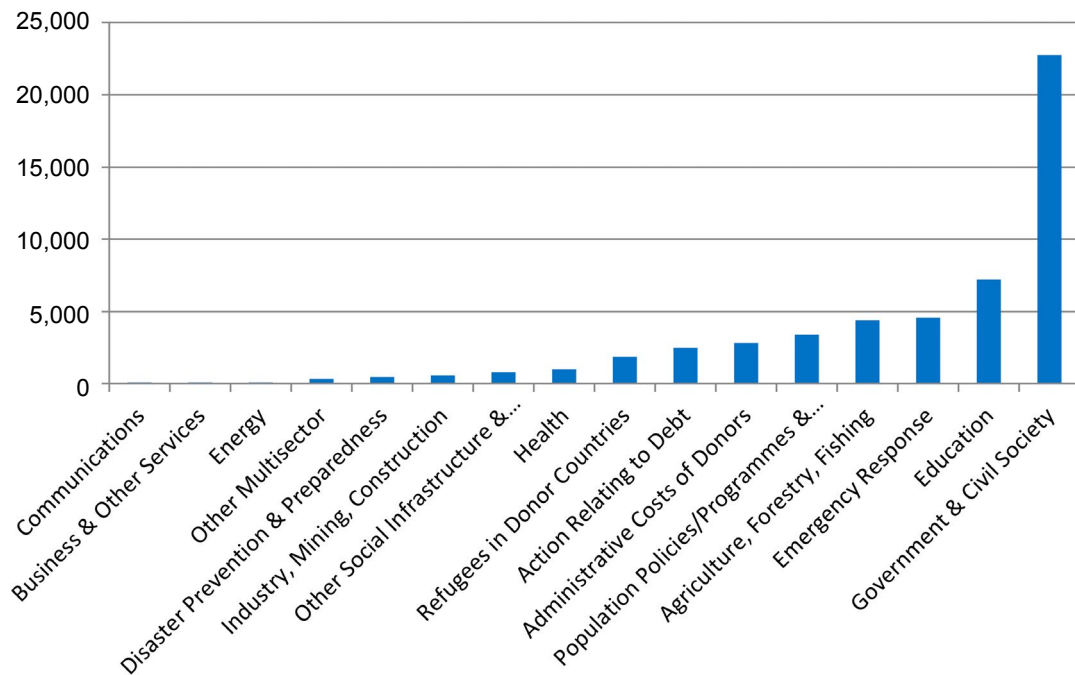
Source: (MFA, 2019d)

Of the total disbursed funds of EUR 52.909 million, EUR 26.239 million (49.6%) were channelled through multilateral organisations, EUR 16.367 million (30.9%) through Finnish NGOs, EUR 3.601 million (6.8%) through the category "partner government, other" which in this case refers mainly to the Joint Peace Fund (multi-donor trust fund), EUR 467,000 (0.9%) through the Institutional Cooperation Instrument (ICI), EUR 901,000 (1,7%) through the Local Cooperation Instrument, EUR 17,000 (0,03%) through the Finnish Business Partnership Programme Finnpartnership and EUR 5.32 million (10.1%) through other channels. Since 2016 Finnish aid has been almost exclusively disbursed multilateral organisations and Finnish NGOs (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Disbursements by aid modality and year (EUR '000)

Legend:
- Multilateral aid, earmarked
- Finnish NGOs
- Other
- Partner government, other
- ICI
- Local cooperation instrument (FLC)
- Finnpartnership
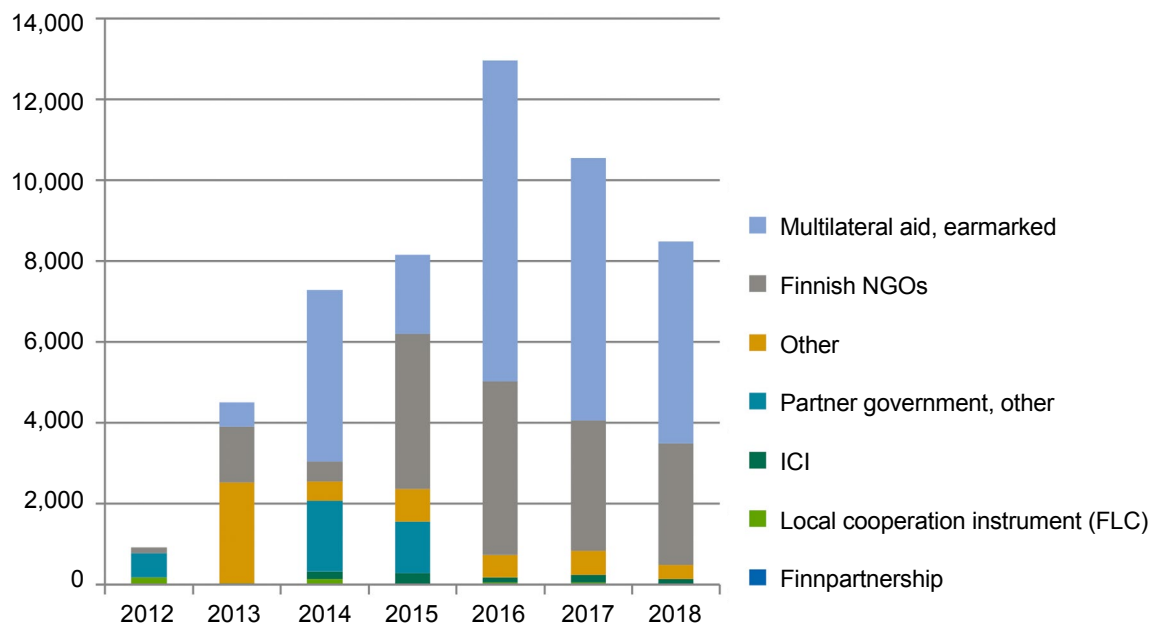
Source: (MFA, 2019d)

Three UN Organisations – United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) (EUR 7.07 million), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (EUR 6 million) and United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) (EUR 4.5 million) were the top receivers of Finnish ODA. Among non-state and civil society organisations, Suomen Lähetysseura (Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission/FELM) (EUR 3.6 million), Finn Church Aid (EUR 3.185 million) and the Finnish Red Cross (EUR 3.012 million) had the biggest share (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Disbursements by top 10 recipients and year

Legend:
- United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)
- Suomen Lähetysseura
- Embassy of Finland
- FinnChurcAid
- Other
- Finnish Red Cross

Source: (MFA, 2019d)

Figure 7 shows the whole spectrum of stakeholders which received Finnish assistance.

Figure 7: Disbursements by recipient and year (EUR '000)
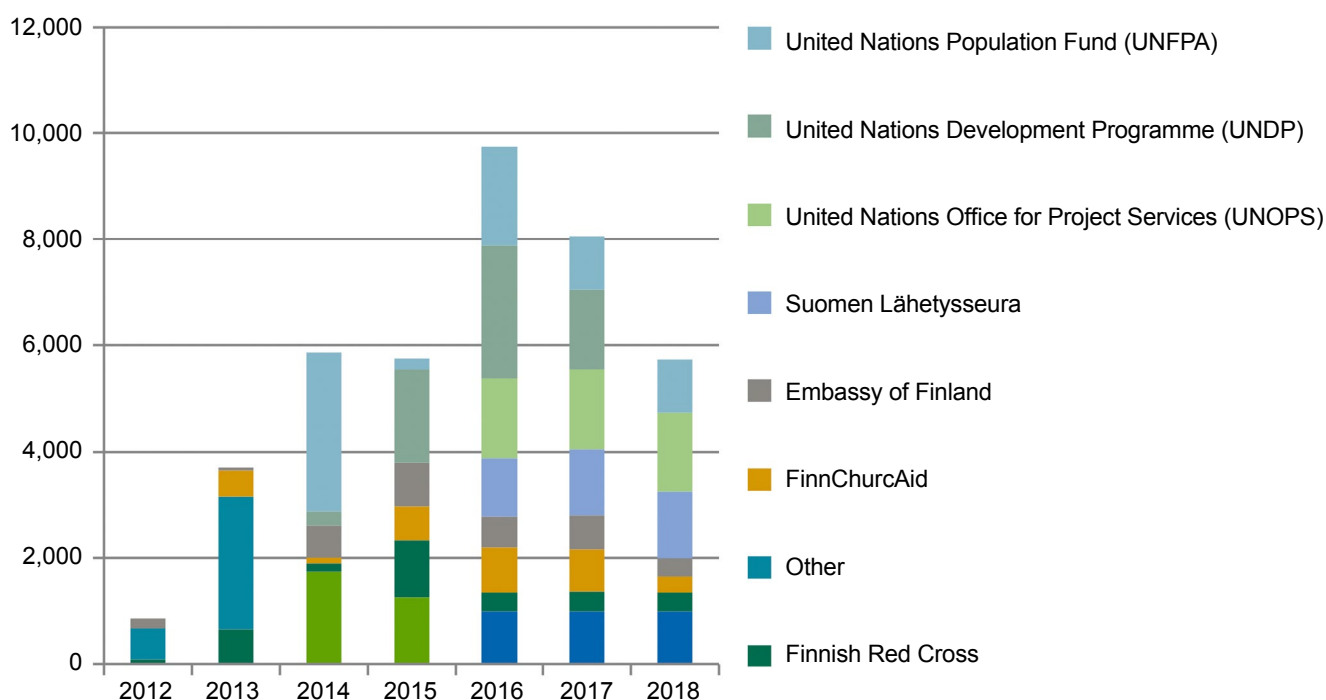
Source: (MFA, 2019d)

Figure 8, 9 and 10 show a gap between committed and disbursed funds for all years and aid modalities. This is not a phenomenon exclusive to Finnish aid but one that affects all donors and is typical of Myanmar's aid environment in general. According to a World Bank report, between 2012/13 and 2016/17 overall ODA commitments rose to a cumulative USD 8.6 billion, of which only around USD 2.6 billion (30%) were disbursed. ODA for direct project spending (as opposed to budget support) tended to have long lags between commitments and disbursements, particularly for investments in infrastructure, education and health. "The drivers of this are complex and include lack of effective multi-year budgeting and funding mechanisms, procurement delays and layers of approvals with limited delegation" (World Bank, 2017, p. 57).

Figure 8: Disbursed versus committed funds by year (EUR '000)
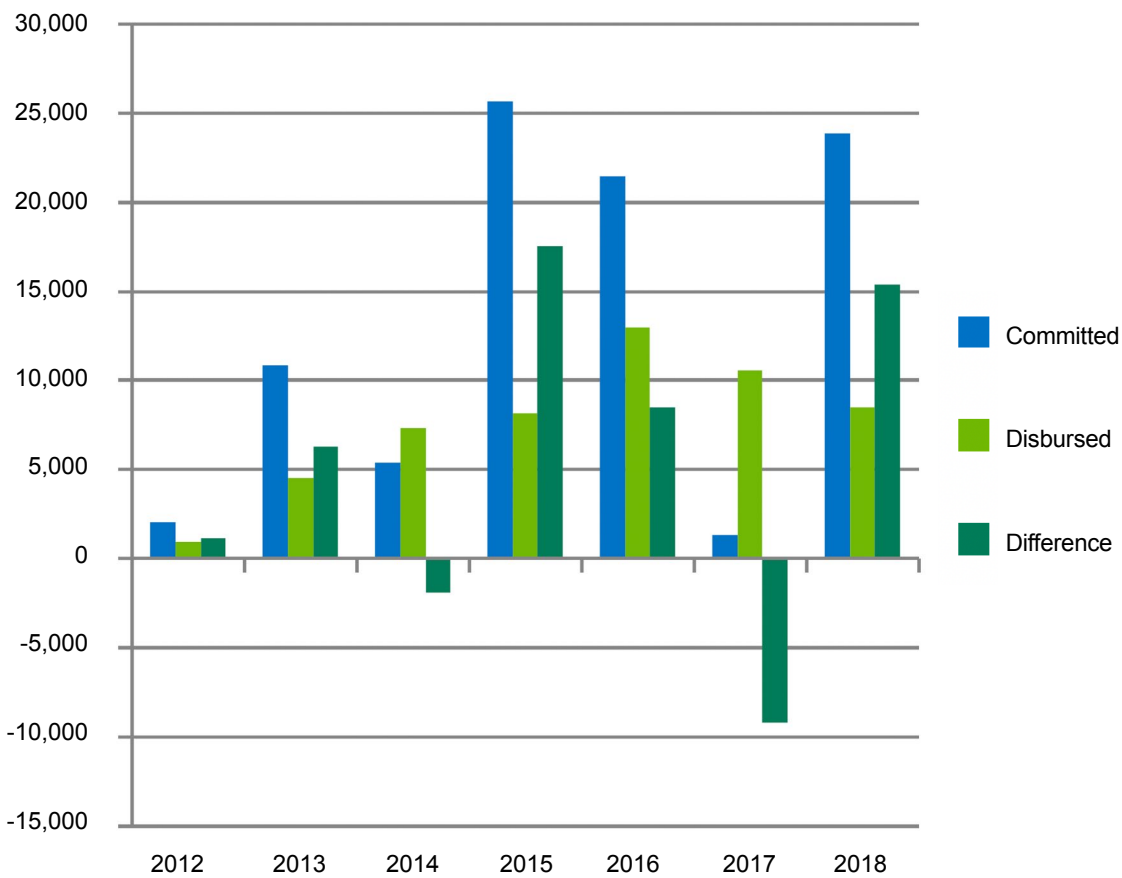
Source: (MFA, 2019d)

Figure 9: Disbursed versus committed funds by aid modality (EUR '000)

Source: (MFA, 2019d)

Figure 10: Disbursed versus committed funds by aid modality: total amounts (EUR '000)

Source: (MFA, 2019d)

4.3   Description of key interventions of the portfolio

The following table provides brief descriptions of the interventions selected for the sample

Table 4: Summary of interventions selected for the sample (alphabetical order)

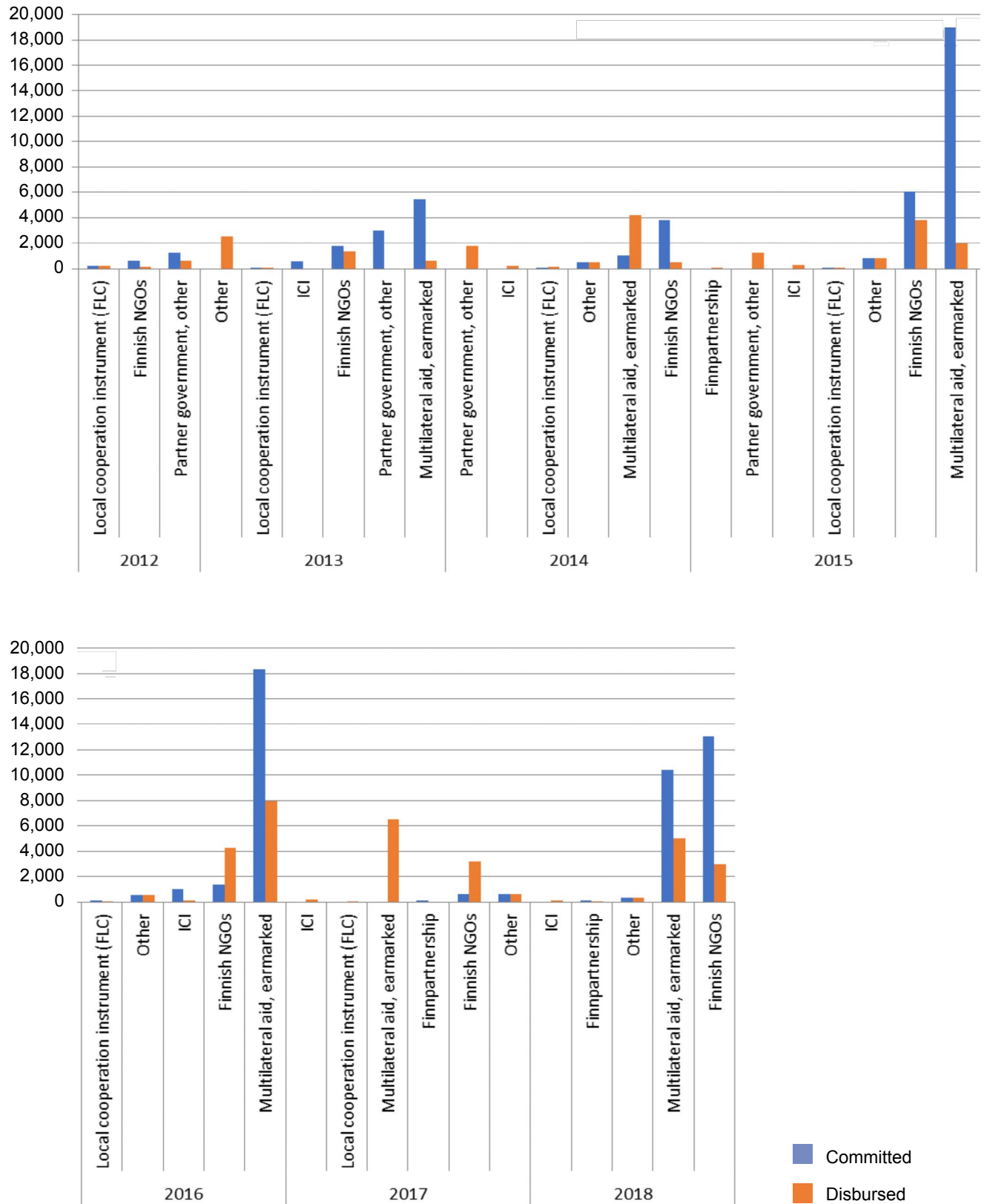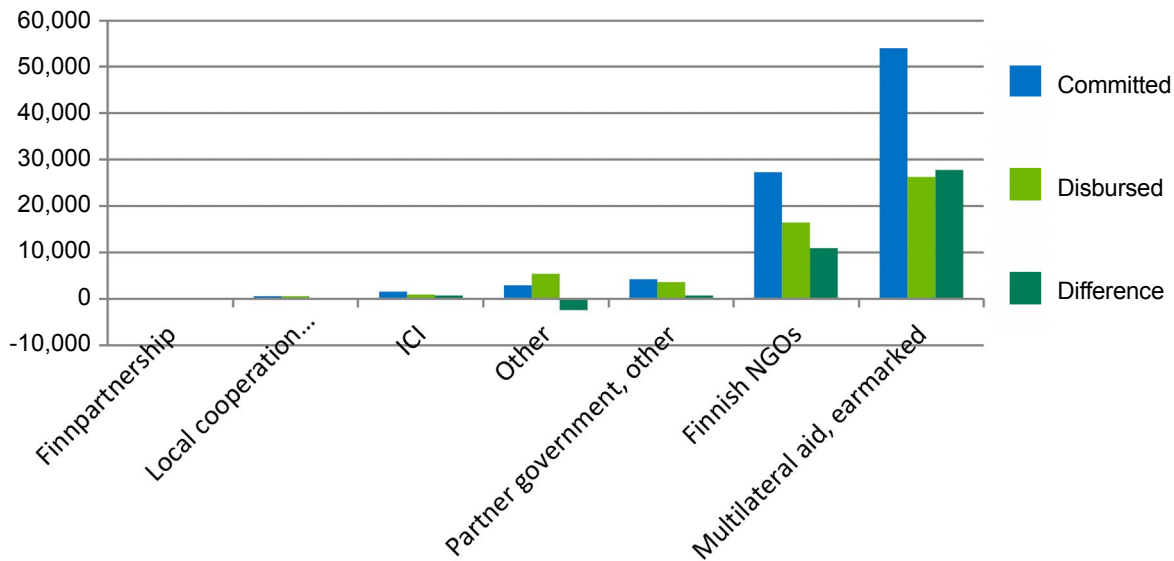| Imple-menting Organisation	Title of Intervention	Dura-tion	Brief description
Crisis Management Initiative (CMI)	Unlocking peace potential through the security sector in Myanmar	2019–2021	The project aims to impact on a more conducive political and security environment for peaceful conflict resolution by focusing on unresolved military/security issues that unlock the peace process in Myanmar. More specifically, the project works to improve ceasefire monitoring, strengthen channels of communication and mutual understanding between key conflict stakeholder but also with international partners of the peace process and makes available jointly agreeable and nationally owned solutions on the pertinent issues. These results should translate into positive building blocks, contributing to revitalising the peace process.
Eden Centre for Children with Disabilities	Early Intervention for Children with Disabilities (EICD)	2016–2017	The project aims to increase access among children with disabilities to mainstream early childhood care and development (ECCD) services through piloting an early intervention approach and increasing awareness and understanding of the need for early interventions for children with disabilities. Objectives also include a contribution to national level thinking on best practice and strengthening capacities of ECDC service providers in Yangon, Kayin and Ayerwaddy. The beneficiaries of the project are children with disabilities as well as individuals and organisations engaged in child development activities (ECCD staff providers of preschool kindergarten and primary school services as well as parents and caregivers).

Imple-menting Organisation	Title of Intervention	Dura-tion	Brief description
Embassy of Finland	Support for IDPs in Dawei and Palaw, a pilot project in the context of the Myanmar Peace Sup-port Initiative (MPSI)	2013–2015	The project includes the village development programme implement-ed by a local NGO network (Tanintharyi Karen Peace Support Initi-ative TKPSI) and support activities by Norwegian People's Aid. The immediate objective of the project is to support the recovery efforts of the IDPs in the two pilot project areas and thus support the peace process in Myanmar. On the political level, the aim is to support the over-arching peace process between Myanmar's government and the Karen National Union (KNU) by creating traction on the ground, thus increasing the confidence in the political process. The project is also a space-increasing exercise aiming at widening the humanitarian space by spearheading relief and development efforts in areas which for decades have been inaccessible to both national and international organisations (see Annex III: principles for inventions). Moreover, the project aims to assist the so-called convergence process in which border-based organisations are helped to a) re-establish themselves inside the country, and b) link up with local organisations on the inside.
Finnish Red Cross	Urban Risk and Resilience Programme	2016–2019	The objective is to reduce the impact of disasters on vulnerable population and increase the capacity of the population to respond to disasters and recover from them.
Finnish Refugee Council (FRC)	Enhancing Vocational Education for Youth in con-flict affected Kayah state	2018–2021	The project seeks to contribute to peacebuilding in Myanmar border areas through increasing access to quality vocational education and consequently increase opportunities and self-reliance for youth and other vulnerable IDP's returnees' and hosting community members. The specific objective is that the targeted youth and other vulner-able groups are equipped with technical and life skills to enhance their potentials for livelihood and life management. The project has a particular focus on vulnerable youth including IDPs, returnees, early-school-leavers, ethnic minorities, female youth and youth with disabilities. The project focuses on the development of vocational education in the region in three priority areas: accessibility, quality of training and improved connection of vocational education providers to the private sector.
Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO)	National Forest Inventory and National Forest Monitoring Information Systems for Myanmar	Since 2016	Between 2010 and 2015 Myanmar lost approximately 10 % of its forest cover and had the third-highest rate of deforestation in the world. The forestry sector has traditionally played a critical role in the development and economic transformation of the country but over the years extractive operations have become more intensive and for-est resources have been utilised unsustainably. The objective of the project is to support the Government of Myanmar in the design devel-opment planning and implementation of a National Forest Inventory and National Forest Monitoring Information Systems (NFI/NFMIS) for Myanmar production of Land Use Land Cover Map (LULC) and development of a forest information system (FIS). In addition, the project trains people at relevant levels to implement and use NFMIS effectively. This project is part of a wider REDD+ readiness process in Myanmar which is supported by the UNREDD programme.

Imple-menting Organisation	Title of Intervention	Dura-tion	Brief description
International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA)	MyConstitution: Constitutionalism in support of inclusive, peaceful and democratic Myanmar	2018–2021	The 2008 Constitution remains one of the key aspects of negotiation within the peace process and future reforms will be necessary to transition from military to democratic rule. Through MyConstitution project IDEA facilitates stakeholders access to a platform and framework to discuss options for formal constitutional change and raise state and non-state actors awareness of the potential for decentralisation and democratisation within the framework of the existing Constitution. IDEA also facilitates its Myanmar partners' access to constitutional tools for use in the peace and democratisation processes as well as their understanding and utilisation of the potential of Myanmar's 2008 Constitution for greater democratisation and decentralisation. Partners include civil society parties in the peace process and state institutions such as the Parliament Union Attorney Generals Office and the Supreme Court of the Union.
Political Parties of Finland for Democracy (Demo Finland)	Myanmar School of Politics	2013–2016	The aim of the project is to support the democratic transition focusing on strengthening the democratic role of political parties in a cross-party setting at the regional/state level of Myanmar. The basic element of the programme are core courses, organised three times a year. The core courses are 4-week-long and all the parties in particular regions/states of Myanmar, send their participants into the course, according to criteria set by MySoP. Moreover, a permanent Multiparty Dialogue Platform has been created in Shan State to support multiparty dialogue in practice among 12 parties in a sustainable and participatory way. The direct target groups are the state-level politicians taking part in the MySoP courses, but also the political parties as institutions.
Save the Children Finland	Early Childhood Care and Education in Myanmar	2015–2017	The aim is to increase access and improved learning and development of children in early grades. Planned Outcomes: (1) Access: Children's early learning and development is supported by increased access to ECCD services and the new Foundation Year of Basic Education for children aged 5 years. (2) Quality and Learning Outcomes: The quality of ECCD services and Foundation Class learning environments have improved in all SC supported schools. (3) Policy engagement: National policies practice and implementation increasingly based on child rights and child-centred approaches in national education sector planning and programming processes.
The Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission (FELM); Euro-Burma Office	Support to the Peace Process in Myanmar	2015–2018	The overall objective is to support and strengthen the peace process and the emerging political dialogue in Myanmar through technical support to and confidence-building between the dialogue partners. The specific objectives for the Finnish support are 1. To end the conflict and reconcile adversaries: A. Formal political dialogue structures established and supported; B. The democratic space and constitutional change process are secured; C. Safety nets and non-formal dialogue structures established.

Imple-menting Organisation	Title of Intervention	Dura-tion	Brief description
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)	Alternative Development and Estab-lishment of Community Forests in South Shan (2014-2018); Sustainable Livelihoods and Forest Governance (2018-)	2014–	The project supports communities to replace opium poppy growing in South Shan Myanmar to find income alternatives (i.e. coffee growing) and to establish community forests and reforest areas where opium poppy have been grown with detrimental environmental impact. At the same time, the project supports peacebuilding at the local level by bringing different parties together to improve the environmental condition and to end opium poppy growing.
United Nations Devel-opment Programme (UNDP)	Support to Democratic development and Rule of Law building in Myanmar	2013–2017	The intervention covers four broad areas of work to advance governance and sustainable peace: Strengthening the effectiveness of state executive and legislative institutions Strengthening accountability and the rule of law Support the civil service reform process Sustaining peace UNDP works with all communities affected by the conflict to achieve conflict-sensitivity, in coordination with other humanitarian and development actors.
United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)	Strengthen-ing Teacher Education in Myanmar (STEM)	2016–2018	The main objective of the project is to develop teacher education in Myanmar based on international norms and standards. The project aims to support teacher education reform through improving the policy frameworks, curriculum, and management capacity of Teacher Education Colleges (TECs). There is a strong focus on human rights and gender equality objectives, with an explicit intended outcome comprising improved awareness and capacity of the Ministry of Education and TEC staff in this regards. The direct beneficiaries include TEC teacher educators and management staff as well as student teachers; indirectly, the project benefits the roughly 11 million school-aged girls and boys in Myanmar.
United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)	Support to Myanmar Peace Fund	2015–2018	The Joint Peace Fund (JPF) was set up to support the process of peace-building in Myanmar. The JPF currently has eleven donors: Australia, Canada, Denmark, the European Union, Finland, Italy, Japan, Norway, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States. JPF provides financial and technical support to the nationally owned peace process led jointly by the Government and the Ethnic Armed Organizations, and also funds peace-building activities outside and beyond the formal peace process.

Imple-menting Organisation	Title of Intervention	Dura-tion	Brief description
United Nations Popula-tion Fund (UNFPA)	Women's rights in Myanmar	2015–2018	The programme (now: "Women and Girls First") was designed with the primary objective of gender equality and women's empowerment. The programme addresses the holistic needs of women and girls, including providing access to quality SRHR and ending violence against women and girls. The programme takes into account the following key points: 1. Women and girls must have access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services. In particular survivors of sexual violence require access to clinical care including clinical management of rape. 2. The inability of women and girls to access GBV services through existing, safe and effective health facilities, particularly in conflict-affected areas, limits their options in making decisions about their health and safety. 3. For some women and girls, violence may have an impact on deci-sion-making and capacity to make self-aware decisions about their bodies including choices regarding SRHR. 4. The subjugation of women in the home may prevent women from being able to access SRHR services, as men or husbands make decisions over women's bodies and deny women's rights to access SRHR services. Economic and physical barriers may prevent access to services.
World Bank Group	Myanmar Decentral-ized Funding to Schools	Since 2017	The project supports access to education of children from poor households by providing stipends as well as improvement of the school environment through school grants and improvement of teaching and learning through teacher mentoring. Management of grants and stipends is decentralised thereby building local capacities and ownership. World Bank's funding to the Government of Myanmar is transferred directly to the Government's budget on the basis of Disbursement Linked Indicators.

Source: (MFA, 2019a; project documents)

4.4 Results management and reporting on the Country Strategy/Portfolio

The Monitoring of the CS 2016–2019 is based on two mechanisms: a one-off self-assessment exercise, which covered the period 2017–2018 and was an internal mid-term review of the strate-gy (MFA, 2018c); and an annual assessment of the indicators in the results framework as well as the accompanying Management Responses (MFA, 2017a, 2017b, 2018a, 2018b). Of the strategy's 14 outputs and outcomes, the annual results report 2016 rated progress on 3 as good, 8 as satis-factory and 3 as unsatisfactory. In 2017 the rating was: 2 good, 10 satisfactory and 2 unsatisfac-tory. It is recognised that the ability of programmes to implement funds efficiently and to move forward or not (especially peace process support), hinges on the peace process itself and related conflict dynamics.

Several projects provide rigorous and comprehensive monitoring of anticipated outputs and out-comes in annual and final reports, e.g. Alternative Development and Establishment of Communi-ty Forests in South Shan (2014–2018); Sustainable Livelihoods and Forest Governance (2018–); Early Intervention for Children with Disabilities (EICD) Project; the second phase of Myanmar School of Politics (2018–2021); Support for IDPs in Dawei and Palaw, a pilot project in the

context of the Myanmar Peace Support Initiative; and to a lesser extent Urban Risk and Resilience Programme; The Best Start: improved early learning opportunities for marginalised children in Myanmar. Most other projects were still in the process of developing or improving their monitoring approaches/frameworks.

A finding for the project Myanmar School of Politics also applies to many other projects: Progress is very difficult to measure at outcome and impact levels, as they depend on external factors and are subject to the changes in a political environment (Poutiainen & Seppänen, 2017). Furthermore, baseline data is missing in the case of most interventions and the availability of socio-economic data is very limited both the national and regional levels.

5 Key findings

5.1 Relevance

5.1.1 Alignment for fragility

There is no explicit alignment for fragility as the CS does neither include a fragility analysis nor comprise references to commonly used fragility studies and indicators or mention the key political declarations related to fragile states – International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (2008); New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States (2012); Stockholm Declaration (2016) However, implicitly the CS is well directed towards Myanmar's development challenges within the context of fragility.

The CS does not elaborate fragility except for the notion that *"Myanmar's peace process remains fragile and complex. The transition from a military-to-military ceasefire negotiations process to an inclusive political dialogue to decide on the fundamental building blocks for a democratic federal union remains a challenge"* and that "the humanitarian situation remains highly fragile due to Myanmar's vulnerability to natural and man-made disasters, including continuous ethnic armed conflicts in parts of the country" (MFA, 2016). At the same time, the context analysis touches on the most important factors that explain Myanmar's fragile situation. These points are expanded and further elaborated on under the thematic areas supported by the CS. Part of the CS modality is a risk analysis exercise (e.g. Annex III Risk Management 2017–2018) which – in the section "Contextual Risks for Country Programme" – provides a detailed and comprehensive assessment of the current context and fragility factors.

The team of MFA officials involved in drafting the CS conducted a conflict-sensitive analysis on the operating environment and how it should be taken into account in the planning, which, however, did not obtain an "official" status and remained internal (interview with current and former MFA staff). In particular, MFA looked at the drivers of fragility and identified moments of risk with the aim of determining when to increase attention to certain situations. Fragility is not extensively discussed in the CS because of its nature as a public document. Donors are generally careful in their public assessment of the country's situation in order not to disturb the delicate political balance and the infant peace process. Simply put: everyone knows that the situation in many parts of Myanmar is fragile and development cooperation of most if not all donors takes fragility into account; but there is no perceived need to constantly remind national stakeholders of the fragile context (Interviews with current and former MFA staff, other donors and implementing agencies). Furthermore, it is important to note that the central and southern states Mandalay, Magwe, Bago, Yangon and Ayeyarwady are not conflict-affected.

Conflict analyses, on which Finland relies, are regularly conducted by several stakeholders and assessments usually come to similar findings and conclusions. Finland's cooperation also takes note of other stakeholder's findings (interviews with current and former MFA staff). The IFRC and Conflict Sensitivity Analysis (CSA) of the Finnish Government's Contribution to the UN FAO's REDD+ intervention (FCG International, 2019) conducted a fragility analysis in Myanmar and there is also secondary data, e.g. UN reports, which informs discussion between the MFA and implementing organisations and finds its way into project proposals and reports (interview with implanting organisation).

At the same time, there is no evidence that a fragility or conflict assessment was conducted for 9 out of the 16 projects in the sample. The other 9 projects include some form of country context and/or conflict analysis with a small number explicitly referring to fragility. For example:

- The project document for "Unlocking peace potential through the security sector" in Myanmar includes an elaborate context and conflict analysis (CMI, 2018);

- The project proposal for MyConstitution comprises a comprehensive situation analysis which elaborates on several key points related to fragility with the main emphasis on constitutional challenges (International IDEA, 2018);

- The project documents for Alternative Development and Establishment of Community Forests in South Shan and the follow-up Sustainable Livelihoods and Forest Governance comprise comprehensive context analyses which elaborate on the link between drug production and conflict (MFA, 2018d);

- The FAO forest inventory for Redd+ was considered not to be conflict-sensitive by an external conflict sensitivity analysis and there are now discussions with FAO on redesigning the project to bring it in line with conflict sensitivity requirements (MFA interview).

Although, as outlined, the CS address fragility through general context analysis, support is nevertheless aligned with the diagnostics. The self-assessment exercise of the CS also clearly reflects this link between de facto fragility diagnostics and the development cooperation programme, without however providing ultimate clarity *"Working in a fragile and conflict environment requires flexibility. In practice through pool-funding and different partnerships, flexibility has been possible. At present, there is no agreed approach to how to address this need. Need to ensure flexibility is explicitly built into next CS"* (MFA, 2018c).

Furthermore, project documents normally include detailed risk assessments but not necessarily mitigating measures. There is a continued tendency among donors – including Finland – to work on the basis of best case-scenarios which assumes that the status quo can at least be sustained. Judging from documents which have been made available to the team, the possibility of an authoritarian regression or a substantial worsening of the security situation does not seem to feature in strategic thinking.

The Self-assessment of the Country Strategy 2016–2019 includes detailed observations and reflections on "problems, risks, challenges and their causes", many of which are related to fragility (MFA, 2018c). However, it is unclear how and to what extent these points have later been monitored and/or guided the subsequent implementation of the strategy. According to informants, the self-assessment was not intended to be a regular excessive but as an internal mid-term evaluation of the CS.

5.1.2 Alignment to beneficiary needs

The CS itself does not include a needs analysis. However, when Finland was carrying out the first identification missions to Myanmar in 2012, environmental governance and forests were identified as a suitable niche for Finland (alongside with peacebuilding/democracy development and education) (interview with former MFA staff). In this context, the Finnish Environment Institute (SYKE for its abbreviation in Finnish) carried out a Needs Assessment for the Effective Implementation of the Environmental Conservation Law in Myanmar (Hildén et al., 2016), which according to several informants, was a highly valued process and that was going to serve as a general framework for channelling donor support to the sector in Myanmar. Later, however, for the 2016–2019 CS, the environmental sector had dropped in importance due to MFA's internal decision; the timing coincides with MFA's budget cuts (interview with former MFA staff).

Needs assessments are mainly conducted at the project level rather than the strategic level. 14 of the 16 projects in the sample conducted needs analyses, most of them are detailed and comprehensive. Overall there is no doubt that the CS addresses the needs of beneficiaries across Myanmar. The CS mainly refers to the whole country; not directly to conflict-affected areas except for one Outcome (*"2.2 Vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, particularly women and girls, have improved equal access to effective and accountable justice and rule of law institutions"*) (MFA, 2016). The CS is thus not a strategy for cooperation in conflict/fragile situations which is evidenced by the fact that the CS does not discuss the role of aid in conflict-affected context. It is rather a strategy that aims to reach the entire population, *including* people affected by conflict.

There is evidence of thorough gender mainstreaming in the vast majority of interventions. Although quantitative disaggregated (gender/vulnerable group-based) socio-economic data is not systematically incorporated into union or regional planning processes and plans in Myanmar (and there are no guidelines for doing so), several – but not all – projects use disaggregated socio-economic data for planning work, for example

- Support to Democratic development and Rule of Law building in Myanmar uses its own quantitative disaggregated (gender/vulnerable group-based) socio-economic data for planning work (UNDP, 2013).

- The JPF Provisional Results Framework (2017) foresees gender-disaggregated data for most indicators (Joint Peace Fund, 2017).

- The WGF project's indicator data is disaggregated for region/ethnic groups (UNFPA, 2016)

- In the Best Start project, the section that analyses needs distinguishes specific groups of people, including children from ethnolinguistic minority communities, and children with Disabilities. The target group is also disaggregated by gender (Save the Children, 2015).

Rakhine and other conflict areas are covered particularly with regards to vulnerability. At the same time vulnerability is a complex issue which is not well defined in the context of Myanmar. Internal displacement and statelessness are main factors of social and economic vulnerability and insecurity among hundreds of thousands of people but here again, the concept of displaced people and – related returnees – is contested. For example, some IDP camps might not exist anymore, but people are still not free to move. This situation – which contributes to fragility – makes it challenging to align support to beneficiary needs if their status is unclear (interviews).

According to several informants, **Finland has been a frontrunner on disability, and early steps have been taken to mainstream disability in multilateral interventions**. However, government and employer awareness of disability issue is still low.

5.1.3 Alignment to key national stakeholder needs

The CS acknowledges the need to involve all conflict parties in the peace process. It, therefore, provides a framework for government stakeholders, ethnic (armed) organisations and civil society to be equally supported and to interact with each other. Several projects – e.g. UNODC, UNFPA, International IDEA – have encouraged or even facilitated dialogue or cooperation between members of the conflict parties.

While there is no Finnish political or policy dialogue with the GoM to provide an institutionalised framework for alignment, the explicit alignment of many projects with the GoM reforms, policies and plans is evident. Even more decisively, individual interventions have provided important inputs to government reform agendas and legislation. For example, Finland's high profile on gender was instrumental in influencing legislation via the Ministry of Social Welfare; there

was prominent Finnish input also into the government's education agenda, and Finnish support via the Eden Centre contributed to the inclusion of education for children with disability in the national education law (interviews with implementing organisations and government officials).

The national development plan – Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan (2018–2030) – came only into existence long after the finalisation of the CS and the crucial Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) (2015) as well as sector development plans, especially the National Education Strategic Plan (NESP) 2016–2021, coincided with the CS or post-dated it. It, therefore, goes without saying that the CS cannot be explicitly aligned with these current national strategies. Other national development plans, such as the National Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women (2013–2022) could have been considered but are not mentioned in the CS either. As already mentioned under 3.2. the CS was not meant to be driven by development objectives of the Myanmar government and rather supposed to reflect Finland's development cooperation agendas.

At the same time, **the vast majority of the 16 projects in the sample is well aligned with government plans and policies**. For example:

- The UNFPA project is directed towards key objectives of the National Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women (2013-2022) (Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, 2013)

- The FAO project builds on an action plan on "Development of a National Forest Monitoring System for Myanmar" developed by the Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry (MOECAF, now MONREC) (FAO, 2019).

- The UNESCO project is directly linked to the government's priorities for the education sector as outlined in the National Education Strategic Plan (NESP) 2016–2021 (Ministry of Education, 2016, pp. 2016–2021; Thornton & Tolmer, 2017).

- The JPF is directed to the implementation of the National Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) and the earlier bilateral ceasefire agreements.

5.1.4 Adaptation over time

The strategy itself was based on more optimistic assumptions than how the reality unfolded, as explained above. While it was naturally impossible for the strategy's authors to anticipate the acts of violence that have gripped northern Rakhine since October 2016 – and especially since August 2017 when hundreds of thousands of Rohingya refugees fled Myanmar into Bangladesh after the escalation of violence – the CS highlights the necessity *"to resolve long-standing as well as new outbreaks of conflict, insecurity and intercommunal violence in ethnic areas (most notably in Rakhine)"*.

Finland did not change its strategic approach to Myanmar or its project portfolio in the wake of the Rohingya humanitarian crisis but several key projects adapted to the situation by providing additional support – or shifting existing support – to Rakhine. Furthermore, some humanitarian aid was delivered outside the CS modality. By not fundamentally altering its strategic approach Finland also sent a signal that, while the situation in Rakhine was dramatic, many other conflicted-affected areas still also required substantial attention and support.

Since 2016 the relevance of the constitutional agenda has increased. Finland responded through the provision of the support to the project MyConstitution implemented by International IDEA. At the same time, the focus of the country programme has switched more towards women and girls than it was in the beginning, e.g. GBV/SRHR was not included in the original strategy.

Overall, project managers of several Finland-supported key interventions expressed satisfaction in terms of the flexibility there were granted in responding to the changing context. This also includes a certain level of informality as the framework conditions for cooperation can change rapidly in fragile situations, and agreed indicators can lose their relevance, as one interlocutor put it.

In retrospect, two of the three anticipated impacts – *"All people in Myanmar benefit from sustained peace and improved democratic governance"; "All children in Myanmar benefit from enhanced opportunities in life through an improved education system"* (MFA, 2016)– were obvious and well-justified choices which addressed – still very relevant – key development challenges at the core of Myanmar's fragile situation. However, while the forest governance component (*"All people in Myanmar benefit from improved climate resilience through sustainable forest management"*; MFA, 2016) was equally strategically relevant, it suffered from a lack of conceptual clarity and vision and has ultimately played only a marginal role in the cooperation programme. Several stakeholders described this as a missed opportunity given the well-established Finnish expertise and experience in this sector.

5.2 Effectiveness

5.2.1 Delivery of results for beneficiaries and other stakeholders

There is clear orientation towards results: The project portfolio is fully in line with achieving results against the CS results framework, except for the first impact area ("*All people in Myanmar benefit from improved climate resilience through sustainable forest management***"; MFA, 2016) where the UNODC and FAO projects have only addressed parts of the CS agenda on good forest governance.**

In terms of overall results, many projects could articulate tangible outputs and some achieved outcomes, e.g. influence on legislation, outputs related to the education sector reform, production of commodities, access to education and health services, empowerment of women and girls, (see table 5).

Some results go beyond the anticipated outputs/outcomes of the CS, especially regarding the empowerment of women and girls which is rather narrowly defined in the CS. However, problems and hurdles remain. For example, while UNFPA's SRHR component seems to have been very successful, strengthening the access to justice for GBV survivors has not made decisive progress (see table 5). The volatile context resulted in some to changes in activities across the portfolio, most of them in the area of capacity building.

The quality of delivering results chiefly depends on the scope and quality of the monitoring system. All projects claim a commitment to RBM but the evidence vary. For 5 of the 16 projects in the sample, no documented evidence is available on the respective approach to monitoring and evaluation. However, several projects provide rigorous and comprehensive monitoring of anticipated outputs and outcomes in annual and final reports (see also 4.4).

Each instrument has its own monitoring and evaluation processes and there has been no attempt at harmonisation. Furthermore, in the case of most projects indicators are not directly aligned with the CS (which is an inevitable consequence of multilateral/bi-multilateral projects) which makes it difficult to assess progress against CS output/outcome indicators. A notable exception is the UNODC and FAO projects which comprise indicators in its results framework which are explicitly tied to the Finnish support. Earmarked funding in bi-multilateral/multilateral/multi-donor projects seems to be the more effective way of delivering results under the country strategy than basket funding.

Based on the results of the individual interventions the following table synthesises the findings for the three supported sectors.

Table 5: Results achieved in the three Sectors of the CS

Sector	Objectives as stated in the CS	Outcomes	Level of Outcome Attainment
Good forest governance	Myanmar's forest resources are governed in a more sustainable, equitable and transparent manner based on up-to-date forest resource information.	As a national forest inventory and information system project, the FAO project "National Forest Monitoring and Information System (NFMIS) with a Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA)" has the potential to generate outcome but due to delays in implantation outcomes have not been achieved yet.	Low
	Local communities progressively engage in sustainable forest management .	Outcome 1 ("Improved environmental conditions and forest governance") of the Finland-funded part of the UNODC project, phase 2 is aligned with the CS. The outcome area builds on some outputs during phase 1, e.g. training, capacity building and awareness-raising (UNODC, 2018; Kaarakka, 2019). However, phase 1 did not include a dedicated forest component which was introduced due to Finland's request. "There was no forestry or gender component in the project. Neither would exist without Finland's contribution" (UNODC interview). An external evaluation on the programme concluded that the intervention is promising and demonstrates signs of early impact (Otero & Behrle, 2018)	Medium
Democratic governance and rule of law	Institutions and processes of peace- and state-building are more responsive to the needs and rights of all people in Myanmar.	Almost all projects have a peace-building component in a broad sense. As table 5 shows there are clear achievements towards institution-building and the strengthening of existing state institutions as well as non-state actors. There is evidence that achievements at the institutional level also improved the situation of individuals (see evidence in table 5, supported by interviews)	Medium
	Vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, particularly women and girls, have improved access to justice	The UNDP project "Support to Democratic development and Rule of Law building in Myanmar" comprised an access to justice component but outcomes were only achieved in other areas ((UNDP, 2016). The UNFPA project Women and Girls First is the main intervention which is supposed to generate outcomes. The project has indeed a strong focus on access to justice for women and girls but there is no evidence for outcomes. Even the output level is difficult to assess. There is no data available on the number of cases in which the project contributed to, or even facilitated access to justice for GBV victims.	Low
Quality education	The most disadvantaged girls and boys in Myanmar benefit from improved access to quality, inclusive pre-primary and primary education	Finland-supported interventions, particularly the World Bank's "Myanmar Decentralized Funding to Schools" project, directly improved access to schools for thousands of disadvantaged children through its stipend programme. In the STEM project, UNESCO works with the government and government Education colleges. However, activities in conflict areas limited to consultations with some ethnic education service providers. The impact of the STEM project has the potential to improve the quality of education in long run but these results cannot be seen in schools yet.	High

The team has come across a small number of – potentially – unintended effects of the support:

- Felm became unexpectedly a mediator between UNDP and KNU (Karen National Union, one of the two main ethnic armed groups). UNDP and KNU requested Felm to resolve a conflict between the two organisations regarding the Ridge to Reef Forest Program, which would affect a significant proportion of KNU's territory (interviews).

- As an unexpected positive outcome, the SYKE assessment was very instrumental for the Environmental Conservation Law which was passed in Dec 2018. Finland was the co-facilitator (interviews).

5.2.2 Delivery of results for non-discrimination and climate change

Gender is the specific focus of UNFPA's Women and Girls First project and has been mainstreamed into most other interventions. Almost all project documents – partly triangulated by interviews – credibly claim results on gender equality. For example, according to JPF informants, none of the individually funded projects is gender blind, which is considered a major success. In line with the JPF's overall goal of allocating at least 15% of funding to gender-related activities, project budgets should aim for this allocation as a minimum (JPF Funding Criteria, https://www.jointpeacefund.org/en/funding-criteria). This target was surpassed and about 17% of funding across the entire Fund has been allocated to gender (Group interview, JPF).

Generally, as many stakeholder interviews confirmed, Finland is perceived as a neutral player, an honest broker which gives it credibility and legitimacy in its relations with both government and civil society stakeholders. Within this context, **Finland has played a decisive role as a gender advocate among donors but does not officially and openly lead**. The Finnish Embassy has played a central part in promoting a gender/equality/non-discrimination agenda in multilateral project settings, in relations with government stakeholders and donor coordination meeting (especially EU).

Despite the CS's strong emphasis on climate change, this has not been a major focal point in individual interventions. Hence, notable results have not been delivered.

5.2.3 Contributions to any reductions in fragility

By and large, the interventions are not averse of conflict-affected areas. Projects are generally geared towards a reduction in fragility; however, overall, Myanmar is not less fragile.

Many of the main interventions have focused directly and concretely on peacebuilding, e.g. JPF, International IDEA. As already noted, some have engaged rival actors in dialogue (i.e. government, ethnic armed organisations, CSOs etc,) and in some cases, cooperation between the conflict parties was achieved (e.g. UNFPA, UNODC, International IDEA). Other projects contributed to social cohesion and peacebuilding through a sectoral approach. Probably the most visible contribution was made by the UNODC project which contributed to the peacebuilding process in a small geographic area in South Shan through the reduction of poppy cultivation but was more effective on the coffee component than on the forestry component (see Table 6).

None of the project documents explicitly mention the PSGs, let alone elaborate on how and to what extent the PSGs are or were addressed. At the same time, between them, the interventions – and thus the CS in general – made demonstrable contributions particularly to PSG 1 (Inclusive political settlements and conflict resolution fostered), and PSG 2 (People's security established and fostered), and to a limited extent to PSG 3 (People's access to justice increased). Several projects also made contributions to the improvement of

livelihoods – and more indirectly than directly to the generation of employment under PSG 4. PSG 5 (Capacity for accountable and fair service delivery built) was addressed in general terms by some intervention but did not play a central role.

Table 6: PSG-related outcomes

PSG	Outcomes	Contributing Projects
1: Inclusive political settlements and conflict resolution fostered	• Contribution to the implementation of the inclusive peace agreement alongside the implementation of the NCA and peacebuilding programmes nationwide • Some conflict reduction in South Shan in communities supported by the UNO-DC project • Contribution to influencing the peace and democratisation processes • Partly successful attempts at bringing all conflict parties together • Contribution to increased knowledge of the conflict dynamics (several projects) • Increased capacity of state institutions that have key roles to play in designing and implementing a federal and democratic constitution	• Support to Myanmar Peace Fund • Unlocking peace potential through the security sector in Myanmar • Myanmar School of Politics • Facilitating the Myanmar Peace Process • MyConstitution: Constitutionalism in support of inclusive, peaceful and democratic Myanmar • Support to Democratic development and Rule of Law building in Myanmar (indirectly)
2: People's security established and fostered	• Strengthened and improved human security for project beneficiaries, e.g. reduced exposure to armed conflict (South Shan), access or better access to education and vocational education; improvement of rights and status of women and girls	• Support to Myanmar Peace Fund • Women's rights in Myanmar • Early Intervention for Children with Disabilities (EICD) Project • Alternative Development and Establishment of Community Forests in South Shan; Sustainable Livelihoods and Forest Governance • Support to Democratic development and Rule of Law building in Myanmar (indirectly)
3: People's access to justice increased	• Creation of better framework conditions for victims of GBV to access the justice system to a limited extent • Better knowledge and awareness of the rule of law	• Support to Democratic development and Rule of Law building in Myanmar • Women's rights in Myanmar
4: Employment generated and livelihoods improved	• Direct legitimate employment opportunities created for farmers in South Shan by helping them to transit from illegal opium production to legal coffee production. • Pre-conditions for employment generation strengthened through support to education, vocational education and teacher training • Contribution to improved livelihood for disabled people	• Strengthening Teacher Education in Myanmar • Myanmar Decentralized Funding to Schools • Enhancing Vocational Education for Youth in conflict-affected Kayah state • Alternative Development and Establishment of Community Forests in South Shan; Sustainable Livelihoods and Forest Governance • Early Intervention for Children with Disabilities (EICD) Project

PSG	Outcomes	Contributing Projects
5: Accounttable and fair service delivery	• Contribution to building more democratic political institutions • Greater accountability of public institutions • Contributing to capacity to fair and accountable education service delivery • Strengthening of the enabling environment for the civil society	• The Best Start: improved early learning opportunities for marginalised children in Myanmar • Myanmar Decentralized Funding to Schools • Strengthening Teacher Education in Myanmar • Early Intervention for Children with Disabilities (EICD) Project • Support to Democratic development and Rule of Law building in Myanmar • Women's rights in Myanmar

Overall, there is evidence that projects reduced the insecurity of individual stakeholders groups in townships where these interventions operated, but there is no indication that this has resulted in reduced fragility at the state or even union level.

5.2.4 Role of the aid co-operation modality in supporting delivery of results

The country portfolio includes most aid modalities available at the MFA, except for bilateral cooperation. The interventions range from small-scale NGO projects to large-scale trust funds and multi-bi projects. There is no evidence that some modalities are better in delivering results than others. Multiple aid modalities support each other in peace/democracy and education, but not in forestry. Among all modalities, multi-bi projects play a key role. The rationale for multi-bi cooperation is briefly explained in the CS: "to ensure maximum efficiency and recognising the specific role of the UN and other multilateral arrangements in supporting Myanmar's efforts to establish and achieve nationally defined SDG benchmarks, Finland will continue to focus on multilateral systems, not excluding bilateral support if deemed feasible."

The CS is clear that "UN organisations remain the main vehicle for Finland's engagement with the Myanmar government" (MFA, 2016). An additional strong pillar of Finland's country programme and its contribution to the peace process is the JPF which comprises 11 donors but has nevertheless given Finland the opportunity to position itself as a visible, constructive and respected stakeholder. JPF is at the core of all like-minded development partners' action in Myanmar and allows the donors to steer the operations directly. Other Finnish interventions build around it directly or indirectly (see also 5.3.2).

More specifically, aid modalities have been appropriate particularly with regards to improved quality of education (multi-bi WB and UNESCO projects), enabling environment for the civil society (MFA funding for Finnish INGOs), empowerment of women and girls (multi-bi UNFPA project) and laying the groundwork for peace-building (Multi-donor trust fund JPF).

Channelling aid through multilateral channels as the most important modality under the CS has proved suitable to the context as UN organisations and the World Bank, as well as multi-donor trust funds, tend to have more leverage vis-à-vis GoM than individual bilateral donors. The strong position of UN organisations is at least partly the legacy of their long presence in the country as they were able to operate in Myanmar prior to the watershed of 2011 (see also 5.3.2).

Several MFA and NGO stakeholders agreed that multi-bi projects are a solution to low resources and increased the impact and credibility of funding as multilateral organisations such as UN organisations (19 are present in Myanmar (United Nations Myanmar, 2019) or the World Bank and Trust Funds tend to have more leverage than most individual, bilateral donors. For example, in the case of the Joint Peace Fund, "With 11 donors acting together, the JPF enjoys widespread credibility and political gravitas, is able to take risks and innovate in ways that bilateral donors are unable to, and allows for information sharing, exchange and advocacy." (EU, 2019, p. 73). In a similar vein, UNFPA's Women and Girls First programme offers potential for informing and enabling the government as well as ethnic organisations to take a strong and active position on GBV, both in terms of informing communities on better practices and approaches they might take response natural and conflict disasters, in applying new approaches and skills. It also gives an opportunity to work with the government authorities and ethnic organisations particularly at the field level, to equip them and enhance their capacity to be better duty bearers. The expansion of GBV interventions to a new dimension of regular setting can open up new potentials for advocacy and visibility, increasing the quantity and quality of women's protection services, such as shelter. (Karunaratne et al., 2017, interviews)

Core funding to UN organisation would make Finland – or any other donor – "look invisible", as one informant noted. Multi-bi cooperation is, therefore, the logical solution in Myanmar as it allows Finland to link the support to the CS and thus demonstrate accountability while adding value to the project (Interviews with MFA and project officials).

According to the MFA's own assessment on Finland's influence the government agenda on gender through multi-bi interventions, *"As co-facilitator of the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Coordination Group (GEWECG) since year-end 2016 together with first UNFPA and more recently with UN Women, Finland has utilized its central position to advance consensus building among DPs on national priorities; planning and implementation of coordinated approaches to supporting the gender equality machinery and to joint advocacy"* (MFA, 2019c). However, Finland's visible and effective role in this area – and also education – was not only, and maybe not primarily, the result of the CS or multilateral influencing strategies but due to personal engagement and efforts of the Embassy staff, most notably perhaps the role of the (former) Head of Cooperation/Deputy who had a high profile as a renowned expert on gender and education.

However, the strategy of relying to a large extent on UN organisations for the channelling is not without its critics both within MFA as well as among implementing organisations and like-minded donors. Several interlocutors suggested that Finland was not sufficiently demanding to the UN and trusted UN Organisation too much. Even in cases of earmarked multi-bi funding, it was not always clear of how and where exactly the money was spent as this was not closely monitored by Finland. Furthermore, informants of the donor community pointed out that the UN was not necessarily a neutral actor, had failed to include human rights in their programmes and systemically omitted the Rohingya. As one interviewee put it, "The UN present Rakhine as a poverty crisis, not a human rights crisis. Poverty yes, but it's also a human rights crisis. We have to be much more demanding with the UN. The UN should be committed to their own human rights principles". In fact, it was only in June 2019 that the UN threatened "to withdraw aid over [a] 'policy of apartheid' against [the] Rohingya" (Stoakes & Ellis-Petersen, 2019). Yet, it also needs to be noted that Finland does not seem to blindly trust multilateral organisations as they are examined at MFA HQ whenever this is deemed necessary (MFA interviews). There is certainly some truth in the argument of one MFA official that it is would be "inefficient to start scrutinising multilateral organisations at the country level".

Not all multi-bi projects are equally convincing. The FAO intervention "Myanmar National Forest Inventory (NFI)/National Forest Monitoring and Information System (NFMIS) with a Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA)" is a case in point. On the one hand, the project allows Finland – which does not have a forest or natural resources sector expert at the Embassy – to exert some influence in the forestry sector. The project, while being very technical, is pivotal for many other interventions in the sector. e.g. for World Bank's plans to invest in the forestry sector, FLEGT, Norway's participatory management of mangroves, and Green Climate Fund (GCF) project proposals (interviews). On the other hand, the project stands isolated in the country portfolio as Finland missed an opportunity to establish itself as a key player in the environmental sector in Myanmar. Compared to the 2015–2024 strategy (MFA, 2019c), which indicated Natural Resources and Environmental Governance as the first outcome area, the environmental sector dropped in importance in the CS 2016–2019 as a condensed version of its predecessor (MFA, 2016b).

5.3 Coherence

5.3.1 Role of the CS in enabling coherent MFA assistance

MFA staff described the Myanmar CS as a statement of intent for development cooperation with a country. While MFA stakeholders noted that CS, in general, were more strategic than they used to be, MFA does not look primarily at the CS when project applications reach to the unit. Projects are screened for different criteria (human rights, gender, education etc.) and officials determine how well a proposal fits into a sector with the CS. However, at some stage in the selection process, the coherence with the CS is checked by the respective country desk officer. MFA staff also stated that most project proposals were already well aligned with the strategy. As representatives of a big NGO confirmed, *"we always look at the CS when we prepare a proposal and justify our project based on the CS – in all countries"* (Interview). That way the CS is an important element in the provision of coherent MFA assistance.

According to Felm and CMI there is a comparatively stronger role of "bilateral" projects with Finnish CSOs in the peacebuilding process in Myanmar compared to non-fragile countries (Interviews). Finnish INGOs – funded directly by MFA under the Discretionary Government Transfers Act – are prominently involved in implementing interventions under the CS, particularly in the areas of peace-building, democracy and education. However, the FLC modality was faced out in 2016. It gave the Embassy the opportunity to flexibly and directly fund small projects of local CSOs. This constituted an important value added especially against the backdrop of fragility as these projects could make a difference in areas where large multilateral interventions could not and did not reach. The last FLC project "Early Intervention for Children with Disabilities", which even impacted on legislation, is a case in point (see table 5).

Economic development (e.g. trade-related assistance, PSD, business environment) is not supported, except for a small amount of funding for Business Finland projects channelled through Finnpartnership, a business partnership programme operated by Finnfund on behalf of MFA. However, the office of Business Finland will be closing down and there will not be an entry point for business activities within the framework of the CS unless the strategic direction changes. There is currently no Finnish FDI in Myanmar but there have been project preparations with regards to energy and financial institutions. According to MFA, the question of whether development cooperation should be linked with trade promotion has been discussed many times. One interlocutor neatly summarised the dilemma, *"Should we have a strategy for everything or only for development? For Denmark and Norway development and trade go*

together. They have a very different approach. For us these are separate tracks. It has also has to be considered that when you do business in Myanmar, you do business with the Tatmadaw. There is a good governance and human rights dimension to be considered". However, there are different views within MFA on how to proceed strategically. Stakeholders based in Myanmar, including the Embassy, tend to have a more optimistic view of the benefits of moving towards a more comprehensive CS which also covers trade and investment relations. There is general agreement that "Finland is not supposed to be in a country with development cooperation funds forever", as one official pointed out. MFA will soon look at the commercial potential of Finland's relations with Myanmar and evaluation is planned to assess options and possibilities for trade and investment relations. At the same time, EU trade embargos and generally the new European Commission's approach to Myanmar will be important factors to consider and there is a well-developed awareness in MFA that any support to trade has to ensure that this does not support the army in one way or another.

5.3.2 Consideration of Finnish development policy through multi-bi co-operation

The CS does not discuss the alignment of its objectives with the strategies of other key donors and international actors within multilateral settings. Against the backdrop of the European Consensus on Development (2005) and the requirements of the Lisbon Treaty which prescribe close cooperation and coordination between and among EU stakeholders, including the Member States, it is striking that the CS does not establish any links with the EU's development cooperation programme with Myanmar. Although the CS mentions *"Alignment with the EU's joint strategy for Myanmar will be ensured"*, there is an indication that an active attempt towards alignment has been made. MFA interviews confirmed that until now there have not been any joint discussions of MFA and the European Commission's Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DEVCO) on the respective strategies towards Myanmar. However, as the CS is broad in scope and reflects analysis and objectives which are widely shared across the spectrum of OECD donors in Myanmar, there is no doubt that the CS supported alignment with other donors and international actors within multilateral settings.

JPF is a case in point for the alignment of Finnish development cooperation with the objectives and strategies of the multi-donor trust which also demonstrates Finnish added value. *"The rationale for the Consortium to request funding from the Finnish government for the peace facilitation activities stems partly from the JPF rationale that it can "support only activities where there is demonstrated value added from a pooled approach for funding."* In facilitation work, trust and understanding require absolute confidentiality, which allows people to change their positions and to move towards more compromising positions. Further examples of the CS providing a suitable framework and basis for Finland's engagement in multi-bi cooperation include UNFPA's work on women's rights in Myanmar and UNODC's project on community forests in South Shan The intervention includes an explicit Finland-supported part with its own specific indicators features indicators reflecting Finland's development priorities.

The FAO project is part of a continuum of similar interventions in other countries (Peru, Vietnam, Uruguay, Zambia, Tanzania) under the FAO's global National Forest Monitoring and Assessment Programme in which Finland has acted as one of the key donors. The current programme document has a global component which follows the idea that what FAO develops in Myanmar can be used as lessons learnt in other countries and continents, e.g. in Congo, Colombia, Peru, also Central America to different extents (FAO (2019), FAO interview).

5.3.3 Role of the CS in contributing to wider Development Policy objectives

The country programme is well aligned with wider development policy objectives at the time the CS was drafted. Consequently, it has contributed to Finland's development policy objectives in general. The country programme fully addresses two of Finland's current four priorities: The rights and status of women and girls; and Democratic and better-functioning societies. Two main programmes (FAO and UNODC) contribute to food security, access to water and energy, and sustainable use of natural resources while the policy priority area dealing with the growth of developing countries' economies to generate more jobs, livelihoods and well-being; and– is at best only indirectly addressed (MFA, 2019b)..

5.4 Connectedness

5.4.1 Adherence to commitments on the IHPs, Do No Harm, and AAP

There is no evidence that projects contradict or even violated IHPs, Do No Harm, and AAP principles. However, there is no documented evidence of adherence in design and implementation to the commitments to these principles. Neither did MFA explicitly require adherence to commitments on the IHPs, DNH and AAP for project approval.

5.4.2 Use of HRBA approaches

The priorities of Finland's international human rights priorities include Women's rights; the rights of persons with disabilities; the rights of sexual and gender minorities; the rights of indigenous peoples; Economic, social and cultural rights. In Myanmar particular emphasis has been given to women's rights, the rights of persons with disabilities, and the rights of indigenous peoples (in this case, the role of ethnicity in Myanmar). The human rights focus is clearly there but none of these agendas is discussed as part of an approach which *expresis verbis* engages in human rights discourses. As interviews demonstrated, Finland is no exception within the donor community which has to appropriately respond to human rights abuses in Myanmar while at the same time not rocking the boat too much which would potentially risk the stability of the country's semi-democratic system or even result in an authoritarian backlash.

One way of looking at HRBA is that it is primarily an approach to identifying the key stakeholder from the point of view who are the duty bearers and the rights holders. By and large, the projects included in the assessment take this approach, i.e. they work with duty bearers such as political parties (Demo), government actors (e.g. UNESCO, UNDP, UNFPA), and vulnerable populations directly or indirectly (most projects).

The FAO project is the only example of an intervention which targets human rights not only in substance but also in name. The title was revised and changed to "Myanmar National Forest Inventory (NFI)/National Forest Monitoring and Information System (NFMIS) with a Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA). The objective of the project is to develop a globally relevant approach to NFI and NFMIS explicitly within the framework of HRBA and conflict sensitivity approach and support the Government of Myanmar in its implementation. (FAO, 2019). However, one informant noted that the project's HRBA was selective. The project is part of a continuum of similar interventions in other countries (Peru, Vietnam, Uruguay, Zambia, Tanzania) under the FAO's (global) National Forest Monitoring and Assessment Programme in which Finland has acted as one of the key donors.

5.4.3 Consideration of the humanitarian-development-peacebuilding nexus

The entire CS strategy is based on the premise that peacebuilding and development are inextricably linked. However, the humanitarian-development-peacebuilding nexus is not explicitly mentioned. There are several examples of the humanitarian-development nexus (UNFPA, FCA, Red Cross). **A Triple nexus approach could be confirmed only for UNFPA** – which receives both humanitarian and development funds – to some extent. The 2018 evaluation of the Women and Girls First project, which was implemented in Rakhine, Kachin and Northern Shan, as well as Kayin and Mon States, states, highlights the unique design of WSF in terms of its "*integration of SRH and GBV interventions as well as its implementation across the humanitarian, development and peace-building nexus in selected conflict-affected states*". (King & Ye Swe Htoon, 2018) However, while this finding is repeated several times, there is no further elaboration and interviews could not clarify the exact approach to the triple nexus either.

6 Conclusions

The CS 2015–2024 was de facto a first draft of the succeeding CS 2016–2019. The latter was formulated during the time of high optimism among development partners following the historic 2015 national elections which formally ended half a century of military rule and seemingly paved the way for democracy and peace. During a relatively short time period (Jan 2012 – to date), Finland transformed it overall approach to Asia from a Mekong programme and transition of relations with Vietnam, closing down Bangkok office, and upscaling operations in Myanmar and Afghanistan. Against this backdrop the establishment of a stable country programme in Myanmar is a positive achievement. In retrospect, the strategy's assumption of the "country's transition towards a more consolidated democracy" and confidence that "many key obstacles to lasting peace can be solved" looks premature and do not reflect the current status quo.

Relevance: The CS played a key role in the process of defining priorities and narrowing them down – a comprehensive and participatory process that led to the 2016–2019 CS. The CS evolved through a structured approach in a context of significant constraints (new partner country, 2015–2016 budget cuts, shortage of MFA human resources, and unpredictability of the development of the political context). Overall, the objectives of the CS were highly relevant for Myanmar's development as key agendas – democratic governance and the rule of law, quality education and good governance in the forest sector – were addressed. The CS provided a comprehensive and sufficiently flexible framework for the implementation of individual projects which, by and large, were strongly aligned with national development agendas. At the same time, while the CS implicitly considered causes of fragility, it was not driven by an explicit fragility analysis. There was also some degree of contradiction between the 2016-2019 CS and the actual support provided in the impact area 1 ("All people in Myanmar benefit from improved climate resilience through sustainable forest management"). Finland co-funded the FAO project which, while focussing on forest management, does not have a strong explicit climate resilience component.

Effectiveness: Interventions under all aid modalities were geared for delivering results at the expected level. Many projects (particularly in the areas of education and gender, and partly governance) achieved tangible outputs and, in some cases (i.e. education, partly gender) outcomes. More specifically, aid modalities have been appropriate particularly with regards to improved quality of education (multi-bi WB and UNESCO projects), enabling environment for the civil society (MFA funding for Finnish INGOs), empowerment of women and girls (multi-bi UNFPA project), laying the groundwork for peace-building (Multi-donor trust fund JPF) and to a limited extent concerning better access to decent work, improved livelihoods and increased income (mainly the multi-bi UNODC project).

The evidence presented generally suggests that working through multilateral organisations, such as UNFPA, that operate through one or two levels of local organisations and are thus linked to the high-level policy level all the way to the grassroots level, has worked well in the context of Myanmar. Specifically, on JPF it can be concluded that it was a right decision to join the trust fund given that it is a mechanism developed only for the specific context of Myanmar and seen as a neutral player. Increased number of people have access to decent work, livelihoods and income

Coherence: Overall, there is good coherence throughout the sectors supported by the CS and duplication of efforts seems unlikely. However, although forestry-related activities are highly relevant they are also isolated. Furthermore, there is a challenge for risk management; risks and challenges are regularly identified but it remains unclear how risk analyses guide deliberations on the coherence of Finland's country portfolio. Increased involvement of the private sector as part of the next CS, which is currently being discussed will inevitably have implications for the coherence of the Finnish support to Myanmar. The broader question behind the issue of business involvement is as to whether MFA should – at least for the time-being – hold on to the concept of development cooperation only strategy or move in the direction of a more comprehensive strategy which also covers political, trade and investment relations.

Connectedness: While the FAO project is the only intervention with an explicitly stated human rights-based approach, several interventions are strong on HRBA. Generally, however, the development partner community, including Finland, has adopted a non-invasive approach which means that individual human rights have been addressed under the headings of education, gender, livelihoods etc. without engaging expresis verbis in human rights discourses. The CS is based on the premise that peacebuilding and development are inextricably linked. While there are several examples of the humanitarian-development nexus (UNFPA, FCA, Red Cross), a triple nexus approach, which also takes peacebuilding into the equation, could be confirmed only for UNFPA. Overall, Finland's triple nexus approach to Myanmar remains unclear.

7 Lessons/Implications

Going forward, and based on the evidence generated by this case study, the following lessons/implications arise for the next iteration of the Country Strategy in Myanmar.

- **The CS is best described as a statement of intent for development cooperation with Myanmar.** It has been sufficiently specific to outline and explain Finland's development cooperation approach – thus providing both guidance for the relevant stakeholders and transparency for the partner country and the general public – while at the same time leaving room for adjustments. It is therefore also part of a wider approach to communicate the objectives of Finland's development cooperation with Myanmar. However, in a strict sense, the CS is not a modality in itself, it rather provides a framework for the application of different modalities, i.e. i.e. multilateral aid, Finnish NGOs, Local Cooperation Instrument (FLC), Institutional Cooperation Instrument (ICI) and Finnpartnership.

- **FLC was a suitable modality for fragile contexts as it gave the Embassy the opportunity to flexibly and directly fund small projects of local CSOs.** FLC projects could be active in areas which large multilateral interventions did not reach. The discontinuation of the FLC modality has deprived Finland of suitable additional instruments in fragile contexts.

- **The CS is not a strategy which was developed to specifically address fragile situations but has worked well in de facto responding to several and inter-related dimensions of fragility in Myanmar.** If the CS is meant to provide a specific framework for the cooperation with fragile states, the discussion of fragility needs to be much more pronounced and should not "hide" behind a general discussion of the country context. Yet it is understood, that approaching fragility "head-on" might not always be the diplomatically most sensible approach.

- **Finland's active and in some areas influential role as a donor in Myanmar is to a sizable extent driven by the personal engagement of Embassy staff.** The absence of political/policy dialogues also means a lack of institutionalised channels of leverage vis-à-vis the GoM. However, people come and go if strategies of influencing rely too much on personal relations, they become unpredictable.

- **The CS is entirely owned by Finland but not Myanmar as a partner country.**
  The fact that the CS was not coordinated or discussed with the GoM and MFA's instance that the CS is "our strategy" which does not need – and even should not – be negotiated with a government that is not seen as fully legitimate due to human rights abuses, is understandable from a foreign policy point of view. Yet, it is difficult to align this approach with the development cooperation principles and requirements of the Paris Declaration and Accra Agenda for Action.

- **India and particularly China are sizable and influential donors in Myanmar. However, their role is ignored in strategic documents and discussions.** It could be argued that – to some extent and in some instances – China's involvement in the country contributed to fragility rather than reducing it. There is a definite need to consider China's, India's and other non-OECD donors' role in Myanmar more thoroughly.

- **The CS solely addresses development cooperation but is not a holistic strategy of Finland's approach to Mynmar in general, which also includes political and economic relations.** The question if and to what extent the CS should move away from being an exclusive development cooperation strategy and be expanded to include TRA and PSD or even the direct promotion of Finnish business, trade and investment interest goes beyond the scope of the country case study and cannot be answered here.

Annex 1: Timeline of events in the context highlighting aspects of fragility

2008 May	Cyclone Nargis hits the low-lying Irrawaddy delta. Some estimates put the death toll as high as 134,000.

A referendum on new constitution proceeds amid humanitarian crisis following the cyclone. The government says 92% voted in favour of the draft constitution and insists it can cope with cyclone aftermath without foreign help. |
2008 November	Dozens of political activists given sentences of up to 65 years in series of secretive trials.
2009 January	Thailand expels hundreds of members of Muslim Rohingya minority who appeared off its coast. Myanmar denies the minority's existence. Several hundred Rohingyas are subsequently rescued from boats off the coast of Indonesia.
2009 August	Opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi is convicted of breaching conditions of her house arrest, following a visit by an uninvited US national in May. The initial sentence of three years' imprisonment is commuted to 18 months' house arrest.
2010 October	Government changes the country's flag, national anthem and official name.
2010 November	Main military-backed party, the Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP), claims resounding victory in the first election for 20 years. Opposition groups allege widespread fraud and the election is widely condemned as a sham. The junta says the election marks the transition from military rule to a civilian democracy.

A week after the election, Aung San Suu Kyi - who had been prevented from taking part – is released from house arrest. |
2011 March	Thein Sein is sworn in as president of a new, nominally civilian government.
2011 August	President Thein Sein meets Aung San Suu Kyi in Nay Pyi Taw.
2011 September	President Thein Sein suspends construction of controversial Chinese-funded Myitsone hydroelectric dam, in a move seen as showing a greater openness to public opinion.
2011 October	Some political prisoners are freed as part of a general amnesty. New labour laws allowing unions are passed.
2011 November	Pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi says she will stand for election to parliament, as her party rejoins the political process.
2011 December	US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton visits, meets Aung San Suu Kyi and holds talks with President Thein Sein. The US offers to improve relations if democratic reforms continue.

President Thein Sein signs law allowing peaceful demonstrations for the first time; NLD re-registers as a political party in advance of by-elections for parliament due to be held early in 2012.

Burmese authorities agree on truce deal with rebels of Shan ethnic group and orders military to stop operations against ethnic Kachin rebels. |
| **2012 January** | Government signs ceasefire with rebels of the Karen ethnic group. |
| **2012 April** | NLD candidates sweep the board in parliamentary by-elections, with Aung San Suu Kyi elected. The European Union suspends all non-military sanctions against Burma for a year. |

2012 August	President Thein Sein sets up commission to investigate violence between Rakhine Buddhists and Rohingya Muslims in the west, in which dozens have died.
2012 November	Around 90 people are killed in a renewed bout of communal violence between Rakhine Buddhists and Rohingya Muslims.
2013 January–February	The army surrounds Laiza, the biggest town controlled by Kachin rebels. The government and rebels agree to disengage and start a political dialogue after Chinese-sponsored talks.
2013 March	Rioting between Muslims and Buddhists in Meiktila, south of Mandalay, leaves at least 10 people dead.
2014 April	At least 22 people are killed in fighting between government troops and ethnic Kachin rebels in the north.
2014 October	Government announces release of 3,000 prisoners. Burma watchers say most are petty criminals, but include ex-military intelligence officers imprisoned along with former Prime Minister Khin Nyunt, who was freed in 2012.
2015 February	Flare-up in fighting with Kokang separatists in Shan State near the border with China leaves nearly 50 soldiers dead. The government puts the Kokang region under temporary martial law.
	Government withdraws temporary voting rights from Muslim Rohingyas ahead of the proposed constitutional referendum, following street protests by Buddhists.
2015 March	A draft ceasefire agreement is signed between the government and 16 rebel groups.
2015 May	Hundreds of Muslim Rohingyas migrants leave by the sea in flimsy boats, along with migrants from Bangladesh. UN criticises the failure of south-east Asian states to rescue them.
2015 July–August	Floods affect much of low-lying parts of the country, killing 100 people and displacing a million others.
2015 November	Opposition National League for Democracy – led by Aung San Suu Kyi – wins enough seats in parliamentary elections to form a government.
2016 March	Htin Kyaw sworn in as president, ushering in a new era as Aung San Suu Kyi's democracy movement takes power after 50 years of military domination.
2017 March	The United Nations human rights council decides to set up an investigation into alleged human rights abuses by the army against the Rohingya Muslim minority.
2017 August	Rohingya militants attack police posts in Rakhine. The response by security forces prompts an exodus of Rohingya and allegations that their actions amount to ethnic cleansing.
2017 October	The number of Rohingya Muslims who have fled military action in Rakhine state and sought refuge in Bangladesh is estimated at one million.
2017 November	Pope Francis visits, disappoints Rohingya by failing to mention their plight.
2018 March	President Htin Kyaw resigns on health grounds and is replaced by Win Myint, a fellow Suu Kyi loyalist.
2018 August	A UN report accuses Myanmar's military leaders of carrying out genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity against Rohingya Muslims, calling for six generals to face trial at the International Criminal Court. It also accuses Aung San Suu Kyi of failing to prevent the violence. Myanmar rejects the findings.

Source: BBC, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-12992883

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COUNTRY CASE STUDY ANNEX

OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY (oPt)

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Amer Madi

Contents

TABLES

FIGURES

Acronyms and abbreviations

AAP	Accountability to Affected Populations
AHLC	Ad Hoc Liaison Committee
AWPB	Annual Work Plan and Budget
CBO	Community-Based Organisation
CMI	Crisis Management Initiative
CPIA	Country Policy and Institutional Assessment
CRDP	Community Resilience and Development Programme
CS	Country Strategy
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DNH	Do No Harm
EAPPI	Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel
EDSP	Education Sector Strategic Plan
ESWG	Education Sector Working group
EU	European Union
EUPOL	European Union Co-ordinating Office for Palestinian Police Support.
FCA	Fin Church Aid
FELM	Finnish Evangelic Lutheran Mission
GBV	Gender-based Violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GII	Gender Inequality Index
HDI	Human Development Index
HEI-ICI	Higher Education Institutions Institutional Cooperation Instrument
ICB	Palestinian Youth Leadership
IUG	Islamic University of Gaza
IMF	International Monetary Fund
JFA	Joint Funding Arrangement
JFP	Joint Funding Partner
LACS	Local Aid Coordination Secretariat
LAP	Land Administration Project
LCF	Local Cooperation Fund
MADA	The Palestinian Center for Development and Media Freedoms
MDTF	Multi-donor Trust Fund
MFA	Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland
MoEHE	Ministry of Education and Higher Education
MoFP	Ministry of Finance and Planning
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPA	National Policy Agenda

OECD	The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
ODF	Open Development Forum
oPt	Occupied Palestinian Territory
PA	Palestinian Authority
PAD	Project Appraisal Document
PASSIA	Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs
PCHR	Palestinian Center for Human Rights
PEA	Political Economy Analysis
PEGASE	European Union's European-Palestinian Management and Socio-Economic Help
PFM	Public Finance Management Systems
PID MDF	Partnership for Infrastructure Development Multi Donor Trust Fund
PLC	Palestinian Legislative Council
PLO	Palestinian Liberation Organisation
PMO	Prime Minister's Office
PSG	Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goal
SWGs	Sector Working Groups
TwB	Teachers without Borders
TWG	Technical Working Group
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UN-OCHA	United National Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UNSCO	United Nations Special Coordinator Office for the Middle East Peace Process
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine refugees in the Near East
UTA	University of Tampere
WB	World Bank

1 Introduction

1.1 The country case study purpose and objectives

This case study comprises one of five prepared for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) Finland's *Evaluation of selected Finland's country strategies and country strategy modality for development cooperation with focus on fragile contexts*. The other four case studies are of Afghanistan, Myanmar, occupied Palestinian territory (oPt), and Syria/Iraq.

The purpose of each Case Study is to apply the overarching evaluation questions, design and methodology of the strategic level evaluation, while adapting their analysis for the specifics of the country context.

The specific objectives of each case study are:

- To provide a contributory evidence stream to the overall strategic evaluation
- To help interrogate the wider theoretical framework for the evaluation (see MFA, 2018) by generating evidence against it;
- To generate Lessons/Implications to help inform country stakeholders in their country-level programming, as part of the constructive approach adopted by the utilisation-focused model of the strategic evaluation.

The Case Study is explicitly not a full evaluation of Finland's country-level portfolio in oPt, which would be beyond the remit of this evaluation. Accordingly, it does not provide Recommendations, but rather Lessons/Implications.

1.2 Approach and methodology

The approach and methodology for the strategic evaluation is fully described in Annexes 2 and 3 of the synthesis report. This Case Study has applied the overarching evaluation questions, design and methodology of the strategic level evaluation, with limited adaptation for the contextual specifics of oPt. The questions to which it contributes evidence are as follows:

Relevance	• To what extent did the Country Strategy modality support the alignment of Finland's Country portfolios and policy dialogue to address the causes of fragility?
	• To what extent did the Country Strategy modality support the relevance of Finland's assistance to the needs of stakeholders and beneficiaries, considering available resources?
	• To what extent did the Country Strategy modality support the relevance of Finland's assistance to the needs of key stakeholders, whether government, civil society or others?
	• To what extent did the Country Strategy modality enable assistance to adapt appropriately over time, including in relation to volatile conditions?

Effectiveness	• To what extent did the Country Strategy modality support the orientation of initiatives to best deliver results for key stakeholders and beneficiaries in the context? • To what extent did the Country Strategy modality provide an enabling environment for results in non-discrimination, including gender equality and the empowerment of women, and climate change? • To what extent did the selected aid co-operation modality, particularly multi-bi co-operation, support the delivery of results in the context? • To what extent have Finnish Country Strategies/Portfolios contributed to any reductions in fragility?
Coherence	• How/or does the Country Strategy modality support Finland in providing coherent assistance to the country, e.g. across MFA departments and multilateral influencing plans and funding? • To what extent did the Country Strategy modality support alignment with the plans and policies of other key donors/international actors in the context? • To what extent did the Country Strategy modality contribute to the realization of wider Finnish Development Policy objectives?
Connectedness	• To what extent did Country Strategies adhere to international commitments on human rights, the International Humanitarian Principles, Do No Harm and Accountability to Affected Populations? • To what extent did the Country Strategies take into account long-term and interconnected problems, e.g. through the humanitarian-development-peacebuilding nexus?

The theoretical framework for the evaluation combines theory-based evaluation (Chen 1991), with elements of contribution analysis (Mayne, 2001) and a utilisation-focused approach (Quinn Patton, 2008). It functions at aggregate level for the strategic evaluation and is applied to this case study through the structured tools applied (see Annex 2 of the synthesis report). This case study contributes to its specification, validation and interrogation as part of the wider evaluation.

The case study has adopted a highly structured and systematic approach, in accordance with the methodology for the wider evaluation. The main elements of the methodology applied (see MFA 2019a) are as follows:

• Quantitative analysis of Finnish assistance to oPt for the period 2012–2018, generated from MFA statistics

• Interviews with key Helsinki-based stakeholders working currently/previously on the oPt portfolio within MFA (see Annex 2 for list of persons interviewed)

• Systematic analysis of 15 MFA-funded projects implemented in oPt during the evaluation's time period of 2012-current against a structured analytical framework (see Annex 3 for full list)

• A two-week field mission in oPt, conducted 22nd September to 3rd October 2019, including interviews and focus discussions with a wide range of stakeholders, including the Representation Office of Finland, Finish Embassy in Tel Aviv, PA ministries in Ramallah, implementing partners, civil society organisations and other donors in Ramallah and Jerusalem.

Findings were discussed and validated with key stakeholders in MFA at a feedback meeting on November 8 2019 in Nairobi/Helsinki.

1.3 Limitations

The main limitations of the case study are as follows:

- As a case study rather than a full evaluation, this report does not provide a definitive performance assessment of all Finnish assistance to oPt during the period 2012–current. Rather, it offers limited insights, generated through a systematic approach, to inform a wider evaluative process.

- The case study is based on analysis of MFA statistics, review of project documentation (including external reviews and evaluations where feasible), and stakeholder/partner interviews. In accordance with the agreed methodology for the wider strategic evaluation, it has not included visits to individual projects or interviews/focus groups with direct beneficiaries.

- It proved challenging to find individuals who have been engaged in the cooperation during the early years of the assessment period, because of high levels of staff turnover among Palestinian organisations and in the MFA.

- The Team did not visit Gaza due to travel restrictions. Information about interventions targeted to Gaza was obtained from the implementing partners.

- While data on development cooperation projects was relatively easily available in the MFA, data gaps were found linked to humanitarian assistance and support for Palestinian refugees through UNRWA.

- It is difficult to disaggregate and attribute Finland's contribution to performance and achievements of the multilateral funding mechanisms such as multi-donor trust funds and UN agencies, apart from the UNICEF project which is implemented as a bilateral modality.

With regards to Outcome area 2 'resilience', Finland did not initiate its support to Area C before 2018 and thus it is too early to assess the achievements.

2 Fragility context

2.1 Overview and timeline of the context since 2012

The Palestinian Authority was established in 1993 by the Oslo Accords. It was anticipated that this arrangement would last for a five-year interim period during which a permanent agreement would be negotiated (beginning no later than May 1996). To this date, the 'Two-State Solution' of the Oslo Accords remains the paradigm of the international community, with a twin track approach of building the institutions of a Palestinian State while in parallel negotiating its boundaries. Key 'final status' issues to be resolved through negotiations include borders, security arrangements, the rights of Palestine refugees, the status of Jerusalem, Israeli settlements and control of water resources. (Djerejian E.P. et al 2018).

Occupied Palestinian Territory has experienced political instability and a series of violent conflicts over the last decades, including the second intifada during 2000–2005, the Fatah-Hamas conflict in 2007–2008, and wars in Gaza in 2008–2009, 2012, and 2014.

The 2007 victory of Hamas in legislative elections, and the rejection of that result by the international community, led to the division of the territory between the Fatah-led (PA) West Bank and the Hamas-led Gaza Strip. Since their political and administrative separation in 2007, Hamas and Fatah have engaged in a series of unsuccessful negotiations in order to reconcile their political differences. Hamas' designation as a terrorist organisation by much of the international community, including the European Union, compromises the possibilities of external actors to facilitate the intra-Palestinian reconciliation process. The Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) has not convened since 2007.

In addition to the impact of the violent Hamas takeover and ensuing Israeli measures imposed in 2007, three rounds of armed hostilities took place in 2008, in 2012 and in 2014. According to the United Nations (UN 2017) in these hostilities more than 3,800 Palestinians were killed and altogether 24,000 homes were damaged or destroyed. According to OCHA (UN-OCHA 2014) at the height of hostilities, the number of IDP's reached 500,000, or 28 per cent of the population in Gaza.

As a result, the past years have been focused mainly on the reconstruction of conflict-damages, drawing attention away from the desperate needs that Gaza faced even before the conflict in 2014. The conduct of the hostilities by both sides has also raised serious concerns about the protection of civilians and respect for international humanitarian law, including of the principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution in attack. (UN 2017).

Furthermore, the Israeli closures continue to impact the daily lives of two million people living in Gaza, undermining the prospects for sustainable development, and impeding effective delivery of humanitarian and development assistance (UN-OCHA 2019). In 2018, the US government announced freeze of US 305 million to UNRWA funds. This, together with the other crisis in the region have drawn funding and attention of global world from the Palestinian situation.

The World Bank Harmonized List of Fragile Situations (World Bank 2019c) does not have a Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (CPIA) score for the oPt (West Bank and Gaza Strip). The UNDP Human Development Index (HDI) value of oPt for 2017 was 0.686 – which

put the country in the medium human development category-positioning it at 119 out of 189 countries and territories (UNDP 2019). Due to a lack of relevant data, the Gender Inequality Index (GII) is not available.

2.2 Key features of fragility and main challenges to stability and development

The root cause of fragility is 50 years of occupation. Israeli restrictions and control over 'Area C' and East-Jerusalem, ongoing settlement expansion, the separation wall, demolitions of Palestinian homes and livelihoods, continued expropriation of Palestinian land, Israeli control of Palestinian natural resources and borders, a continuing Israeli blockade of the Gaza Strip and recurrent outbreaks of high levels of violence, are all major impediments to Palestinian governance and economic development. (UN-OCHA 2019).

After nearly 30 years the Oslo process has not led to the envisaged Palestinian statehood, resulting in an ongoing political deadlock. Trust in the process has reduced, coupled with increased disillusionment among the Palestinian population. The current Israeli-Palestinian political situation remains deadlocked. Cautious optimism that existed around a possible new United States (US) initiative has evaporated after the US Government decisions including movement of the US Embassy to Jerusalem; the recognition of the Golan Heights as part of Israeli territory; and reduced funding to the Palestinian Authority, UNRWA and US NGOs operating in the oPt (MFA 2019b).

In 2011, the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) assessed that the Palestinian Authority (PA) had reached a level where its institutions are capable of assuming the government responsibilities of a state (World Bank 2011). However, the PA faces serious budgetary, fiscal and accountability challenges, including limited control over its income, which is mostly used to pay the salaries of civil servants (MFA 2019b). The PA also suffers also from a serious democratic deficit. Presidential elections were last held in 2005 and legislative elections in 2006 (MFA 2019b). According to MFA's own internal documentation, most Palestinians feel alienated by their political leaders and consider most of them to be corrupt (MFA 2019b). A citizen-centred approach – while embraced in the Palestinian National Policy Agenda (2017–2022) – is not yet being fully materialized on the ground. In the absence of a solution to the conflict, oPt has become deeply dependent on development aid and on humanitarian assistance.

Israeli restrictions and control over 'Area C' and East-Jerusalem, ongoing settlement expansion, the separation wall, demolitions of Palestinian homes and livelihoods, continued expropriation of Palestinian land, Israeli control of Palestinian natural resources and borders, a continuing Israeli blockade of the Gaza Strip and recurrent outbreaks of high levels of violence, are all major impediments to Palestinian governance and economic development. (UN-OCHA 2019). A lack of access has constrained a weakened private sector in stimulating the West Bank economy and contributing to wealth creation.

In Gaza, the economy has de-industrialized, eroding the productive base and human capital. Conditions have led to an effective state of 'de-development' in the Gaza Strip. According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (https://www.pcbs.gov.ps) poverty rates in Gaza have increased dramatically from 2011–2017, rising from 38.8 to 53 percent.

According to the 2017 census the total population in the oPt is 4,9 million, of which 3 million reside in the West Bank including East Jerusalem and Area C; and 1.9 million in Gaza.[1] Different

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[1] A note on terminology: It is noted that the MFA uses the term occupied Palestinian territory (oPt), EU uses term Palestine (see e.g. https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/final_-_european_joint_strategy_english.pdf) and the World Bank and OECD refer in their documentation to West Bank and Gaza Strip. UN agencies use the term State of Palestine. see e.g. http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr_theme/country-notes/PSE.pdf

governance arrangements per area: Area A, is fully governed by the PA; Area B has shared control; Area C (over 60 percent of the West Bank) is under exclusive Israeli control. Some 611,000 Israelis currently live in settlements, two thirds of them in Area C and one third in East Jerusalem (UN-OCHA).

The 2007 victory of Hamas in legislative elections, and the rejection of that result by the international community, led to the division of the territory between the Fatah-led (PA) West Bank and the Hamas-led Gaza Strip. The Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) has not convened since 2007. Since their political and administrative separation in 2007, Hamas and Fatah have engaged in a series of unsuccessful negotiations in order to reconcile their political differences. Hamas' designation as a terrorist organisation by much of the international community, including the European Union, compromises the possibilities of external actors to facilitate the intra-Palestinian reconciliation process.

According to the World Bank (2019b) the Palestinian economy has not witnessed any real growth during past years, due to a steep deterioration in Gaza and a slowdown in the West Bank. Around 24 percent of Palestinians lived below the US$5.5 day poverty line in 2016/17 (latest available data). The gap between the West Bank and Gaza increased substantially in 2016/17 with 46 percent of the population below the US$5.5 poverty line in Gaza, compared to 9 percent in the West Bank. The unemployment rate was 31 percent in 2018 – with 52 percent of Gaza's labour force unemployed, including two out of every three youth. The West Bank and Gaza ranked 116th out of 190 economies in the 2019 "Doing Business report".

Gaza's economy has been kept afloat in recent years, despite its economic isolation, by large transfers of donor aid and spending through the budget of the PA, both of which amounted to 70–80 percent of Gaza's GDP. However, these two sources have significantly declined during the last two years pushing Gaza into a recession, reflecting large fiscal multipliers in a mostly closed economy operating far below potential. (World Bank 2019a).

The Palestinian Authority (PA) acceded to seven of nine core human rights treaties and one of the substantive protocols in April 2014, which all have come into force[2]. Notwithstanding these commitments, there are continued reports and documentation of human rights violations by both Hamas and the Palestinian Authority security forces and also concerns over the rate of impunity of such acts. (Ekholm & Wallendahl 2014).

MFA's documentation considers that an aid-dependent Palestinian economy and largely controlled by Israel is on both accounts unsustainable (MFA, 2019b). The current contextual constraints – Israeli occupation, Palestinian political divisions, short term international assistance and lack of progress in the peace process – present a highly complex operating environment for external actors. These contextual constraints and lack of progress pose increasingly a dilemma for the international aid community and a growing realization that the current assistance modalities and broader engagement are not able to reach the desired changes at both the political and development level. (AIDA 2018; MFA 2019b). The complexities and challenges of development under occupation and the need to address the structural drivers of vulnerability and control over resources (AIDA 2018) are key features of the development paradigm in oPt.

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[2] The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD), the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in armed conflict (CRC-OPAC).

Key factors exacerbating the current instability are as follows:

- The current Israeli-Palestinian political situation remains deadlocked which impedes a resolution to the conflict and for the Palestinian population to control its own development path.

- The continued political divide between the PA and de-facto Gaza government, as well as the postponement of 2016 local elections, means that the Gaza Strip remains without an elected government, raising risks of increased frustration and protests (non-violent and violent);

- The youth bulge, with 42% youth unemployment, reaching 58% in the Gaza Strip, and low GDP, raise the potential for even more serious economic problems. Without lifting of the Gaza strip blockade, resolving access and control over resources a viable economy is not achievable and add to the risk of further conflict escalation. (World Bank 2019a)

- Children aged 0–14 represent approximately 40% of the total population, placing a strain on the government's ability to provide adequate health care and education for its population (UNICEF 2018a).

- Gaza's heavy dependence on government and non-government assistance makes the Gazan population vulnerable to sudden declines in aid, such as those form the US government (79 per cent of the population of Gaza had access to social assistance in 2018 (compared to 15% in the West Bank) (UNRWA 2018).

2.3 Relevant national strategies, plans and programmes

Since 2011 the Palestinian Authority has developed three national plans.[3] These plans are based on a the two-state solution and international legitimacy, aiming for the establishment of a sovereign and independent Palestinian state.

The 2014–2016 plan aimed to continue the institution building process, achieve financial stability, improve effective state functions and develop capacities to deliver equitable, public services; promote social justice, taking into account the different needs and social conditions of various groups. It focused on the following sectors as a priority: Economic development and employment sector, good governance and institution building, social protection and development sector and infrastructure sector. It also highlighted the government's commitments regarding East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip, including the Strategic Multi Sector Development Plan for East Jerusalem (SMDP), which has been in place since 2011.

The current National Policy Agenda 2017–2022 (NPA) "Putting Citizens First" seeks to achieve Palestinian national unity, economic independence, social justice and rule of law, and the end of the occupation and realization of Palestinian independence. This Agenda is built pm three pillars: Path to Independence (Pillar 1), 'Government Reform' (Pillar 2) and 'Sustainable Development' (Pillar 3) which addresses Economic Independence, Social Justice and Rule of Law, Quality Education for All, Quality Health Care for All and Resilient Communities. The National Policy Agenda is meant to cover all geographical areas including East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip. However, in practice, Hamas as the de-facto government of the Gaza Strip has developed its own sectoral strategies and revised 2017 charter outlining its general principles and policies.

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[3] The Palestinian Reform and Development Plan 2018–2020; the National Development Plan: State-Building to Sovereignty 2014–2016; and the National Development Plan: Establishing the State, Building Our Future 2011–2013.

2.4   Donor policies and aid architecture

The oPt aid coordination structure was renewed in 2017. The new structure is now aligned with the National Priorities of the Palestinian National Development Plan and the NPA. It consists of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee (AHLC), Open Development Forum (ODF), Donor Advisory Group of Heads of Mission and Joint Liaison Committee (LVG) at international level and local level structures and 15 Sector working groups linked to National Priorities. However, it is not fully implemented in practice. The education sector is probably the most well-organized sector in oPt – often referred to as an example for other sectors (World Bank 2016a).

Development assistance to oPt has declined over the evaluation period 2012–2018. According to the April 2019 Economic Monitoring Report submitted to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee (World Bank 2019a), aid received in 2018 was in total US$676 million (US$516 million in budget support, and US$160 million for development financing), resulting in a financing gap of around US$400 million. Aid received in 2018 was 6 percent lower than in 2017. In calendar year 2018, following the reductions in US support, the EU became the biggest donor to the oPt, followed by Germany, the Islamic Development Bank, United Arab Emirates, Norway, Sweden, United Kingdom and Japan (Figure 1) (OECD 2018).

Figure 1: Top ten donors of Gross ODA for West Bank and Gaza Strip, 2016–2017, average (USD million)
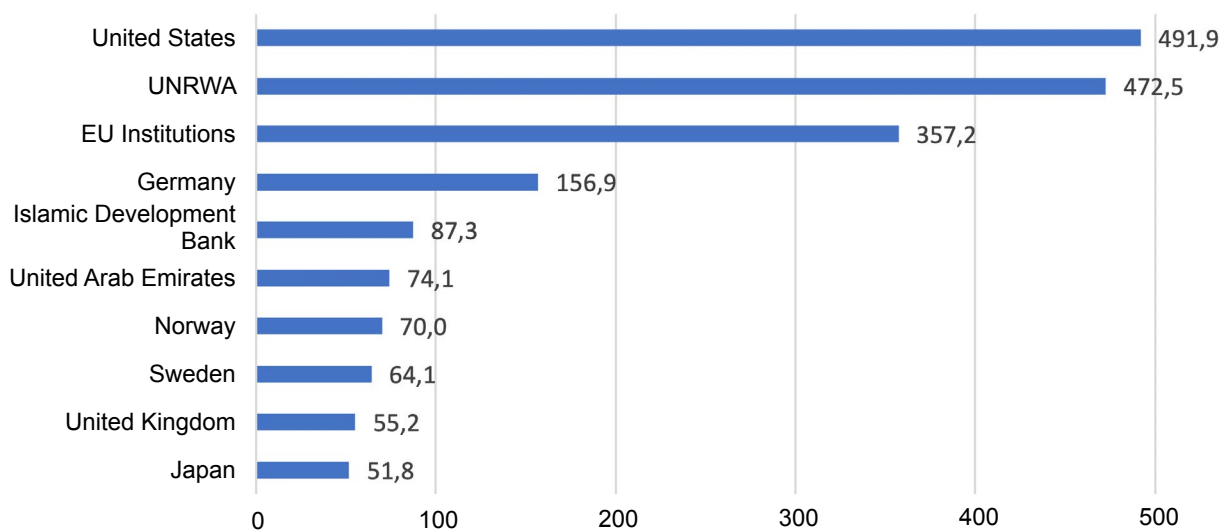
Source: OECD 2019

According to the MoF interview, during the evaluation period, the PA undertook substantial PFM reforms to decrease reliance on donor financing of the recurrent budget, and succeeded in reducing the budget deficit from 25% to 4% of GDP, while also reducing arrears to the private sector from US$ 700 million to US$ 250 million. Local revenue during this period doubled from ILS 150 million to ILS 300 million. This increase enabled the government to cover the majority of its recurrent budget (85%) from local sources of revenue. However, the development budget remained largely dependent on donor funding. This despite the fact that self-financed development budget increased from US$ 50 million in 2012/2013 to US$ 250 million in 2018. The situation now is worse, because of Israel's withholding of revenues. Therefore, PA is now in more need than ever for donor financing for both the recurrent and development budget.

3 Evolution of Finland's cooperation in country since 2012

3.1 Overview of Finnish development/humanitarian cooperation in country since 2012

Finland's engagement in development cooperation in oPt is driven by the overall political objective of supporting the peace process and two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (MFA 2016a). Finland's support to Palestinian Authority (PA) since the mid-1990s has been channelled to water, education, and land management sectors. In addition, Finland has provided direct budget support to the PA via the European Union's (EU) European-Palestinian Management and Socio-Economic Help (PEGASE) instrument, through United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), EU Police Mission for the occupied Palestinian territories (EUPOL) and through civil society organisations.

The Country Strategy states that given the present economy and budget cutbacks, Finland will further decrease the number of interventions in the occupied Palestinian territory. This has taken place in 2018, when the support to the water sector through MDTF discontinued and more emphasis was put on the resilience programmes, namely CRDP and West Bank Protection Consortium. Funds are channelled through multilateral organisations. Thus, during the Country Strategy implementation period, Finland has not financed any bilateral projects with the Palestinian Authority, all support is channelled through co-financing mechanisms.

3.2 Policy dialogue emphases

Politically, Finland advocates for a peaceful two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (MFA 2016a). The Country Strategy does not promote policy dialogue in this area, but focuses on building a Palestinian state. The Country Strategy recognizes that the desired results of state building cannot be achieved through development cooperation alone, but that it must be accompanied by effective policy dialogue and influencing. The Country Strategy defines the themes of dialogue and advocacy as follows:

> 'Finland advocates for a peaceful two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This goal is being promoted in regular political dialogue with the Palestinian Authority, emphasising the principles of democracy, rule of law, and the necessity of Palestinian unity. Questions related to the implementation of development cooperation are covered in political as well as in more technical dialogue with the competent authorities'. (MFA 2016).

The Strategy further states that in order to advocate for a peaceful two-state solution to the conflict, and end to Israeli occupation and the blockade of Gaza, and to ensure the sustainability of development cooperation with the Palestinians, it is also necessary for Finland to have dialogue with Israel on the occupied Palestinian territory. This dialogue is both bilateral and multilateral, mainly through the EU. (MFA 2016).

A Plan for Policy Dialogue in Support of Finland's Development Cooperation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory has been developed in 2017. It is structured around the Country Strategy results and sets targets and milestones for policy dialogue linked with the results of the Country Strategy.

Finland has worked as co-chair of the Palestinian Education Sector Working Group in 2017–2018 and in the pre-school Technical Working Group (TWG). Finland also participates in several sector meetings such as JFA donor group meetings, Technical Working Groups for Inclusive Education, Jerusalem, Education in Emergency (EiE) and EU Civil society and Gender working groups, and Social Protection Working group, chaired by UNICEF, just to mention a few.

In 2016, the MFA developed an advocacy Plan for UNRWA (MFA 2016b) for the period 2016–2019. In accordance with the MFA's Humanitarian Aid Policy (MFA 2012), the focus of this advocacy work is on promoting gender equality, promotion of vulnerable groups and improving the situation of people with disabilities. The long-term goal to Finland's thematic influence is that gender equality and mainstreaming of vulnerable groups are mainstreamed in UNRWA's core sectors of education and health, as well as in employment, emergency and social support. Finland has co-chaired the Advisory Committee (AdCom[4]), and contributed to the process of drafting UNRWA resolutions and the Fourth Committee General Assembly discussions.

3.3 Finnish Co-operation beyond the Country Strategy

Finnish funding to oPt flow also through several channels beyond the Country Strategy portfolio. While the Country Strategy is managed by the Unit for the Middle East, the other modalities and funding channels are managed by different MFA Units, including Humanitarian Assistance managed by the Unit for Humanitarian Assistance and Policy and Civilian Peace Building Operations managed by the Unit for General Development Policy. The support to CSOs through framework agreement or project support, in turn, are managed by the Unit for Civil Society. These interventions are described more in detail in the section 3.3 of this report.

3.4 Any key evaluation/review findings to date

A Study on Peace and Development in Finland's Country Programme in Palestinian Territories (Duncan 2014) was conducted as part of a broader evaluation of Finland's support to peace and development in fragile states during the period 2007–2013. This recommended drawing up a country strategy and focusing stronger on gender. The links between civil society initiatives and state building objectives should be strengthened. The MFA was advised to increase in-country staffing to ensure greater programme efficiency.

An 'Analysis to support the Preparation of a Results-based Country Strategy for the occupied Palestinian Territory' (2014) was commissioned by the MFA as part of the Country Strategy development process. Recommendations were made to continue in the education sector and land administration. The analysis also considered that Finland could put more efforts to develop innovative ways to support the marginalized groups (e.g. women, Bedouins, persons with disabilities) in Gaza, area C and in the Seam Zone as well as in East Jerusalem. In the education sector, focus should be put on strengthening the local capacities particularly in the area C.

A third study 'Human rights-based approach to Development – Human Rights situation of the Occupied Palestine Territories' conducted by the MFA Human Right advisers (Ekholm & Wallendahl 2015) concludes that the Country Strategy should ideally be accompanied by a strategy to

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[4] 5 million is the threshold for AdCom membership.

address human rights and international law through political dialogue, not just with the Palestinian Authority but also with Israel. The study also noted that donors should strive to engage in a meaningful dialogue with civil society in the areas of intervention.

A recent evaluation of Local Cooperation Fund (LCF) (Sharia 2019) made recommendations to develop a new FLC policy document and a more focused strategy for the years 2020–2023. This evaluation recommends that LCF should be targeted to strengthening the resilience of Palestinians living in vulnerable areas Gaza, East Jerusalem, and area C especially the Jordan valley as it is under threat of annexation and forcible transfer of the population, and to the following target groups: women, youth, and the elderly. Policy dialogue with CSOs should be strengthened and focused on finding the balance in their engagement between being a watchdog and service providers. The evaluation recommends consolidating the portfolio in a smaller and flexible number of interventions of longer duration.

4 Country strategy in the context

4.1 Overview & key features of the Country Strategy

The Country Strategy is being implemented in the context of one of the world's longest protracted crises. The occupied Palestinian territory is a fragile, high-risk environment suffering from fragmentation of people, area, and political and administrative control as well as democratic deficit (MFA 2016). Delays and hinderances in the implementation may occur due to the deteriorating political and security situation and particularly in the Area C and Gaza. The Country Strategy states that that Finland and the donor community are ready to operate in this reality and with the related contextual risks, considering the risks of 'no development cooperation and funding' to be even higher causing instability, human suffering and losing already achieved results (MFA 2016).

The overall objective of Finland's development cooperation with the Palestinian Authority in the occupied Palestinian territory is to contribute to a peaceful, negotiated two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by supporting Palestinian state-building. The Country Strategy 2016– 2019 for development cooperation in the occupied Palestinian territory is the first of its kind and aims to contribute to the achievement of a democratic, independent, contiguous and viable Palestinian state, living side by side with Israel in peace and security, based on pre-1967 war borders (MFA 2016).

The planned budget frame for 2016–2019 Country Strategy was 22 million euros, with this financing only applying to the bilateral development under the Country Strategy. It does not include humanitarian aid, private sector instruments or contributions to Finnish NGOs (MFA 2017).

Figure 2: Planned budget allocation 2016–2019

- Education (69%)
- Vulnerable area: Gaza (11%)
- Vulnerable areas: Area C and East Jerusalem (16%)
- Local cooperation funds (2%)
- Programme planning funds (2%)
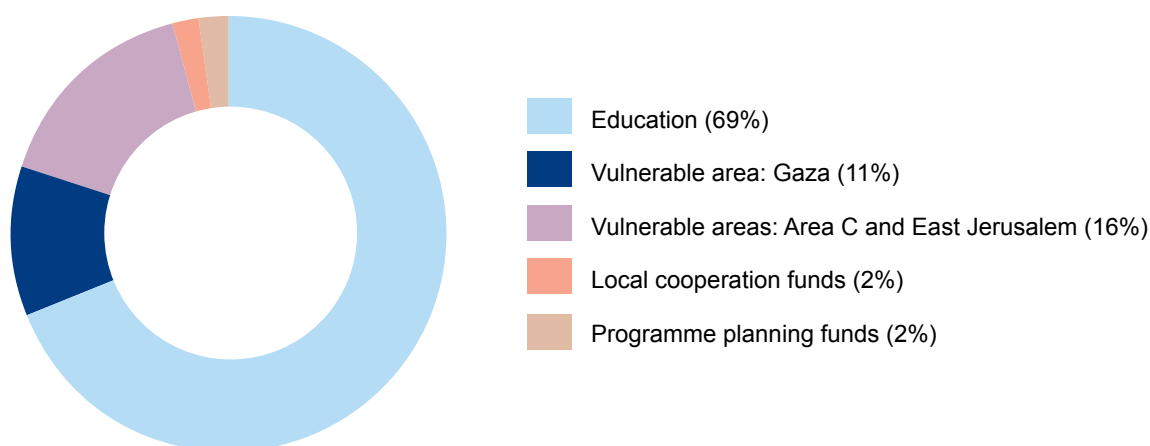
Source: MFA (2016)

The Country Strategy concentrates on two impact areas: 1) Palestinian children's right to equitable and quality education enhanced, and 2) strengthened resilience of Palestinians living in vulnerable areas (Area C, Gaza, East Jerusalem), which are aligned with the PA's National Policy Agenda (NPA). Table summarizes the expected results of the oPt Country Strategy 2016–2019 (MFA, 2016).

Table 1: Results of the Country Strategy 2016–2019

OUTPUT	OUTCOME	IMPACT
1.1.1. Learning and teaching enabling conditions improved.	1.1. Improved quality of education	1. Palestinian children's right to equitable and quality education enhanced.
1.2.1. Expanded and enhanced pre-school education	1.2. Improved educational equality	
2.1.1. Rehabilitated existing and damaged water and wastewater systems in Gaza	2.1. Improved water supply and wastewater services in Gaza	2. Strengthened resilience of Palestinians living in vulnerable areas (Area C, Gaza, East Jerusalem)
2.1.2. Enhanced capacity of the Coastal Municipalities Water Utility (CMWU) to sustain water and wastewater services.	2.2. Strengthened livelihoods and living conditions for Palestinians living in Area C and East Jerusalem	
2.2.1. Communities in Area C strengthened through financing of local development projects		
2.2.2. Women's economic opportunities and livelihoods supported in Area C		

4.2   Key features of the Country Portfolio

According to data provided by MFA (2019), a total number of 205 individual disbursements have been made between 2012 and 2018 Disbursement to different aid modalities has remained relatively stable over the years, apart from disbursements to Finnish NGOs, which reduced significantly from 22 disbursements in 2015 to 6 disbursement in 2018. Figure 3 shows the number of disbursements by year and modality.

Figure 3: Number of disbursements by year and aid modality
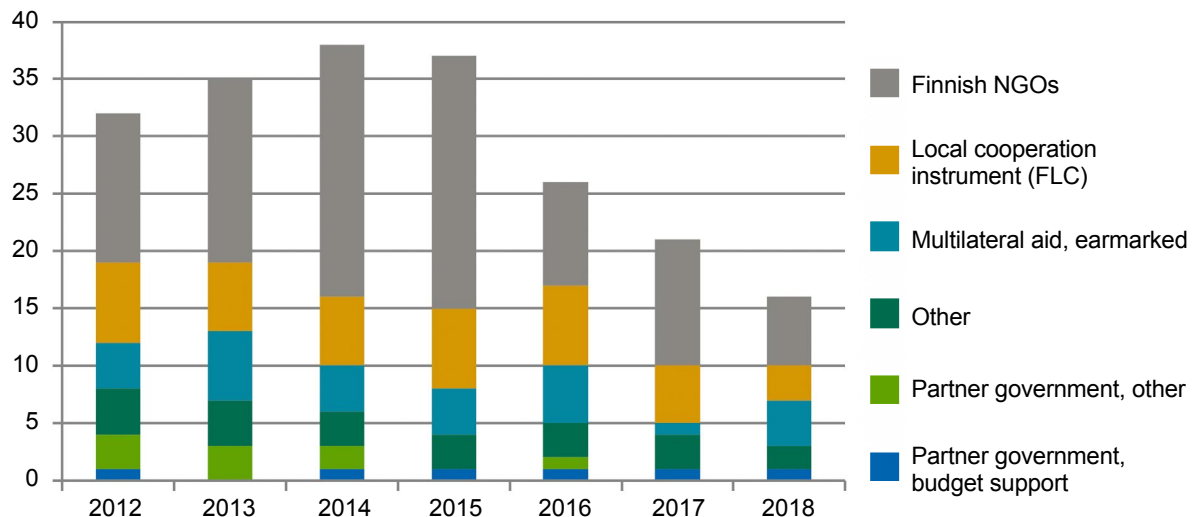
From 2012 to 2018 disbursement reached EUR 66,38 million. During 2012–2015 the annual disbursement was on average EUR 11,43 million, being highest in 2015 (EUR 12,09 million), then dropping to EUR 4,55 million in 2017. During 2012–2018, Finnish support was channelled to water, education, and land administration sectors. Disbursement by Sector is elaborated in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Disbursement by Sector and year (EUR '000)
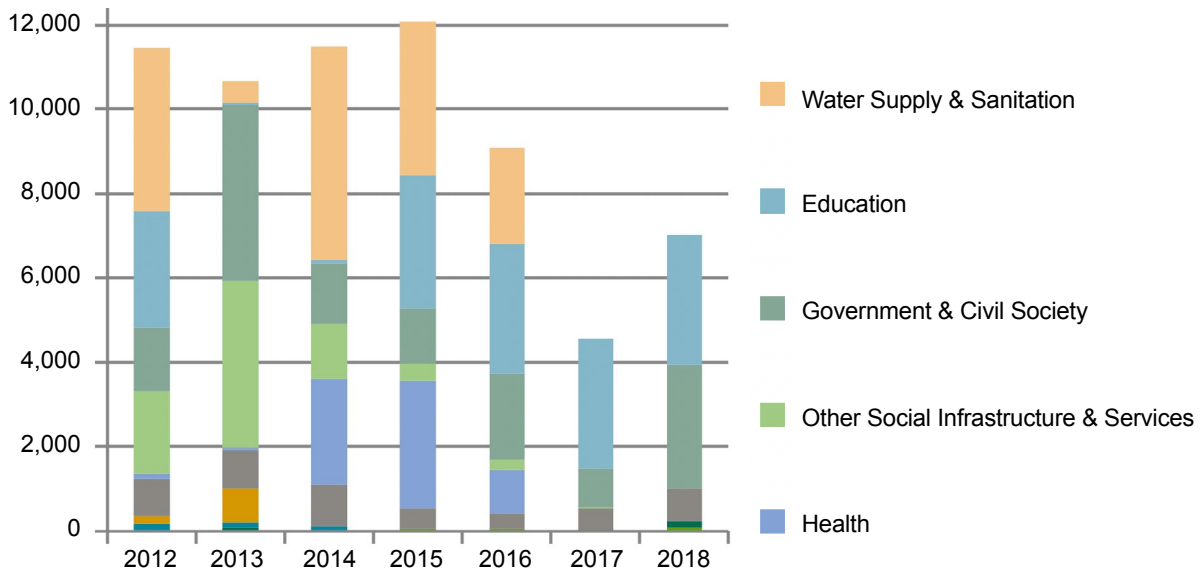
Disbursement by sector is illustrated un the Figure 5.

Figure 5: Disbursement by sector
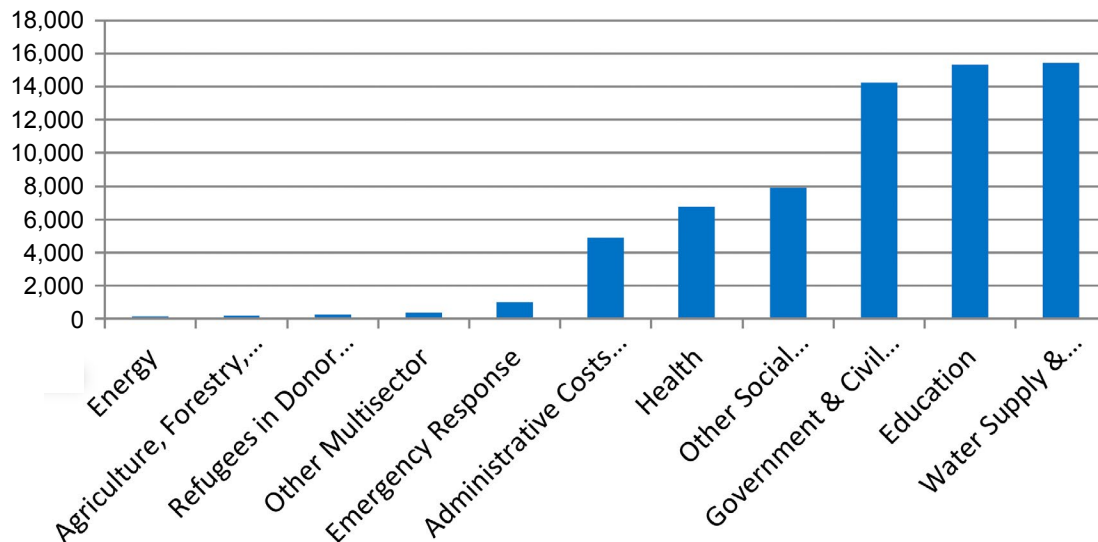
Figure 6 shows the disbursement by aid modality and year. Overall, during 2012–2018, the highest disbursement has been channelled to multilateral aid (EUR 33,60 million), followed by budget support (EUR 14,7 million). Disbursements to FNGOs were EUR 1,03 million until 2016, and then dropping to EUR 0,41 million in 2016. Budget support remained stable over the years (except 2013 and 2014 when budget support was not provided). A significant decrease in disbursement occurred in all aid modalities in 2017.

Figure 6: Disbursement by aid modality and year (EUR '000)
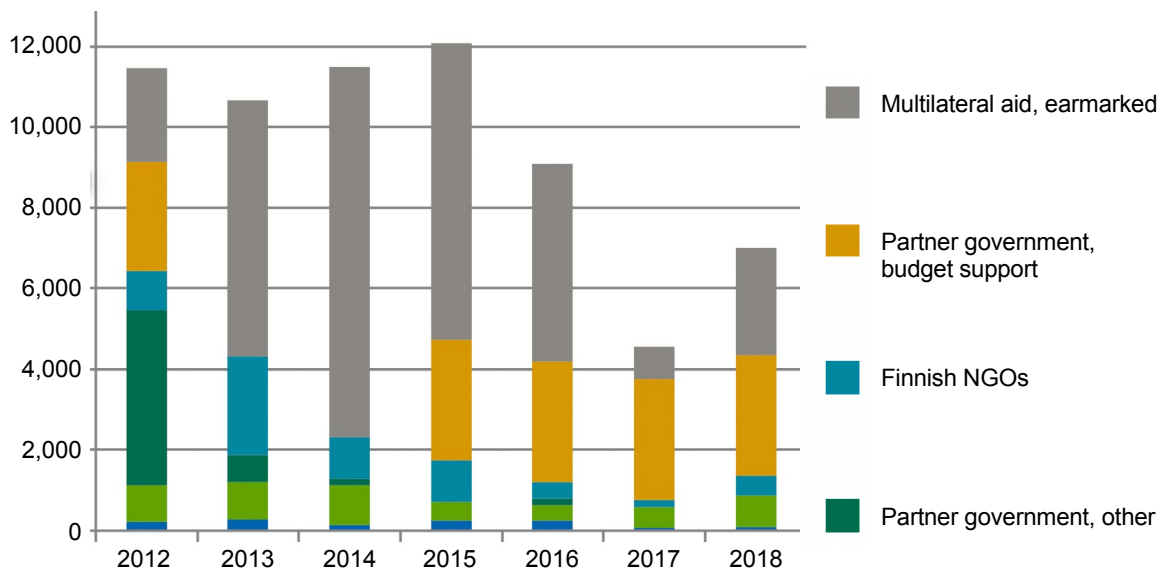
Source: Evaluation team, applying MFA data (2019)

Earmarked multilateral aid accounted for 51 percent of Finnish aid expenditures from 2012–2018. Budget support (through EU Pegase mechanisms) accounted 19 percent and support to Finnish NGOs (through programme-based support and project-based support) 12 percent. Funds for local cooperation provided 2 percent of total funding.

4.3   Description of Key Interventions in the portfolio

4.3.1 Interventions within the Country Strategy portfolio

Education. Finland has supported the education sector since 1997, first through bilateral projects, and from 2010 through sector support to the Palestinian Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE). Finland, Ireland, Norway and German Development Bank, KfW, acting on account of Germany signed in 2010 a Joint Financing Arrangement (JFA) with PA in support of the implementation of the five-year strategic Education Sector Development Plan (EDSP). Belgium joined the Joint Funding partners later. According to MFA statistics Finland's funding amounts to 12,4 million EUR during the assessment period (MFA 2019). Finland's support represented approximately 17% of JFA funding, but the proportional share has increased after Belgium left the JFA in 2018.

In addition to JFA, within the Country Strategy the other support to the education sector within the Country Strategy portfolio includes:

• Financial contribution to cover teachers' salaries and pensions through the EU's Pegase mechanism (direct financial assistance to the Palestinian Authority).

• Support to UNICEF's project on reducing violence in schools and pre-schools and improving the coordination of education, protection and humanitarian response in vulnerable areas. Finland's contribution (100% of the project budget) is 1 million euros 2016–2018.

Finnish support to education sector programmes outside the Country Strategy includes:

- Higher Education Institutions Institutional Cooperation (HEI-ICI) project 'Leading Innovative Teaching in Higher Education (LITE)' implemented by DIAK University of Applied Sciences in collaboration with the Bethlehem University.

- Higher Education Institutions Institutional Cooperation (HEI-ICI) project 'Online Training of Trainers: Initiative to Develop Pedagogical Practices in Palestinian Higher Education (eTraining Finpal)' implemented by Faculty of Education of the University of Tampere (UTA) and Islamic University of Gaza (IUG).

- CSO projects focusing on Early Childhood Education (FS), Vocational education (Abilis), pre-school education (FS) and Primary Education (FELM and FCA) and through "Teachers without Borders" (FCA).

Water: Finland has supported the water sector since 1995. Finnish funding to water sector was 15, 4 million EUR during the period of study. The project Construction and Rehabilitation of Water Infrastructure Networks in Northwest Villages of Jerusalem began in 2010 with the objective of repairing infrastructure in order to provide villages with a reliable supply of clean and safe water and, thereby, improve the quality of life, socioeconomic situation and health status of the residents of the project areas. This project was closed in autumn 2014 and Finland continued supporting water sector through World Bank managed Multi Donor Trust Fund (MDTF), which enabled access to Gaza. The overall objective for the Trust Fund is to improve the coverage, quality, and sustainability of infrastructure in the West Bank and Gaza through financial and technical assistance to the Palestinian Authority for infrastructure development and related capacity building and institutional development. At the time of this evaluation Finland has made a decision to withdraw from the water sector and focus on are C.

Peace building: During 2016–2018 Finland has financed peace building activities of the Palestinian Peace Coalition – Geneva Initiative through a bilateral agreement. The objective of the Geneva Peace initiative is to raise awareness, change attitudes and build capacity to advance a peaceful solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and advance the prospects of a two-state solution between Israel and the Palestinians. The Palestinian Peace Coalition – Geneva Initiative is an NGO, which cooperates with its Israeli counterpart.

Land administration: Finland has been involved in a multi-bi project in the land sector since 1997, initially in Gaza. Since 2005, Finland supported the development of the Palestinian Land Authority (PLA), property registration and land policy and legislation reform through single donor trust fund', managed by the WB. The bilateral support to the land sector/PLA was phased out at the time when the Country Strategy was developed.

Local Cooperation Funds: The Fund for Local Cooperation (FLC) is funding initiatives of Palestinian CSOs. It is managed by the Finnish Representation Office. During period 2012–2016 the focus was on human development for a continued Palestinian presence in East Jerusalem and Area C, human rights and accountability, strengthening participation of marginalised groups in Palestinian society and fostering peace dialogue and conflict resolution. For 2016–2019 had a specific objective for enhancing the rights and status of women in the West Bank, in particular through improved awareness and empowerment to advance women's rights; improving women's economic opportunities improved and increasing support to the victims of GBV. A similar setup exists within the Finnish Embassy in Tel Aviv to support local CSOs' initiatives associated with the Palestinians, mainly peace dialogue and human rights monitoring interventions. The following Table 2 summarises the main interventions by Impact Area.

Table 2: Interventions by Impact area

IMPACT	Main interventions and funding modality
1. Palestinian children's right to equitable and quality education enhanced.	Education Sector Support V Joint financing arrangement (JFA)
	UNICEF – Non violence in school and child protection
	Payment of salaries and pensions of public servants (mostly teachers and doctors) through the EU Pegase mechanism; support to cash transfers programme for low income households through Pegase (2018 contribution)
2. Strengthened resilience of Palestinians living in vulnerable areas (Area C, Gaza, East Jerusalem)	UNDP's CRDP programme
	West Bank Protection Consortium
	The World Bank's Partnership for Infrastructure Development Multi-Donor Trust Fund
	Support to East Jerusalem hospitals through EU's Pegase mechanism.

4.3.2 Description of Interventions beyond the Country Strategy

Humanitarian assistance is provided through core funding to UNRWA, the UN agency responsible for providing assistance and protection to Palestine refugees, through FCA and Red Cross society. According to data provided by MFA, the annual contribution to UNRWA has been 4,5 million EUR in addition to emergency funding provided during Gaza crisis. Program budget contribution increased from EUR 4.5 million in 2014 to EUR 5 million in 2019. In 2018 Finland was ranked 27th among donors contributing to UNRWA's core program budget. Last emergency appeal was provided in 2014 as response to the Gaza war. According to the MFA data (MFA 2019), Finland provided Humanitarian Aid through UNRWA, FCA and Red Cross society as follows (Table 3):

Table 3: Humanitarian aid to oPt 2012–2018

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
UNRWA (core funding)	4,5	4,5	4,5	4,5	4,5	4,5	4,5
UNRWA (Gazan crisis)			0,5	1			
FCA	0,2	0,31	0,35				
ICRC		0,5	1,5				
Humanitarian funding total	4,7	5,31	6,85	5,5	4,5	4,5	4,5

Source: Evaluation team, applying MFA data (2019)

Finland participates in the EU's civilian crisis management missions. Finland sends experts to the EU Police Mission for the occupied Palestinian territories, which started in 2006. The aim of the mission is to contribute to the establishment of sustainable and effective policing arrangements and to advise Palestinian counterparts on criminal justice and rule of law. EUPOL COPPS is the European Union Co-ordinating Office for Palestinian Police Support.

During 2016–2018 Finland has financed through a bilateral agreement a CSO project of the Palestinian Peace Coalition – Geneva Initiative. The objective of this project is to raise awareness, change attitudes and build capacity to advance a peaceful solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and prospects of a two-state solution between Israel and the Palestinians. The Palestinian Peace Coalition – Geneva Initiative is an NGO, which cooperates with its Israeli counterpart.

During the evaluation period 2012–2018, the MFA (KEO-30) has financed work of Finnish CSOs through two channels: Through programme-based CSO support based on a framework agreement and project funding to CSO projects implemented by Finnish CSOs with their Palestinian partners.

During 2012–2018, six Finnish partner organisations receiving multiannual programme-based support were active in the oPt. These CSOs are: Crisis Management Initiative (CMI), Disabilitypartnership, Finn Church Aid (FCA), the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission (FELM) and FIDA International, Frikyrklig samverkan FS rf. (FS). According to data received from MFA (MFA 2019), CMI and FCA have received the highest share of Finnish ODA funding during period 2012–2018. (See Table 5). The programme-based main interventions have focused on education (FELM, FS), Democratic participation (Disabilitypartnership, FIDA), Peace-building, conflict prevention and resolution (CMI), and Human Rights (FELM). FCA has supported implementation of projects in various domains, including agricultural development, democratic participation and civil society, culture and recreation, Human Rights, civilian peace-building, conflict prevention and resolution and basic life skills for youth and adults.

Table 4: Civil Society Organisations receiving programme-based support for oPt

CSO	Years active in oPt	Funding 2012–2018 EUR	Sector
Crisis Management Initiative (CMI)	2011–2016	1,77 million	Civilian peace-building, conflict prevention and resolution
Finn Church Aid (FCA)	2012–cont.	0,72 million	Multiple
Disabilitypartnership	2014–2015	0, 28 million	Democratic participation and civil society
FIDA International	2007–2016	0,27 million	Democratic participation and civil society
FELM	2010–2015	0,15 million	Education, Human Rights
Frikyrklig samverkan FS rf	2009–2016	0,11 million	Education (ECE)

Source: MFA 2019

During the period 2012–2018, MFA has provided project funding to six Finnish CSOs and two development foundations. The CSOs which have received this funding are the Finnish-Arab Friendship Society (2005–2013), Finnish Psychologists for Social Responsibility (2008–2015); Youth Development Association (2011–2013), Finnish Foundation for Media and Development (2012–2015), the Evangelical Free Church of Finland (2013–2014), and Finnish Lifelong Learning Foundation (2014–2016, continues 2019–2020). The CSO projects have focused on human rights, media, democratic participation, health education and medical services (rehabilitation and prevention of war trauma). The development foundations have implemented projects in employment generation (ABILIS foundation 2014–2015[5]) and solar energy (Siemenpuu 2017).

The number of Finnish CSOs active in oPt has reduced significantly during 2012–2018. In 2014, a total number of 11 Finnish NGOs (including five partnership organizations) were implementing 16 projects in oPt (Venäläinen and Sharia 2014). Currently only three Finnish CSOs are active in oPt: FCA and CMI have funding till 2021 and the Finnish Lifelong Learning Foundation continues its media education project in 2020. FCA supports vulnerable children in East Jerusalem through a project implemented by the Palestinian Counselling Centre (PCC).

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[5] Abilis Foundation funds projects that are planned, implemented, reported and monitored by Persons with Disabilities through their Organizations.

In 2018 the FCA seconded Finnish teachers to support FCA's project "Improved inclusive quality education and wellbeing of the most marginalized Palestinian children" through its Teachers without Borders -programme[6]. FCA also supports an International Human Rights observer programme EAPPI – programme (Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel[7]). The EAPPI programme seeks to ensure that human rights and international humanitarian treaties are respected in the area. Finland has seconded annually 12–14 observes who provide support for securing the schooling of children in sensitive areas.

4.4 Results management and reporting

The Country Strategy reporting is based on a results framework which built around the two impact areas: (1) Quality and equality of education and (2) Resilience. For both impact areas, specific outcomes are defined, with related outputs and monitoring indicators. For education, the indicators and related baselines (2014/2016) are drawn from the EDSP and the monitoring system of the Impact area 2 is built on the results of the MDTF and CRDP. Also monitoring and reporting are based on the data provided by the implementing organisations. However, many indicators lack baselines and target values. The indicators have been revised and new indicators for resilience have been added in 2019.

Assumptions and risk analysis are included in the Country Strategy. The Country Strategy risk management section identifies a number of contextual, institutional and programmatic risks. The risk matrix was updated in 2018, with more specific information about contextual factors. The Risk Matrix does not indicate references on how the likelihood and impact has been assessed.

According to the Country Strategy synthesis report (MFA 2016) results data was available for 73% output indicators. While Finland aims to strengthen the state building through institutional capacity development, no related indicators have been included in the RF. The stakeholders had opinions that the indicators of the interventions are not suitable to track the realisation of the state building or resilience objectives.

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[6] https://www.opettajatilmanrajoja.fi/en/becomeavolunteer/teachers-abroad/
[7] https://eappi.org/en

5 Key findings

5.1 Relevance

5.1.1 Alignment with fragility

The Country Strategy makes a reference to the main fragility factors in oPt: Israeli occupation, Palestinian political division, and lack of progress in the peace process which present a highly complex operating environment for external actors. However, fragility aspects specifically related to Gaza, Area C, West Bank and East Jerusalem are not elaborated in detail in the Strategy. The Country Strategy also states clearly that the development goals in oPt cannot be achieved without a political solution for occupation.

Country Strategy is built on sound understanding of the fragility situation in the oPt, although fragility assessments were not conducted. The Country Strategy preparation was guided by a background document on state building prepared by MFA Advisor in collaboration with the Representation Office staff[8] (MFA 2015) and three studies (see section 3.4.). Particularly the Human Rights assessment conducted by MFA's Human Rights advisers (Ekholm and Wallendahl 2015) pointed out fragility aspects related to human rights and international law. These studies, however were not highlighted in the Country Strategy, but it kept a neutral tone in terms of root causes of fragility, namely occupation and internal challenges. The Strategy also did not make use of fragility assessments by other organisations[9] neither of the MFA guide 'Finland's Development Policy and Development Cooperation in Fragile States' (2014). This guide was not known to the MFA staff engaged in the Country Strategy development and it has not been used during the design, neither as a reference during implementation and monitoring and reporting.

Context analysis is included in the project documents of the main interventions (EDSP, MDTF, PEGASE, and UNICEF) of the Country Strategy portfolio: The projects. The CSO projects, analysed as part of this study (including CSO projects financed bilaterally by the MFA, such as Palestine Peace Coalition and LCF projects) in turn, had limited context or fragility analyses, similarly like the Land Administration project LAP II, which was closed prior the Country Strategy period. The Completion Report of LAP II (Shepard 2016) indicates that " LAP II planning didn't take into account the conflict context and vulnerabilities and that the PAD would have benefitted from a more thorough analysis especially on the power struggles as well as the dynamics of the Israeli occupation and clear assessment of these as part of the operational risk assessment ".

The strategic priorities of the Country Strategy were agreed with the Palestinian Authority. According to the MFA and PA interviews, a MFA delegation discussed development priorities with the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) and Ramallah-based government ministries (MoEHE, and MOP), these consultations were held to ensure coherence with national planning. There was an overall agreement on the priority sectors, confirmed by the PMO. Implementing agencies, development partners, CSO organisations were not engaged in the actual Strategy planning process, but they were consulted during the pre-planning phase (see Venäläinen and Sharia

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8 State building in oPt developed by the MFA Advisor together with the Representation Office staff, MFA 2015.
9 Such as Common Country Analysis. Leave No One Behind: A Perspective on Vulnerability and Structural Disadvantage in Palestine (2016) UN Country Team, occupied Palestinian territory

2014). Gaza was not directly engaged in the Country Strategy development, due to the political situation. According to MFA officers, only limited internal consultations between MFA departments took place. The drafting of the Strategy was a lengthy process done mainly by the MFA Head Quarters in Helsinki, with contributions from the Representation Office.

Finland channels funds through multi-donor agencies and programmes. These channels (MDTF, UNICEF, PEGASE, JFA) are also appropriate means to reach Gaza and for risk sharing. Use of multilateral channels is supported by the PA as it reduces the number of interventions. The stakeholders also consider that participation in the multi donor financing arrangements gives more space for policy influence.

5.1.2 Alignment to beneficiary needs

The Country Strategy does not include an overall beneficiary needs analysis. It relies on the analysis made by the implementing agencies. For instance, several technical studies have been conducted in preparation of the EDSP also including Gaza such as School Profile projections, training needs analysis for administration staff in the Ministry, general administrative analysis (MoEHE 2016). The Project Appraisal Document of the MDTF (World Bank 2015) has an analysis of the water sector and institutional challenges and the programme is targeting interventions using vulnerability criteria. However, gender was not systematically addressed (World Bank 2017). Surprisingly, the UNICEF programme does not have vulnerability analysis neither sex-disaggregated data on the beneficiary population (UNICEF 2018b). With regards to CSO and CRDP projects, specific needs analyses were not found.

Disaggregation of needs by vulnerability categories is lacking in the Country Strategy. Specific groups of beneficiaries (women, persons with disabilities women, vulnerable groups and children, Area C and East Jerusalem residents, Gaza population) are however, mentioned, but their specific needs are not clearly articulated, neither gender or vulnerability analyses are referred to. Similarly, while the Strategy focuses on institutional capacity building, the Country Strategy itself, neither the programme documentation apart from the abovementioned MDTF makes a reference to capacity assessments of PA institutions as part of the state building agenda.

The Country Strategy also lacks analysis of the needs of the refugees residing in the refugee camps which are considered one of the most vulnerable population groups in the oPt. Outside the Strategy's portfolio, Finland supports UNRWA which provides access to basic services to 2.2 million registered Palestine refugees in West Bank and Gaza. Support to UNRWA is seen by the PA as an urgent priority both from a humanitarian and a political perspective, particularly in the aftermath of the decision of the US administration to stop funding to the organization and the mounting political pressure the agency is facing. All the main interventions operating in Gaza (MDTF, PEGASE, UNICEF) are targeted to refugees as according to UNRWA10 73% of Gaza population comprises refugees, while the West Bank is home to nearly 775,000 registered refugees, around a quarter of whom live in 19 camps.

The LCF focuses on marginalised and women but, it remains unclear on what basis the strategic priorities for the multiannual LCF plans have been selected and how the beneficiary needs are identified. The Country Strategy states that Finland supports local NGO projects that enhance the rights and status of women. Special emphasis is on improving women's economic opportunities and on supporting victims of gender-based violence. While the LCF plan 2012–2015 focused on 'Participation of marginalised groups in Palestinian society is strengthened' the most recent Plan 2016–2019 aims at enhancing specifically the rights and status of women in the West Bank, through a) improving awareness and empowerment to advance women's rights, b) improving

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10 https://www.unrwa.org/where-we-work/gaza-strip, Figures as of 1st January 2018.

Women's economic opportunities, and increasing support to the victims of Gender-based Violence (GBV). Projects implemented by five local CSOs are supported. The recent evaluation of the LCF (Sharia 2019) noted that Gaza was almost neglected from the FLC allocations and recommended that regardless of the difficulties in accessing Gaza and in managing interventions there, special attention should be given to them that will help in protecting the public space there. In addition, the FLC should find a way to continue in East Jerusalem and to support grassroots initiative or CBOs.

5.1.3 Alignment to key national stakeholder needs

The Country Strategy is well in line with the priorities of the National Development Plan 2014–2016 and the National Policy Agenda 2017–2022. The National Development Plan (State of Palestine 2014) focuses on the improving effective state functions and developing capacities to deliver equitable, public services and institution building at education, water and land administration sectors. Similar alignment can be found with the priorities if the current National Policy Agenda 2017–2022 (State of Palestine 2016), which addresses Quality Education for All, Quality Health Care for All and Resilient Communities, among other priorities.

The Country Strategy is also aligned with the EU political framework of the 2-state solution, and international commitments. It is in line with the "European Joint Strategy in support of Palestine 2017–2020" supporting Pillar 1 Governance Reform (through PEGASE), Pillar 3 Sustainable Service Delivery (through JFA education). Through supporting Area C, Gaza and East Jerusalem, it supports the approach of the European Joint Strategy to ensure that geographical fragmentation is not further reinforced. (European Union 2016)

Palestinian Authority representatives as well as development partners interviewed consider that Finnish support responds to the PA needs and policies and that education is the flagship of Finnish support to oPt, based on long term partnership and Finland's good reputation in the sector. The PA and stakeholders also consider that addressing Area C and Gaza are key priorities and well in line with the needs of oPt. There were also opinions suggesting that Finland could take a stronger role in Human Rights issues.

PA considers that support to PEGASE is important. This is not only because it provides budget support to the PA, but also because it sends a strong political message that the funding agencies stand behind the state building agenda and is confident of the effectiveness and transparency of the government's programs financed through the mechanisms. EU instruments such as PEGASE are widely viewed by donors as stability instruments.

Finland's engagement with civil society (through the LCF and Finnish NGOs) is broadly in line with the Joint European Roadmap for engagement with Civil Society in Palestine. However, in practice Finland does not support civil society in challenging areas such as defamation (vis a vis NGO Monitor; human rights). The CSOs consulted suggest that Finland should decide how to best use this allocation of funding: for instance, potentially to support a research project, an advocacy publication, or the development of a policy which can then be used to influence the PA. The CSO consultations as well as the evaluation of LCF (Sharia 2019) conclude that Finland should develop more long-term partnerships (minimum of 3-years funding, including core funding) and dialogues with civil society (to feed into Finland's strategy, advocacy, knowledge, etc)

5.1.4 Adaptation over time

Finland has managed to stay relevant, flexible, and adaptable over time. The joining the West Bank Protection Consortium is evidence of Finland's responsiveness to the changes in the context and aiming to address causes of fragility and as a way of responding to emerging needs, but also to respond to the humanitarian-development nexus. Also, the JFA comes with a great degree of flexibility and adaptability. For instance, the JFA partners agreed to waive procurement procedures to expedite the rehabilitation process of 119 schools that sustained damage during the 2014 war. Also, in 2016 the JFA funds were used to provide transport to students in hot spot areas, which enabled these students to access their schools safely. The Country Strategy also showed flexibility by reallocation of support through PEGASE from salaries to civil servants and pensions to East Jerusalem Hospitals when there was a dire need for this support.

5.2 Effectiveness

All interventions supported within the Country Strategy portfolio report about tangible outputs and outcomes, although the MFA reports (MFA, 2019) that that the effectiveness of the implementation to achieve the higher-level goals, has been limited. According to the EDSP Annual Report 2017 (MoEHE 2018a), the Execution Rate for all 2017 AWPB programs was 71% (based on a new methodology of calculating actual technical implementation instead of expenditure). The semi-annual report (MoEHE 2018b) indicates an Execution Rate of 57% for the first half of the 2018 AWPB programs. The MDTF reports that the level of achievement of the results is moderate satisfactory or satisfactory (Word Bank 2019d). Although behavioural changes are difficult to verify, UNICEF (2018) reports that there is evidence indicating that interventions have provided alternatives to violence not only for children and adolescents, but also their families and communities that may help promote better social relations and contribute towards reducing violence in the society. Significant developments included the preparation of a national emergency contingency plan for the education sector to ensure effective response to emergencies and humanitarian crises at the national level through coordination by the MoEHE.

The review of the LCF (Sharia 2019) conclude that the Local Cooperation Fund has been effective in achieving its objectives. It is addressing the crosscutting issues of human rights, democracy and good governance of the Finnish Development Policy. The FLC was consistent with the second Outcome area of the Finnish Country Strategy (2016–2019) that is strengthening the resilience of Palestinians living in vulnerable areas (Area C, Gaza, East Jerusalem). As well, the FLC is in line with the European Roadmap for Engagement with Civil Society.

5.2.1 Delivery of results for beneficiaries and other stakeholders

Impact area 1: Palestinian children's right to equitable and quality education enhanced

All stakeholders confirm that Finland's most significant achievement to date has been in the education sector. As a JFA partner Finland has contributed to the overall education sector development and service delivery. The stakeholders also report that during its co-chairing period Finland has also introduced substantial improvements in the way the ESWG operates. According to the MoEHE and development partners Finland has also been active in the thematic working groups and policy dialogue on inclusive education, preschool education.

The MoEHE reports about significant achievements in the education sector during Country Strategy period (MoEHE 2018a, MoEHE 2018b). The Palestinian Authority issued its first ever education law in 2017. The MoEHE has made progress with the curriculum reform

placing increased emphasis on more active and student-centred learning. Vocational subjects were introduced in the basic education cycle and a pre-school curriculum framework was developed. Educational facilities have been upgraded and so far, 114 schools reconstructed in Gaza (since the 2014 conflict) with funds from the joint financing arrangement.

Progress is reported in the quality of education outcome area, but results in the equity area are modest (Table 5). The review of the MoEHE annual report (MoEHE 2018a) shows that the enrolment in the preschool is still low. The monitoring systems also do not indicate to what extent the increased number of pre-schools and students enrolled in preschool education can be seen as an equity measure (targeting disadvantages children) as intended in the Country Strategy. The implementation of the inclusive education, which is also thematic target area of Finland, is delayed. Furthermore, while oPt has succeeded to achieve and maintain almost universal enrolment at least at lower levels, there are concerns about quality of education. There are concerns about the increasing the drop-out of boys particularly at grade 10. Table 5 summarizes the CS indicators as presented in the Results Framework updated on 21.3.2019 and achievements reported in the 2018 CS report.

Table 5: Results of Country Strategy portfolio (March 2018)

Results	2014/15	2018 (MFA 28.3.2019)
IMPACT 1		
Palestinian children's right to equitable and quality education enhanced		
IMPACT INDICATORS		
The number and net enrolment rate of the students at 10th grade	60%; M54%; F66%	80%, 73% (M), 88% (F)
Share (number and %) of girls among students at 10th Grade has remained nearly same.	54%	54%
The average learning outcome achievement of students in national tests in mathematics and languages at grades 4, 10	Grade 4: Math 48.2; 50 (F); 46 (M)	In 2018 indicator was changed[11] Data available grade 5 reading and Math
Lost class time because of Israeli violence	927 (affected 696 teachers; 9 855 students)	9154
Outcome 1.1.: Improved quality of education		
Degree of utilisation of educational technologies and resources in basic cycle.	30% (EMIS 2014)	44%
% of qualified teachers and headmasters at public schools in the basic/ secondary cycle. (According Teacher Education Strategy) NB. no data on headmasters	Basic 44.2%	Basic 68.3%, Secondary 38.8%
1.2.3. Palestinian Inclusive education policy operationalised	Policy prepared	no progress reported
Outcome 1.2 Improved educational equality		
1.2.1. % and number of children with special needs in basic education	64.5% (baseline from 2011)	73% ; 76% (F); 70% (M) WB 68%, Gaza 76%, 6510 students
1.2.2. Survival rate to grade 10 (by gender/ by region)	84%; F92%; M76%	85; 93 (F); 77 (M) WB 82, Gaza 89
1.2.3. Gross Enrolment rate in KG2 by sex (Gaza/ West Bank; Public / Private)	75%; 74% (F); 75% (M) (2016)	73%, 73% (F); 72% (M)

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[11] In 2018 the MOEHE has changed the indicator in line with SDGs to measure achievement in grade 5 and at the end of primary (grade 9) from 2017–2018 onwards. The indicator is measured every two years from a sample of UNRWA, public and private schools in WB including East Jerusalem and Gaza.

Results	2014/15	2018 (MFA 28.3.2019)
IMPACT 2		
Strengthened resilience of Palestinians living in vulnerable areas (Area C, Gaza, East Jerusalem)		
IMPACT INDICATORS		
Number of Palestinians benefitting from restored water supply and wastewater services in Gaza	0	1 900 000
Number of Palestinians living in Area C (OCHA)	297 986 (OCHA 2015)	393 163 (PCBS census 2017)
Outcome 2.1. Improved water supply and wastewater services in Gaza.		
2.1.1. Number of people benefiting from improved water supply	1 600 000 (2015)	1 900 000
2.1.2. Number of people benefitting from improved water facilities in Gaza	250000	477 575
Outcome 2.2. Strengthened livelihoods and living conditions for Palestinians living in Area C and East Jerusalem[12].		
2.2.1. Number of Palestinians targeted and benefitted from CRDP interventions	N/A	Started in 2018, results available from 2019
2.2.2. Number of beneficiaries (by gender and age)	60 679	
Outcome 3. Potential for trade with oPt Enhanced		
Knowledge of business opportunities and markets in the occupied Palestinian territory increased	-	Finland education week including a business delegation visit, SLUSH
Finnish-Palestinian partnerships supported		No progress reported

Source MFA updates 21.3.2018

In the ESWG, dialogue has been held with the Palestinian ministry and Minister of Education as well as with other development partners on the Palestinian curriculum. Finland has advocated within the EU for a comparative study of the Palestinian and Israeli curricula to identify to which extend the curricula promote peace, tolerance, non-violence and acceptance of the other. So far, EU has not agreed to take action. In Finland, questions have been raised requesting clarification to Finnish role in the curriculum development. In the response, the Minister used the Country Strategy as a reference.

Impact area 2: Strengthened resilience of Palestinians living in vulnerable areas (Area C, Gaza, East Jerusalem)

The World Bank reports (2019d) that the water and wastewater services in Gaza have improved substantially despite the difficult conditions. However, data is reported only at output level and provides little insight into the benefits accrued by beneficiaries, or the impact these projects have had on the beneficiary households as a whole. The situation in the Gaza strip in terms of sustaining access to clean water and wastewater services continues to be critical.

With regards to resilience, Finland did not initiate its support to Area C before 2018 and thus it is too early to assess the achievements. The CRDP was evaluated in 2017 (AWRAD 2017). This evaluation identified strengths of the Programme such as it has developed a Strategy for Area C and EJ, which placed Area C and EJ on the political and development map,

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[12] Revised indicators available in the Results Framework dated 28.3.2019.

and raised awareness regarding the urgency of addressing the development issues of these two areas of the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt), both with the PA and the international donor community. The Programme tested new approaches for scaling-up lower-risk models for the delivery of essential services.

The Evaluation also identified areas for improvement in the implementation of the CRDP mainly related to the design and management of the programme, and sustainability. The evaluation found the projects are still somewhat dispersed, weakening the level of synergy needed to generate a greater impact on resilience. The programme would need to improve its management structures, procedures as well as its communication and dissemination efforts. Also, the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework must be strengthened. The MFA self-assessment (MFA2019) has also raised concerns on how effective the CRDP-programme really is in addressing resilience.

In 2018 a decision was made to join supporting the West Bank Protection Consortium seen as a mechanism to achieve the same through bridging the humanitarian and development divide. Protection Consortium provides a multi-sectoral and integrated response to prevent displacement and dispossession.

With regards to the objectives of institutional capacity development as part of state building, JFA is an investment enabling the MoEHE to implement its strategic plan for the development of the education sector. Otherwise, this would not be possible as capacity building contributes significantly to building state institutions and human development. This is collectively recognised within the PA and among the stakeholders, also confirmed by the MTR of JFA (Wolsey 2017). The MTR notes that it has contributed to the institutional capacity building and MoEHE-wide planning and budgeting systems but insufficient attention has been given to the broader picture of alignment to the broader Public Finance Management systems. Achievements of institutional capacity development the Water sector is also reported (World Bank 2018). The MDTF has for instance supported the regulatory framework of water service delivery in Gaza.

Finland has invested in policy dialogue at different forums and developed a plan for policy dialogue in 2018. Policy dialogue is however, not explicitly reflected in the Country Strategy, neither in the results framework as shown in Table 5. Both PA and development partners confirmed that Finland has brought important changes to the structure and ways of working of the ESWG during the period it was co-chairing the ESWG. These improvements were highlighted by several JFA partners and MoEHE as important results. Also, because humanitarian aid is not part of the Country Strategy, the Finnish contribution to policy dialogue in UNRWA is not reported in the Country Strategy reports, although it significantly supports the Finnish development cooperation goals. For instance, it was reported[13] that Finland has played an important role in mainstreaming gender equity in the UNRWA Mid Term Strategic plan.

Policy dialogue is also embedded in monitoring systems. For instance, JFA partners indicated that the process of review of annual reports has not only helped in sharing the work lead between JFA partners, but it also enabled them to push the Ministry to integrate certain activities and give more emphasis to emerging issues into its annual programmes. For example, as a result of the continuous dialogue with the MoEHE, the JFA partners have managed to convince the Ministry of Education of the importance of pre-school education, and now pre-school education has legally become part of the basic education system. The donors also constantly push for an integrated, whole-country approach.

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[13] MFA (2017) Vuosittaiset tulokset monenkeskisestä vaikuttamisesta. Organisaatio: UNRWA. 7.4.2017, memo.

The competence and commitment of RO staff was constantly recognised by the PA and development partners. In support of Finland co-chairing the education sector working group, Finland's development cooperation team in Ramallah was strengthened in 2017 with a local education sector expert, to work with the Head of Development cooperation.

5.2.2 Delivery of results for non-discrimination

The Country Strategy states that Finland advocates for the rights of women and vulnerable groups, such as children, people with disabilities, and people living in Area C, Gaza, and East Jerusalem. However, as indicated above, the Strategy does not have gender analysis or refer to such, it only makes a reference to low labour participation of women. Thus, it remains unclear on what basis the strategic focus of GBV was selected.

Finland supported interventions address the vulnerable groups identified the United Nations Country Team (2016)[14] which are most impacted by one or more structural drivers of disadvantage and vulnerability in the Palestinian context such as location (or place of residence), exposure to violence, economic factors, institutional and political factors, and socio-cultural norms. Finnish supported interventions address women exposed to gender-based violence (LCF), children facing obstacles in accessing schools (EAPPI); children subject to violence (UNICEF); communities in Area C (CRDP; West Bank Protection Consortium), persons with disabilities (JFA), individuals in need of urgent medical referrals from Gaza to Jerusalem or Israeli hospitals (Pegase); and refugees residing in camps (UNRWA). Cash assistance has been provided under PEGASE to vulnerable household in Gaza

The Country Strategy addresses the geographical inequity by channelling support area C and Gaza. Significant JFA resources are being directed to Gaza and MoEHE reports that teacher education activities are equally and equitably implemented in the Gaza Strip. Education sector is supported through the EU PEGASE mechanisms (teacher salaries). Finland also provides core funding to UNRWA which manages 50% of the education system.

Finland has been active in promoting gender equity. For instance, Finland has highlighted the importance of UNRWA efforts to take into account gender and vulnerable groups in its services to Palestinian refugees and advocated for gender disaggregated monitoring in the MDTF. Also, Finland has urged MDTF should better demonstrate how interventions have contributed to the living conditions of the beneficiaries including female and people with disabilities. The earlier LCF framework had a thematic focus area for marginalised groups and the current LCF is explicitly focusing on women. The Representation Office is also coordinating a network 'Women in International Security in Palestine)' that brings together Palestinian and international women working on peace and security issues. Although efforts are made, the Self-Assessment (MFA 2019b) states that more work could be done with gender mainstreaming and in terms of including persons with disabilities in the results framework.

Climate change concerns are not discussed in the Country Strategy. The self- assessment reports (MFA 2019) that programmes supported are more or less climate neutral. It is also reported (MFA 2019) that support to the water sector in Gaza has contributed to climate sustainability through reducing wastage, repairing existing pipes, constructing a sewage treatment plant and that the Ministry of Education in Palestine works towards climate sustainability through solar energy, enhancing environmental standards for school building and environmental education.

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14 such as: adolescent girls; women exposed to gender-based violence (GBV); households headed by women; children facing obstacles in accessing schools; children in the labour force; children subject to violence; out-of-school children; youth; the elderly; communities in Area C; Bedouins and herder communities living in Area C; Gaza residents without access to clean water or sanitation; Hebron H2 residents; persons living in the Seam Zone; persons with disabilities; individuals in need of urgent medical referrals; refugees living in abject poverty; refugees residing in camps; small-scale farmers, non-Bedouin herders, fisher folk; and the working poor.

5.2.3 Contributions to any reductions in fragility

Finland has contributed to fragility reduction for instance through continued engagement in the education sector and support for East Jerusalem hospitals through PEGASE.

Support to education sector has not been designed with a specific fragility focus. However, the stakeholders pointed out that the entire educational system is fragile due to the inability of the PA to sustain education provision and development financially on the one hand, and the disruption of the educational process as a result of the political situation. Furthermore, the MoEHE points out that the question of education quality in a fragile situation such as oPt depends on many factors that determine quality. In addition, keeping the system afloat while also developing it further at multiple levels is a priority.

Peacebuilding and State Building Goals (PSG) building are not explicitly incorporated in the Country Strategy's results framework. Within the portfolio there are few interventions addressing conflict resolution, livelihoods and capacity. There are also interventions addressing strategic PSG outside the Strategy. The links between the sample of interventions with the PSGs is illustrated in the Table 6 below.

Table 6: Interventions and Peacebuilding and State building Goals (PSG)

Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goal	Intervention within Country Strategy	Intervention outside Country Strategy
PSG 1: Inclusive political settlements and conflict resolution fostered	CSO project by Palestinian Coalition;	FCA; CMI
PSG 2: People's security established and fostered		EUPOL
PSG 3: People's access to justice increased		EUPOL
PSG 4: Employment generated and livelihoods improved	LCF; CRDP (Started 2018)	FCA
PSG 5: Capacity for accountable and fair service delivery	Support to education (JFA), MDTF, PEGASE	UNRWA

5.2.4 Role of the aid cooperation modality in supporting the delivery of results

Finland's co-operation has been largely implemented through budget support and joint financing mechanisms. According to the MFA interviews, the rationale for this choice includes ensuring Finland's ability to share and manage risks, and to strengthen policy dialogue. There is a clear rationale for multilateral channels also enables accessing areas (area C, Gaza) where the Palestinian Authority has limited ability to operate. (MFA 2016). PA also prefers support to be channelled bilaterally or through multilateral mechanisms that are fully or largely managed and owned by the PA, such as PEGASE, the JFA and the PRDP Trust Fund. While MoF has a decision-making authority in other mechanisms (such as the MDTF-PID, for example) in theory, its ability to influence these mechanisms is limited in practice because it does not have superordinate position in the governance of these mechanisms. Hence, the MoF indicated in the interviews that Finland continues to channel funding to PEGASE and the JFA.

For instance, the JFA is not only for channelling funds but the ESWGs and joint missions are also a platform for policy dialogue between the partners and with the MoEHE. Also, while Finland is unable to implement school-level activities through the JFA, especially in Gaza, UNICEF has strong field presence with technical capacities, and is also strongly present at policy level. In the water sector, in turn, Finland has not been very actively engaged in the policy dialogue.

Support to area C through the CRDP was deemed as most suitable mechanism at the time when the Country Strategy was developed, and for sharing political risk with other donors. The EU's preference would have been for Finland to support the EU strategy in Area C. Currently the CRDP is being restructured. West Bank Protection Cluster is a mechanism that offers great opportunity to advance political influencing work and sharing exposure to political risk with like-minded donors.

According to development partners and the PA representatives interviewed, Finland has been active in the dialogue within the education sector and that it has also contributed to enhanced coordination of EU dialogue in the sector. However, no major results are reported with regards to the specific sub-sectors of pre-school education and inclusive education which are the thematic focus areas in the education sector.

Finland has also participated in the oversight group of the World Bank administered infrastructure trust fund and together with other funding partners, requested better integration of gender in the programme implementation and reporting, which is now done. No policy dialogue is reported with regards to 'Strengthened livelihoods and living conditions of Palestinians living in area C and East Jerusalem' (Outcome 3). Political dialogue with Israel is conducted by EU which has systematically condemned for instance school demolitions through local statements. (MFA 2019).

5.3 Coherence

5.3.1 Role of the Country Strategy in enabling coherent MFA assistance

The development partners were aware of the Finnish Country Strategy and the sectors and modalities Finland is engaged with. The MFA also considers that channelling support through multilateral agencies and participation in the donor coordination groups ensures that the specific objectives and interventions are coordinated with inputs from other development partners and reduces the risks of duplication of efforts.

There is internal coherence between the PEGASE and the main interventions of the Country Strategy. Otherwise, the Country Strategy modality itself makes a limited contribution to internal coherence between the outcome areas (education and resilience). Coherence within education sector exists. For instance, cooperation with the UNICEF project is a channel or an entry point for broader policy dialogue.

Internal coherence between the LCF and the Country Strategy outcomes is limited although LCF is filling in the gap of gender equity. As indicated earlier in this report the current multiannual LCF Plan 2016–2019 aims at enhancing specifically the rights and status of women in the West Bank. The Embassy of Finland in Tel Aviv supports projects by Israeli NGOs and projects where the beneficiaries are Palestinians in the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza. According to the LCF guidelines issued by the Embassy of Finland in Tel Aviv, funded projects must endorse the peace process, dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians and the human rights of Palestinians.

Finnish humanitarian aid operates through channels that are separate from the management of development aid. According to the MFA interviews the involvement of the Representation Office in humanitarian aid is limited. Humanitarian funding channelled through UNRWA supports both humanitarian and resilience objectives but is not part of the Country Strategy.

There is not much trade between Finland and oPt. The business environment in oPt is unpredictable and there are restrictions due to the occupation, conflict as well as lack of reforms by the Palestinian Authority. (MFA 2019, Self-Assessment). However, the MFA Management Response pointed out that the team should link up with TF work of Department of Development Policy to build its capacity on business opportunities.

5.3.2 Role of the Country Strategy in contribution to wider Development Policy objectives

The Country Strategy does not discuss the Development Cooperation Policies and priorities in the context and does not directly aim at eradicating poverty. Aid is instead directed to support living conditions and basic service delivery in fragile contexts. The goal of supporting state building is linked with the development policy priority of governance, but otherwise only the LCF addresses directly the priorities of women a girl's rights and economic empowerment. More specifically the implemented FLC projects supported Finland's Development policy priority area; the rights and status of women and girls and thus also contributed to SDG 5.

5.4 Connectedness

5.4.1 Adherence to commitments on Human Rights Based Approaches and related frameworks

The Country Strategy and supported programmes do not have a very explicit human rights promotion focus. The Country Strategy indicates that Finland's current development cooperation portfolio was formulated with a human rights-based approach. (MFA 2016). However, the four HRBA principles of non-discrimination, participation and inclusion, transparency, and accountability are not explicitly addressed. Overall, the Country Strategy formulates the need for political dialogue with the Palestinian Authority on human rights in a very generic way. (MFA 2019a). The Country Strategy states that: *The human rights situation has deteriorated during the past year with a rise in clashes between Palestinians and the Israeli Security Forces. In the West Bank, attacks on schools and personnel continue to impact children's access to education. The Gazans' right to freedom of movement is restricted by the blockade, which undermines their civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. (MFA 2016).* The portfolio does not include direct support to organisations seeking to hold duty bearers accountable or protect vulnerable Palestinians subject to human rights violations.

The rights of children to access education and the rights of women and girls are emphasised in the Country Strategy. However, how these and other human rights concerns are being advocated for in a context of occupation or in a situation of increased shrinking of Palestinian democratic space are not elaborated on. Some of the MFA interlocutors interviewed found that the human rights of the Gaza population, and the dire humanitarian situation resulting from the ongoing Israeli blockade and closure, are not sufficiently highlighted within the strategy. This finding was not limited to Finland's strategy. According to development partners interviewed there is a lack of political will to increase support or initiate strong advocacy in support of the respect and implementation of rights-based actions to protect the Gaza population.

MFA interlocutors highlighted that Finland's implementing partners (UN and Civil Society) apply HRBAs programmatically but these are not all at the same level of understanding or application. It was noted that the PEGASE funding mechanism has less emphasis on HRBA where it was providing budget support to the Palestinian Authority institutions. However, it had a stronger human rights emphasis where financial support under PEGASE was allocated to provide access to medical services for Gaza patients in East Jerusalem hospitals or toward social protection (cash-based assistance to the most vulnerable). (Saad 2016). For instance, the West Bank Protection Consortium interventions emphasize engagement in Area C with its reports and interventions on the ground having a strong protection and rights-based focus. (Sandouka & Freij 2018) This was less evident in the case of the UNDP implemented Community Resilience and Development Programme (CRDP). While the CRDP documents have a resilience focus, they do not provide an explanation on the understanding of resilience in the context of Area C and how resilience is approached from a rights perspective (UNDP 2017).

The oPt strategy makes very limited reference to International Humanitarian, Do No Harm (DNH), and Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) principles, but there is noticeable commitment on those principles in practise at operational level. There is also no explicit documented evidence of adherence to these principles in the design of projects developed by implementing partners. Background documents – including a human rights assessment conducted as a pre-country strategy activity – that were produced in support of the oPt Country Strategy development actively promote the adaption of these principles. (Duncan 2014, Venäläinen & Sharia 2014, and Ekholm & Wallendahl 2015). While there is insufficient analysis of these principles in the Country Strategy itself, there is a noticeable commitment in practice and operational engagement at all levels among the MFA staff based in the oPt Representation Office in Ramallah and the MFA interlocutors met with in Helsinki. This was demonstrated for instance through the role of Finland's Ambassador in chairing the UNRWA's sub-com of the Advisory Committee, advocating for support for the refugee problem and support for the West Bank protection consortium, an initiative clearly supporting protection and a rights-based approach in Area C.

Interview evidence indicates that Finland is considered as a Rights-based donor. The EU Representative Office in Jerusalem, other European donor countries, international humanitarian and development actors, and the Palestinian Authority representatives interviewed indicate that Finland is committed to human rights – with a strong commitment towards:

• defending human rights principles including refugee rights;
• right to equal access to basic services (especially education for all);
• gender equality;
• rights of women and girls in policy dialogue with stakeholders (including with Palestinian Authority institutions); and
• in sector working groups and other national or international fora.

The extent to which *AAP* is advocated for through Finland's engagement with Palestinian Authority institutions is not referenced in the Country Strategy. This omission is important given the reduced democratic space in the oPt under the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank and Hamas rule in Gaza. Advocating for adherence to *international humanitarian principles* is complex in the oPt, particularly as international actors are reluctant to hold Israel to account for its obligations as an occupying power under international law.

The increased democratic deficit in the oPt has not yet translated into stronger Finnish support for Palestinian human rights organisations or a more solid support for Palestinian civil society. The no contact policy with de-facto Gaza government precludes Finnish engagement on these issues. Civil society organisations met during the in-country consultation process emphasized the need for Finland to provide support directly to civil society

organisations to conduct rights-based interventions, advocacy and policy work to advance and protect existing freedoms (toward the three duty bearers: Israel, Gaza de-facto government and the Palestinian Authority).

Finland does not explicitly request its implementing partners to demonstrate adherence to IHPs, DNH, HRBA and AAP in their planning, implementation, or reporting. Local civil society organisations might be less equipped to develop relevant operational guidelines using international best practice or provide reports and assessments demonstrating their results achieved. However, it is evident from local partners' documents review that at the community level *Do No Harm* principles are at the core of development and humanitarian interventions. Also, advocacy materials produced by leading Palestinian NGOs demonstrate a good understanding of international law instruments and how these relate to the Palestinian context.

5.4.2 Consideration of the humanitarian-development-peacebuilding nexus

In the oPt the focus is on the double nexus (linking humanitarian and development assistance). Stakeholders (UN, Civil Society) based in oPt view the double nexus as equal to supporting resilience. However, a realisation of the contextual, geographic differences has contributed to the realisation that 'resilience' needs to be defined depending on the geographic location: supporting resilience ("holding ground") in the West Bank (mainly Area C) and East Jerusalem, and ii) supporting resilience in the Gaza Strip and recognising de-development and greater need for humanitarian assistance.

According to development partners in-country the link with peacebuilding and supporting the triple nexus is considered too complex and outside of the control of the humanitarian and development actors based in the country. Civil society actors welcomed and recognised Finland's continued support for distinct peacebuilding initiatives through civil society (support through CMI stands out). According to civil society actors there are two interlinked levels of peacebuilding and reconciliation that require attention in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict:

- reconciliation between Ramallah-based Palestinian Authority and the de-facto Hamas government in Gaza, and
- the need for restarting the peace process to find a political and durable solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the end of the Israeli occupation.

Interviewed stakeholders mentioned that Finland has been able to have a more pragmatic approach and make effective, contextualised decisions in the allocation of the development cooperation and humanitarian funding. ECHO and civil society humanitarian actors mentioned that discussions in donor meetings often focus on "what is humanitarian and what is development". Evidence of this is seen in Finland's financial support in Area C through the West Bank Protection Consortium (often considered as humanitarian, protection, and with a short-term focus) and the UNDP CRDP (longer-term focused development interventions). Both initiatives support different types of interventions and could potentially be more complementary on the ground. By supporting both initiatives, Finland has been able to support with development cooperation funding the operationalisation of a nexus approach in Area C. Finland's engagement under both initiatives could contribute to learning among stakeholders and support a stronger operationalisation of the nexus through both initiatives.

The context analysis of the Country Strategy does not sufficiently integrate the refugee crisis nor does it adequately address the need for a political solution to the refugee crisis. This impacts on the strategy's comprehensiveness. Finland's humanitarian financial support to the Palestine refugees, provided mainly through UNRWA as the main provider of assistance to the Palestine refugees, has allowed for support to both humanitarian and resilience objectives.

6 Conclusions

Relevance

The Country Strategy modality has been a useful *process*. While the direct impact of the modality to the effectiveness of the interventions and the achievement of the overall Country Strategy objectives may be limited, several uses and benefits of Country Strategy were reported. The modality has supported strategic planning, and it has been used as a tool for strategic planning and for communication and informing about Finnish support to oPt as well as a reference for policy dialogue especially in the education sector. It is also an important tool in the dialogue between the HQ and RO and in safeguarding against changing Finnish policy priorities and political decisions. It also gave an opportunity for flexibility. In case of oPT, the Country Strategy modality has provided a structured opportunity for results-oriented monitoring, reporting and management feedback.

The Finnish supported interventions are relevant in terms of their alignment to the beneficiary and stakeholder needs and policies. Although the beneficiary needs analysis is covered to a large extent by the interventions and implementing agencies, the needs are not elaborated in the Country Strategy. Also, inequity and needs of vulnerable groups in the different contexts, Gaza, Area C, East Jerusalem and the West Bank are not available in the Country Strategy, although it aims explicitly address these groups in accordance with the principles of the Finnish Development Cooperation Policy. The complementary value of LCF could be strengthened through a comprehensive situation analysis and needs assessment.

Having two impact areas with few outcomes keeps the Country Strategy focused. Working through multilateral organisations has been appropriate as it has enabled to reach areas where projects implemented by PA cannot reach. However, the modalities of support were selected prior to the Strategy, and were not significantly influenced by it. Finland can bring in additional value in education through policy dialogue.

The use of Country Strategy as means to promote the equity and non-discrimination agenda, gender equity and climate sustainability has **been limited**. Implementation of fragility analysis in the specific regions Area C, Gaza, East Jerusalem and West Bank could have influenced the focus of the Country Strategy. Internal coherence and complementarity could be improved by linking the LCF with the resilience outcome area. In the current political context addressing is too narrow. For instance, vibrant civil society forms an essential part of the functioning democratic state. The needs of the civil society do not match with the fact that the CSO support has significantly reduced significantly during 2012-2018.

Addressing the root causes of fragility would require political dialogue with Israel and between the Palestinian partners. The status-quo as it is now will not lead to a two-state solution in short term. If political solutions for both the occupation and reconciliation are not found, the need is to keep the systems afloat and strengthen the resilience of the Palestinian people and communities. Development assistance to the Palestinian Authority may respond to needs, but in itself cannot sustain the prospect of a two-state solution. The limitations of aid in the absence of a comprehensive political solution also require explicit recognition. Thus, resilience strengthening and support to people to be steadfast on their land is of importance. Supporting resilience however requires collective action, a larger number of donors to invest and

who are willing to take political risks (support the building of infrastructure in Area C). Due to the political challenges and without a political solution, Finnish support is not able to contribute to tangible reductions in fragility.

Continuation in the two impact areas of education sector and resilience is relevant. Support could be enhanced by more focused policy dialogue, particularly in the education in area C and East Jerusalem, where the rights to education are threatened.

Effectiveness

The interventions supported within the Country Strategy portfolio have delivered tangible results although it is difficult to verify the specific Finnish contributions. For instance, the MDTF contains only output level indicators which do not reflect the benefits at the beneficiary level. In the education sector, the indicators are suitable to track the overall trends of the education sector development In order to develop a more robust monitoring framework for the Country Strategy, it would be advisable to incorporate the policy dialogue more concretely in the Results Framework with clear targets.

All interviewed stakeholders consider Finland as a reliable, committed and competent partner. The technical expertise particularly in the education sector was highly recognized. The quality of the staff of the Representation Office was recognised by all stakeholders as a great asset for Finland as a small donor. In order to keep the same level, the MFA needs to ensure sufficient staffing both in the HQ and in the RO, with relevant technical skills. Finland is considered as a 'steady' donor but not as an emergency response donor.

Some support provided by Finland remains outside the Country Strategy, thereby the reporting does not provide a full picture of the volume and achievements of the Finnish support to oPt. A more comprehensive and flexible approach would be needed to link humanitarian funding with as the Country Strategy to bridge the nexus.

Coherence

The Country Strategy instrument itself does not explicitly support policy coherence. Several interventions which also aim at state building and resilience are not included in the Country Strategy portfolio, thus challenging the creation of a comprehensive picture about Finnish support to oPt. Internal coherence within the Country Strategy is limited, but particularly in the education sector it is sought for. Increasing the involvement of the private sector as part of the next Country Strategy, has not been found feasible in the current situation although it could have great impacts on the Palestinian economy and livelihood. Coherence with the other development cooperation actors is high and the use of multi-donor modalities and JFA reduces the risk of duplication efforts. Coherence would entail closer cooperation between the Embassy of Finnish Tel Aviv and the Representation Office under the guidance of the MFA Head Quarters.

Connectedness

Finland has recognized human rights gaps in oPt, but current programmes do not have a very explicit human rights promotion focus. The traditional nexus approach — where the development actors take the lead — is no longer possible in the Palestinian context. Instead, a process of de-development is unfolding with humanitarian actors increasingly taking the lead driving a humanitarian response to the causes of fragility. The changed and worsening conditions, especially in Area C and Gaza, warrant this. The Country Strategy could give greater consideration to the rights and the protection needs of the refugees.

7 Implications/ Lessons learned

Going forward, and based on the evidence generated by this case study, the following lessons/ implications arise for the next iteration of the Country Strategy in oPt:

- Policy dialogue is an essential part of Finnish support to oPt. Targets could be more focused and specific, based on Finnish added value, and should be set at an achievable level, where the Finnish added value and contribution could be verified. Policy dialogue should also be incorporated in the Country Strategy and related results framework. It is also important to ensure that there are sufficient human resources for policy dialogue.

- More emphasis should be placed on risk analysis and mitigation, and articulating the strategic objectives in such a way that enables greater flexibility to priority setting and annual decision making when it comes to programming in order to provide greater ability to respond in a dynamic environment.

- Better use of fragility analyses would help in targeting the support. Finland should use and promote conducting such assessments jointly particularly in the Are C, East Jerusalem and Gaza for instance among specific vulnerable groups such as youth.

- The 'nexus' is a very current concern, but there is no clear answer on what needs to be done in the context of the oPt. The issues and needs in a protracted crisis require a different approach; therefore, clarifying an understanding of the nexus within oPt, and where Finland is best to engage, would be useful.

- Finland could take a stronger role in human rights and reconciliation. Addressing concerns around shrinking democratic space and also distinct initiatives in support of peace building, reconciliation and/or resilience would however require increasing resources (particularly in LCF) and also close cooperation with the CSO Unit in the MFA. Alignment with the European Joint Strategy (EJS) is important when considering the use of HRBAs or the humanitarian-development-peacebuilding nexus in the Palestinian context.

- Further clarify and define the results and changes to which Finland contributes/intends to contribute, mindful of its comparative advantage in oPt – but also the limited human and financial resources available.

Annex 1: Timeline of events in the context highlighting aspects of fragility

September 1995	Interim Agreement on the West Bank and Gaza Strip, or 0slo II, signed.
	Confirms economic/trade affairs and divides West Bank into areas A, B & C
January 1996	Yasser Arafat elected President of the Palestinian National Authority
March 1996	Benjamin Netanyahu elected Israeli Prime Minister
	Hebron Protocol signed, dividing city between Israeli and Palestinian control
October 1998	Wye River memorandum signed intended to progress Oslo II agreements
July 2000	US mediated summit between Barak and Arafat ends without any agreement in Camp David
September 2000	Ariel Sharon visits Haram-al-Sharif/temple Mount. Sparks violent protest, start of the 2nd Intifada Uprising.
January 2001	Talks on permanent status issues end to allow for Israeli elections. Sharon elected Prime Minister, declines to continue negotiations
March 2002	Arab League endorses Arab Peace Initiative to normalise relations with Israel providing occupation ends and Palestine refugee problem is resolved
June 2002	Israel begins building wall in and around the West Bank citing security needs following 2nd intifada attacks
June 2003	Quartet of Russia, the EU, the US and the UN propose roadmap for peace based on Oslo II and endorsed by both sides
July 2004	International Court of Justice announces that the wall is illegal
September 2005	Israel withdraws settlers and military personnel from Gaza, retains control of border airspace and coastal waters.
January 2006	Hamas wins 75 of the 132 Palestinian Legislative Councils seats in elections
March 2006	Hamas forms PNA government rejecting previous peace accords. Other Palestinian political factions refuse to join unity government. Violence breaks out.
March 2007	Hamas fighters eject Fatah officials from Gaza after breakdown in talks to form unity Palestinian government.
June 2007	Israel announces military air, sea and land blockade restricting movement of goods and people in and out of Gaza following Hamas takeover.
November 2007	Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert & Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas pledge to implement zoom roadmap to achieve two-state solution in Annapolis.
December 2009–2010	Months of escalating violence result in Israeli military invasion of Gaza, thousands killed and injured.
September 2010	Months of US-mediated talks between Netanyahu & Abbas fail to get past stalemate
November 2012	Israel launches week-long military campaign against Gaza after months of roc‹et attac‹s on Israeli towns.

July 2013	Direct US-brokered negotiations fail.
August 2013	Month-long Israeli military offensive in Gaza following escalating violence. Thousands more frilled and injured.
January 2017	French government hosts international conference in support for continued efforts to achieve two-state solution.
January 2017	Following his inauguration, US President Donald Trump appoints Jared Kushner and Jason Greenblatt to develop a Middle East Peace Plan.
December 2017	President Trump recognises Jerusalem as Israel's capital and announces the decision to move the US Embassy to Jerusalem.
January 2018	US announces $ 305 million to its annual UNWRA funds
February 2018	Various laws prepared to annex portions of West Bank put forward in the Israeli Knesset.
May 2018	Thousands of Palestinians in Gaza protest in the Great March of Return, met with deadly Israeli military response

Source: AIDA 2018

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COUNTRY CASE STUDY ANNEX

SOMALIA

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Contents

TABLES

FIGURES

Acronyms and abbreviations

CPIA	Country Policy and Institutional Assessment
CS	Civil Society
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DPP	Development Policy Programme
EUR	Euro
FCA	Finn Church Aid
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
HRBA	Human Rights Based Approach
MFA	Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland
MPF	Multi-Partner Fund to Somalia
NDP	National Development Plan 2017-19
PEA	Political Economy Analysis
PFM	Public Financial Management
SCI	Save the Children International
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
SRH	Sexual and Reproductive Health
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

1 Introduction

1.1 The country case study purpose and objectives including its role as a contributory evidence stream to the global evaluation

This case study comprises one of five prepared for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) Finland's *Evaluation of selected Finland's country strategies and country strategy modality for development cooperation with focus on fragile contexts.* The other four case studies are of Afghanistan, Myanmar, the State of Palestine and Syria/Iraq.

The purpose of each Case Study is to apply the overarching evaluation questions, design and methodology of the strategic level evaluation, while adapting their analysis for the specifics of the country context.

The specific objectives of each case study are:

- To provide a contributory evidence stream to the overall strategic evaluation
- To help interrogate the wider theoretical framework for the evaluation (see MFA, 2018) by generating evidence against it;
- To generate Lessons/Implications to help inform country stakeholders in their country-level programming, as part of the constructive approach adopted by the utilisation-focused model of the strategic evaluation.

The Case Study is explicitly not a full evaluation of Finland's country-level portfolio in Somalia, which would be beyond the remit of this evaluation. Accordingly, it does not provide Recommendations, but rather Lessons/Implications.

1.2 Approach and methodology

The approach and methodology for the strategic evaluation is fully described in annexes 2 and 3 of the synthesis report. This Case Study has applied the overarching evaluation questions, design and methodology of the strategic level evaluation, with limited adaptation for the contextual specifics of Somalia. The questions to which it contributes evidence are as follows:

Relevance	• To what extent did the Country Strategy modality support the alignment of Finland's Country portfolios and policy dialogue to address the causes of fragility?
	• To what extent did the Country Strategy modality support the relevance of Finland's assistance to the needs of stakeholders and beneficiaries, considering available resources?
	• To what extent did the Country Strategy modality support the relevance of Finland's assistance to the needs of key stakeholders, whether government, civil society or others?
	• To what extent did the Country Strategy modality enable assistance to adapt appropriately over time, including in relation to volatile conditions?

Effectiveness	• To what extent did the Country Strategy modality support the orientation of initiatives to best deliver results for key stakeholders and beneficiaries in the context?
	• To what extent did the Country Strategy modality provide an enabling environment for results in non-discrimination, including gender equality and the empowerment of women, and climate change?
	• To what extent did the selected aid co-operation modality, particularly multi-bi co-operation, support the delivery of results in the context?
	• To what extent have Finnish Country Strategies/Portfolios contributed to any reductions in fragility?
Coherence	• How/or does the Country Strategy modality support Finland in providing coherent assistance to the country, e.g. across MFA departments and multilateral influencing plans and funding?
	• To what extent did the Country Strategy modality support alignment with the plans and policies of other key donors/international actors in the context?
	• To what extent did the Country Strategy modality contribute to the realization of wider Finnish Development Policy objectives?
Connectedness	• To what extent did Country Strategies adhere to international commitments on human rights, the International Humanitarian Principles, Do No Harm and Accountability to Affected Populations?
	• To what extent did the Country Strategies take into account long-term and interconnected problems, e.g. through the humanitarian-development-peacebuilding nexus?

The theoretical framework for the evaluation combines theory-based evaluation (Chen 1991), with elements of contribution analysis (Mayne, 2001) and a utilisation-focused approach (Quinn Patton, 2008). It functions at aggregate level for the strategic evaluation and is applied to this case study through the structured tools applied (see Annex 2 of the synthesis report). This case study contributes to its specification, validation and interrogation as part of the wider evaluation.

The case study has adopted a highly structured and systematic approach, in accordance with the methodology for the wider evaluation. The main elements of the methodology applied (see MFA 2019a) are as follows:

• Quantitative analysis of Finnish assistance to Somalia for the period 2012–2018, generated from MFA statistics

• Interviews with key Helsinki-based stakeholders working currently/previously on the Somalia portfolio within MFA (see Annex 2 for list of persons interviewed)

• Systematic analysis of 14 MFA-funded projects implemented in Somalia during the evaluation's time period of 2012–current against a structured analytical framework (see Annex 3 for full list)

• A two-week field mission in Somalia, conducted October 28–November 8 2019, including interviews with key stakeholders and partners in Mogadishu, Hargeisa and Garowe.

Findings were discussed and validated with key stakeholders in MFA at a feedback meeting on November 8 2019 in Nairobi/Helsinki.

1.3　Limitations

The main limitations of the case study are as follows:

- As a case study rather than a full evaluation, this report does not provide a definitive performance assessment of all Finnish assistance to Somalia during the period 2012-current. Rather, it offers limited insights, generated through a systematic approach, to inform a wider evaluative process.

- The case study is based on analysis of MFA statistics, review of project documentation (including external reviews and evaluations where feasible), and stakeholder/partner interviews. In accordance with the agreed methodology for the wider strategic evaluation, it has not included visits to individual projects or interviews/focus groups with direct beneficiaries.

- The case study includes findings up to November 2019, the point of field mission closure. The context in Somalia is highly volatile and may have experienced significant change since that time.

- Results data for the study was extremely limited, being based on a combination of project reports, Finland's own 2019 Self-Assessment of the Country Strategy and reviews/evaluations where available. The case study team were not able to independently verify results, and nor were they required to do so under the terms of the Case Study. Results presented are therefore caveated accordingly.

Notwithstanding these limitations, the case study offers some relevant and, it is hoped, useful, insights into Finnish assistance to Somalia, and particularly the use of the Country Strategy in the context.

2 Fragility context

2.1 Overview of the context since 2012

Following the fall of Barre regime in 1991, Somalia experienced state collapse. Since then, it has experienced ongoing armed conflict including, since mid-2000, by an Islamist group, Al-Shabaab. Years of chaos and violence have severely eroded the legitimacy of centralised authority.

In 2012, the Somalia Federal State and a Federal Government were formed based on a 2011 Provisional Constitution, recognised by the international community. Two successful elections were held, first in 2012 and more recently in 2016.

In its current form, the Federal State of Somalia consists of four Federal Member States: Jubaland, South West, Hirshabelle and Galmudug, plus two self-declared independent provinces, Somaliland and Puntland. The latter resist to varying degrees their integration into a federal structure, particularly Somaliland while Puntland is considered to form part of the Federation. Their independent status is not, however, recognised by the international community and they are treated as (autonomous) provinces of Somalia.

Recent estimates suggest a 2018 population of around 11.2 million (AFDB 2019a), though this figure is not considered reliable. Somalia's Annual Official GNP per capita is 450 USD, making it the fifth poorest country in the world (World Bank 2018). Life expectancy stands at approximately 55 years (UNICEF, 2019) with an under-five infant mortality rate of 147 out of 1,000 live births (ibid.). Just over 40% of Somali children are in school (ibid). Humanitarian needs are acute, with 5.2 million people estimated to need humanitarian assistance in 2020 (UNOCHA 2019). Around 2 million people were classed as Internally Displaced People in 2019 (ibid.)

Governance and corruption indicators rank particularly low, with the most recently available (2014) Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (CPIA) score ranking the country 37th in Africa (AFDB 2019a). Somalia was bottom of the 54 countries on the Ibrahim Index of African Governance in 2018 (IIAG, 2019) and is the second most fragile state globally (The Peace Fund 2019).

More than 60% of Somalia's population is younger than 25, and the fertility rate is among the world's highest at almost 6 children per woman (UNICEF 2019 op.cit.). Women and girls face discrimination and gender-based violence (GBV) and limited or no access to justice (ibid.). The female genital mutilation (FGM) prevalence rate among 15–19-year-old girls is 97% (UNFPA 2019).

Nonetheless, more recent political stability has brought the potential for economic growth. The Somalia economy is estimated to grow by 3.5% in 2019–2020 (AfDB 2019b), in part due to remittances, telecommunications services and agricultural exports. While foreign direct investments have been scarce, relative political stability has attracted immigration of the Somalia diaspora both for business and involvement in politics (ODI 2018).

2.2 Key features of fragility and main challenges to stability and development

Analysis from a range of sources (Hersi, 2018; ODI 2018 op.cit; ICAI 2017) indicates some core drivers of conflict and instability in Somalia:

A weak and contested state: Somalia is still in the initial stages of state-building, and the reconstruction process is widely contested. While the two 'independent' provinces have basic state structures in place, the four newly created states are at a very incipient process of state formation. Despite encouraging progress in some federal level areas, such as increased revenue collection and public finance management (PFM) reforms, progress has been slow in strengthening the legitimacy of political power (ODI 2018 op.cit.).

Since late 2018, friction has occurred between the Federal Government and member states, linked to unclarified allocations of resources and powers across the different levels of government. Optimism regarding the peacebuilding and state building agenda has accordingly reduced. Operating space for humanitarian, development or peace building interventions has shrunk, and conditions for external actors are both difficult and dangerous (MFA pers. comm. June 2019).

Exclusive political settlements: Many communities and minorities in Somalia continue to feel excluded from political representation, particularly since the political elite comes mainly from the diaspora. Such exclusion has been capitalised on by e.g. Al Shabaab, to foster alliances. The Somali state's lack of capacity to perform the core functions of government has also led to disputes between groups who lack incentives to support the development of a functioning state. Competition to capture key economic assets is also fuelling conflict.

Lack of access to justice: Rather than settled rule of law, Somalia continues to experience diverse and often competing formal, religious and customary legal frameworks. This vacuum has become a central part of Al Shabaab's persuasion machinery, appealing to those who have grievances, as Al-Shabaab is considered less corrupt, 'clan-blind' and more expedite in delivery of justice.

Resource scarcity: Around 80 per cent of Somalia's GDP comes from agriculture, including livestock which represents 93% of the country's exports (World bank 2018) Agriculture-related activities however expose Somalia to environmental shocks in the arid climate of the Horn of Africa. Increased competition over water and pasture is raising the frequency of communal clashes, particularly between pastoralists and agro-pastoralists. Increasingly extreme weather conditions are also intensifying the scarcity of resources. As of May 2019, 5.7 million people were food-insecure, and 2.7 million could not meet their essential food requirements (WFP, 2019). Aid agencies in 2019 launched a Drought Response Plan calling for urgent and sustained resources to avert a major crisis (UNOCHA 2019).

Regional tensions and engagement: The role of regional internal conflicts in the nearby Gulf states have also affected Somalia, with federal member states and the Federation itself aligning with different powers at different times. Currently, Qatar is aligned with the Federal Government of Somalia while United Arab Emirates provides resources to Somaliland (New York Times 2019). Both Ethiopia and Kenya have troops in country who engage directly in the fight against Al-Shabaab, sometimes in violation of Somali territorial sovereignty.

2.3   Relevant national strategies, plans and programmes

Following the peaceful transition to a federal government in 2012, the international community launched the €1.8 billion New Deal Compact in 2013. This provided a strategic framework for security, political and statebuilding efforts in Somalia during the period 2014–2016. The Compact sought to align aid with Somalia's national priorities to expedite its recovery in general, and with the five OECD DAC Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goals (PSGs) in particular (Medinilla et al 2019).

The Compact was succeeded by the New Partnership for Somalia in 2017, following the peaceful transition of power in February 2017. In 2017, the Federal Government of Somalia endorsed its first National Development Plan (NDP) (2017–2019), setting out the state-building and development priorities for a three-year period. It outlines collective priority areas critical for development, including humanitarian issues, national security, inclusive politics, and economic recovery (Federal Republic of Somalia 2017). The Plan has been succeeded by the Somalia National Development plan 2020–2024 (not available to the case study team).

2.4   Donor policies and aid architecture in the context

Aid volumes: Somalia is highly aid dependent. Official development assistance (ODA) amounted to 27% of the country's gross domestic product (GDP) in 2018, slightly higher than the 21.5% share of GDP accounted for by remittances (MoPIED 2018). Humanitarian aid accounted for almost 60% of reported ODA in 2018.

According to data from OECD, Somalia received almost USD 1.8 billion in ODA in 2017 with the main donors being UK, US and the EU (OECD 2019a). Humanitarian aid funding was at its lowest in 2015 (USD 386 million) and peaked at more than USD 1 billion in 2017 due to drought. Non-humanitarian aid has ranged from USD 333 million in 2012 to 750 million in 2017.

Figure 1: Humanitarian and non-humanitarian aid 2012–2018 (USD million)
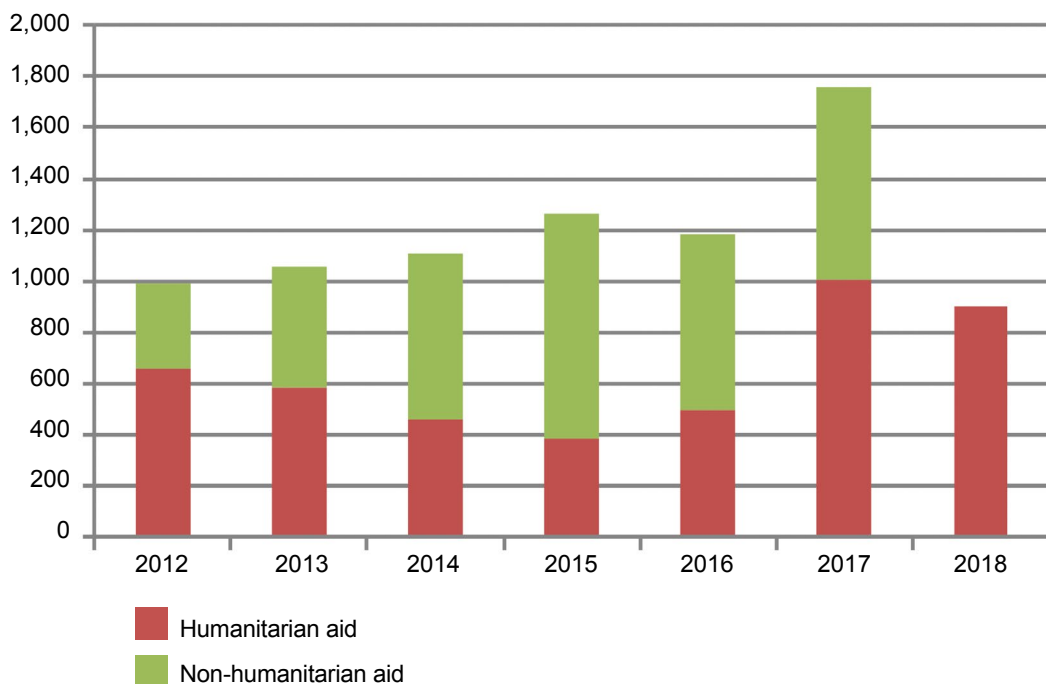
Source: Evaluation team using OECD DAC data

The US, the UK and the EU institutions are by far the biggest donors to Somalia (Figure 2). They are followed by Germany and Sweden, which provide mainly development financing (Medinilla et al 2019). Somalia also has non-DAC donors, including Turkey and UAE, and remittances estimated at USD 1.4 billion in 2016, making them by far the largest external financial support to Somalia (Majid et al., 2018).

Figure 2: Top Ten Donors for Somalia (USD million)
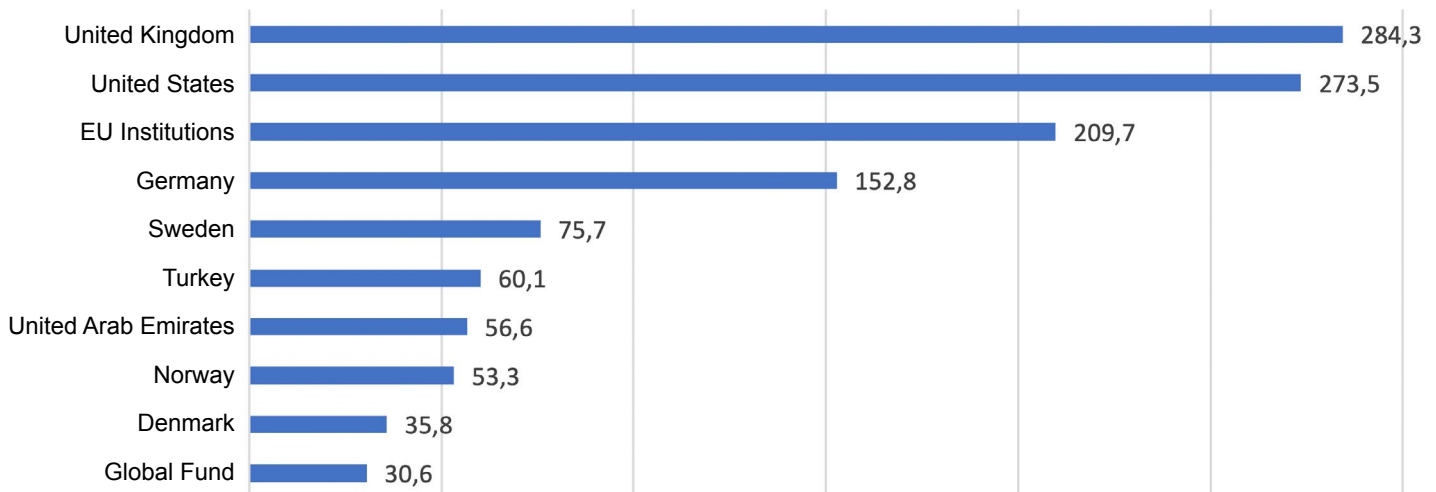
Source: Evaluation team, using OECD DAC data

Aid co-ordination: The Somali Partnership Forum is the highest level of aid architecture in Somalia. Chaired by the President, it provides the key forum for dialogue between the Federal Government of Somalia and international partners. Under an Executive Committee sit two main functions: the Comprehensive Approach to Security, which addresses the main areas of security required for stabilisation, and the Somalia Development and Reconstruction Facility (SDRF), which has both a co-ordinating and a financing function.

The SRDF brings together government, UN and bilateral partners in nine thematic pillar working groups coordinating the implementation of the NDP 2017–2019 (Figure 3). The SRDF comprises three multi-partner funding windows: the World Bank Multi-Partner Fund (WB MPF), the United Nations Multi Partner Trust Fund (UN MPTF), and the African Development Bank Fund for Somalia, each aligning with the peace and state-building goals included in the compact. (The Federal Republic of Somalia 2013).

Figure 3: Aid co-ordination structures in Somalia
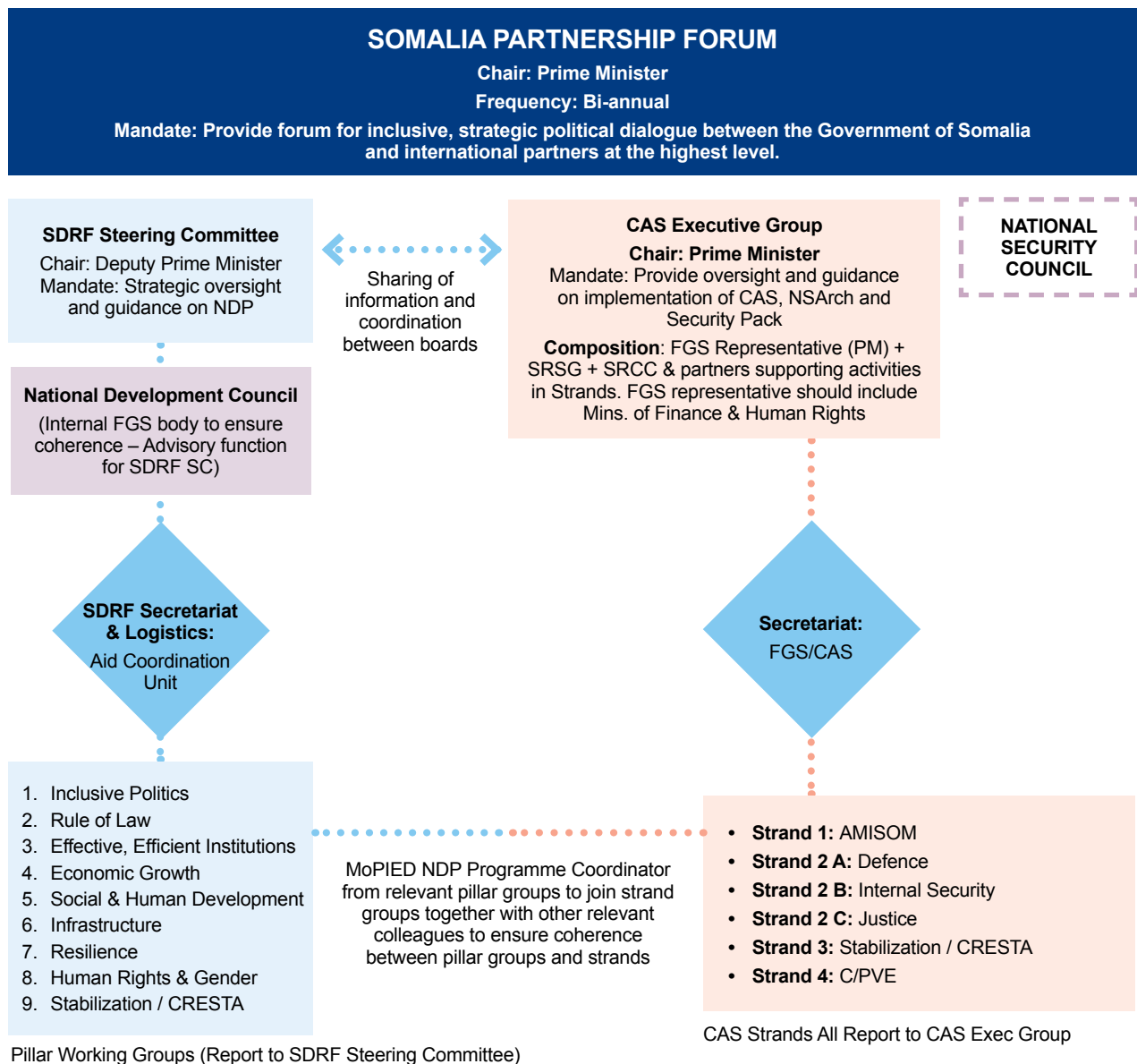
Source: Medinilla et al 2019

The two key relevant external frameworks in the context are the UN Strategic Framework for Somalia 2017-2020 and the EU 2017–2020 Somalia Country Strategy. Both focus heavily on the political settlement in the country.

- The UN Strategic Framework 2017–2020 contains Five Strategic Priorities:1. Deepening federalism and state-building, supporting conflict resolution and reconciliation, and preparing for universal elections. 2. Supporting institutions to improve Peace, Security, Justice, the Rule of Law and safety of Somalis. 3. Strengthening accountability and supporting institutions that protect 4. Strengthening resilience of Somali institutions, society and population. 5. Supporting socio-economic opportunities for Somalis.

- The EU Country Strategy 2017–2020 comprises three pillars: Pillar 1: Build effective and sustainable responses to security challenges; Pillar 2: Respond to vulnerabilities and create economic opportunities; Pillar 3: Build state legitimacy and responsiveness, and democratic governance.

Due to insecurity, the vast majority of donors have until recently managed their cooperation with Somalia from Nairobi. Finland retains its Embassy presence located in Nairobi, but staff travel frequently to Mogadishu and elsewhere in Somalia.

3 Evolution of Finland's cooperation in country since 2012

3.1 Overview of Finnish development and humanitarian cooperation in Somalia since 2012

Finland has a long history of support to Somalia. In the 1980s, Somalia was the recipient of one of Finland's largest bilateral country programmes. In the 1990s and early 2000s, Finland's support consisted mainly of humanitarian assistance given the range of humanitarian crises arising at that time.

Following increased stability in the late 2000s, Finland's development aid gradually increased; in totality, it provided around USD 15 million (EUR 13 million) in 2016 and 2017 respectively (OECD 2019a), directed through a combination of support to multilateral agencies and to Non-Governmental Organisations 9see section 4.3 below). Finland also actively supports the involvement of the Somali diaspora in Finland, including through capacity development as well as trade and commerce (MFA 2017).

Finland joined the Somalia Compact in 2013 and allocated its support through the New Deal modalities relevant at the time. Subsequently, Finland aligned its support to the priorities and objectives of the 2017–2019 National Development Plan (MFA 2017), selecting statebuilding and the rights of women and girls as its key priorities (see section 4 below). Given international sanctions and political sensitivities, opportunities for direct bilateral assistance are scant; consequently, Finland provides most of its financing through multilateral agencies or NGOs (see section 4.2 below).

3.2 Policy dialogue emphases

Finland participates actively in donor coordination and related political and policy dialogue concerning Somalia's peace-building and state-building, and has a particular focus on health and gender. It also participates actively in the co-ordination mechanisms surrounding key financial instrument such as the World Bank Multi Partner Fund and EU Budget Support, to which it contributes. Finland has also more recently engaged in dialogue around reconciliation, a major theme in Somalia's ongoing peacebuilding process (see section 5 below).

3.3 Finnish Co-operation beyond the Country Strategy

Finland provides a range of assistance beyond the Country Strategy, which covers development assistance managed by the (Regional) Department for East and Horn of Africa. These other forms of assistance include:

- Humanitarian assistance, which is managed from the Unit for Humanitarian Aid; it does not fall under the purview of the 2017-2020 Country Strategy. Such assistance is often provided as un-earmarked funding, allowing for recipients to decide how the funds are best spent (MFA 2019a), for example, that to UNFPA for work on its Country Programme in Somalia.

- Framework and some project-specific funding to CSOs/NGOs, which falls under the responsibility of the Civil Society Unit (MFA 2019a). In Somalia, NGOs have strong geographical outreach to diverse areas and populations and conduct the majority of project delivery on the ground, even when initial funds are channelled through UN agencies (Interviews with donors, UN agencies and NGOs in Somalia).

- Somalia is a pilot business country for FinnPartnership in 2018, with around 20 business projects currently in operation (MFA 2019a).

- Finally, Finland also provides support to crisis management and Reconciliation work, managed by the Political department, the latter opportunity having opened up in 2019.

3.4 Any key evaluation/review findings to date

While there have been no key evaluations or reviews of Finnish support to Somalia during the period under review, the country has been included in two centralised, larger evaluation by the MFA. The evaluation on the Improvement of Women's and Girls' Rights in Finland's Development Policy and Development Cooperation (MFA 2018d) and the evaluation on Forced Displacement and Finnish Development Policy (MFA 2019d) included Somalia as a case study.

The findings of these evaluations confirm those of the current case study:

- The evaluation on Forced Displacement's (MFA 2019d) findings on Somalia included a gap in climate change related support, 'surprising given Finland's commitment' in a country prone to draught and food insecurity which have 'constantly precipitated population displacements' (p. 62) and increased the need for humanitarian aid. Furthermore, the evaluation found a gap in internal displacement, the problem of IDPs being almost totally absent at the programmatic level although some multilateral organisations supported by Finland in Somalia do provide services in IDP camps. The evaluation also found that Finland had been active and well positioned in peacebuilding in Somalia through the work of Finn Church Aid with the Network of Religious and Traditional Leaders.

- The evaluation of women's and girls' rights (MFA 2018d, 74) found that the UNFPA midwifery support the programme had 'undoubtedly' contributed to raising the standard of midwifery services in parts of Somalia and had led to shifts in awareness and capacities of graduates to support women during pregnancy and delivery 'particularly where FGM leads to complications'.

4 Finland's Country strategy for Somalia

4.1 Overview & key features of the Country Strategy

Aims, objectives and strategies: The Country Strategy 2017–2020 was the first of its kind for Somalia. Its purpose is to ensure 'a more stable and secure Somalia through stabilisation, economic recovery and social development in order to address the root causes of social exclusion, radicalisation, and irregular migration' (MFA 2017). The Strategy adopts two primary impact statements: (i) Support to the realisation of women's and girl's rights, and (ii) the development of core state functions. The Country Strategy also places an emphasis on economic cooperation as a means to achieve development outcomes.

Aid volumes: The Country Strategy foresees a steady increase in bilateral development assistance (excluding support through CSOs, humanitarian support and private sector support) over time, from almost EUR 5 million in 2017 to 9 million in 2020. 58% of the planned volumes were allocated to women and girl's rights; 39% to governance (core state functions), and 3% for planning. The EUR 5 million in 2017 covered by the Country Strategy comprised less than 40% of the total Finnish aid to Somalia.

Modalities: Within the Country Strategy, Finland mainly funds multilateral (and one multi-bilateral) programme (MIDA FINNSOM, implemented currently by IOM). Support to CSOs is mainly financed outwith the Country Strategy, by Civil Society Unit (see section 3.3).

Risk: The challenges and risks of operating in Somalia, given the precarious political, security and humanitarian situation, are set out in the latest risk management analysis, an annex to the Country Strategy, with a high probability of (mostly security-and political-related) contextual risks – and with concomitantly potentially high impacts on implementation. Institutional and programmatic risks are mostly medium rated in terms of probability and medium or high in terms of impact (MFA 2019b). Mitigation measures include actions within MFA's control, such as internal flexibility, internal coordination and monitoring, and those which require strong partnership with others, such as seeking to improve aid coordination and risk sharing.

Piloting a concept for a more comprehensive approach: Somalia has been a pilot country for the development of a concept for a more comprehensive approach to Finnish co-operation. In this model, bilateral assistance under the Country Strategy, alongside humanitarian aid, civil society support and other forms of co-operation such as trade and security assistance, are brought together in a holistic way to ensure a joined-up approach to co-operation (MFA, pers. comm. April and June 2019). The outcomes of this approach have not yet been realised, but interviews with MFA in April and June 2019 indicated that the value the model had been recognised, with plans to expand the comprehensive model to all Country Strategies in future (ibid.)

4.2 Key features of the Country Portfolio (Finnish assistance to Somalia)

Total Finnish aid to Somalia 2012–2018 was EUR 93 million. Annual volumes ranged from EUR 8.5 million to EUR 20.7 million, with an average of a little more than EUR 13 million per year (Figure 4). Disbursement peaked in 2014 at EUR 20.7 million, and fell thereafter, being affected by wider cuts in Finnish development aid.

Figure 4: Disbursement by aid modality and year (EUR '000)
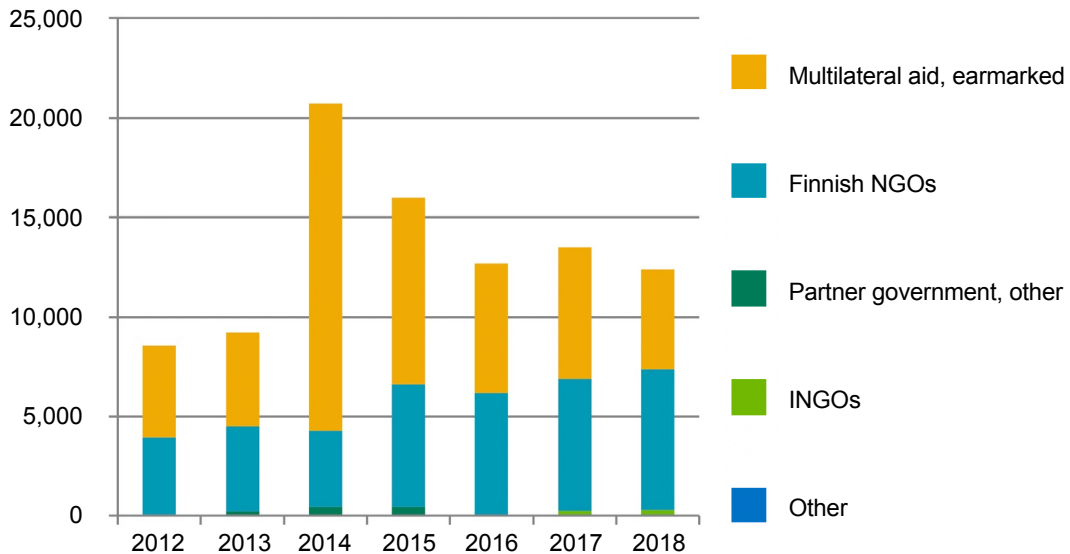
Source: Evaluation team, applying MFA data (2019)

Due to limited opportunities for direct bilateral assistance (see section 3.1), a total of EUR 91 million, or 98% of the total aid, was provide through multilateral agencies and NGOs. Multilateral aid constituted 57% of total assistance (EUR 53 million) and aid through Finnish NGOs 41% (EUR 38 million). Only a relatively small amount (EUR 1.7 million) was provided through INGOs (2017 and 2018 only), others and the partner government (until 2015). Figure 5 provides the distribution by aid modality:

Figure 5: Distribution by aid modality
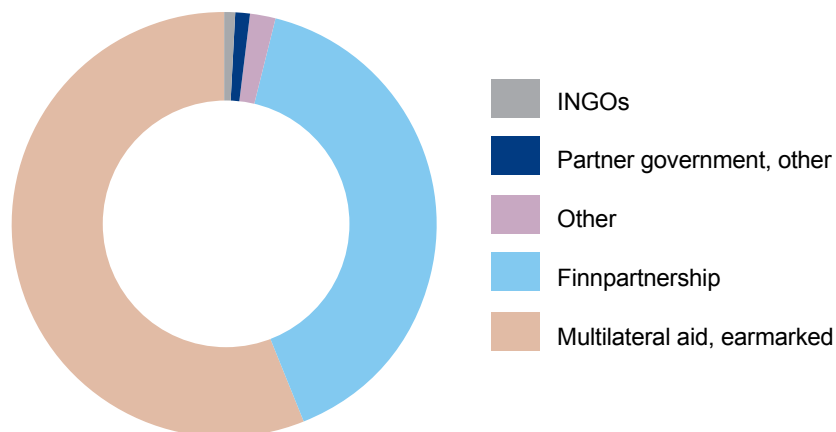
Source: Evaluation team, applying MFA data (2019)

The largest number of disbursements was made through Finnish NGOs (Figure 6), with 299 in total 2012–2018, followed by 40 in total as earmarked assistance to multilateral organisations. In keeping with the modalities applied, above, partner government; INGOs; Finnpartnership; and other channels combined received only 22 disbursements 2012–2018. The average disbursement to Finnish NGOs was comparatively low, however, at EUR 127,000 compared to more than ten times as much to multilateral organisations (EUR 1.33 million).

Figure 6: Number of disbursements by aid modality and year
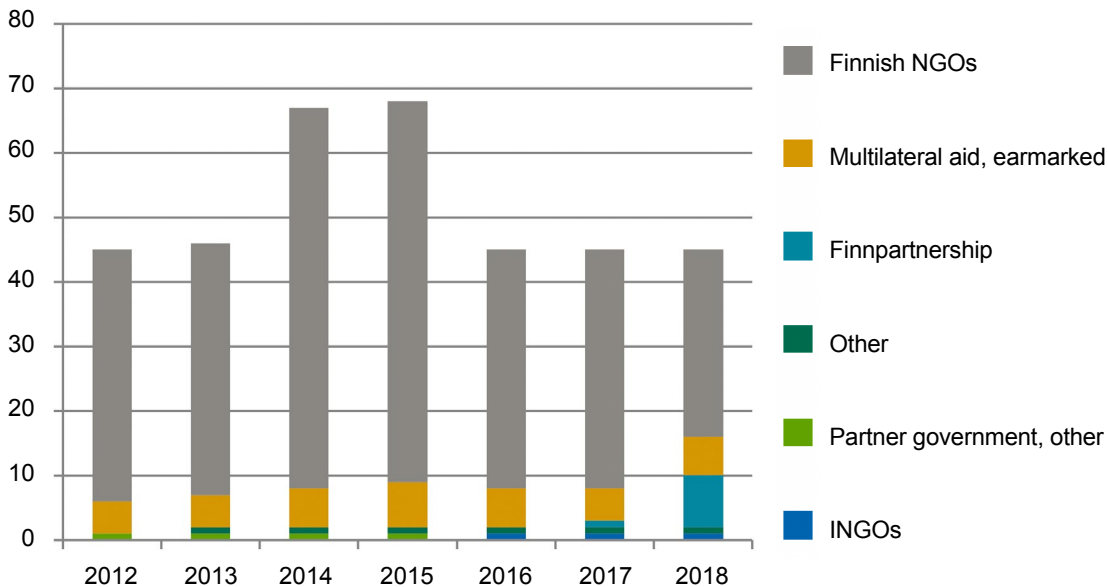
Source: Evaluation team, applying MFA data (2019)

A total of 52 organisations were supported during 2012 to 2018. This includes numerous smaller NGOs, many of which are run by the Somali diaspora (MFA 2019a). Figure 7 reflects the top 11[15] recipients of aid during the evaluation period and Figure 8 provides these broken down by year. Specific features are as follows:

- The main recipient of multilateral aid during the period was UNICEF, receiving more than 20% (EUR 16.9 million) of total aid to support health initiatives. IOM received EUR 12 million, also for health initiatives, including secondment of Somali diaspora experts (MIDA FINNSOM). WFP received EUR 8.5 million to provide food assistance, while EUR 4.5 million was provided to UNDP/EUR 3 million to UNOCHA to support the Common Humanitarian Fund until 2014.

- Finnish Red Cross (EUR 12 million) and Finn Church Aid (EUR 8.3 million) were the third and fifth largest recipients, respectively. Finnish Red Cross focused on health and humanitarian assistance, while Finn Church Aid (FCA) focused on humanitarian assistance and peace building. The seventh largest recipient was Save the Children (Pelastakaa lapset ry in Finnish) with EUR 4.5 million, focusing on child protection.

- The World Bank MPF was supplied with EUR 2 million in 2016 and EUR 1 million EUR in 2018. However, in December 2018, Finland made a new funding decision of EUR 8.1 million, for the years 2019–2022 (MFA pers. Comm. 2019).

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[15] Top 11 because UNICEF and IOM share a 10th place, each received EUR 3 million.

Figure 7: Disbursements by top 11 recipients, all years

- United Nations Office of Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA)
- World Bank Group
- Int. Solidary Foundation
- United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
- Pelastakaa lapset ry
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- FinnChurcAid
- World Food Programme (WFP)
- Finnish Red Cross
- International Organization for Mitigation (IOM)
- United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
- Others
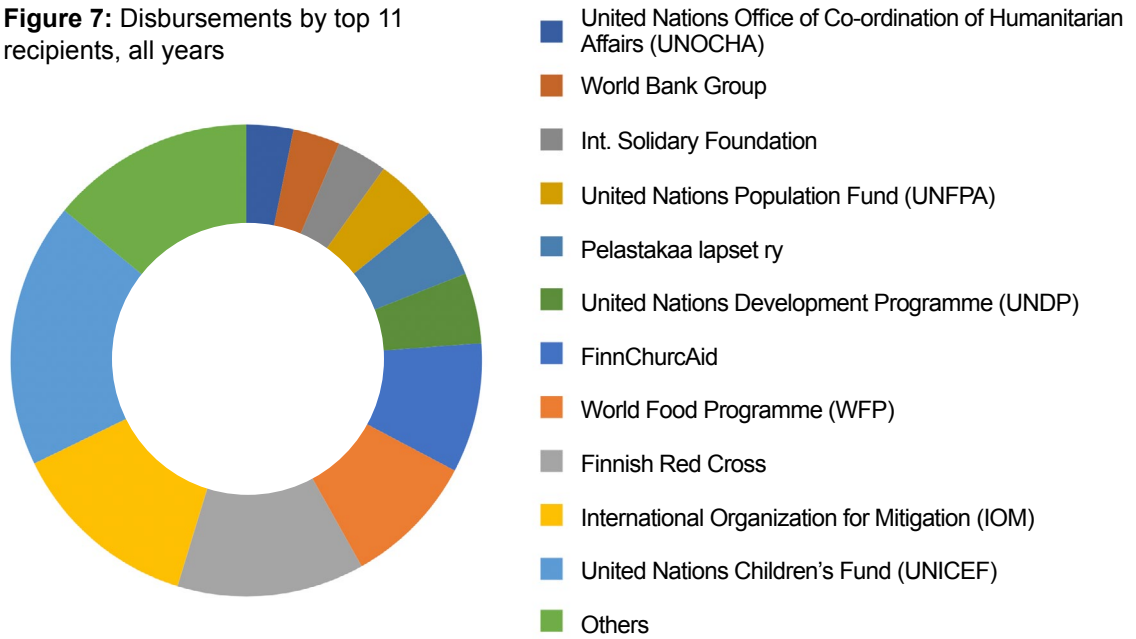
Source: Evaluation team, applying MFA data (2019)

Figure 8: Top 11 recipients by year, disbursement (EUR '000)

- United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
- International Organization for Mitigation (IOM)
- Finnish Red Cross
- World Food Programme (WFP)
- FinnChurcAid
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- Pelastakaa lapset ry
- United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
- Int. Solidary Foundation
- World Bank Group
- United Nations Office of Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA)
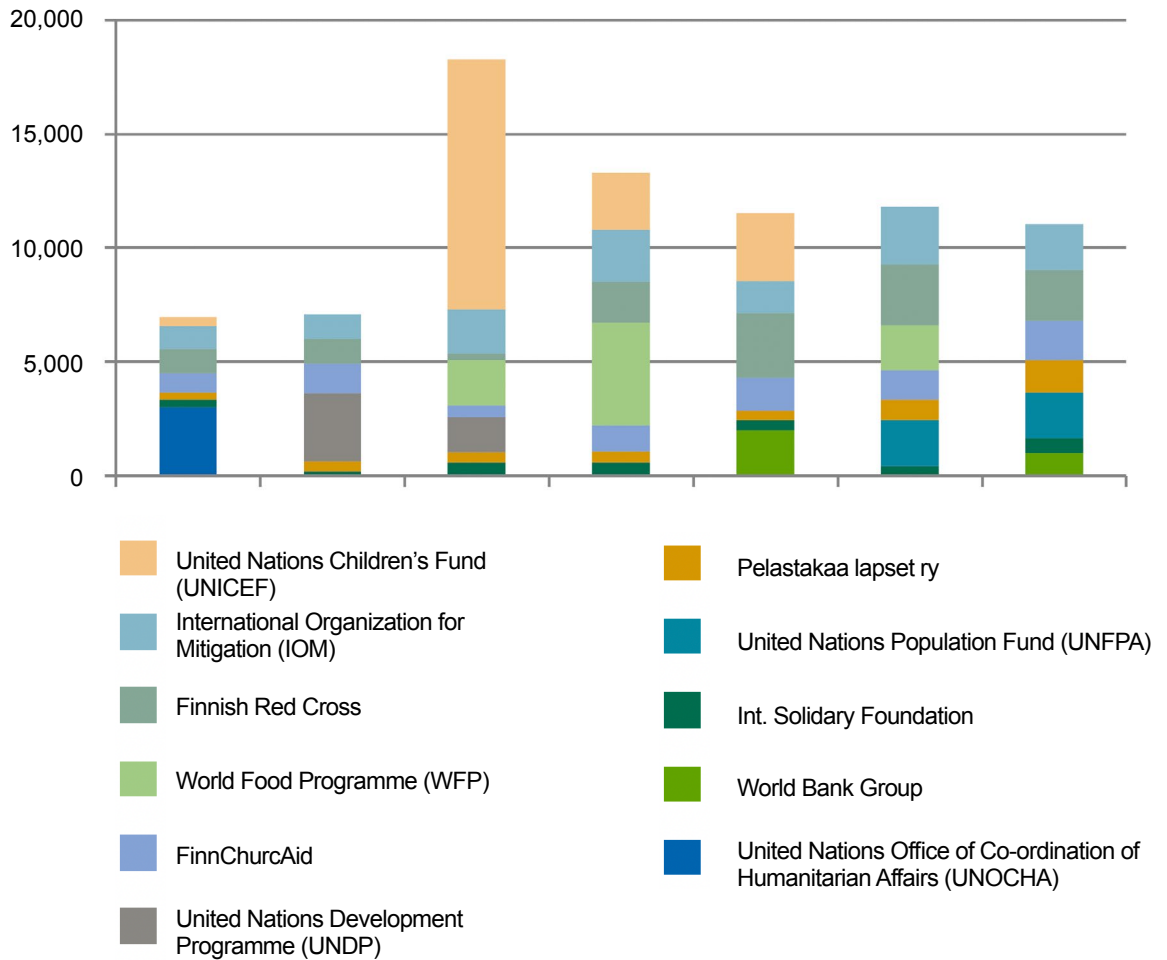
Source: Evaluation team, applying MFA data (2019)

Finnish aid 2012–2018 was provided across 14 different sectors, with Health and Emergency Response the two largest, respectively consuming a little more than a third of the total aid, with a total value of EUR 65 million (Figure 9).

Figure 9: Disbursements by sector
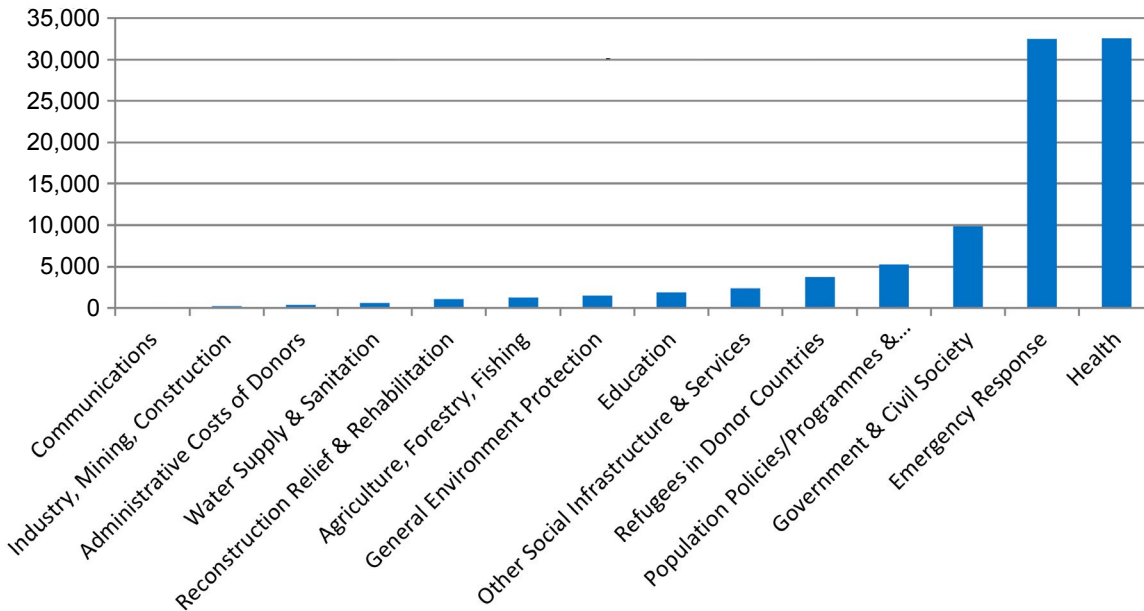
Source: Evaluation team, applying MFA data (2019)

Support to the health sector increased from less than EUR 2 million in 2012 and 2013 to EUR 5 million in 2014 and 2015, with a peak of more than EUR 12 million in 2014. Emergency response peaked in 2015 with over EUR 7 million (Figure 10).

Figure 10: Disbursement by sector and year (EUR '000)
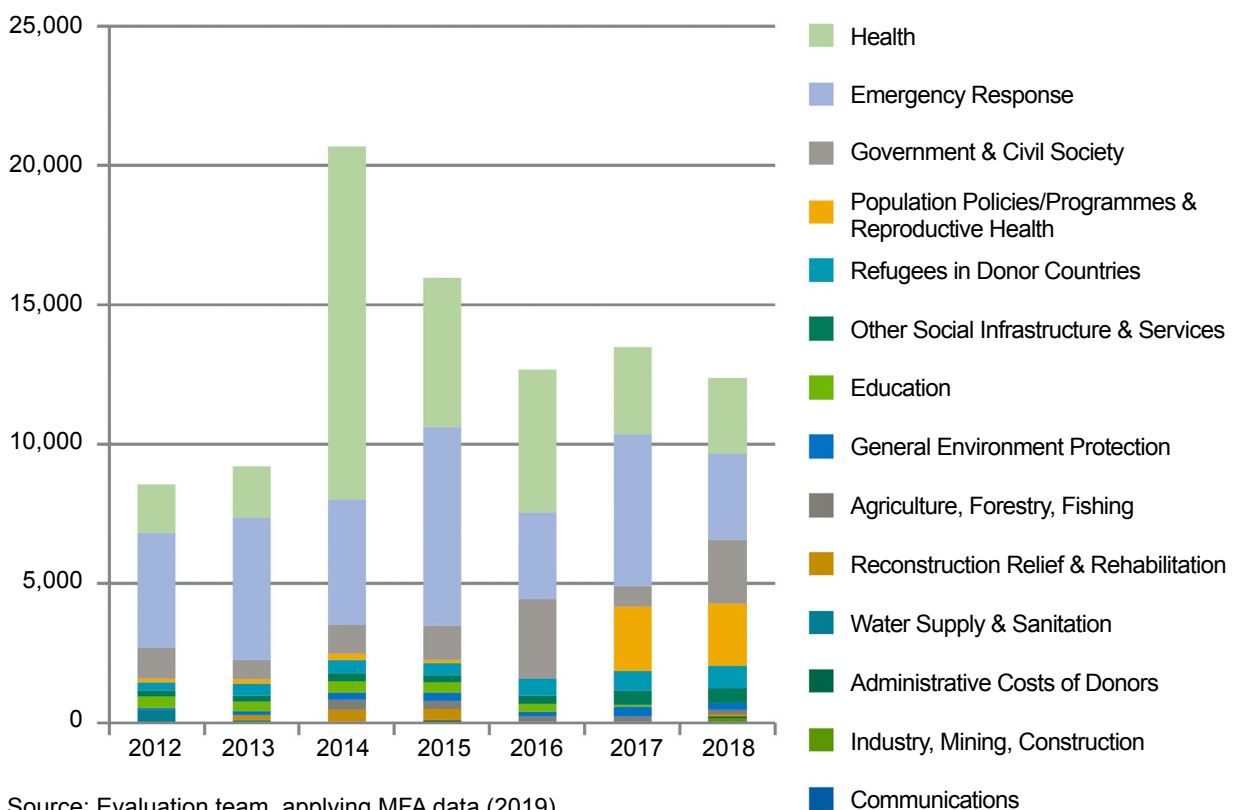
Source: Evaluation team, applying MFA data (2019)

Health Sector support was provided through UN agencies, large and small Finnish NGOs, while Emergency Response support was provided through larger Finnish NGOs and UN agencies. The third largest sector was Government and Civil Society with 10% of the total assistance, and comprised mainly support to women's and human rights projects through the UN/Finnish NGOs, mostly working through framework agreements.

Support to Population Policies/Programmes and Reproductive Health constitutes only 5.6% of the total aid from 2012 to 2018, with less than EUR 200,000 annually until 2016, after which it increased to EUR 2.3 million annually, or 18% of the total aid in 2018. This increase was due to EUR 2 million provided annually to the UNFPA country programme, in line with the 2017–2020 Country Strategy.

4.3   Description of the main interventions of the portfolio

The following table provides the sample interventions analysed for Somalia, their timing and sector. They also comprise the main interventions financed to date (see Annex 2 of the main report for a description of the sampling methodology):

Table 1: Overview of sample interventions analysed for Somalia

Implementing Organisation	Title of Intervention	Duration	Sector
UN Children's Fund	Somali Joint Health and Nutrition Programme (JHNP)	2014–2016	Health
UN Development Programme	Support to Somalia Common Humanitarian Fund (CHF)	2012–2014	Emergency response
Finnish Red Cross	Humanitarian assistance, International Committee of the Red Cross, Finnish Red Cross	2013–2015	Emergency response
Finnish NGO, Viestintä ja kehitys -säätiö (VIKES)	SoFiTV – Freedom of Expression Journalism and Public Service Broadcasting in Somalia	2013–2016	Government & Civil Society
World Bank Group	Multi-Partner Fund for Somalia (MPF)	2015–2018	Government & Civil Society
Finnish NGO, Pelastakaa lapset ry	F.a: Strengthening Child Protection Systems for a Safe & Protective Environment for Children	2013–2016	Other Social Infrastructure & Services
Finnish NGO, Finnish Church Aid	Strengthening Civil Society Engagement in Political Dialogue and Statebuilding Processes – Interim South West Administration and Banadir	2016	Government & Civil Society
Finnish NGO, Intern'l. Solidarity Foundation	F.a: Reducing and mitigating gender-based violence in Togdheer Region, Somaliland	2014–2016	Government & Civil Society
Finnish Red Cross	F.a: Integrated Health Programme	2014–2016	Health
World Food Programme	Humanitarian assistance Somalia	2014–2017	Emergency response
UN Fund for Population	UNFPA Somalia Wellbeing of Women and Girls	2015–2018	Population Policies/ Programmes & Reproductive Health

Implementing Organisation	Title of Intervention	Duration	Sector
International Organization for Migration	Somaliland Health Sector Support (MIDA FINNSOM IV)	2017–2018	Health
Lääkärin Sosiaalinen Vastuu ry/ Physicians for Social Responsibility	Public-Private-People: Joint and Inclusive Effort Against Tuberculosis in Somalia	2016–2018	Health
Pelastakaa lapset ry (Save the Children Finland)	Child Sensitive Social Protection in Somaliland	2017	Other Social Infrastructure & Services

Support to building core state functions primarily takes place through the World Bank-managed Multi-Partner Fund to Somalia (MPF), with additional contributions to the EU's Budget Support initiative (not included in sampling but studied during fieldwork). The main health sector support provided 2014–2017 was the Joint Health Programme, subsequently succeeded by support to UNFPA's work on reproductive health and Gender Based Violence. Finland's three multi-bilateral projects in Somalia, are health sector projects. Somalia was pilot country for Finnpartnership in 2018, with eight projects supported through an independent organisation, though funds are sourced from the development budget.

4.4 Results management and reporting on the Country Strategy/Portfolio

Results framework: The Country Strategy results framework has two expected impacts, each with one or two expected outcomes (Table 2):

Table 2: Impact and outcomes of Country Strategy

Expected impact	Outcomes
1) Rights of women and girls increasingly realised	1.1: Increased availability and use of maternal and reproductive health care 1.2: Improved national response to gender-based violence
2) Core State functions for delivery of basic services strengthened	2.1: Public administration is strengthened, and public revenue increased

Outputs are also presented, as well as some indicators, though not all have associated targets. The results framework itself has some technical challenges, including:

- Limitations in logical aggregation, for example with two impact statements, which do not logically aggregate up to provide an overarching results statement for Finland's intended achievements in Somalia

- Many outputs provided are actually inputs e.g. Output 1.1.2 Strengthened workforce in maternal, neonatal and reproductive health services.

- No specific targets are cited, and pathways to results are not consistently determined (or at least explicit)

Results monitoring of the Country Strategy takes place through annual assessment of the indicators in the results framework and the provision of accompanying Management Responses (MFA, 2017a, 2017b, 2018a, 2018b). A one-off self-assessment exercise covered the period 2017–2018, comprising an internal mid-term review of the Strategy (MFA, 2019b). Annual reporting for 2018 reports good progress: Of the strategy's three main outcomes, 2 were rated as satisfactory (1.1 and 2.1) and 1 as unsatisfactory (1.2). At output level, progress was rated on 4 as satisfactory, 3 as good, 2 as unsatisfactory (both under Outcome 1.2).

5 Key findings

5.1 Relevance

5.1.1 Alignment for fragility

Country Strategy not based on conflict and fragility analysis: With limited access and exposure to the operating terrain in Somalia, due to the fragile security situation, a sound analytical basis is essential if the Country Strategy and Finland's programming in Somalia are to be grounded in a sound knowledge of operating conditions.

Preparation time and human resources for the 2017 Country Strategy were limited (MFA pers. comm. 2019) and the Somalian context is highly volatile and fluid. Consequently, MFA opted not to invest in a detailed conflict or fragility analysis within the Country Strategy document, but instead to provide a brief and limited description of conflict dynamics. This text does not reference or consider conflict or fragility at the regional or local level, despite the centrality of these dynamics in Somalia's instability. Nor does it reference or apply the extensive range of conflict and fragility assessments available for Somalia (for example Danish Refugee Council 2017; Botha and Abdile 2016 and others).

Improvements in internally-generated conflict and fragility analysis since the CS – but limitations remaining: Finland subsequently made efforts to improve its internally-available analysis base, reflected in an MFA-generated 2018 Political Economy Analysis (PEA) and Situation Analysis which combined included a more comprehensive analysis of the fragility factors in Somalia (MFA 2018a). However, both these analyses sit at the federal rather than member state or regional level. Internal documentation reflects awareness of this gap; the self-assessment (2019) critiqued a lack of analysis of regional and local conflict-related dynamics, and reflects on consequent implications for programming.

Little explicit adoption of conflict-sensitive approaches: The two key outcome areas within the Country Strategy were shaped by a) Finland's own priorities, in the case of gender and b) the international community's intentions, in terms of the development of core state functions. Neither of these intended outcome areas are linked to a robust analysis of how conflict and fragility in the country shapes the specific challenges in these areas, nor does the Country Strategy signal the accordingly conflict- and fragility-sensitive response required. For statebuilding, in particular, however, conflict and fragility dynamics – which are intrinsically linked to the political settlement in the country – are central to designing appropriate responses.

Limited generation/use of conflict and fragility analysis by partners: As a comparatively small agency, Finland places a high level of trust in partners to develop conflict-sensitive approaches. But there is no formal requirement or verification to ensure that these are developed or implemented by partners, whether multilateral (who are as section 4.1 indicates implement the bulk of Country Strategy-related programming in Somalia) or in partnerships with civil society organisations.

This lack of a formal requirement is reflected in evidence from the desk review and field study for this case study, which found that little attention to conflict and fragility analysis in documentation. The exception was the World Bank-managed Multi Partner Fund, which provides a detailed

fragility/conflict analysis, including analysis of dynamics at local and regional level. By contrast, and in response to an MFA requirement for funding, all CSO initiatives did include a risk assessment, though many of these focused purely on technical or implementation issues, rather than considering conflict- or fragility-related risks.

Partner organisation staff interviewed demonstrated highly variable knowledge of conflict dynamics, often linked to how frequently and to where they were able to travel throughout Somalia.

5.1.2 Alignment to beneficiary needs

'Beneficiaries' in Somalia include Government (federal and regional level) and the wider population. Both development and humanitarian needs at all levels in Somalia are acute, as described in section 2.1 above.

Limited needs analysis in the Country Strategy: The Country Strategy document itself contains a limited needs analysis, including commentary on capacity weaknesses in federal Government of Somalia. However, descriptions of need are broad brush, rather than specific, and do not capture levels below the federal. In particular, the needs of member states – whether governance or population-related – are not reflected, although these are diverse across Somalia, as multiple sources record (see e.g. Goodman and Majid, 2017; Medinilla et al 2019, Hersi 2019). Nor is the role of the clan-based system and its effects on political dynamics and structures recognised, a gap noted in the 2019 Self-Assessment. The 2018 PEA and Situation Analysis do not contain additional analysis of needs, either governance or population-related.

Reliance on partners to conduct project/programme-level needs analysis: As for conflict and fragility analysis, above, Finland relies largely on needs assessments conducted by its implementing partners. Analysis for this case study found comprehensive conduct and use of needs assessments by partners, with all 14 projects analysed containing a direct beneficiary needs analysis. Examples included:

- MPF: Design documentation contains a detailed diagnostic of needs around institutional capacity building, focus on governance needs etc - noting differences by region.

- Support to UN agencies such as UNFPA; UNDP; WFP; UNICEF: Needs analyses are available though are often broad-brush e.g. 'women and girls' as a beneficiary category

- Civil society project vulnerability analyses were extensive and nuanced, as follows

- ISF/GBV project: The project is based on a problem analysis developed in focus groups of local people of the root causes of GBV.

- SCI: detailed child rights analysis is followed through by programme strategies to target the IDP population in Hargeisa, and work with the government towards building child-sensitive social projection schemes.

Beyond the Country Strategy, humanitarian assistance (support to the Common Humanitarian Fund previously) relies on Humanitarian Needs Overviews (HNOs) conducted by UNOCHA which categorise beneficiaries according to humanitarian needs. Finnish agreement documentation 2012-2014 cites from the HNOs to justify contributions in terms of needs.

Limited disaggregation of needs: The Country Strategy does not flag vulnerability categories beyond women and girls, and does not direct partners to particular vulnerable groups it wishes to target. Neither is disaggregation requested by the MFA, except in the case of 'women and girls'. Partners interviewed indicated that they are not required to report to MFA on this, though CSO project reports particularly showed presence of such disaggregation in annual and final reports.

However, some key parameters for vulnerability exist in Somalia. Beyond women and girls, these include: 2 million IDPs and minority ethnic groups, who are not recognised by Government of Somalia. There is no mention of minorities specifically either within the Country Strategy, supporting documentation or project documentation.

Desk review of 14 projects, supported by fieldwork, found relatively strong disaggregation both analytically and programmatically with direct beneficiaries, although mainly around a relatively blunt categorisation of women and girls. There was little reference to (or, in interview, recognition of) ethnic minorities, a politically sensitive issue in Somalia, beyond the ongoing Reconciliation work.

Limited strategic direction on targeting: At aggregate (Country Strategy) level, few clear links are available from the (limited) needs analysis available in the Strategy and subsequent programme strategies. This analytical 'gap' undermines the intended justification for some areas of proposed programming. For example, the Country Strategy's stated recognition of the need to build State capacity through Public Financial Management (PFM) support is not supported by a discussion of why PFM support particularly is required, and why Finland is well placed to intervene here. For gender, while the Country Strategy does contain some limited information on gender imbalances within Somalia, the case for Finland intervening on the specific areas identified – GBV and women's and girls' rights within health, and particularly sexual and reproductive health (SRH) – is not clearly made.

Moreover, beyond the Finnish priority of gender in a broad sense (usually interpreted as 'women and girls'), the Country Strategy does not contain a clear statement determining which (if any) vulnerable groups will be targeted under the Strategy; to what extent; and why. Nor is there any statement of the intended balance of assistance programmatically in terms of targeting of specific vulnerable groups.

Use of analysis to inform programmatic targeting: At individual project level, desk analysis and fieldwork found needs assessments clearly linked to programme designs, with targeting and intervention strategies appropriately tailored to the needs identified at design stage. For example, work by MIDA FINNSOM to target IDPs and nomads was based on clear analysis of the needs of these groups.

Below the generalised level of 'women and girls', specific vulnerable groups targeted by Finnish interventions under the Country Strategy included:

- IOM MIDA FINNSOM – IDPs and nomads
- UNFPA – victims of GBV
- ISF – victims of GBV and those in need of livelihoods/education
- WB MPF – government capacities at central level; fiscal reforms
- EU BS – PFM and fiduciary management capacity

However, NGOs and UN agencies tend to target different vulnerabilities according to their mandate (UN) or speciality (e.g. SCI, children), rather than being directed more cohesively by the Country Strategy. Thus, Finland's targeting of vulnerabilities appears somewhat scattered.

5.1.3 Alignment to key national stakeholder needs

Strong alignment with national strategies and plans: The main articulation of national stakeholder needs in Somalia is the Somalia National Development Plan 2017–2019, described in section 2.3 above, and the successor NDP 2020–2024. The Country Strategy is fully aligned

to the very comprehensive 2017–2019 Plan, noting that 'Finland's development cooperation with Somalia contributes particularly to…Building of effective and efficient institutions, and Social and human development.' The successor NDP 2020–2024 was developed after the Country Strategy and was not signed off (or available for review) at the time of case study conduct.

Programmatic alignment with relevant strategies and plans: Analysis of Finnish-funded projects and programmes in Somalia finds them all well-aligned with key relevant strategies and plans in the context. Examples include:

- The VIKES project references, and is aligned to, the Media Law and the Somali Federal Media Strategy
- LSV/PSR: The project is aligned with the objectives of the National Tuberculosis Programme, as well as with the National TB Strategies 2015–2019, and the TB programme funded by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.
- The SCI/SCF Child Sensitive Social Protection in SL project is aligned to the UNICEF-run and MOLSA-implemented social protection scheme (child grants) in Somaliland
- UNFPA's work in Somalia is aligned with Somalia Reconstruction and Development Programme 2008–2012 and the UN Somalia Assistance Strategy 2011–2015

Programmatic co-ordination with national systems and structures: Finnish-funded projects (often beyond the Country Strategy) also showed strong integration in implementation with national systems and structures. For example, the Reconciliation work is conducted from within the Federal Government's Ministry of Interior, with MFA's Political Department funding a full-time adviser to the Ministry. The Save the Children projects work in close coordination with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MOLSA) and has successfully lobbied for child protection legislation. The International Solidarity Foundation (ISF) has integrated local authorities in anti-GBV activities in a province in Somaliland.

Generally positive perceptions of relevance but a recognised need to shift direction: All interviewees – including government at various levels – in Somalia considered that the Finnish priorities, state-building (or institution building) and gender were relevant for the context in Somalia, and accord with national requirements. Interviewees noted a particular comparative advantage in health, dating back to the 1980s with the large TB project in Somalia funded at the time by Finland. However, interviewees raised two areas where Finland's relevance to national priorities could be refined:

- Finland's implementing partners raised questions of relevance concerning the Country Strategy's current focus on the federal level, perceiving it as increasingly challenged in a context of increased tensions between national and state-level authorities. Government representatives at federal member state level in Puntland and Somaliland reinforced this request, stressing that the strongest need at State level was for technical capacity development, including in health, education and statebuilding. MFA representatives recognised this challenge, indicating that while broad alignment with the NDP 2017-2019 had been achieved, Finland's contribution to wider strategies needed going forward to adopt a focused approach, considering its small resources. A strong emphasis was now needed on member state level below federal and on emphasising state legitimacy (MFA pers. comm. 2019).
- Several interviewees questioned why Finland was not engaged in the education sector in Somalia, given its comparative advantage in this elsewhere (see for example other case studies in this series)
- Several interviewees also signalled that Finland had scope to extend its work in peacebuilding, given its reputational capital and demonstrated abilities in the Reconciliation arena in the country.

Relevant policy dialogue priorities: Finland's two main policy dialogue priorities, as reflected in the Country Strategy (section 4.1) are: Gender – women's and girls' rights and particularly within health, and Statebuilding (focus on PFM and capacity strengthening at federal level). In relation to the NDP 2017–2019, these are appropriate priorities, though the case is not clearly made within the Country Strategy for Finland's comparative advantages here.

All partners considered Finland's assistance and priorities for its policy dialogue relevant in the context, with no areas of dissonance identified. The importance of the gender priority was especially flagged as important since this is not always recognised by Government at federal or regional level. Finland's comparative advantage in health dialogue was well recognised across all donors and UN agencies and NGOs.

Finland is considered by partners to have a strong capacity and reputation for its reconciliation work, linked to its perceived 'neutral' status – something few external actors in Somalia share. Finland's partners stressed a strong desire for Finland to do more in this arena, since it can potentially achieve more bilaterally than e.g. the EU can multilaterally, because of the need to share information across all EU Member States if a multilateral approach is adopted.

5.1.4 Adaptation over time

A rapidly evolving context and a challenge to remain 'relevant': The context in Somalia is highly dynamic, with conflict continuing and increasing threats from Al Shabaab. The concept of statebuilding is highly dynamic, and the political settlement has not yet been fully 'worked through' within all member states, and between member states and the federal government. Tensions between the federal government and some states are increasing and the current Government is expected to be replaced at the next elections. (HNO 2019 and HNO data prepared for 2020 (UNOCHA); Somalia National Development Plan 2017–2019; UN Strategic Framework for Somalia 2017–2020: MFA PEA and Situation Analysis 2018; MFA Self-Assessment Somalia 2019). In such a dynamic environment, remaining 'relevant' is a challenge for all international partners.

Country Strategy remains static but programmatic adaptation has occurred: The Country Strategy, as a fixed document, has necessarily remained static since 2017. At the level of the intervention, however, there are many examples of strategic and programmatic adaptation:

- *The reconciliation opportunity arose and was seized.* The intensification of Finland's work on Reconciliation, in response to an opportunity arising in late 2018, is an example of an opportunity noted and seized. Finland now chairs the donor group Friends of Reconciliation, and co-chairs the Subgroup on Federalisation and Reconciliation with the Ministry of the Interior (Federal Government of Somalia). Partners highly praised Finland's role in this area of work.

- *MPF:* Progress reports 2015–2018 suggest that it took a while for the fund to become operational, and stringent WB procurement regulations have been a challenge, but overall the MPF has adapted to track the progress of statebuilding in Somalia and to build capacities as needs arose.

- *SCI:* A project designed as child protection work evolved into more integrated approach, which focuses on state systems and processes as well as support to individual beneficiaries.

However, while the Country Strategy has provided a broad framework for relevance, in itself it has not provided a vehicle for / facilitated adaptation. Rather, it has remained relatively passive, with adaptation occurring at implementation rather than strategic level. Finland's financial systems have also played a role, given the high level of pre-programming required on an annual basis. For example, while the opportunity to work on reconciliation was seized, no budget was

available to support this shift. Finland does not have contingency funds in projects, nor a Flexibility fund a Sweden has, a factor that is often challenged by partners in a context like Somalia, where needs can change on a daily basis.

5.2   Effectiveness

5.2.1 Delivery of results for beneficiaries and other stakeholders

Strong alignment of results frameworks with the Country Strategy but limited availability of results data: Review of project results frameworks found those of all relevant projects (i.e. within the time period of the Country Strategy) aligned with the Country Strategy results framework, though in most cases this alignment appeared due to the breadth of the Country Strategy outcome areas. No interviewees from implementing partners had applied the CS in setting or determining their own intended results.

However, tangible results reporting from Finnish-funded initiatives is limited, with most CSO projects for example – which fall outside the Country Strategy – reporting upwards to their respective organisational HQ, where results are aggregated before reporting annually to MFA. Similarly, Finnish contributions to UN projects, which form the bulk of Country Strategy activity, mostly do not require separate results reporting, but rather Finland applies the UN's own broader corporate reporting as a basis to consider performance. The two exceptions were the MIDA FINNSOM and MPF initiatives, which both contained comprehensive results reporting.

Results have been achieved from Finnish assistance in Somalia: In terms of achievement, based on the limited data available, results are available from Finnish assistance to Somalia as follows. These are reported at three levels: 1. Country Strategy impact areas; 2. Contributions to non-discrimination including climate change 3. Contributions to reduced fragility and PSG goals.

The CS identifies two main impact areas, as follows:

Impact Area 1: Women and girls rights realised: The country case study finds that the 2019 Self-Assessment's rating of a Developing grade in the self-assessment of 2019 accurately reflects performance, with projects demonstrating some tangible achievements to expand Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) to women and girls. Example results reported (which could not be independently verified by the cases study, but are documented) were:

- Reductions in maternal mortality in areas of coverage (UNFPA, SCI)
- Childbirth assisted by skilled healthcare staff increased (UNFPA, SCI)
- Training and professionalisation of midwives (ISF, SCI, UNFPA)
- Reductions in GBV prevalence and support systems for survivors established/legislative frameworks developed and implemented (ISF, UNFPA)
- Some small gains in FGM, with legislative frameworks developed but not yet implemented (UNFPA).

However, most of these gains have taken place in the healthcare arena (though some progress has also been achieved in supporting girls through education e.g. via previous UNICEF support). MFA has not engaged with the Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development substantively or strategically. Moreover, fieldwork identified gaps in taking a more strategic approach to gender down to State level, with government interlocutors stating that the issue was not raised in dialogue with Finland. The Self-Assessment also notes that the Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA) could still be deepened, a finding which this case study endorses (see section 5.4)

Impact Area 2: (Statebuilding): Similarly, this impact area receives a Developing rating in 2019 under MFA's Self-Assessment. The case study endorses this assessment, but also finds that substantive gains have been made in some important areas for Somalia's development. These include:

- PFM improvements through EU Budget Support, which are both tangible and demonstrable

- Strengthened public administration and increased public revenue under the MPF initiative

- Technical capacity and education policy frameworks improved through MIDA FINNSOM project

- Health sector capacity improved through projects such as MIDA FINNSOM, support to UNFPA, ISF and SCI

- Local governance improved through FCA's work in delivering elections at local level

- In Reconciliation, policy frameworks and structures established, and broad-based public consultation conducted

However, the self-assessment notes that insufficient attention has been paid to the conflict dynamics in the country, with consequent state-level weaknesses. The case study endorses this observation at aggregate level, noting that, while some statebuilding-related initiatives are highly conflict-sensitive, such as the Reconciliation work, others do not appear to have a clear strategy for ensuring that results planning takes account of the volatility in the Somalian context.

Lack of aggregation to higher level change: Moreover, in the absence of a clear and directive strategic framework (or cohesive theory of change), the results generated have mostly been individualised to specific projects. They have not aggregated up to generate a cohesive set of aggregate-level contributions to higher level results, geared to Finland's overarching purpose of its assistance in Somalia.

5.2.2 Delivery of results for non-discrimination and climate change

The main results delivered for non-discrimination are in gender (see section 5.2.1 above). The case study was not able to determine results delivered for climate change, given the relative youth of the portfolio and the limited engagement here.

The results related to gender are – as described in the previous section – mostly related to reduced FGM/GBV and maternal mortality. Finland is viewed as a donor with a strong principled/empowerment-focused stance in policy dialogue on gender rather than adopting an 'equal number of women and girls' approach. This approach was praised by development partners (donors, UN, NGOs) and by national level government, but regional level stakeholders did not recognise a strong dialogue on gender from any donor, including Finland.

5.2.3 Contributions to any reductions in fragility

Finnish assistance has contributed to some aspects of fragility reduction: Although reductions in Somalia's fragility cannot be robustly measured, most of Finland's projects have contributed directly or indirectly to different areas of reducing fragility (See: Volume 1, Annex 2). However, these contributions are subject to considerable caveats and cannot be robustly linked to the Country Strategy – indeed, many of them fall outside the Strategy itself, being CSO-implemented interventions.

The main contributions identified were in (i) improving the rights and status of women and girls; and (ii) more democratic and accountable public institutions through governance and reconciliation work.

Improved rights and status of women and girls	
Reductions in/increased awareness of GBV	ISF, UNFPA, SCI
Supporting girls through education	IOM
More democratic political institutions	
Improved local governance	FCA
National level reconciliation work	FCA/MFA
Greater accountability of public institutions	
Improved financial planning and accountability	EU Budget Support,
Improved social sector service delivery	MPF

However, there are a number of caveats to these contributions, including:

- Contributions are at different levels, ranging from EU Budget Support/MPF to smaller scale NGO projects;

- While individual gains are significant, they are dispersed and do not aggregate up to 'more than the sum of the parts' to an overall contribution in fragility reduction

- Somalia remains highly fragile and Finland's contributions are small, comparatively. Therefore, Finland's contributions need to be seen as smaller-scale contributions to the wider statebuilding process over the medium term.

Aspects of reducing fragility in which no tangible contributions from Finland could be identified were as follows:

- Strengthened rule of law
- Enabling environment for civil society
- Quality of education improved
- Increased number of people have access to decent work, livelihoods and income
- Improved food security (beyond some humanitarian support to WFP)
- Increased access to water and energy
- Strengthened South-South cooperation

The assistance has made some limited contributions to the realisation of PSGs 1 Inclusive political settlements and conflict resolution fostered and 5 Capacity for accountable and fair service delivery built: Analysis of available results data against PSG goals finds most progress against PSGs 1 and 5, as follows (though subject to the caveats above):

PSG 1 Inclusive political settlements and conflict resolution fostered	Provision of local elections under FCA governance work; Reconciliation work supporting an accepted political settlement; Previous support for UNDP on governance issues
PSG 5 Capacity for accountable and fair service delivery built	Capacities for financial management and social sector planning build under MPF, EU Budget Support MIDA FINNSOM work to support the education and health sectors UNFPA work on health sector reform SCI work on education and social safety nets

Contributions to other PSG goals are more limited. Small-scale contributions have been made to PSG 2 on *Establishing security of people* through a slight reduction or at least increased awareness of the negative consequences of GBV (e.g. the ISF GBV project and UNFPA). Under PSG 4,

Employment generated and livelihoods improved, the MIDA FINNSOM and ISF projects reporting increased employment and improved livelihoods in the health sector and through microenterprise respectively. Under PSG 3, *People's access to justice increased*, promising progress is being provided by the Reconciliation work, but this has yet to demonstrate tangible results.

Little role of the Country Strategy in fostering results: However, while the demonstration of results achieved in Somalia is in itself compromised by limited data, connections from results to the Country Strategy are even less tangible. The Case Study was not able to determine any instances of a clear connection from the Strategy to results. Indeed, several discrete factors would suggest that the Strategy had little to no influence on results generation:

- Almost no stakeholders in Somalia or working on the country from Nairobi were familiar with the Strategy. The exceptions were some CSOs who had used the Strategy as a reference when applying for funding. However, none could describe its content.

- The Country Strategy had not shaped the intended results of partners – there was little to no explicit connection between the two

- The Country Strategy was not actively disseminated externally, according to MFA interviewees

- The main uses of the Country Strategy, according to MFA and to those few stakeholders who were familiar with it, were to legitimise choices made (whether positive choices or to resist proposals being made); to help articulate a position externally; and as a reference point when reviewing the country programme as part of annual reporting. It was not used for accountability or learning with partners.

Accordingly, no links can be robustly drawn between the Country Strategy's intended results and those achieved by Finland's programming. Consequently, chains of contribution from partner results through to CS results are at best intangible. The results achieved by most projects have helped realise the Country Strategy's intended results, but contributions are by default rather than by design.

Human resourcing: One major challenge arising to effectiveness is the scant human resources available to manage a complex aid programme in a highly complex and protracted emergency situation such as Somalia. A 2019 evaluation of Finland's work with forced displacement (MFA 2019a) reported insufficient human resources at the Embassy of Finland in Nairobi. This gap has been subsequently reflected elsewhere: including in Finland's own 2019 self-assessment of its Somalia programme (MFA 2019) and in the corresponding risk analysis (MFA 2019b) attached to the self-assessment. MFA stakeholders were highly aware of these constraints and their effects on the Embassy's ability particularly to support the effectiveness of Finnish-funded initiatives.

5.2.4 Role of the aid co-operation modality in supporting delivery of results

The full range of funding modalities are used, allowing for targeting at different levels: Portfolio analysis found a diverse range of aid modalities being applied in the Somalian context. However, the main Country Strategy-related modalities were support to multilateral agencies, through which the bulk of Country Strategy-related assistance was delivered. There were only three multi bi projects; two implemented by IOM (MIDA FINNSOM in Somaliland and a similar health-related project in South Central region; plus support to UNFPA for its country programmes focused on women and girls' health). Other forms of assistance related to the Country Strategy (the partner government; INGOs; Finnpartnership; and other channels), all received less than 5 disbursements respectively 2012–2018.

Lack of a clear rationale for aid modalities: Neither the Country Strategy nor interviewees in MFA could provide a clear rationale for the balance of funding modalities. In fact, modality selection arises as a result of different departments in MFA making their own independent decisions on modalities (for example, the Humanitarian and CSO units). The Finnish Embassy in Nairobi has little to no input into the choice of modalities used.

Some features of the Somalian context also influence the aid modalities applied. For example, the high levels of resource in Somalia being directed through NGOs is a feature of the aid co-operation environment, where NGOs take specific geographical responsibilities for particular areas. Providing outreach to any given area therefore requires the direction of resources through NGOs. This is reflected in the high proportion of UN financing provided to NGOs as implementing partners (e.g. 47% of total contributions for UNOCHA and 70% for UNICEF, a comparatively high proportion).

...But an appropriate balance for the context: Despite the lack of a clear rationale, the relative balance of modalities was appropriate for the context in Somalia. For support delivered through UN agencies, contributions supported the targeting of large-scale needs. Being an active partner in large-scale UN or multi-donor initiatives also provided Finland with a 'seat at the table' in key policy dialogue forums, and the ability to leverage and influence accordingly. For particular geographical areas, or outreach to vulnerable groups, CSOs were the logical choice, who in turn can provide Finland with insights into real conditions on the ground in different geographical areas. These inputs are considered valuable for an agency with a comparatively small staffing cohort.

Scope for greater use of multi-bi co-operation: Although the multi-bi modality has considerable potential advantages, helping solve challenges of limited human resources while contributing to large-scale efforts in Somalia, it has only been used within the MIDA FINNSOM project. Multi-bi financing would allow Finland to make a strong connection between the support provided and project results, whilst also gaining scope for influencing and leverage. At the same time, there is a risk of Finland, in its trust-based approach, placing too few demands on the UN in a context where the UN's role has been previously critiqued (Manuel et al 2017, Medinilla et al 2019). Finland would also need close sight of how, and on what, money was being spent – as well as a degree of confidence that standards on conflict sensitivity and other concerns were being met.

Lack of flexibility in funding modalities: A frequent complaint from both MFA stakeholders working on Somalia and also implementing partners was the relatively rigid financial procedures of the Finnish system, which constrains the ability to respond quickly where conditions require – a particularly important feature of the Somalian context given its volatility. The 2018 Reconciliation work was one example, but many others were provided by partners, such as the inability to switch funding streams to different priorities as e.g. emergency conditions broke out, or projects were affected by conflict-related factors. This comparative rigidity was unfavourably contrasted to Finland's generally flexible and non-burdensome approach to implementation partners.

5.3 Coherence

5.3.1 Role of the CS in enabling coherent MFA assistance (Internal coherence)

Clear statement of intent on coherence in the Country Strategy: The Country Strategy makes a clear statement of intent on coherence. 'Finland's approach to Somalia is comprehensive. Finland aims to support Somalia through various means and channels in a coherent and effective manner. These include support for development and state-building, humanitarian

assistance, and crisis management support.' (MFA, 2017). As noted in section 3.3, Somalia has been a pilot country for the development of a concept for a more comprehensive approach to Finnish co-operation. In this model, bilateral assistance under the Country Strategy, alongside humanitarian aid, civil society support and other forms of co-operation such as trade and security assistance, are intended, in future Country Strategy iterations, to be brought together in a holistic way to ensure a joined-up approach to co-operation.

Limited coherence across assistance types: However, in practice, the case study found little to no coherence across the different types and modalities of Finnish assistance provided. Both desk analysis of projects and field study found few synergies between, and even limited awareness of, Finnish-financed interventions. Only one project reviewed – the intervention implemented by Physicians for Social Responsibility – referenced synergies with the IOM MIDA FINNSOM project, in the form of secondment of health sector professionals from the Somali diaspora. For the most part, however, humanitarian, CSO, political and development initiatives have been separately funded, managed and implemented. For example, the work on reconciliation has sat under the Political Department rather than being closely linked to development assistance financed by the Regional Department. Projects supported by FinnPartnership are implemented by a separate organisation.

This weakness was noted in the Self-Assessment of 2019, which rated coherence as 'Developing' –'Mechanisms for the use of development cooperation instruments alone, such as the continuation of humanitarian and development cooperation and the enhancement of synergies and effectiveness in bilateral and non-governmental cooperation, have been weak' (MFAa, 2019). Interviews with MFA staff and with implementation partners reinforced this finding, with few Somalia or Helsinki-based implementation partners having an awareness of the 'aggregate' level of profile of the totality of Finnish assistance to Somalia, nor of individually Finnish-funded initiatives. MFA staff both in Nairobi and Helsinki noted that they lack a clear overview of the diverse forms of assistance provided. At Embassy level, some decisions taken by Helsinki were not always communicated fully in advance (MFA pers.comm. 2019).

No overarching strategic framework: The Self-assessment also notes that 'a guiding political documentary is missing' as one of the constraints to coherence. The case study findings endorse this observation, with projects implemented discretely rather than forming part of a more comprehensive strategic (and politically-geared) narrative for Finnish assistance to Somalia. However, there are signs that this limitation is recognised and being addressed; the merging of the political and development agendas in Somalia and the impossibility of separating the two has led to the rationale for the Head of Development Co-operation in the Nairobi Embassy to cover some aspects of political dialogue, given her background and expertise in this field.

Little to no effort by MFA to 'join up' assistance across actors or initiatives: Interventions are implemented discretely, with no apparent effort by MFA to link interventions funded under separate modalities or by separate departments. No partners interviewed had experienced efforts by MFA to join up assistance e.g. across CSOs at country level, in order that lessons could be learned/experience shared. None had experienced enquiries by MFA on coherence with other Finnish-funded partners working in the sector/in other sectors. Visits to partners/projects tended to be perceived as 'bilateral' – 'they came to see our work' (interviews with implementing partners).

5.3.2 To what extent did the Country Strategy modality support alignment with the plans and policies of other key donors/international actors in the context? (external coherence)

Clear statement of intent for external coherence: Somalia is a comparatively well-harmonised context, with functioning co-ordination structures within humanitarian and development assistance. There are however some current donor divides, with some donors such as the UK prioritising a stabilisation agenda and focusing more on the federal government level. Meanwhile, Nordic 'plus' donors, including Finland, are more focused on reconciliation and on the member state level (interviews).

The Country Strategy states a clear intent to participate in the relevant structures and systems – *'Finland participates actively in donor coordination and related political and policy dialogue concerning Somalia's peace-building and state-building and aims to ensure that its support is coherent and coordinated with other external actors. Finland participates actively in donor coordination and related political and policy dialogue concerning Somalia's peace-building and state-building and aims to ensure that its support is coherent and coordinated with other external actors.'*

A strong role in donor co-ordination forums: The Self-Assessment (2019) notes that: 'Finland has actively participated in general and sectoral political dialogue, including in international bodies…Finland has played a constructive role in donor cooperation and has taken responsibility under the co-presidencies.' It also notes however that '…results are difficult to verify and advocacy can be enhanced by setting clear goals.'

Case study findings confirm this observation. All UN and donor partners all agreed that Finland indeed participates actively in relevant forums. Examples include:

• Somalia Donor Group

• 'Nordic Plus' informal donor group (Nordics plus Switzerland)

• Health sector working group (Finland co-chairs with UNFPA)

• Reconciliation (co-chair with Sweden of donor Friends of Reconciliation; co-chair with Ministry of the Interior on Subgroup on Federalisation and Reconciliation)

Finland was consistently described by partners, including donors and the UN, as a 'constructive' and 'measured' partner in co-ordination forums in the Somalia context. Its perceived comparative advantages were mainly cited in two areas:

• Reconciliation and sensitive governance areas – Finland lacks a colonial history (important in Somalia) and is perceived as a neutral broker. It is considered by partners as one of the very few external actors who can engage in this area. (interviews)

• Health – Finland is perceived as having strong technical abilities and knowledge of the sector by all its partners.

Strong participation in multi-stakeholder programming: Finland is also an active partner in a range of multi-partner initiatives including the MPF and EU Budget Support. Its contributions were described by partners here as highly valuable, with its perceived neutrality providing considerable 'reputational capital', in turn allowing it to generate a high-level trust with both donor partners, the UN and Somali authorities. It was described as 'neutral, mature and measured' by a wide range of partners, with its only constraint being the limited human resources at its disposal.

Strong use of leverage in policy dialogue: The case study identified several instances where Finland had, despite its comparatively small size, successfully influenced major policy dialogue and programming processes. Examples include:

- Within Reconciliation, where Finland's political support was considered much more important than the amount of dollars provided. Finland successfully convinced other donors, such as Sweden and Norway, to join the reconciliation agenda

- Within the MPF, Finland successfully influenced the World Bank to have social workers' salaries paid from the Fund.

These examples reflect a generally-held sense by partners of Finland 'punching above its weight' in Somalia.

5.3.3 Role of the Country Strategy in contributing to wider Development Policy objectives

Explicit alignment of the Country Strategy with DPP objectives: The Country Strategy contains a clear statement of alignment with DPP 2016–2019 – namely, the intent to contribute to stabilisation, economic recovery and social development in Somalia, and support Somalia's efforts to address the root causes of social exclusion, radicalisation, and irregular migration to countries in the region and overseas. Its two outcome areas, of statebuilding and the rights of women and girls, are fully cascaded from the DPP. The Strategy is also in line with the Government Report on Development Policy (2016), which states that a key priority for Finland's engagement with Somalia is to support the realisation of women's and girls' rights, which is a key aim of the Strategy.

Programmatic contributions to DPP objectives: Desk and field study found all Finnish funded projects/programmes interviewed, studied or visited, are fully coherent and complementary with the DPP goals for the period. Specific areas of alignment (according to the relevant time periods) were:

Table 3: Programmatic contributions to DPP objectives

DPP	DPP goals for the period	Specific areas of contribution
DPP 2012–2015	1) Democratic and accountable society that promotes human rights	• Support for UNDP on governance issues •
	(4) Human development;	• SCI work on education and social safety nets • MIDA FINNSOM work to support the education and health sectors • Joint Health and Nutrition Programme with multiple actors • Childbirth assisted by skilled healthcare staff (SCI) • Increase in access to education (UNICEF) • Reductions in material mortality (SCI)
DPP 2016–2019	(1) Women's and girls' rights	• Reductions in maternal mortality (UNFPA) • Training and professionalisation of midwives (ISF, UNFPA) • Reductions in GBV prevalence and support systems for survivors established/legislative frameworks developed and implemented (ISF, UNFPA)

DPP	DPP goals for the period	Specific areas of contribution
	(3) Governance and democracy	• Provision of local elections under FCA governance work; • Reconciliation work supporting an accepted political settlement; • Capacities for financial management and social sector planning build under MPF, EU Budget Support • Improved social sector service delivery under MPF

The DPP the predominant frame of reference: The case study also finds that, for MFA staff and partners, DPP objectives remain the key reference point for Finnish engagement in Somalia (interviews). They are perceived as a) having broader relevance across Finnish assistance, beyond the development assistance covered within the Country Strategy and b) as a constant point of reference above the Country Strategy, which is perceived as having been transcended by contextual change, as reflected in e.g. the move into Reconciliation programming (Interviews). MFA stakeholders referenced the DPP as the key reference point for dialogue and articulating Finnish priorities in Somalia, rather than the Country Strategy (interviews). Civil Society Unit finding requirements for partners were also, until 2019, linked to the DPP rather than the Country Strategy (though according to stakeholders interviewed, MFA will seek in future a clearer relationship between CSOs' development cooperation activities in partner countries and Country Strategies).

5.4 Connectedness

5.4.1 Adherence to commitments on Human Rights Based Approaches and related frameworks including the International Humanitarian Principles, Do No Harm and Accountability to Affected Populations

Complex issues surrounding human rights and related frameworks in Somalia: Human rights are a complex issue in Somalia, particularly given challenges around State legitimacy (see for example UNSOM 2019, Osman 2018). External actors frequently report human rights violations (UNSOM 2019 op.cit.) and the UN system in Somalia has been challenged in its addressing of human rights issues (Maunder et al 2018). Similarly, frameworks such as the International Humanitarian Principles, for humanitarian assistance, have proven far from straightforward for external actors to uphold, as several studies and evaluations have shown (ibid; interviews). Interviewees in Somalia openly acknowledged the challenges, but stated that their task in such complex operating territory, was to try to uphold and adhere to human rights frameworks, and those guiding humanitarian assistance, 'as far as feasible given the complexities here.' (interviews).

Country Strategy explicitly based on a human rights approach but lacking specificity: Human Rights Based Approaches (HRBAs) are a cornerstone of Finnish development policy (REF). The Country Strategy follows this approach, making an explicit commitment to HRBAs in its text – 'Finland's engagement is based on the cornerstones of the HRBA, including equality and non-discrimination, participation, transparency and accountability. Finland emphasises inclusiveness and the need to create a federal state that is accountable and that promotes equality and the protection of the most vulnerable groups.' However, it does not provide any further detail, such as which areas of rights are especially challenged in Somalia, or the rights of which vulnerable groups Finland intends to prioritise. This gap is reflected in the Self-Assessment of 2019, which provides a rating of 'Developing' and states that: 'The National Indicative Program is human rights-based, as it strengthens the capacity and capacity of those responsible to carry out their tasks. SRHR focus is also strong. However, the situation of the most vulnerable and minor-

ities from the point of view of human rights has not been mentioned. The role of civil society in strengthening accountability should be further considered and linked to the indicative program.'

Finland a strong articulator of human rights in policy dialogue: Partners observed that Finland plays a strong role in articulating a HRBA in policy dialogue and other co-ordination forums in Somalia. Its approach was described by partners as 'explicit' and 'progressive' in this respect (interviews), with a particular focus being placed on rights areas including gender and vulnerable groups. Raising human rights issues with the authorities in Somalia is a complex area, and MFA and other international actors in Somalia indicated that often a 'vulnerability' lens is more politically palatable.

Variable attention to human rights in programming: Desk review of 14 projects found references to human rights approaches in only two projects explicitly (MIDA FINNSOM and VIKES). However, in interview, all funded partners indicated that they apply HRBA approaches, and provided evidence that they had done so. Several civil society organisations had conducted extensive trainings on HRBAs (e.g. FCA; SCI; VIKES; ISF, LSV-PSR). UN agencies reported that attention to HRBAs was mandated by their own organisational attention to the issue, and was particularly prominently noted in UNDP, UNICEF, UNDP and IOM. Programmatically, however, the case study found that depth of engagement varied across agencies/programming, with some programming, particularly in the health sector, adopting a 'servicing women' rather than a 'real-ising the rights of women' approach.

Raising of human rights concerns but no formal monitoring or verification requirements: All implementing partners interviewed stated that Finland raised human rights issues, and their addressing in programming, consistently. However, in line with the trust-based approach of Finnish assistance generally, partners also agreed that – whether within or beyond the Country Strategy – Finland does not require partners to adhere to human rights commitments, and nor does it verify that all programming is human rights-sensitive. No partners reported requests by MFA to report on application of HRBAs.

International Humanitarian Principles, Do No Harm and Accountability to Affected Populations not well reflected in programming: For the limited humanitarian assistance to Somalia, the few involved partners stated that Finland does not consistently raise these concerns, nor request or require adherence to them. While UN humanitarian agencies state that their own guidelines require these issues to be addressed programmatically, recent evaluations and reviews have highlighted shortcomings, despite the complexity of the context (Maunder et al 2018). Finland places considerable trust in its multilateral partners to implement these concepts; yet as for HRBAs, a lack of consistency and follow through risks weakening application in practice.

5.4.2 Consideration of the humanitarian-development-peacebuilding nexus

Somalia is a prominent global example of the 'nexus': Internationally, Somalia has frequently been cited as a prominent example in 'triple nexus' discussions globally (ODI 2018). A resilience-recovery plan was in place even before the 'nexus' was theorised globally. The maturity of thinking in this area is reflected in a nexus working group formally embedded in the UN architecture. However, there is currently a divide in thinking between donors on the issue, with some focused on the stabilisation agenda, through the vehicle of the national Stabilisation Fund – and those who prioritise a different model of peacebuilding, focusing on the social and economic contract between the federal states and the federal government (interviews). Finland is included in the latter group.

Country Strategy adopted a functional statebuilding lens: The Country Strategy does not reference the 'nexus' explicitly but instead adopts a statebuilding lens, following the gradual stabilisation of the context. 'Finland supports the building and strengthening of the core functions of the Somali state, including those of the federal and regional governments.' As section 5.1 above notes, statebuilding is one of two outcome areas for the Strategy, reflected specifically in Public Financial Management reforms and capacity strengthening at central level. The approach here is functional rather than political, however, seeing 'enhanced capacity' as the vehicle to build up the Somali state.

The Strategy does not however consider the political settlement or the legitimacy of the state, and nor does it consider other areas of statebuilding, such as enhancing state accountability to citizens or, in particular, reconciliation issues. The 2018 PEA however does note the need for a longer-term strategy for civil society engagement in reconciliation, and the self-assessment of 2019 notes that MFA recognise the importance of the political settlement and state legitimacy going forward (MFA 2018a).

Recognition of the need to address medium- and longer-terms concerns in development programming but few links from humanitarian to development programming: All development projects contain a clear link forward to aspects of statebuilding. Examples include:

- Support to UNFPA includes the development of stronger national health systems while at the same time delivering services to the conflict-affected population.

- The Finnish-supported MPF prioritises stabilization and peacebuilding by strengthening Somalia's governance and the management of the state's revenues. The initiative includes four thematic priority areas, which address the key functions of government.

- The SCI-run Child sensitive social protection in Somaliland provides both cash transfers to affected populations but also helps build social protection legislation and governmental systems in the long term.

All interviewed partners (NGO and UN) state that Finland in dialogue with them stresses the importance of linking projects and assistance to longer term aims of development or statebuilding.

Notably, the humanitarian support provided to the Common Humanitarian Fund and WFP does not contain any clear links into development. Although this support predated nexus discussions, the 2019 self-assessment noted that 'Humanitarian assistance lacks integration with longer term development aims'. Humanitarian stakeholders interviewed in Somalia recognised this shortcoming and stated that respective agencies were committed to its addressing e.g. through an increase in resilience-focused livelihoods work.

An emergent focus on peacebuilding: Finland was praised for its policy dialogue efforts on peacebuilding, reflected for example in its engagement in key forums on reconciliation and joint donor strategizing for development. Its main programmatic engagement on peacebuilding was reflected in its support for reconciliation activities (including funding Forgiveness Day); and through Finn Church Aid's work on local elections. Partners stated that, going forward in Somalia, reconciliation and peacebuilding need to lie at the heart of the development agenda going forward and that Finland is one of the very few well-placed external actors to engage on this. A far stronger role for Finland was therefore both envisaged and desired.

6 Conclusions

Relevance

Overall, Finnish support to Somalia has been relevant to stakeholder and beneficiary needs over time. However, this relevance did not arise because of the Country Strategy, which played a 'benign but passive' role in shaping assistance on the ground. Indeed, as new opportunities for programming open up in the highly dynamic context of Somalia – such as Reconciliation – the Country Strategy 2017–2020 is at risk of losing its utility to influence programmatic choices.

The lack of fragility analysis in the 2017–2020 Country Strategy r offered little guidance to partners on Finnish expectations for fragility and conflict-sensitivity within the portion of assistance governed by the Country Strategy. Finland has placed considerable trust in its partners to conduct and apply fragility/conflict analysis within programming; however, this trust has not been borne out by consistently conflict-sensitive approaches applied in designs and in implementation. The Country Strategy's limited focus on the political settlement, and particularly its complex dynamics below the federal level, rendered the Strategy a relatively blunt instrument with which to address the complex and changing needs in Somalia.

Despite the lack of detailed needs analysis or clear statement of intent on specific vulnerable groups, below the level of 'gender' Finland's programmatic assistance in Somalia is broadly relevant to population and government needs. Given the immense needs of the country, however, relevance would be more difficult to avoid than to achieve. Some areas are evident gaps: Finland lacks an explicit or implicit strategy to address the concerns of minority ethnic groups. Additionally, a sharper political analysis of needs at all levels – governance and beneficiary – is needed, with a particular focus on those of member states.

Overall, Finland's priorities – both programmatic and policy dialogue-related – are well-aligned with national priorities in Somalia, but with scope for refinement going forward. Notably, scope for closer engagement in education and peacebuilding work exists (building on its existing reconciliation portfolio). There is also a strong case – recognised by MFA – for redirecting its policy dialogue and programming below the federal, and towards the member state level, in its next Country Strategy iteration.

Finally, in such a dynamic context as Somalia, even a two-year strategy risks rapid outdating. The extensive programmatic adaptation by partners and by MFA has enhanced relevance, but adaptation has taken place 'around' the Country Strategy rather than being actively supported by it. Excessively rigid (or at least perceived as such) financial procedures have also constrained the scope to enhance relevance. Given the extensive contextual evolution in Somalia since 2017, and anticipated rapid further evolution going forward, a flexible approach is needed

Effectiveness

Despite data limitations, the case study finds that Finnish assistance in Somalia has achieved some promising results considering its scale, both directly through programming and indirectly through policy dialogue. However, these cannot be linked to the Country Strategy, which has covered only a very partial component of assistance supplied. Some significant foundations have been built in the two key outcome areas of gender and 'statebuilding' (in the purely functional

sense adopted) though results are mainly individualised to projects rather than being aggregated to higher level contributions at a more strategic level. Results in 'non-discrimination' have mainly comprised gender-related achievements, and the case study was not able to determine results delivered for climate change, given the relative youth of the portfolio and Finland's limited engagement here.

However, in the absence of a clear and directive strategic framework (or cohesive theory of change), the results generated have mostly been individualised to specific projects. They have not aggregated up to generate a cohesive set of aggregate-level contributions to higher level results – that it, they have not comprised 'more than the sum of the parts'.

Although reductions in fragility cannot be robustly measured, most of Finland's projects have contributed directly or indirectly to different areas of reducing fragility, with most contributions arising in the areas of improving the rights and status of women and girls; and more democratic and accountable public institutions. The assistance has contributed to the realisation of PSGs 1 Inclusive political settlements and conflict resolution fostered and 5 Capacity for accountable and fair service delivery built. However, these contributions are subject to considerable caveats. Moreover, they cannot be robustly linked to the Country Strategy – indeed, many of them fall outside the Strategy itself, being CSO-implemented interventions. Overall the Country Strategy has not played a strong role in fostering results

The full range of funding modalities have allowed for targeting at different levels. Despite the lack of a deliberative strategy for the selection of modalities, Finland has achieved an appropriate balance for the context, given a) the need for major outreach in the face of large-scale needs, which implies working heavily through a multilateral approach and b) the geographically-oriented role of NGOs, which allows for outreach to specific target populations and areas of the country. Here too, however, constraints in financing flexibility, actual or perceived, have constrained Finland in its adaptive capacity in a highly volatile context. There is scope for greater use of the multi-bi modality.

Coherence

While the Country Strategy positions itself as a vehicle for improved coherence, in reality, its scope to realise this is limited, given the diverse range of assistance types provided by multiple MFA departments to Somalia. The Country Strategy itself provides a narrative for one type of assistance – development aid provided by the Department for the East and Horn of Africa – but even within this, does not comprise an overarching strategic framework, given its lack of focus and directiveness. It has functioned more as a conceptual umbrella than a strategic driver to shape assistance.

The limited (or absence of) effort by MFA to 'join up' assistance across actors or initiatives has also compromised coherence. Even within the scope of assistance provided under the Country Strategy approach, there is little lateral engagement. More broadly, humanitarian assistance and trade support implemented by Finnpartnership are separately implemented to development support managed by the Department of East and Horn of Africa.

Nonetheless, Finland has contributed extensively and constructively to a wide range of donor co-ordination and other key aid co-ordination mechanisms in Somalia, despite its limited human resources. It is perceived by partners as a mature, neutral and 'measured' actor in the context, with defined areas of expertise, and as having particular technical strengths in health. It has a specific comparative advantage in its reputational capital for neutrality, which has allowed it to successfully engage in reconciliation and sensitive governance areas – aspects which few actors possess in the Somalia context.

The Country Strategy is aligned with the respective DPPs for the period, and programming has made demonstrable (if small-scale) contributions to DPP goals. The DPP remains the predominant reference point for Finnish assistance in Somalia, given its more encompassing reach across assistance types and modalities, and its perceived ongoing relevance.

Connectedness

Despite major complexities surrounding human rights issues in Somalia, Finland is perceived by external actors as a prominent and progressive articulator of the HRBA, raising the issue in policy dialogue particularly. Within programming, the trust-based approach adopted in partnerships is reflected in ongoing raising of human rights issues with partners, but there is little follow through in terms of monitoring, verification or reporting requirements.

In a context seen as a global example of the 'nexus', the Country Strategy focused on the functional, interpreting statebuilding' lens through the vehicle of capacity strengthening and PFM reform. The broader concerns of the political settlement and state legitimacy have not been prominent during the period of the Country Strategy, and scope exists here for a more incisive approach. Finland's recent engagement in reconciliation work and its emergent focus on peacebuilding is highly welcomed by partners, as an area in which Finland – as one of few international actors capable of working in this arena – possesses a strong comparative advantage.

7 Lessons/implications

Going forward, and based on the evidence generated by this case study, the following lessons/implications arise for the next iteration of the Country Strategy in Somalia.

The intended more comprehensive approach currently under consideration by MFA is both welcome and necessary. To improve the internal coherence of its assistance, Finland could:

- Adopt the intended comprehensive approach, bringing together humanitarian, development, private sector and other forms of support under a single strategic framework
- Articulate 'Government of Finland' aims for Somalia over the Country Strategy period, and develop an associated (if flexible) theory of change
- Ensure that funded initiatives under the new Country Strategy going forward clearly articulate their intended contribution to Country Strategy aims and intentions
- Hold regular meetings of Finnish-funded CSOs and other partners engaged in its support, in Helsinki/Nairobi/Mogadishu as appropriate

MFA may wish to consider including the following elements in the forthcoming revision of the Strategy:

- Adopt an explicit approach of, and clearly state, the function of the Country Strategy as a specified articulation of the DPP for Somalia context
- Include a strong focus on the political settlement in Somalia, and a clear articulation of the primary conflict dynamics which the Country Strategy will seek to address, recognising the importance of the clan system on political structures and systems
- Include a clear statement on/strategy for address the concerns of minority ethnic groups, mindful of the political sensitivities around these
- Include a sharper political analysis of needs at all levels – governance and beneficiary – with a particular focus on those of member states
- Ensure that the results framework for the Strategy is technically robust, and focuses on the trajectory of development in Somalia while recognising the country's inherent volatility (and embeds flexibility accordingly)
- Embed a clearer articulation of, and rationale for, funding modalities selected

Programmatically and in its policy dialogue, MFA may wish to consider the following areas of action:

- In MFA's policy dialogue and programming, emphasise the member state level, below the federal, with a particular focus on the political settlement, and gearing capacity-building work beyond the purely functional to focus on issues of state legitimacy
- Ensure partners adopt conflict-sensitive approaches applied in designs and in implementation, making this a mandatory requirement for grant approval
- Engage more closely in education and peacebuilding work (building on the existing highly-valued reconciliation portfolio).
- Intensify work on climate change
- Intensify work on peacebuilding, building on Finland's strong reputational capital and comparative advantage here.

Annex 1: Timeline of events in the context highlighting aspects of fragility

2006 June July	Union of Islamic Courts take over Mogadishu and other parts of South Somalia.
2006 December	Ethiopian troops enter Somalia and captures Mogadishu and later on Kismayo.
2007 March	African Union troops arrives in Mogadishu.
2009 January	Ethiopia officially withdraws troops, and Al-Shabab capture Baidoa, a key government stronghold.
2009 October	Al-Shabab recaptures Kismayo.
2010–2012	Famine kills almost 260,000.
2010 February	Al-Shabab formally declares alliance with al-Qaeda.
2011 July	A famine is declared in three regions of Somalia.
2011 October	Kenyan troops enter Somalia.
2012 February–May	Al-Shabab loses key towsn of Baidoa and Afgoye.
2012 August	Somalia's first formal parliament in more than 20 years is sworn in.
2012 September	MPs in Mogadishu Hassan Sheikh Mohamud as president in the first presidential election in Somalia since 1967.
2012 October	African Union and government forces recapture Kismayo.
2013 January	US recognises Somalia's government for the first time since 1991.
2013 September	International donors promise 2.4 billion dollars in reconstruction aid in three-year ''New Deal''.
2016 February	Government and African Union troops recapture southern port of Merca that Al-Shabab briefly seized.
2016 November	Leaders of Puntland and Galmudug agree to a ceasefire in Galkayo. Fighting in the city reportedly displaced 90,000.
2017 February	Parliament elects former prime minister Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed, known as Farmajo, as president.
2019 January	The Somali government expelled the UN's Special Representative for Somalia after he publicly questioned the arrest of South West state presidential candidate Mukhtar Robow the previous month.
2019 January	Puntland's parliament chose Said Abdullahi Deni as its next state president.
2019 February	Somalia's ambassador to Kenya expelled by the Kenyan government after a dispute over a coastal areas believed to hold oil deposits.
2019 April	Somalia and Kenya agreed to exchange ambassador again.
2019 May	Puntland's government stated that it would suspend its cooperation with the Somali federal government, including that it would not recognize any new federal laws, and that it would stop coordinating on constitutional review, elections, and national security.

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COUNTRY CASE STUDY ANNEX

SYRIA/IRAQ

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Contents

Acronyms and abbreviations

CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DPP	Development Policy Programme
ENP	European Neighbourhood Policy
EU	European Union
FRIT	[EU] Facility for Refugees in Turkey
HDI	Human Development Index
GBV	Gender Based Violence
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
ISIS	[so-called] Islamic State in Iraq and Syria
MADAD	EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MDTF	Multi-donor Trust Fund
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
NGL	No Generation Lost
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
SRTF	Syria Recovery Trust Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose and objectives

This case study comprises one of five prepared for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) Finland's *Evaluation of selected Finland's country strategies and country strategy modality for development cooperation with a focus on fragile contexts*. The other four case studies are of Afghanistan, Myanmar, the State of Palestine and Somalia.

The purpose of each Case Study is to apply the overarching evaluation questions, design and methodology of the strategic level evaluation, while adapting their analysis for the specifics of the country context.

The specific objectives of each case study are:

- To provide a contributory evidence stream to the overall strategic evaluation
- To help interrogate the wider theoretical framework for the evaluation (see MFA, 2018) by generating evidence against it;
- To generate lessons/implications to help inform country stakeholders in their country-level programming, as part of the constructive approach adopted by the utilisation-focused model of the strategic evaluation.

This Case Study is explicitly not a full evaluation of Finland's regional-level portfolio in Syria and Iraq, which would be beyond the remit of this evaluation. Accordingly, it does not provide Recommendations, but rather Lessons/Implications.

1.2 Approach and methodology

The Syria and Iraq case study used the overarching evaluation questions, design and methodology of the strategic level evaluation as outlined in Annexes 2 and 3 of the synthesis report, with some adaption of the tools and analysis for the specifics of the regional context. The questions to which the case-study contributes are outlined as follows:

Relevance	• To what extent did the Country Strategy modality support the alignment of Finland's Country portfolios and policy dialogue to address the causes of fragility?
	• To what extent did the Country Strategy modality support the relevance of Finland's assistance to the needs of stakeholders and beneficiaries, considering available resources?
	• To what extent did the Country Strategy modality support the relevance of Finland's assistance to the needs of key stakeholders, whether government, civil society or others?
	• To what extent did the Country Strategy modality enable assistance to adapt appropriately over time, including in relation to volatile conditions?

Effectiveness	• To what extent did the Country Strategy modality support the orientation of initiatives to best deliver results for key stakeholders and beneficiaries in the context?
	• To what extent did the Country Strategy modality provide an enabling environment for results in non-discrimination, including gender equality and the empowerment of women, and climate change?
	• To what extent did the selected aid co-operation modality, particularly multi-bi co-operation, support the delivery of results in the context?
	• To what extent have Finnish Country Strategies/Portfolios contributed to any reductions in fragility?
Coherence	• How/or does the Country Strategy modality support Finland in providing coherent assistance to the country, e.g. across MFA departments and multilateral influencing plans and funding?
	• To what extent did the Country Strategy modality support alignment with the plans and policies of other key donors/international actors in the context?
	• To what extent did the Country Strategy modality contribute to the realization of wider Finnish Development Policy objectives?
Connectedness	• To what extent did Country Strategies adhere to international commitments on human rights, the International Humanitarian Principles, Do No Harm and Accountability to Affected Populations?
	• To what extent did the Country Strategies take into account long-term and interconnected problems, e.g. through the humanitarian-development-peacebuilding nexus?

The theoretical framework for the evaluation combines theory-based evaluation (Chen 1991), with elements of contribution analysis (Mayne, 2001) and a utilisation-focused approach (Quinn Patton, 2008). It functions at aggregate level for the strategic evaluation and is applied to this case study through the structured tools applied (see Annex 3 of the synthesis report). This case study contributes to its specification, validation and interrogation as part of the wider evaluation.

The Syria/Iraq case-study differs from the other case-studies as the strategy is regional in nature and includes not only Iraq and Syria, but also interventions in Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey. This reflects the regional dimensions of the Syria and Iraq conflicts and the impact on fragility in neighbouring countries.

The case-study has adopted a highly structured and systematic approach, in accordance with the methodology of the wider evaluation and incorporated the following:

• Selection of a purposive project sample of 25 projects, from across the full portfolio of almost 300 projects (2012-2019)

• A desk review of project documentation against the evaluation matrix.

• Key interviews with Helsinki based stakeholders, either currently/previously working on Syria/Iraq (see Annex 2 for a list of persons interviewed)

• A mission to Lebanon, from 22-30 September 2019. The focus of the mission was to collect the perspectives and experiences of staff in the Embassy of Finland in Beirut who are responsible for implementing the Syria/Iraq Crisis Strategy, as well as portfolio stakeholders and partners in both Lebanon and the wider region whose interventions are included within the strategy.

- As the evaluation focuses at the strategic-level, there was no direct observation of Finnish-funded interventions or focus groups with primary beneficiaries.

Findings were discussed and validated with key stakeholders in MFA at a feedback meeting on 27 September in Beirut/Helsinki.

1.3 Limitations

The main limitations of this study are as follows:

- There was limited documentation available for review. A large component of the Syria/Iraq portfolio comprises humanitarian assistance. The MFA internal documentation on humanitarian assistance is incomplete, with almost no documentation on implementation and results. The team used reports and evaluations from partner organisations where available. As humanitarian aid from multilateral organisations is usually unearmarked and the Finnish contribution is small, attribution of results to Finland was not possible and often the reporting available was not very detailed or only activity based.

- The team was able to visit Beirut and Helsinki only, although electronic and telephone interviews were undertaken with stakeholders in other locations. Due to limitations on movement and other factors, it was not possible to undertake a wider set of interviews with stakeholders in Turkey and Iraq.

- As an additional constraint on the Turkey and Iraq components, there was limited documentation and/or institutional memory. There have been changes in the Iraq portfolio content and to diplomatic arrangements (opening of a new Embassy in Baghdad), in addition to rotation of personnel in Turkey and Iraq. The Beirut Embassy has limited information on the Iraq and Turkey portfolios, and no direct oversight role or responsibility.

- The conflict and/or political situation in Syria, Lebanon and Iraq has evolved since the fieldwork was undertaken. Changes in the context are likely to influence the future direction of the strategy. However, it was not possible to capture them adequately in the case study which covered the 2012–2018 period.

Notwithstanding the limitations, the case-study team were still able to draw robust findings and conclusions as sufficient information was available on the major Finnish interventions included in the strategy.

2 Fragility Context

2.1 Overview of the context since 2012

In Syria, the social protest of 2011 escalated into a civil war, and then a regional proxy conflict with geopolitical consequences. Early optimism that transition was imminent, set during the peak momentum of the "Arab Spring", gave way to an eight-year multi-party war; a mix of sub-national dynamics fuelled by external intervention. The conflict further created a vacuum exploited by ISIS and other extremist groups.

Eight years later, the Syrian conflict appears to approaching a closure or evolution in its dynamics, the terms of which are uncertain. The means to rebuild Syria and reconstitute society are as unclear as is how the conflict will end. Affected areas are depopulated, and their physical and public service infrastructure is destroyed. The Syrian Government and its allies lack the resources, and Syria's administrative and political capacity to rebuild has also suffered from the war. However, western Donors will not directly engage with the Government of Syria to rebuild until certain political conditions are met.

Iraq has been in a continuous situation of the conflict and instability since the Iraq-Iran war (1980 to 1988). The cumulative effect has been to fragment Iraqi society, and to degrade Iraq's economy, its physical infrastructure and public services. There was a period of relative optimism, following the transition to Iraqi political authority and improvement in the overall security situation (2007–2010). With relative stabilisation, the focus of Government and Donors shifted to consolidation of state institutions, their capacity to deliver public goods and services, and strengthening Iraq's economy (2010–2012). Notwithstanding progress, there was no political resolution to underlying sectarian tensions. Political disenfranchisement contributed to conditions for the emergence of ISIS (2012–2014), and its occupation of north central Iraq (2014–2017). Iraq has made limited progress stabilising after a four-year period of occupation by an extremist entity, the co-called Islamic State (ISIS).

The situation in Syria and Iraq continues to evolve, as does the impact of those conflicts in the region. Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan have strained under the burden of hosting Syrian refugees. **Lebanon**, with its 4.5 million inhabitants, has received almost 1 million registered Syrian refugees. **Jordan**, with its 6 million inhabitants has received approximately 600,000 registered Syrian refugees as of May 2018 (UNHCR, 2018). As of September 2019, **Turkey** hosts 3.66 million registered **Syrian refugees**, compared to 2.73 million in September 2016 (OCHA, 2019). There are approximately 250,000 Syrians in **Iraq**, mostly living in the autonomous Kurdish region. These numbers give Syria's neighbours among the highest global refugee density.

2.1 Key features of fragility and the main challenges to stability and development

Analysis in this section draws mainly on two documents: (MFA 2017a, hereafter the "Syria/Iraq Crisis Strategy") and Finland's Strategy for the MENA Region, 2017–2020 (MFA 2017b).

2.1.1 Fragility Factors Syria

In 2018, the OECD classified the situation in Syria as "Severe Fragility" (OECD 2018). Syria had an aggregate value of "Severe Fragility" across all five dimensions of fragility. It has among the world's highest fragility values in the dimensions of Societal, Political and Economic fragility, and the worst value in the world for the Security Dimension. The dimension of Environment was only slightly better, showing the second highest fragility value and assessed as deteriorating (OECD 2018).

Syria continues as the site of geopolitical rivalry, at an intersection between civil conflict, violent extremism and of regional and geopolitical conflict through proxies (OECD 2018). The OECD assesses this intersection is likely to increase the intensity and duration of conflict and adds to the difficulty of its resolution. The primary sources of Syria's fragility relate to political exclusion, violent conflict, social fragmentation and the overall decline in the indicators of human security and development. Within these, the OECD notes specific indictor sets of particular relevance to Syria (Table 1):

Table 1: Syria fragility profile (2018)

Dimension	Level	Characteristics
Economic	Severe	High level of social dependence on aid, low level of domestic resource mobilisation, heavy destruction of lack of basic infrastructure, creating difficult conditions for recovery.
Social	Severe	High levels of vertical, horizontal and gender inequalities, extremely low levels of accountability and rule of law, very weak civil society, poor access to justice, high numbers of displaced people.
Environmental	Severe	High risk of natural disasters, acute food insecurity, prevalence of infectious diseases with low community and state coping capacity. Climate change and the environment degradation compound fragility risk, on a matter that contributed to the initial outbreak of conflict.
Political	Severe	Very low democratic accountability, weak political institutions, low levels of human rights protection, high levels of political terror
Security	Severe	The worst performing country in the Security dimension. Violence interplays across all other dimensions, and supresses their values. Presence of multiple armed conflicts, significant terrorist activity, high numbers of violent death per capita, weak rule of law.
Syria Multidimensional fragility profile: Extremely fragile		

Source: Evaluation Team summary from the OECD States of Fragility Report (2018)

2.1.2 Fragility Factors Iraq

In 2018, Iraq had an aggregate ranking of "Severe Fragility", with mixed values across the different dimensions (Table 2). It was also considered a "Chronically Fragile" state, featuring in every report since 2008. Iraq showed some relative improvement in the Economic dimension (High Fragility), with deterioration in the Security and Societal dimensions, and continuing poor values in the Political and Environmental dimensions. These contrast with relative improvements in 2013.

Table 2: Iraq fragility profile (2018)

Dimension	Level	Characteristics
Economic	high	Iraq is one of the countries showing improvement in the economic dimension, driven by the petroleum. However, high dependency on the petroleum and ODA. Destruction of basic infrastructure, high unemployment with lack of opportunity for youth.
Social	Severe	Major deterioration in societal fragility. High levels of vertical, horizontal and gender inequalities, high level of internal displacement, low levels of accountability and rule of law, weak civil society, poor access to basic services and justice.
Environmental	Severe	High risk of natural disasters, degradation of natural and water resources, contributing to food and livelihood insecurity, weak legal protection framework.
Political	High	Vertical and horizontal political exclusion, low democratic accountability, weak political institutions, low levels of human rights protection, continuing high levels of political terror.
Security	Severe	Some improvement, but remaining presence of armed conflict, large number of non-state militias, significant terrorist activity, high numbers of violent death per capita, state lacks control of territory, weak rule of law.
Iraq Multidimensional fragility profile: Extremely fragile		

Source: Evaluation Team summary from the OECD States of Fragility Report (2018)

Among the key drivers of fragility in Iraq were:

- Extremist violence in the central and northern governorates, occurring in parallel with other forms of violent conflict.
- Political and social exclusion, the principle driver of insecurity identified since reporting began in 2008.
- Multiple forms of deprivation experienced by individuals and social group that result from violence and exclusion.

2.2 Relevant national strategies, plans and programmes

Finland supports the main international strategies and plans related to the Syria and Iraq, with an approach integrated with the European Union and the multilateral system. There are no bilateral agreements between Finland and countries included in the strategy, therefore there is no alignment with national strategies.

Finland provides support for the EU's policy and programmes in the region. These relate primarily to management of migration, humanitarian response and the nexus between development and humanitarian action. Key agreements include:

- EU-Turkey Joint Action Plan on Migration, as part of efforts to reduce migration and keep refugees in the region (EC 2016).
- The EU Regional Strategy for Syria and Iraq (EC 2015)

Within the United Nations and multilateral system, key affiliations, agreements and processes include:

- UN Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP), which is an umbrella for 240 partner organisations and covers Syria's neighbouring countries and Iraq (UN 2017).
- The collective Syria Humanitarian Response Plan (UNOCHA 2016).

- UN Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review Process (Finland engages in human rights discussions.
- UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (UN 2000).

2.3 Donor policies and aid architecture in the context

Syria and Iraq are among the world's largest recipients of Official Development Assistance (ODA), along with Afghanistan. By 2018, Syria surpassed Afghanistan and Iraq as the top recipient of assistance, with total levels doubling since 2014 to USD 9.9bn in 2018 (OECD 2019). Almost 80 percent of assistance is humanitarian. The second sector is social infrastructure. Bilateral cooperation is almost non-existent given political sensitivities surrounding bilateral co-operation with the Syrian Government. The main donors in 2017-2018 were Turkey, Germany and the United States.

Figure 1: OECD DAC Aid Data for Syria (2017)

	2016	**2017**	**2018**
Receipts for Syria Arab Republic			
Net ODA (USD million)	4,267.3	10,427.9	9,990.8
Gross ODA (USD million)	8,911.7	10,443.0	10,007.6
Bilateral share (gross ODA) (%)	95.5	96.0	93.5
Total net receipts (USD million)	8,864.1	10,467.1	9,990.6
For reference			
Population (million)	17.4539	17.0680	16.9063

Top Ten Donors of Gross ODA for Syrian Arab Republic, 2017–2018 average (USD million)

Turkey	6,973
Germany	824
United States	664
EU Institutions	462
United Kingdom	365
Norway	127
Canada	109
United Arab Emirates	80
Sweden	66
Japan	56
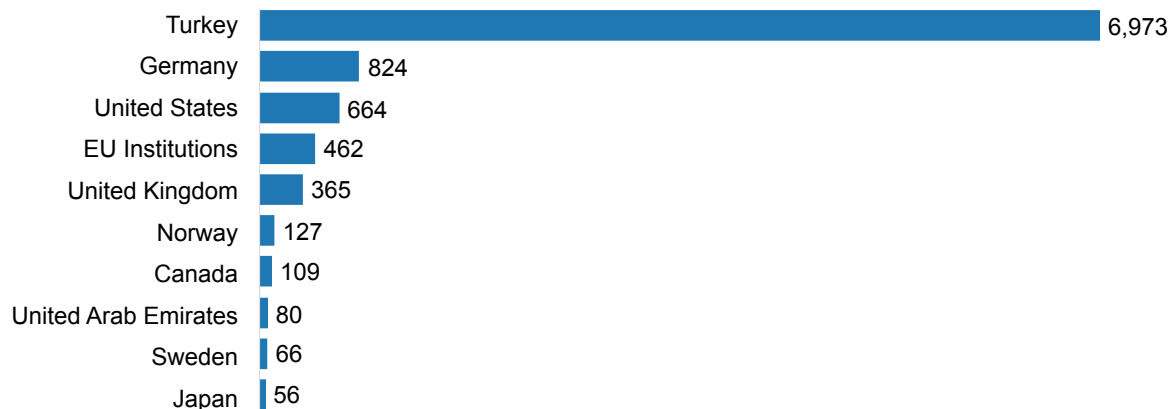
Bilateral ODA by Sector for Syrian Arab Republic, 2017–2018 average

Education 4% | Other social infrastructure and services 9% | Humanitarian aid 76% | Other and unallocated/unspecified 9%

- Education
- Health and Population
- Other social infrastructure and services
- Economic infrastructure and services
- Production
- Multisector
- Programme assistance
- Humanitarian aid
- Other and unallocated/unspecified
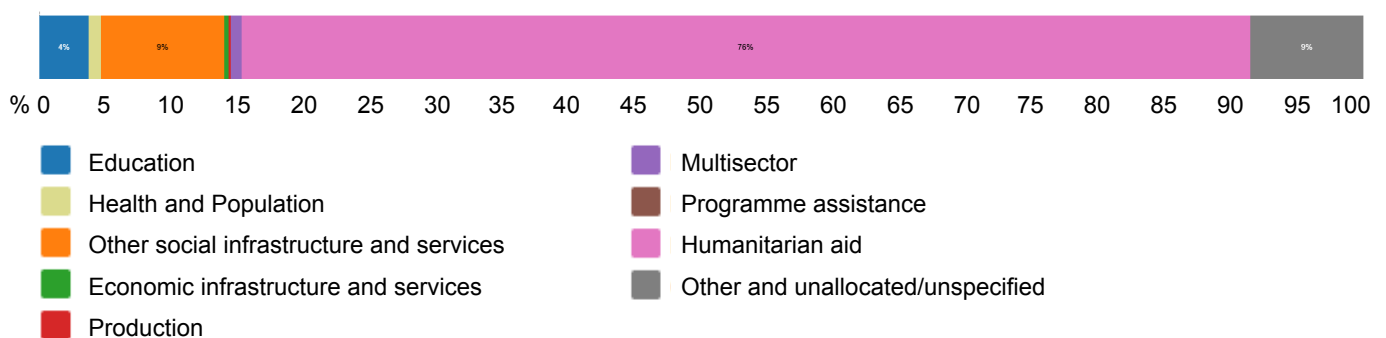
Source: OECD Aid statistics (OECD 2019)

Post 2003, Iraq was among the highest ODA recipients and most aid dependent countries, with assistance to humanitarian, stabilisation and reconstruction needs. Levels of aid and dependency fell after 2010, with the combination of reduced ODA flows and the growth of national income from the petroleum sector. However, OECD data shows ODA to Iraq increased 51 percent 2014-2016, responding to the ISIS occupation. Humanitarian aid remains the largest sector of assistance (38% in 2017–2018), followed by programme assistance (25%) and assistance to economic infrastructure and services. The main donors in 2017–2018 were Germany, the United States and Japan.

Figure 2: OECD DAC Aid Data for Iraq (2017)

	2016	2017	2018
Receipts for Iraq			
Net ODA (USD million)	2,287.9	2,907.5	2,299.9
Net ODA/GNI (%)	1.4	1.5	1.0
Gross ODA (USD million)	2,309.1	2,938.3	2,404.5
Bilateral share (gross ODA) (%)	90.0	92.4	87.6
Total net receipts (USD million)	4,338.0	2,620.3	3,820.1
For reference			
Population (million)	37	38	38
GNI per capita (Atlas USD)	5,520	4,800	5,030

Top Ten Donors of Gross ODA for Iraq, 2017–2018 average (USD million)

Donor	Value
Germany	518.4
United States	485.2
Japan	462.5
France	233.0
EU Institutions	231.0
United Arab Emirates	221.4
United Kingdom	104.2
Canada	72.0
Italy	66.4
Norway	40.5
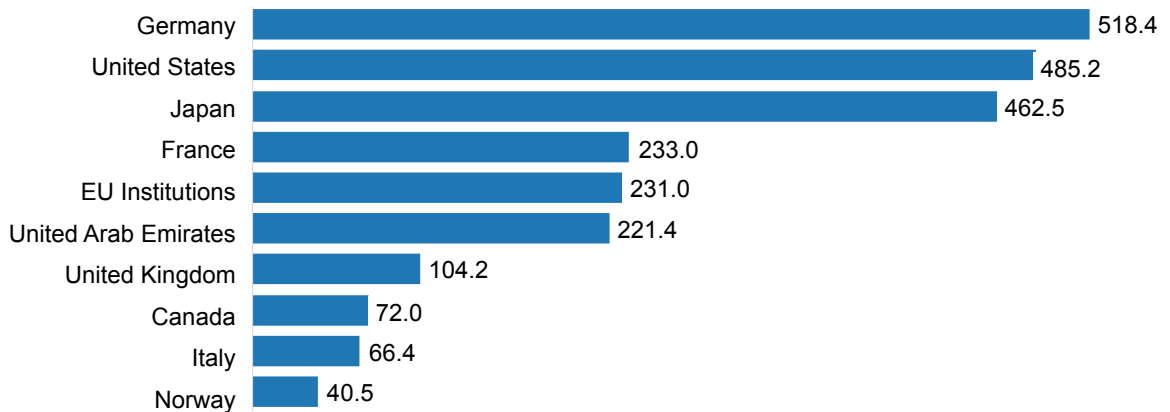
Bilateral ODA by Sector for Iraq, 2017–2018 average

Education — 1%
Other social infrastructure and services — 15%
Economic infrastructure and services — 18%
Programme assistance — 25%
Humanitarian aid — 38%
Other and unallocated/unspecified — 1%

Legend:
- Education
- Health and Population
- Other social infrastructure and services
- Economic infrastructure and services
- Production
- Multisector
- Programme assistance
- Humanitarian aid
- Other and unallocated/unspecified

Source: OECD Aid statistics (OECD 2019)

3 Evolution of Finland's cooperation in country since 2012

3.1 Overview of Finnish development and humanitarian cooperation in Syria/Iraq since 2012

Since 2011, Finland's has provided assistance to the conflict in Syria through development cooperation and humanitarian aid. The approach has not differed over the evaluation period and has been primarily focused on protection for Syrians impacted by the conflict to ensure that their basic needs, such as nutrition, education for children and healthcare are met. On supporting the political process in Syria, peace-building and on countering impunity, as well as supporting the most vulnerable groups such as women and children in Syria and its neighbouring countries Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey. Finland also supports the resilience of Syria's neighbouring countries that accommodate refugees and can cope with providing assistance to more than five million Syrian refugees. Support has amounted to more than EUR 200 million since 2011, with around half of this assistance humanitarian aid and the other half development aid (MFA 2020).

Since 2014, Finland has supported Iraq through development cooperation and humanitarian aid to the tune of EUR 30 million. This has focused on the country's stabilisation through development cooperation and humanitarian aid as well as through contributing to crisis management. Finland has also supported Iraq over the period by taking part in the international coalition against ISIS. Development cooperation funds are directed especially at rebuilding areas that were liberated from ISIS' control. Since 2014, Finland has supported Iraq through development cooperation and humanitarian aid with some EUR 30 million.

The Syria//Iraq Crisis Strategy 2017–2020 was the first strategy developed by the MFA for Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey and Egypt. There is some overlap with the MENA strategy which is focused more on long-term development cooperation (MFA 2017a and 2017b).

3.2 Policy dialogue emphases

The strategy identified five strategic themes for its political advocacy, design and through multilateral engagements:

- Promoting inclusiveness of the peace and dialogue processes.
- Women's political participation and attention to their specific needs in conflict response.
- Further development of the concept of resilience and strengthening the humanitarian-development nexus.
- The special needs and rights and the protection of vulnerable groups, especially people with disabilities in the conflict response.

- the innovative role of the private sector in bringing new solutions to the humanitarian and resilience challenges and in creating jobs

In practice it was not possible to focus on all five areas due to capacity constraints. The main areas of engagement have been in gender, youth, resilience and disability in the Syria programme. This has been through engaging with and supporting dialogue through Finnish funded UN Women and UNICEF programmes related to these areas, and promoting women's participation in dialogue and peace-building processes.

3.3   Finnish Co-operation beyond the Syria and Iraq Crisis Strategy

The Strategy mainly covers Finnish humanitarian aid administered by the Unit for Humanitarian Assistance and Policy and development/resilience funding by the Unit for Middle East and North Africa. Other interventions are Humanitarian Mine Action and the Facility for Refugees in Turkey (FRIT). There are also Finnish regional programmes, NGO project funding and local cooperation funds administered by the Finnish Embassy in Beirut which are not included within the strategy.

3.4   Any key evaluation/review findings to date

There have been no key evaluations or reviews of the Finnish support to Syria/Iraq during the period under review, apart from the MFA (2019b) Evaluation on Forced Displacement and Finnish Development Policy, 2019/1. Some individual projects have been evaluated internally by partner organisations, but do not comment on Finnish assistance at aggregate level to Syria/Iraq.

4 Finland's Strategy for Syria/Iraq

4.1 Overview and key features of the Syria/Iraq Crisis strategy

Aims, objectives and strategies: The 2017–2020 Syria/Iraq Crisis Strategy was the first of its kind for Syria and Iraq. It comprises a response to conflict in Syria and Iraq, and the effect of conflict on neighbouring states. Programme design at the regional level was framed first as a response to humanitarian conditions in Syria, with the programming in frontline countries evolving with the shock of refugee flows. The strategy has four primary impact statements:

- Improved conditions for inclusive transition and sustainable peace in Syria

- Dignified life for affected populations in Syria and improved conditions for the safe return of refugees and IDPs in stabilised areas.

- Dignified life for Syrian refugees and host-community affected populations in Syria's neighbouring countries.

- Sustained stability and resilience of communities in Iraq, enabling IDPs and refugees to return.

Aid volumes: Finland disbursed EUR 121 million to affected countries during the case-study period. The peak disbursement years were 2014 and 2016, corresponding with an escalation of conflict in both Syria and Iraq (see Figure 3). Finland met or exceeded its commitments in 2013 and 2014.

Aid modalities: The portfolio is large in scope, compared to most bilateral programmes with the number of interventions at 40 in 2018 (see Figure 5). Finnish aid is channelled through UN agencies, the International Red Cross/Red Crescent movement, international financing institutions, international, Finnish and local non-government organisations. There is no bilateral cooperation and little private sector cooperation. The majority of funding to UN organisations is provided as un-earmarked core funding with only two multi-bi projects.

Funding framework: The strategy did not have a multi-year financing framework as the CS was developed after the 2016 cuts in Finnish development spending so there was no budget allocation available. As a result, funding is allocated by the MFA on an annual basis according to resource availability.

Piloting a more comprehensive approach: The Strategy is one example of adopting a more comprehensive Country Strategy format, alongside Afghanistan and Somalia (albeit with differences between the two Strategies) The strategy combines programmable aid from the regional department, with humanitarian mine action (political department) and humanitarian aid (development policy department) under a single framework of impact areas and objectives.

4.2 Key features of the regional portfolio (Finnish assistance to Syria/ Iraq Crisis Strategy)

Total Finnish aid to the Syria and Iraq Crisis strategy 2012–2018 was EUR 121 million. Annual aid volumes increased significantly from EUR 3 million in 2012 to EUR 22.5 million in 2018 as illustrated in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Disbursements by aid modality and year (EUR '000)
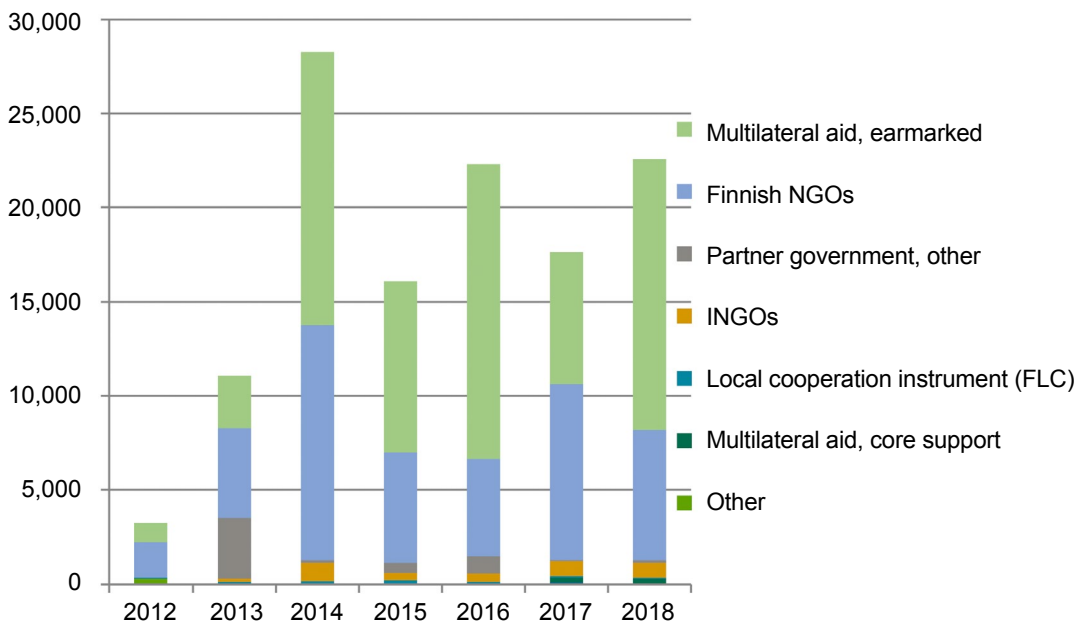
Source: Evaluation team, applying MFA data (2019)

The majority of support over the evaluation period was channelled through either Finnish NGOs or multilateral assistance, reflecting the lack of direct bilateral assistance. A total of 49% of assistance as provided through Finnish INGOs and 24% through earmarked multilateral support. There was relatively little provided though INGOs (8%) (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: Distribution of aid by aid modality (all years)
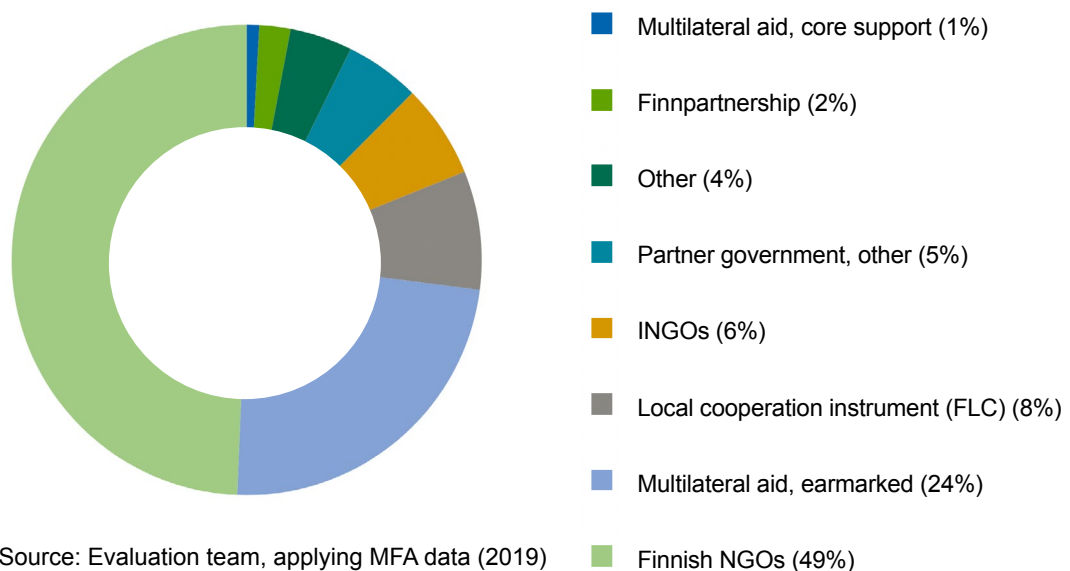
Source: Evaluation team, applying MFA data (2019)

A total of 40 organisations were supported in 2018, a significant increase from 27 in 2012 (See Figure 5). Almost half of these were 2018 Finnish NGOs, followed by multilaterals, organisations funded through the local cooperation instrument and INGOs

Figure 5: Disbursements by year and aid modality
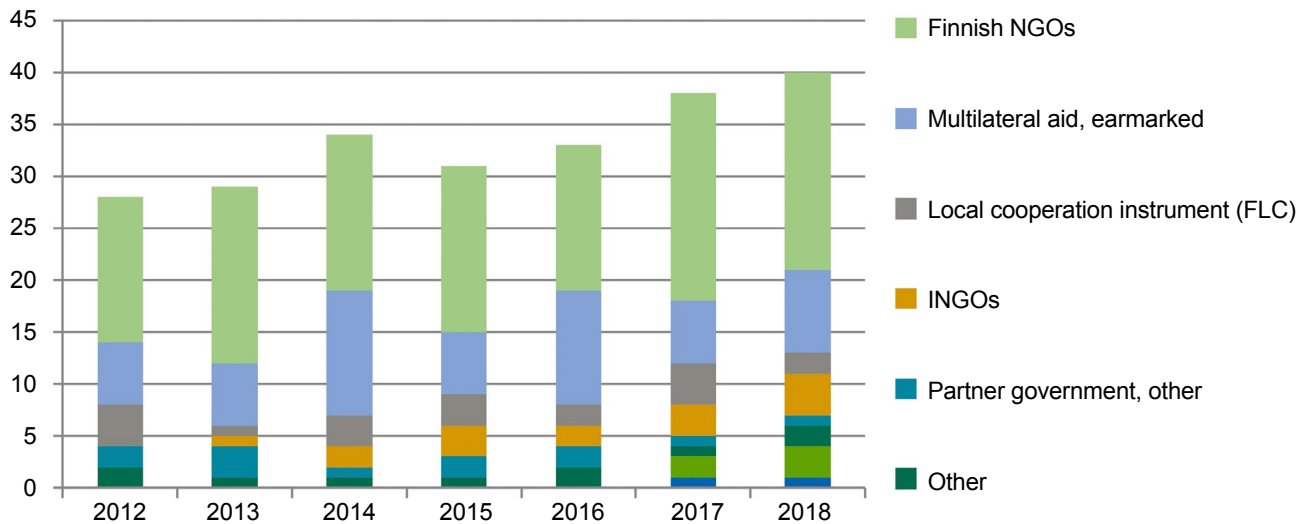
Source: Evaluation team, applying MFA data (2019)

The top 10 recipients of Finnish funding from 2012–2018 are outlined in Figure 6. The main five recipients were the Finnish Red Cross, UNICEF, WFP, UNDP and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. The Finnish red cross received the most funding at 25% over the period, UNICEF 23%, the WFP and UNDP 10% respectively and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees 7%.

In terms of sector allocations, as Figure 7 indicates emergency response consistently received the majority of funding throughout the period. In 2017 government and civil society (22%) was the second highest sector in terms of disbursements, followed by health (4%) and education (3%). By 2018 this changed to reconstruction relief and rehabilitation the second largest sector funded (22%) followed by other social infrastructure and services and government and civil society both with 16%.

Figure 6: Disbursement by top ten recipients 2012–2018

- World Bank Group (2%)
- The Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission (3%)
- World Health Organization (WHO) (3%)
- United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) (4%)
- Institutions (5%)
- United Nations Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (7%)
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (7%)
- World Food Programme (WFP) (10%)
- United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) (10%)
- Finnish Red Cross (25%)
- Others (23%)
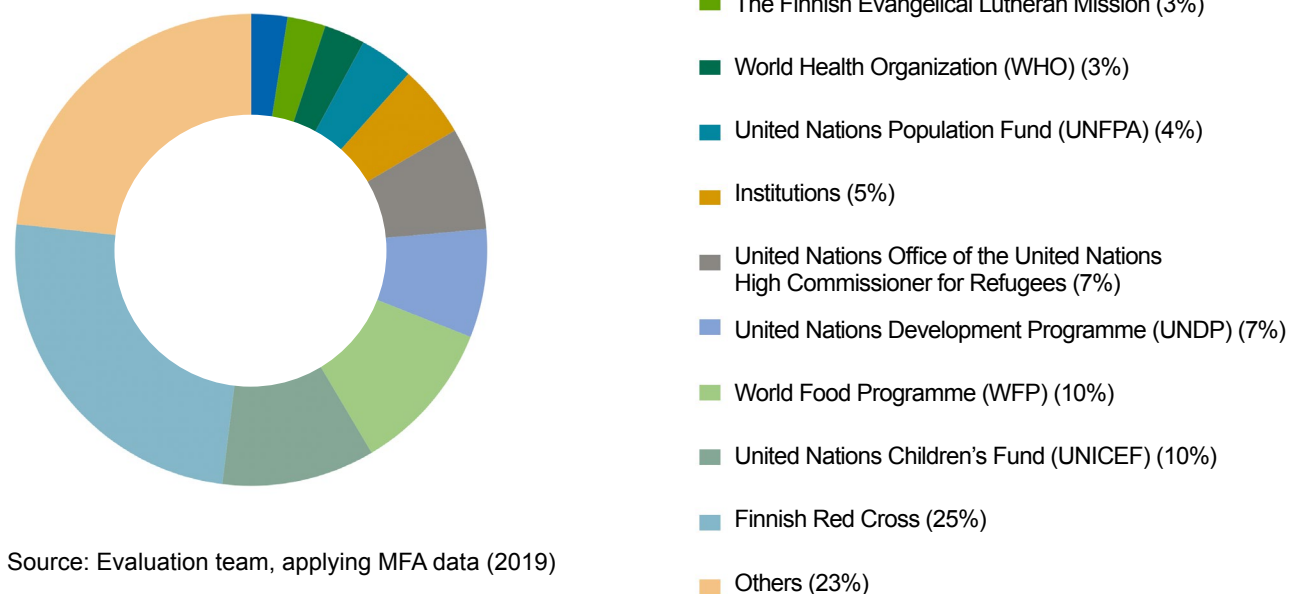
Source: Evaluation team, applying MFA data (2019)

Figure 7: Disbursements by sector and year (EUR '000)
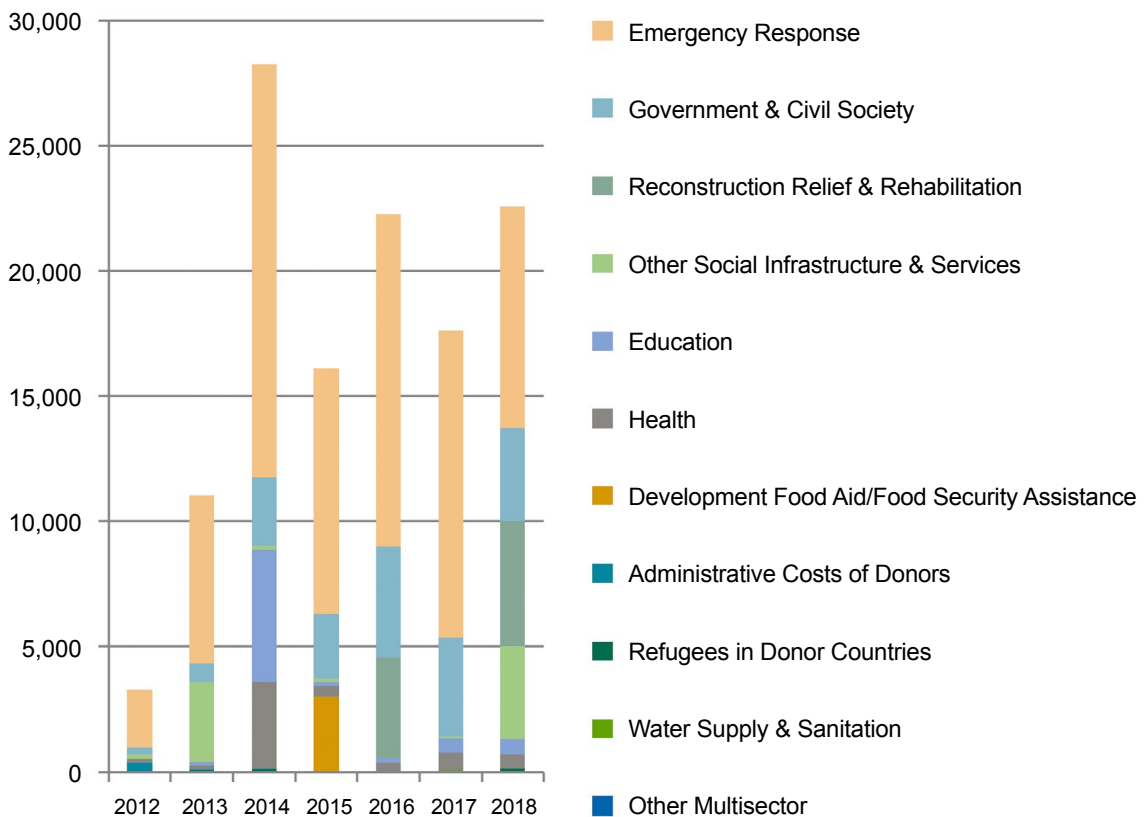
Source: Evaluation team, applying MFA data (2019)

4.3 Description of the main interventions of the portfolio

The following table provides the sample interventions for the Syria/Iraq Crisis Strategy, their timing and sector. This includes regional projects, as well projects in Syria, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey. They also comprise the main interventions financed to date.

Table 3: Summary of Project Sample

Country	Implementing organisation	Title of intervention	Project Number	Duration	Modality	Budget category	DAC Sector
Regional Projects							
Middle East, regional	European Union	Madad EU Syria Trust Fund	85301029	2015	Multi-lateral	1–10m	Multisector aid for basic social services, 16050
Middle East, regional	UN Children's Fund	No Lost Generation – support to education in Jordan and Syria through UNICEF	85301037	2016	Multi-lateral	1–10m	Primary education, 11220
Middle East, regional	UN Development Programme	UNDP: Building Resilience in Response to the Syrian Crisis	85301028	2017	Multi-lateral	1–10m	Multisector aid for basic social services, 16050

Country	Implementing organisation	Title of intervention	Project Number	Duration	Modality	Budget category	DAC Sector
Middle East, regional	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	Syria crisis; humanitarian aid; UNHCR's regional operation in response to the Syrian crisis	85301002	2018	Multi-lateral	1-10m	Emergency material response, 72010
Syrian Arab Republic							
Syrian Arab Republic	The Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission	Syria Initiative: Support to peace-building in Syria	57300413	2016	Bilateral	1–10m	Civilian peace-building, conflict prevention and resolution, 15220
Syrian Arab Republic	Suomen Lähetys-seurary	Syria Initiative: Support to peace-building in Syria	57300413	2017	Bilateral	1–10m	Civilian peace-building, conflict prevention and resolution, 15220
Syrian Arab Republic	Finnish Red Cross	ICRC Finnish Red Cross	89892612	2017	Bilateral	1–10m	Emergency material response, 72010
Syrian Arab Republic	World Health Organization (WHO)	Humanitarian assistance through WHO to Syria	57300405	2015	Multi-lateral	1–10m	Emergency material response, 72010
Syrian Arab Republic	UN Children's Fund	Humanitarian aid to Syria via UNICEF	57300420	2016	Multi-lateral	1–10m	Emergency material response, 72010
Syrian Arab Republic	World Food Programme	Humanitarian food assistance to Syria/WFP	57300401	2016	Multi-lateral	1–10m	Emergency food response, 72040
Syrian Arab Republic	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	Humanitarian assistance Syria (UNHCR)	57300427	2017	Multi-lateral	1–10m	Emergency material response, 72010
Syrian Arab Republic	UN Fund for Population	Support to UNFPA for humanitarian activities in Syria	57300435	2018	Multi-lateral	1–10m	Emergency material response, 72010
Turkey							
Turkey	UN Children's Fund	Turkey No Lost Generation -strategy. Supporting education sector in Turkey through UNICEF	85501123	2015	Multi-lateral	1–10m	Primary education, 11220

Country	Implementing organisation	Title of intervention	Project Number	Duration	Modality	Budget category	DAC Sector
Turkey	European Union	Facility for Refugees in Turkey	85501124	2017	Multi-lateral	>10m	Emergency food response, 72040
Jordan							
Jordan	Finnish NGO, Finnish Church Aid	Humanitarian assistance, Finn Church Aid	89892619	2016	Bilateral	<1m	Emergency material response, 72010
Jordan	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women	UN-Women's Project Eid-bi-Eid to promote women's economic empowerment in Za'atari and Azraq refugee camps and nearby host-communities	85100504	2016	Multi-lateral	1–10m	Women's equality organisations and institutions, 15170
Lebanon							
Lebanon	World Bank Group	Lebanon Syrian Crisis Multi Donor Trust Fund	85202506	2014	Multi-lateral	1–10m	Basic health care, 12220
Lebanon	UN Children's Fund	No Lost Generation -strategy. Aid to the education sector in Lebanon	85202507	2014	Multi-lateral	1–10m	Primary education, 11120
Lebanon	Suomen Nuorten Miesten Kristillisten Yhd	Vocational Training and Economic Opportunities for Syrian refugees and host Lebanese communities	85202521	2016	Multi-lateral		Vocational training, 11330
Lebanon	Geneva Call (INGO)	Geneva Call: Generating and fostering ownership of International Humanitarian Norms in Lebanon (2nd phase)	85202525	2017	International NGO	<1m	Basic health care, 15220
Iraq							
Iraq	Finnish Red Cross	International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Iraq emergency operation, Finnish Red Cross		Finnish NGOs	Bilateral	Not known	Emergency material response, 72010

Country	Implement-ing organi-sation	Title of intervention	Project Number	Duration	Modality	Budget category	DAC Sector
Iraq	United Nations Devel-opment Programme (UNDP)	Funding Facility for Immediate Stabilization in Iraq (FFIS) UNDP		Multi-lateral aid, ear-marked	Multi-lateral	Not known	Immediate post-emergen-cy recon-struction and rehabilitation, 73010
Iraq	World Food Programme (WFP)	Support to World Food Programme (WFP) operations in Iraq		Multi-lateral aid, ear-marked	Multi-lateral	Not known	Emergency food response, 72040

The Syria/Iraq Crisis Strategy introduced a new regional approach for Finland's engagement. The strategy focused on Syria crisis response and the situation in Iraq, reflecting Finland's national policy and priorities and its commitments within the European Union and multilateral frameworks. The included the EU's common regional response to the refugee crisis, policy on engagement with the Syrian State and relations with/support to Turkey, among others (MFA 2017a).

The strategy was developed during 2016, around a "legacy" portfolio comprised of pre-existing projects and commitments. In its first iteration, therefore, the strategy is potentially a transition-al mechanism, for implementation of a regional approach, to enable a shift between earlier and emerging regional and national priorities, and to different institutional arrangements within the Ministry. Key determinants for consolidating a regional approach emerging during the evalua-tion interviews included:

- *Adaption of the "legacy" portfolio over time* based on the effectiveness of analytical, feedback and management systems that enable evolution of the strategy.

- *New institutional arrangements within the Ministry* that enable cooperation at the regional level, and between four jurisdictions that have their own diplomatic representation (Turkey, Iraq, Syria/Lebanon/Jordan, and Egypt), and with Ministry in Helsinki.

- *The allocation of the financial resources and institutional capacity* needed to achieve strate-gy objectives. Adequate human resources emerged as a critical issue.

The Syria/Iraq Crisis strategy is a high-level framework for priority setting and decision-mak-ing, with a results framework. The supporting analysis of regional and national dynamics was adequate to develop the four national portfolios assessed (MFA 2017a). In addition, to facilitate some regional-level engagement on approaches such as resilience, largely implemented through multilateral organisations or the European Union. The results framework allows for consolida-tion and assessment of data on achievement in the portfolio, at the regional and national levels.

Notwithstanding, the strategy does not set out an underlying strategic rationale for moving to a regional planning format, nor did one emerge in the documentation or interviews. It focuses on development and humanitarian assistance only, and does not set out a "whole of government" approach linking the portfolio to broader political, security or economic objectives (ibid). There is limited evidence of new institutional arrangements for regional planning or management, or of new resources to support implementation of the strategy at the regional or national levels.

In these regards, the Syria/Iraq Crisis Strategy did not provide a coherent regional framework for operations. The regional portfolio itself comprises three largely independent programmes, nested within a common results framework, but with limited joint strategic development and

coordination between them. The results framework is organised around country specific port-folios, with only one of the four Impact Areas (3) taking a regional scope for support to Syrian refugees and host communities (Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey). Management of the strategy was also fragmented for the following reasons:

- The Embassy in Beirut manages Syria, Lebanon and Jordan, which accounts for the bulk of the regional portfolio. Embassy personnel interact with the MENA regional strategy, mainly through the UN 3RP regional response (MFA 2017b).

- Management of the Iraq portfolio was in transition. The new Baghdad Embassy was sched-uled to open in late 2019. There was not roving Ambassador or Deputy Ambassador at the time of the evaluation, and Helsinki desk personnel were in rotation.

- Activities in Turkey, mainly EU commitments and some regional UN programming, were managed by the Embassy in Ankara. Personnel were also in transition, with all three senior personnel rotating out in 2019.

The strategy is not a "live" document, used consistently by MFA personnel as a framework for portfolio development and stakeholder engagement. No MFA informant reported using the strategy as a common reference or programme document. Notwithstanding, MFA personnel did report increased use of the strategy as a framework for decision-making on relevance, as the con-text and portfolio evolved after 2017 and decisions on funding new initiatives are made.

5 Key Findings

5.1 Relevance

5.1.1 Alignment with key fragility features

There is alignment with fragility features, although the Strategy does not provide an analytical framework to understand or assess fragility. Regardless, the strategy document and results framework describes the features of fragility present in the region, consistent with the OECD fragility framework (MFA 2017a).

The Syria/Iraq Crisis Strategy does not use "fragility" as an analytical or programme concept. There is no specific reference to "fragility" within the strategy, no fragility assessment contributing to design, and there are no explicit fragility-related indicators in the strategy's results framework or the Annual Reporting (MFA 2017c & 2018a). Nor according to interviews do Finland's counterparts, in the Donor community and among the implementing multilaterals and NGOs, appear to make explicit use of "fragility" as an analytical or programme concept.

Notwithstanding, the Strategy and the Annual Reporting adequately describe the conditions of fragility present, in its political, societal, economic and security dimensions. These set out the scale, dynamics and status of the conflicts in Syria and Iraq and its regional impact, particularly related to the massive outflow of refugees from Syria into neighbouring countries, Iraq's recovery and reconstruction needs after protracted extremist and sectarian violence. Justified within this framework are the strategy's four Impact Areas, and the supporting programme interventions and partnership arrangements. There is no reference to the fragility dimension of "environment".

The level and quality of the analysis set out in the Strategy was adequate, although the supporting MFA political economy analysis documentation available to the evaluation was not robust, nor regional in its scope (MFA 2019c). However, interviews revealed that Finland makes effective use of the extensive analysis and reporting provided by international initiatives (e.g. 3RP and HRP) and its bilateral engagements with programme implementers. As a result, the strategy provides analytical conclusions on the regional and national contexts, that address fragility and are sufficient to enable activities in the four Impact Areas.

5.1.2 Alignment to beneficiary needs

Finland's assistance is highly relevant to the needs of beneficiaries across the region. In a context where needs are enormous and beyond the means of any single Donor, Finland balances its own national priorities with integration into broader international processes and targets highly vulnerable groups. These include Syrian refugees in Turkey, Jordan, Iraq and Lebanon, people with disabilities and women.

Drafting of the Syria/Iraq Crisis Strategy document did not include a structured analytical process, including a review of beneficiary needs. There was limited evidence of internal consultation between the drafting team in Helsinki and the Beirut Embassy, or externally with Donor counterparts and implementing entities. Regardless, Finland has access to a large body of needs assessment from Donor counterparts and from its multilateral and NGO implementing partners.

At the portfolio level, the desk review indicated that most significant activities in the sample were based on an assessment of beneficiary needs, either done specifically for the initiative or drawing on data from existing assessments Interviews confirmed that Finland generally requires some form of assessment as part of its funding requirement, ensuring that proposals are evidence based. For the assessment, Finland generally accepts the assessment models and processes of the counterpart.

Independent of Finnish requirements, good practice for multilaterals and NGOs is also to conduct an assessment, or otherwise to base the proposal in evidence and the desk review and interviews indicated that this was normally undertaken for interventions funded by Finland. Interventions are therefore evidence-based and designed to international standards for the delivery of peace-building, humanitarian, resilience or development assistance. In many cases, the assessments are joint activities that form the basis for regional or national response plans such as the 3RP and HRP, around which Donors and implementers collaborate. The combination of improved evidence and delivery options better aligns assistance to beneficiary need, although this is difficult for Finland to quantify within the current results reporting structure.

Capacity within the MFA to absorb and use assessment is limited, and underlying information management systems are weak (MFA 2018a & 2018b). Notwithstanding, evidence from interviews is that Embassy personnel make use of the information and analysis received.

Finland consistently ensures assessment against priority development and humanitarian policy areas, with the needs of women first among them. Fifteen of the 25 projects in the desk review sample show evidence that the design included some form of disaggregation by gender and/or vulnerable group, depending on the project scope. For example, World Bank, European Union and the programmes of United Nations' organisations show documentary evidence of disaggregation, in their supporting assessments, design and allocation of resources. Disaggregation for priority groups was not as well documented with NGO/CSO projects.

Finally, Finland consistently supports innovation, research and development, in the areas of resilience, gender equality and the application of International Humanitarian Law. Counterparts valued Finland as an early adapter, and funder of 3RP, gender and mediation interventions.

5.1.3 Alignment to key national stakeholder needs

There is alignment with the needs of national stakeholder as direct alignment with national stakeholders is constrained by the context. Finland depends on third party agreements between national stakeholders and multilateral entities, sometimes in contested environments. In these arrangements, Finland's assistance is highly integrated into the overall international effort.

The Syria/Iraq Crisis Strategy notes that Finland does not have bilateral relations with the Government of Syria. Further, Finland does not have bilateral cooperation agreements with Lebanon or Jordan, and did not have a permanent diplomatic presence in Iraq until 2019 (MFA 2017a). It does have a large mission in Turkey, but programmes on Syria crisis-related activities occur largely through the European Union.

Direct alignment of the Strategy and portfolio with national stakeholder needs, therefore, is constrained by context and Finland's capacity. Alignment across the region occurs through third party platforms, and agreements with national governments and stakeholders with the European Union, Donor coordination platforms and multilateral organisations. Finland integrates its assistance into these processes (MFA 2018b). All CSO projects in the desk review sample collaborate with, and work to the norms and standards of the multilateral aid structure of the recipient country, or implemented with relevant government ministries, such as in Iraq.

5.1.4 Adaptation of the portfolio over time

There were at least three possible areas for responding to changing contexts: the strategic approach; the underlying institutional arrangements; and the portfolio itself. The possibilities for adaptation in all three areas as well as overarching institutional processes that enable adaptation were not fully taken advantage of and remained under-used.

Strategy as adaption to the context. The choice of using a strategy was an adaption for the context. The strategy recognises the regional and geopolitical dynamics of the crisis in Syria and Iraq, and unique impacts and requirements at a national level in the five portfolio countries. The choice of a regional format created a platform for a more comprehensive approach, for integration into the regional multilateral response, coordination with other elements of Finland's political, security and economic action and for operational benefits in allocation of institutional and financial resources. Notwithstanding, the strategy does not articulate the underlying rationale for a regional approach, as the basis for action in these areas.

Institutional adaption to the strategy. There was limited evidence of change to the institutional arrangements and resourcing needed to support a regional approach. The strategy consolidated existing Finnish priorities and projects for the five countries, within a new regional-level results framework. Otherwise, there was limited or no evidence of change to the MFA's underlying institutional arrangements, for management, resourcing or to enable effective coordination between the five countries. The Turkey, Syria (inclusive of Lebanon and Jordan), Iraq and Egypt portfolios are largely independent programmes, with limited coordination or information sharing between them. The management structure and capacity to enable such coordination is not in place.

Adaption in the portfolio. There have been adaptions in the portfolio content, achieved largely through projects adapting to ongoing needs and changing contextual assessments. Examples from interviews and the Annual Results Report (MFA 2018a) are the Berghof Foundation which refocused its work plan when the conflict context made original plans related to cease-fire and stabilisation less relevant. Geneva Call as a Lebanon dialogue project had to focus less on dialogue due to Lebanese internal politics and in 2018 moved towards the implementation of other activities. The MFA also decided in 2017 to strengthen its focus on gender with mainstreaming gender into all projects related to Syrian dialogue processes under outcome 1.1. these initiatives show evidence of shifts in focus, approach and method, as adaption to the context. Finland is not always the initiator of the change, but supports and re-enforces with its funding and advocacy choices.

The current portfolio was built around legacy projects and commitments, many of them based in longstanding relationships with specific multilateral organisations and Finnish or international NGOs. The actual components and relationships show limited change, albeit noting that the strategy itself has only been effective for two years and is still maturing.

Notwithstanding, the strategy provides a priority framework that is being used for decision-making. In addition, a management feedback loop through the results reporting allows for assessment against those priorities. There was evidence in the 2018 reporting of the MFA using these processes to move away from projects assessed as showing less strategic relevance (MFA 2018a). Over time, therefore, the strategy is playing a more important role informing choices within the Syria and Iraq portfolios– a decision making tool that helps define the scope of the portfolio and priorities, and to communicate priorities to counterparts (improved targeting of proposals received by Finland). The trend is most pronounced in the Syria portfolio.

5.2 Effectiveness

5.2.1 Delivery of results for beneficiaries and other stakeholders

There is strong alignment between the strategy and the results framework, but limited results information with reporting mainly at activity and output level and a lack of an overall regional results assessment. The results framework has three country-specific Impact Areas (Impacts 1, 2 and 4) for Syria and Iraq. Only one Impact Area that is regional in its scope (Impact 3, comprising a regional portfolio of refugee and host community support). Some multilateral initiatives have a regional scope and approach, but are reported as funded at the country level in the 2017 and 2018 Annual Results Reports, such as the UNICEF, 'No Lost Generation' (UNICEF 2019, MFA 2017 & 2018a). The results framework, therefore, does not provide a "whole of region" assessment.

The Finnish Embassy in Lebanon lacks capacity to adequately monitor and report on results due to the number of interventions and staffing constraints. Finnish annual results reporting is largely narrative and for the programme findings, the Annual Results Reports do not systematically assess project specific-results on a systematic basis (MFA 2017 and 2018a). Further, reporting for Iraq (impact area 4) tends to be limited, reflecting according to interviews Finland's lack of a permanent presence in the country prior to 2019. The 2018 Self-Assessment of the Country Strategy does not include impact area 4 and is vague in concluding on specific results achieved in other impact areas (MFA 2018b). Interviews with staff and the 2017 and 2018 Annual Results Reports, highlight the lack of field capacity to adequately monitor project implementation (MFA 2017 and 2018a). Results from implementing partner reporting, therefore, are not systematically captured in the Finnish reporting and fed back into the system or adequately analysed.

Progress towards the achievement of results from Finnish assistance in Iraq and Syria has been mixed and has been heavily constrained by the changing conflict dynamics and external political contexts. The 2018 Annual Results report emphases that overall progress to impact and outcome level results is not visible despite evidence of progress towards providing relief and basic services in Syria and neighboring countries and towards facilitated dialogue processes related to the resolution of conflict and peace-building. This will only occur with a political transition in Syria and a resolution of the conflict. Nonetheless, the following results according to the four Strategy impact areas have been achieved.

Results for Impact 1: Improved conditions for inclusive transition and sustainable peace in Syria

The Country Strategy Self-Assessment 2018 assesses impact area 1 as emerging progress, meaning that only marginal results have been achieved as yet (MFA 2018a). There has been some progress in deepening and supporting engagement in Syrian dialogue processes and the inclusion of women within these peace-building processes, but there has been no substantial progress in the overall political process. Changes in the conflict dynamics also resulted in challenges to the achievement of some results as plans became outdated (MFA 2018b). The self-assessment was reflected in the results reported in the 2018 Country Strategy Results Report and was broadly confirmed by the case-study team through interviews (MFA 2018a). Example results reported under the two sub-outcome areas which only relate to activities are as follows:

- The Syria Initiative launched 27 dialogue initiatives reaching over 5,000 indirect beneficiaries and supported 6 dialogue platforms.

- The Berghoff Foundation organised a dozen workshops to bring together armed groups, members of the civil society entities, academia/think tanks, local council representatives and persons engaged in dialogue processes. However, a substantial change in workplan focus was needed due to changes in the conflict situation.

- Progress has been made by the International Impartial and Independent Mechanism (IIIM), with two case-files opened and increased cooperation with third party jurisdictions investigating serious crimes committed in Syria. Staffing of the mechanism has been slower than planned and there was a lack of progress with interacting with the Syrian Authorities.

- Long-term dialogue and trust building activities aimed at peace-building reported improved engagement with women and a greater focus on empowerment through UN Women Support to Syrian Women's Engagement in the Political Peace Process and the Syria Initiative. However, unsatisfactory results were achieved in the second component due to insufficient funding and a change in personnel.

Overall, successful results in this impact area remain constrained mainly by the lack of progress in the UN-led political process and the fast-changing nature of the conflict.

Results for Impact 2: Dignified life for affected populations in Syria and improved conditions for the safe return of refugees and IDPs in stabilised areas.

Similarly impact area 2 is rated as emerging progress although the 2018 Self-Assessment highlights that Finnish funded interventions have provided relief and basic services for thousands of Syrians. (MFA 2018b, p.2). Finland provided un-earmarked core contributions to several humanitarian organizations for humanitarian assistance inside Syria, but mixed results were achieved again due to the political situation. This is highlighted in the 2018 Annual Results Report (MFA 2018a), with some of the results confirmed by a number of external evaluations. Key examples from the 2018 Annual Results Report and evaluations are as follows:

- **UNHCR** reached 2.3 million beneficiaries through protection activities in Syria, while 17.3 million people benefitted from ICRC/IFRC implemented water and habitat projects and 8.5 million people received food assistance in Syria (MFA 2018a).

- **UNICEFs No Lost Generation Syria Project** resulted in 70,509 (49% girls) benefitting from improved access to quality teaching-learning environment more than 3 times the original target (MFA 2018a). The overall positive impact of the regional NLG programme was confirmed by an independent evaluation (Dara 2019).

- **UNDP** support provided 898 monthly job opportunities to youth and 281 females in Syria (MFA 2018a).

- **UNFPA** provided 1.6 million reproductive health services and 445,752 beneficiaries were reached with GBV services (MFA 2018a). An independent evaluation, found that although the project experienced start up delays, qualitative evidence indicates that activities supported by UNFPA are positively received and are filling essential service gaps. (UNFPA 2019).

Overall, progress in this area has been constrained by an absence of bilateral relations and dialogue with the Syrian regime, restrictions on access inside Syria and the regimes expanding control of territory. For example, the Finnish funded Syria Recovery Trust Fund experienced major challenges when the Syrian regime took over opposition-controlled areas with 40% of their work having to be suspended, therefore no Finnish funding was disbursed in 2018 (MFA 2018).

Results for Impact 3: Dignified life for Syrian refugees and host-community affected populations in Syria's neighbours

Impact 3 is the largest portfolio, in its value, scope of activities and level of ambition and is rated as 'developing' meaning that targeted results were partially achieved. Good progress was achieved in Finnish interventions, but the humanitarian context remained difficult resulting in higher-level country strategy results not being achieved. Finnish reporting provides participation and activity numbers but no assessment of specific results, although external evaluations and interviews provide supporting evidence that confirms progress. Examples of results include:

- UN Women's Jordan- **Eid-bi-Eid** project reached 20,000 direct and indirect Syrian refugee beneficiaries with livelihoods, GBV, education and childcare services, although it fell short of achieving some of its results (MFA 2018a). An independent evaluation concluded that there were positive impacts of the programme, particularly in terms of the empowerment of refugee women (UN Women 2019)

- The **EU Facility for Refugees in Turkey provides** humanitarian assistance, education, migration management and socio-economic support. A recent evaluation found that the programme is on track to achieving its objectives, with the Facility permitting results and efficiencies at a scale that could not have been achieved with a conventional mix of EU and member state funding alone (EC 2019).

- The **UNDP Sub-Regional Response Facility** (SRF) helped to expand resilience interventions in the regional response to the Syria crisis, and to enable private sector engagement and innovation in the response. The 2018 Annual Results Report notes that 'Finnish support enabled SRF in 2018 to make a significant impact on 3RP programme and policy development' (MFA 2018a p.23). The case-study team was not however able to verify this.

- An independent evaluation of the **EU MADAD Syria Trust Fund Regional Fund** found delays resulting from start-up difficulties, but high relevance to the needs of context and policy of EU member states, and positive, albeit it uneven, overall trends for effectiveness, sustainability and impact, across the portfolio (Landell Mills, 2018).

The Annual Results Report 2018 noted that progress on Lebanon dialogue projects, including Geneva Call, was difficult to measure, and that the results framework still lacked meaningful indicators to measure progress (MFA 2018a).

Results for Impact 4: Sustained stability and resilience of communities in Iraq, enabling IDPs and refugees to return

Impact 4 is not included in the 2018 Self-Assessment, but the 2018 Annual Results Report indicates that progress in Iraq was very positive, although 2018 data was not available for all the project and results indicators. The report notes that 4.2 million IDPs had returned to their area of origin by early 2019 (MFA 2018a).

The case-study team were not able to verify results as although the evaluation project sample was to include three projects from the Iraq portfolio insufficient documentation was received to assess the projects and it was not possible to interview MFA staff or implementors involved in the Iraq programme despite requests. Evidence of results from external sources include:

- The **UNDP Funding Facility for Stabilization** (FFS) was the main intervention supported by Finland. The FFS Annual Report 2018 notes that it doubled operations in 2018, with 5 million Iraqis benefitting from completed FFS projects, of which 2.4 million were women. Sectors targeted comprised basic services (UNDP 2019).

- Humanitarian funding provided by UNHCR reached 2.9 million people in Iraq through 76 quick impact projects in the areas of basic needs and essential services, security from violence and exploitation and community empowerment and self-reliance (UNHCR 2019).

5.2.2 Delivery of results for equalities (including gender)/ non-discrimination/climate change

There is a strong focus within the Syria/Iraq Crisis strategy on themes related to equality, non-discrimination and vulnerability, which in turn is reflected in the programmes included in the regional portfolio. Finland made a decision to strengthen its approach to gender equality and empowerment in 2017, ensuring a gender sensitive approach in all Finnish projects for the Syria Crisis (MFA 2018a). Finland has also allocated a significant part of its limited capacity for advocacy and policy dialogue to related issues, reinforcing funding choices.

According to interviews, other Donors and implementing partners perceive the emphasis on gender, disability and equality as core part of Finland's identity as a Donor. It influences how they approach Finland, and perceive its position in the Donor community. Interviews indicated that UN Women, UNFPA and some INGOs now focus their funding submissions to include a gender focus or bring specific projects focused on women to Finland to fund. This means that the Finland's expressed identify is reinforced in the submissions received and final portfolio content, therefore improving alignment over time with development policy and priorities. The evidence of this transition is most tangible in the Syria Crisis portfolio, where Finland has some limited field capacity. It is less clear in the Iraq and Turkey portfolios, where Finland has less capacity.

Climate change does not present as a theme within either the Syria/Iraq Crisis Strategy or the portfolio, as much of the portfolio is humanitarian or resilience in orientation. The Self-Assessment does however note that although it is not a direct objective of the strategy, sustained conflict has a negative impact on society and the provision of basic services and resilience building can avert possibly environmentally harmful coping strategies (MFA 2018b).

Notwithstanding, the results achieved by for Finnish funded activities for equalities are difficult to quantify, due to the focus on monitoring activities and some outputs. Although there was often an intention to disaggregate date by gender or age, this was often not possible in practice given the context. The likelihood of positive achievement is however good, with some evidence showing in the partner reporting (see section 4.3.1). In addition, given that portfolio design itself places a strong emphasis on equality, non-discrimination and vulnerability. Examples exist in each of the four Impact Areas, albeit less well articulated under Impact 4 in Iraq. These include promoting a role for women in social dialogue on peace -building(Impact 1), a strong focus on women and girls in humanitarian and resilience assistance inside Syria (Impact 2) and in the neighbouring countries (Impact 3).

5.2.3 Contributions to reductions in fragility

Finland's assistance is likely to have contributed to some aspects of fragility reduction although this is difficult to measure as fragility is not a term used as a programme or analytical concept. It is not integrated into the results framework or used to decide on or target interventions. Conceptually, there is an intersection between the portfolio and some of the key indicators of fragility, therefore it can be assumed there is some contribution either directly or indirectly to reducing fragility.

The main contributions identified were related to: i) Improvement of rights and status of women and girls; ii) Enabling Environment for civil society: iii) Quality of education improved; iv) Increased number of people have access to decent work, livelihoods and income and v) Increased access to water and energy. These are outlined in the following table:

Table 4: Main contributions to reductions in fragility identified

Improvement of rights and status of women and girls	
GBV prevention	UN Women, Eid-Bi-Eid, UNFPA
Participation of women in the peace process in Syria	Syria Initiative, UN Women and Berghof Foundation
Enabling Environment for civil society	
Support to CSOs to participate in the Syrian peace process	Syria Initiative, Berghof Foundation
Enhancing the capacity of CSOs to provide services in livelihoods, education and employment	UNDP Building Resilience in Response to the Syria Crisis, UNICEF NLG,
Quality of education improved	
Education for girls	UN Women, Eid-Bi-Eid, UNICEF NLG
Increased number of people have access to decent work, livelihoods and income	
In 2018 there were 37,876 beneficiaries of livelihood programmes (UNDP 2019)	UNDP Funding for Stabilisation in Iraq
Livelihoods for women and girls	UN Women, Eid-Bi-Eid, UNICEF NGL
Work opportunities for youth and women in Syria	UNDP
Increased access to water and energy	
In 2018 1.7 million people gained access to improved water supply and 2.8 million to electricity (UNDP 2019)	UNDP Funding for Stabilisation in Iraq

There are however a number of caveats to these contributions, including:

• Both Syria and Iraq remain extremely fragile and according to the OECD State of Fragility Report July 2018, both countries experienced a deterioration in some dimensions of fragility since 2016 (see section 2.2).

• Contributions are at different levels ranging from core contributions to multilateral agencies to smaller-scale CSO projects.

• Results from programme interventions have been mixed with impact area 1 and 2 demonstrating emerging progress, suggesting contributions may well have been limited (see 4.3.2).

Aspects of reducing fragility in which no tangible contributions from Finland could be identified were strengthened rule of law, improved food security and strengthened South-South cooperation.

The Finnish programme has made some contributions to the realisation of PSGs 1 Inclusive political settlements and conflict resolution fostered, PSG 2 People's security established and fostered and PSG 4: employment generated and livelihoods improved.

Table 5: Contributions to the realisation of PSGs

PSGs 1: Inclusive political settlements and conflict resolution fostered,	Support to intra-Syrian dialogues (Syria Initiative, Berghof Foundation, European Institute of Peace, IIIM)
PSG 2: People's security established and fostered	Support to stability and resilience of communities in Iraq & Syria (UNHCR, ICRC, IFRC)
PSG 4: Employment generated and livelihoods improved	Access to livelihood opportunities (UNDP Syria, UNDP FFS Iraq, UN Women, Eid-Bi-Eid, UNICEF NGL)

The link between results and the strategy is limited as there was no clear connection between the achievement of results and the strategy. In practice evidence suggests that there is little influence of the regional strategy on results generation for the following reasons:

- Many of the programmes were already part of the portfolio before the strategy was developed therefore it was a 'legacy' portfolio and the strategy had no influence on the generation of results, which would most likely have still occurred in the absence of the strategy.

- No stakeholders interviewed either in Finland or Lebanon were aware of the strategy as it was not actively disseminated and therefore it did not shape the objectives or results of partners.

- As there was a regional rather than a country strategy, which included multiple countries and interventions, it is possible that the strategy hindered the achievement of results. as resource constraints meant that Embassy staff in Lebanon did not have sufficient oversight of programmes to maximise results.

Human resourcing and MFA capacity was a major challenge for programme effectiveness given the broad scope of the programme. This was raised in interviews with MFA and donor partners, as well as the self-assessment and the corresponding risk matrix (MFA 2018b). It is also noted as a constraint in the 2019 evaluation of Finland's forced displacement work which recommended a scale up of staff (MFA 2019). A lack of capacity to engage in policy dialogue, advocacy and provide sufficient oversight of programmes, as well as monitoring and reporting limits the Embassy's ability to maximise programme effectiveness,

There were no unanticipated effects found by the case-study team.

5.2.4 Role of the aid-cooperation modality in supporting the delivery of results

The strategy is mainly delivered through multilateral agencies and Finnish NGOs, with most multilateral support provided through core funding or trust funds (see section 3.3). The only multi-bi projects were UN Women's Eid-el-Eib and UNICEFs NGL projects in Jordan and Syria. There were no bilateral projects.

There is evidence of a strategic rationale for aid modalities used apart from Finnish NGOs. The desk review and interviews indicated that there is a commitment to medium-term support to priority agencies that Finland has a historical and trusted relationship with (UNHCR, UNICEF, UN Women and UNFPA) or that are supporting innovation (UNDP and the UNDP Stabilisation Fund). Flexibility in modalities used was demonstrated when funding was increased to UNFPA after US cuts and funding was ended to the SRTF and the UNDP stabilisation fund for Iraq as the context changed. The rationale for support to Finnish CSOs appears less well documented with the exception of the rationale for peacebuilding and mediation work under Impact I and II. The relative advantage of Finnish CSOs in the humanitarian sector is not documented in

the strategy, although interviews indicated that maintaining a Finnish presence was a key rationale. It is also unclear how Finland sees the relative advantage or synergy of investing in parallel Multilateral and CSO mechanisms.

The mix of aid modalities is appropriate given contextual constraints. Support delivered through the large UN agencies and multilateral trust funds was highlighted as appropriate for targeting large scale humanitarian needs by most interviewees given Finland has no capacity on the ground apart from in Lebanon. The team also noted that CSOs are a logical choice for engaging with peace building processes as they have the relevant skills and capacity. However, capacity constraints have led to less engagement in policy dialogue and advocacy, lessening Finland's ability to influence and leverage this funding. The two multi-bi projects have been important for delivering results and furthering Finland's work on gender equality. Bilateral projects are not feasible given the context and would not anyway be possible given MFA capacity constraints. EU policy also limits working through state entities in Syria which is likely to limit options for delivery of stabilisation and other non-humanitarian assistance through non-state channels going forward, as the government re-establishes its authority. There is no evidence that one modality delivered more results than other.

Un-earmarked core contributions to several humanitarian organizations was highlighted in interviews as important in providing flexibility to respond to a rapidly changing context giving these organisations the ability to address urgent and unfunded needs and provided flexibility in rapidly changing environments. Interviews with these organisations indicated that this support was considered to be highly appropriate to the context and particularly valued as opposed to other funders who earmarked contributions.

A lack of a multi-year funding framework. This was frequently raised as a challenge by MFA stakeholders and implementing partners in interviews as the Syria/Iraq Crisis Strategy is not supported by a multi-annual budget. Allocations are decided on an annual basis and the Embassy in Lebanon has to reapply for programming funding accordingly. This according to the Self-Assessment means that effective planning of interventions cannot take place, which in turn can jeopardise the delivery of results (MFA 2018b).

5.2.5 Role of policy dialogue in delivering results

There is some evidence of positive outcomes on policy dialogue in key areas of Finnish policy and priorities – on issues related to protection, gender and regional innovation on resilience. With Finland's support UN Women has engaged in policy dialogue with UN agencies and Jordanian authorities for a more gender-sensitive refugee response and UNDP has advocated for a resilience sensitive response to the Syria crisis (MFA 2018a and interviews). These outcomes derive from the targeted and strategic use of Finland's limited capacity and resources for policy dialogue with other Donors, multilaterals and governments. Otherwise, results are severely constrained by capacity, particularly the shortage of human resources. This includes the inability for effective engagement in the governance of pooled funding modalities, such as the EU (FRiT and MADAD), World Bank (Lebanon Stabilisation) and the Syria Recovery Trust Fund and UNDP Iraq stabilisation fund. Finland lacks the capacity and ambition to engage in fund governance and policy dialogue and, therefore does not contribute to, or benefit from related processes. Finland's unique contribution as a "small donor", therefore, is less visible.

Embassy personnel raised related issues throughout the 2018 Annual Results Report (MFA 2018a). The Management Response states that there are currently no resources in the system to mitigate the situation (MFA 2018c).

Although an objective of the strategy was to undertake strategic advocacy in five areas (see section 3.2.1) this was not possible due to insufficient staff resourcing. The only area where there has been some limited policy engagement is on gender, youth, resilience and disability in the Syria programme, as some expertise exists within the Embassy. This was achieved by a Finnish Advisor from the Beirut Embassy engaging in dialogue with programme partners. This was a result of a strategic choice to engage in dialogue in this area. This has supported Finnish programming and the perception of Donors in interviews was that this is an area of Finnish strength. The evaluation team did not find any specific evidence of how this dialogue has translated into results. No information was available on policy dialogue in Turkey and Iraq.

The 2018 Country Strategy Annual Report stresses that not engaging in policy dialogue is a missed opportunity for Finland. In terms of engagement to leverage results, the report states that "the team wants to point out that in order to strengthen the policy dialogue with various partners on the desired results under this outcome area and to promote Finland's policy objectives, it is of utmost importance to have the required human resources" ((MFA 2018a, p.25). In interviews, it was noted by several donors that Finland could also leverage their position more politically as an independent broker given their perceived position of political neutrality.

5.3 Coherence

5.3.1 Role of the Syria/Iraq Crisis Strategy enabling coherent Finnish assistance

The strategy institutionalises DPPs and humanitarian policy, and integrates them into the regional results framework. The Syria/Iraq Crisis Strategy has not been effective as a regional document. The strategy may provide a regional programme framework. However, it does not set out a strategic rationale for an integrated approach, and does not appear supported by changes within the Ministry's operational arrangements. What emerges is effectively three largely independent programmes, for the regional Syria crisis, Iraq and in Turkey, nested within a common results framework but with limited or no regional coordination. The exception may be within Humanitarian assistance, which takes a Syria/regional focus. There is limited coordination or exchange between them, and weakness in the monitoring undermines the benefit of reporting results into a regional format.

In addition, the MFA annual results for 2017 and 2018 reports cover humanitarian and development support to Syria and Iraq, but not the other countries included in the CS, private sector instruments, CSO funding or support to civilian or military crisis management despite the emphasis on the comprehensiveness of the strategy.

Otherwise, "coherence" is more of an "efficiency" issue, about institutional arrangements in the Finnish ministries. Here, the strategy is not an effective instrument to management/operational coherence; facilitation of regional or "whole of government" coherence. Some CSO and Fin-funded activities are implemented within the Embassies jurisdiction, but are not integrated into the strategy or subject to Embassy oversight. Multilateral influencing plans have not been developed, at country level and the Embassy team were not aware of MFA global multilateral influencing plans, despite the prevalence of multilateral aid within the programme and trade and security is not incorporated into the strategy. We have no evidence that the strategy is being used to as a frame for engaging between departments and with other ministries, or that the underlying systems which have been developed by the MFA for country rather than regional strategies have been adapted to support a regional approach.

5.3.2 Role of the Syria/Iraq Crisis Strategy contributing to wider Development Policy objectives

The strategy has contributed towards the realisation of Finnish Development Policy Objectives (DPPs), and there is a strong alignment between the strategy and the wider Finnish DPPs. The strategy reflected the 2016 DPPs through highlighting gender equality, which is fully integrated into programming and support to refugees and asylum seekers (MFA 2016). A key pillar of the strategy is needs-based humanitarian action reflecting Finland's Humanitarian policy (MFA 2012), while Finland's Development Policy in Fragile States emphasises conflict prevention, democratic and accountable society and the rule of law and participation of women that has clearly influenced both the strategy and programming (MFA 2014).

5.3.3 Alignment of the strategy with plans and policies of other key donors and actors in the context

Finland's strategy is strongly aligned with key international agreements through adherence to the (UN) Grand Bargain on humanitarian financing, Humanitarian Principles, EU common policy on the refugee situation and engagement with the Syrian Government ("red lines") and the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (UN 2000). Finland aligns and provides support for the EU's policy and programmes in the region. These relate primarily to management of migration, humanitarian response and the nexus between development and humanitarian action. These include the EU-Turkey Joint Action Plan on Migration (EC 2016), as part of efforts to reduce migration and keep refugees in the region and the EU Regional Strategy for Syria and Iraq (EC 2015).

As part of these commitments Finland provides significant funding to the MADAD and the FRIT, although it has limited engagement in their governance or implementation. Within the United Nations system, the strategy aligns with and supports the UN Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (UN/3RP 2017), which is an umbrella for 240 partner organisations and covers Syria's neighbouring countries and Iraq and the Syria Humanitarian Response Plan (UNOCHA, 2016, 2017 & 2018).

Finland has no bilateral relationship with the Syrian government or bilateral programmes with the Lebanese or Jordanian governments so does not align with their policies and programmes. Finland has had limited capacity to engage in dialogue on policy issues with other donors through the various forums for engagement in Lebanon and Jordan. Finland is, however, part of a Nordic group in the region, which is an informal grouping of like-minded Nordic donors that has developed common policy positions with other Nordic donors on some key issues that were raised within the donor community.

5.4 Connectedness

5.4.1 Adherence to international commitments on a Human Rights Based Approach

A HRBA is briefly mentioned in the strategy in relation to the 2014 Finnish Development Policy for Fragile States, which the strategy is based on and it is noted that a HRBA will be used to benchmark partners practices (MFA 2014). How this will be integrated into the strategy is not explicitly mentioned, as the strategy makes no further references to this.

Documentation indicates that Finland does not actively require a HRBA for its funding decisions, not does it systematically monitor HRBA in its internal reporting. Notwithstanding, the interven-

tions do generally adhere to HRBA principles, even though a HRBA is not explicitly emphasised. Use of HRBA principles is internal good practice for many of Finland's implementing partners, and included as a standard design element. Similarly, IHP, Do No Harm and AAP principles are not highlighted in the strategy and there is limited mention in programme documents.

5.4.2 Consideration of the humanitarian-development-peacebuilding nexus

The overall regional context is not appropriate for "nexus" programming. With the possible exceptions of Iraq and Jordan where Finland has supported some stabilisation/reconstruction/livelihoods work, the context places significant restrictions on nexus-oriented programming. Nexus work is constrained by the restrictions of host governments (Lebanon and Turkey, lesser in Jordan) and international agreements restricting direct engagement with the Syrian regime and state institutions. These are set in the common European Policy towards Syrian, and the parameters and principles of UN assistance in Syria (EC 2015).

The effect is to drive the international focus back to humanitarian and protection issues (for example, forced return from Turkey and Lebanon) with the portfolio largely humanitarian and resilience focused. The evaluation team was advised that "resilience" is not "nexus". Therefore, although the strategy includes 'further development of the concept of resilience and strengthening the humanitarian- development nexus', as an aim of advocacy', in practice this cannot be undertaken in the current context, due to the political situation. Therefore, focus on a humanitarian response was maintained. This was despite considerable discussion among the donor community about longer-term development activities with some disagreement among the approach to take.

6 Conclusions

Relevance

Finnish support through the Syria/Iraq Crisis Strategy has been relevant, although this was not as a result of the strategy as it represented a 'legacy' portfolio that was already in existence prior to the strategies development. The strategy is adapted to the context as it is a regional strategy rather than a country strategy, which acknowledges the regional and geopolitical dynamics of the crisis in Syria and Iraq. There is however limited evidence of MFA institutional arrangements and resourcing adapting to support this regional approach. Adaptations did occur within the portfolio through shifts in approaches and methods of delivery by implementors which Finland supported, but were constrained by a lack of multi-annual year resourcing.

Although the strategy does not include an assessment of fragility, it describes the features of fragility and aligns these with Finland's policies, priorities and the portfolio choices. As a result, no significant element of the strategy or portfolio appears out of align, or otherwise lacking in relevance, while Finland's assistance is highly relevant to the needs of beneficiaries across the region. There is less alignment with national stakeholders due to the lack of bilateral cooperation agreements with authorities in Syria, Lebanon and Jordan. Instead Finland's assistance was highly integrated into and relevant to the overall international effort led by the UN and other multilateral agencies.

Effectiveness

Progress towards the achievement of results from Finnish assistance has been mixed and has been heavily constrained by the changing conflict dynamics and political contexts and is likely to continue to be so going forward. Results reporting is at activity level drawing from specific interventions, while there is no regional results assessment. This means it is not possible to assess the overall higher-level strategic contributions or regional impact of the strategy.

Despite a lack of results data, it is clear that some results are beginning to emerge under impact areas 1 and 2. Finland has made some progress in deepening and supporting engagement in Syrian dialogue processes related to peace-building and the inclusion of women, although a lack progress on a Syrian political settlement and the fast-changing nature of the conflict has constrained results. Impact area 3 has demonstrated better results in terms of supporting Syrian refugees and host communities in the region, but again results were mixed and a difficult external humanitarian context limits the achievement of higher-level results. There is little information available on impact 4 related to Iraq, which is an omission given this should be reported on as part of the annual reporting process. Overall, there has been a strong focus on equality, non-discrimination and vulnerability with significant efforts in promoting gender equality and empowerment. There is evidence of some project level results in these areas, but not of these aggregating to higher level contributions at a more strategic level.

Although fragility is not a term used as a programme or analytical concept, Finland's assistance is likely to have contributed to some aspects of fragility reduction either directly or indirectly. Possible contributions were identified in the areas of: improvement of rights and status of women and girls; enabling environment for civil society: quality of education improved; increased number of people have access to decent work, livelihoods and income and increased access to water

and energy. The Finnish programme is also likely to have made some contributions to the realisation of PSGs 1: inclusive political settlements and conflict resolution fostered: PSG 2 people's security established and fostered and PSG 4: employment generated and livelihoods improved.

The mix of aid modalities used appears appropriate given contextual and capacity constraints as Finland has no capacity on the ground in Syria and unearmarked funding allows multilateral institutions flexibility to adapt to changing contexts., There is no evidence that one modality has delivered more than another. Nevertheless, capacity constraints have led to less engagement in policy dialogue and advocacy than the strategy intended, which has reduced Finland's ability to influence and leverage more results from this funding.

Coherence

The strategy institutionalises the current DPPs and Finland's humanitarian policy, and integrates them into the regional results framework. Nonetheless, it does not set out a strategic rationale for an integrated approach, and does not appear to be supported by changes within the Ministry's operational arrangements. What emerges is effectively three largely independent programmes, for the regional Syria crisis, Iraq and in Turkey, nested within a common results framework but with limited or no regional coordination.

The strategy is not an effective instrument to management/operational coherence, facilitation of regional or "whole of government" coherence. There is no evidence that the strategy is being used as a frame for engaging between departments and with other ministries, or that the underlying systems which have been developed by the MFA for country rather than regional strategies have been adapted to support a regional approach. A more comprehensive approach, supported by systems adapted to a regional approach would be useful going forward if a regional strategy is maintained. If not, another option would be developing separate Syria and Iraq country strategies.

Finland's strategy is however strongly aligned with key international agreements on humanitarian financing and the Syrian crisis which provide the main frameworks for donor support in the region. It is also aligned with the EU's policy and programmes in the region.

Connectedness

There is little emphasis on a HRBA in the regional strategy or programme documentation, although they both generally adhere to HRBA principles although they are not monitored or reported on. Although the regional strategy includes 'further development of the concept of resilience and strengthening the humanitarian- development nexus', as an aim of advocacy', in practice this cannot be undertaken in the current context, therefore a focus on a humanitarian response and resilience has been the only option. This is likely to remain the case in the future, unless there is agreement among the donor community on the political feasibility of longer-term development activities.

7 Lessons and Implications

The Iraq/Syria Crisis Strategy was the first strategy for the region and as such represented a transitional strategy that would be adapted in the future. Experience with the current strategy and tangible achievements in the portfolio, offer a number of insights for the next iteration of the strategy. In addition, there are some key issues and policy dilemmas that will confront the next strategy that will focus on shifting conflict and political dynamics, and include engagement within:

- *The Syrian national authorities*: this will involve resolving the tension between delivering to meet the needs of people vis-à-vis the EU "red lines" and the degree of political legitimacy of the Syrian state.

- *The changing national policy environments of Syria's neighbour's*: Lebanon and Jordan still require significant assistance, working within a regional framework, but there are significant challenges from "host" fatigue and new restrictions on non-humanitarian funding.

- *Turkey*: which is in a different political context, of high sensitivity to Finland and the European Union, and subject to considerations beyond the regional crisis.

- *The place of Iraq beyond Syria crisis response*: The implications of opening an Embassy Bagdad for portfolio management in a regional framework.

Going forward, taking into consideration these issues and evidence generated by the case study, the following lessons/implications arise for the next strategy.

1. **To increase coherence MFA may wish therefore to consider the following measures to increase coherence.**

    - Adopt a high-level approach, focused on guiding principles using Finnish development policy and priorities to focus on the needs of people. A "needs" focus can depoliticise and shift the focus of debate.

    - Limit the geographic scope of the strategy and portfolio focus on the Syrian response and meeting basic needs. The opening of an Iraq Embassy provides the opportunity for a separate Iraq strategy, which makes sense given the different country contexts and the difficulty Finland has experienced in implementing a strategy that covers interventions in a number of countries.

    - Clarify the place of Turkey within the portfolio, in the light of it's unique relationship with Europe and consider whether it is appropriate to include within the strategy.

    - Rationalise the size and scope of its portfolio to move beyond legacy projects and to ensure stronger oversight and management of the portfolio.

    - MFA processes and institutional arrangements should be adapted to accommodate a regional strategy to allow a more comprehensive approach.

2. **To strengthen effectiveness of the portfolio the MFA may wish to consider:**

- Underpinning the strategy with a multi-annual financing framework

- Ensuring that the results framework is technical robust, key data is available and there is sufficient oversight, monitoring and reporting of results, while at the same time ensuring the necessary flexibility in a dynamic situation.

- Increasing engagement in influencing, dialogue and advocacy to leverage investments and strengthen results

- Ensuring staffing capacity at an operational level is adequate for both portfolio management and influencing objectives.

- For elements of the portfolio that are politically driven by decisions outside of the strategy, MFA should ensure it has the capacity to maintain a watching brief, or preferably to participate in fund governance and influencing opportunities.

- Ensure projects and their results are well documented, objectives are clarified and there is sufficient oversight of partner interventions.

Annex 1: Timeline

Annex 1A: Timeline of events highlighting aspects of fragility – Syria

Nationwide uprising

2011 March	Security forces shoot dead protestors in southern city of Deraa demanding release of political prisoners, triggering violent unrest that steadily spread nationwide over the following months.
2011 May	Army tanks enter Deraa, Banyas, Homs and suburbs of Damascus in an effort to crush anti-regime protests. US and European Union tighten sanctions.

Opposition organises

2011 July	President Assad sacks the governor of the northern province of Hama after mass demonstration there, eventually sending in troops to restore order at the cost of scores of lives.
2011 October	New Syrian National Council says it has forged a common front of internal and exiled opposition activists.

Civil war: The uprising against President Assad gradually turned into a full-scale civil war

2012 February	Government steps up the bombardment of Homs and other cities.
2012 March	UN Security Council endorses non-binding peace plan drafted by UN envoy Kofi Annan. China and Russia agree to support the plan after an earlier, tougher draft is modified.
2012 December	US, Britain, France, Turkey and Gulf states formally recognise opposition National Coalition as "legitimate representative" of Syrian people conflict in Syria displaced millions of people, many of whom sought refuge in camps in Jordan, Turkey and Lebanon.

Rise of Islamists

2013 September	UN weapons inspectors conclude that chemical weapons were used in an attack on the Ghouta area of Damascus in August that killed about 300 people, but do not allocate responsibility. Government allows UN to destroy chemical weapons stocks, process complete by ?
2014 January–February	UN-brokered peace talks in Geneva fail, largely because Syrian authorities refuse to discuss a transitional government.
2014 June	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria militants declare "caliphate" in territory from Aleppo to eastern Iraqi province of Diyala.

Russian intervention

2015 September	Russia carries out its first air strikes in Syria, saying they target the Islamic State group, but the West and Syrian opposition say it overwhelmingly targets anti-Assad rebels.
2015 December	Syrian Army allows rebels to evacuate remaining area of Homs, returning Syria's third-largest city to government control after four years.
2016 March	Syrian government forces retake Palmyra from Islamic State with Russian air assistance, only to be driven out again in December.
2016 August	Turkish troops cross into Syria to help rebel groups push back so-called Islamic State militants and Kurdish-led rebels from a section of the two countries' border.
2016 December	Government troops, backed by Russian air power and Iranian-sponsored militias, recapture Aleppo, the country's largest city, depriving the rebels of their last major urban stronghold.
2017 January	Russia, Iran and Turkey agree to enforce a ceasefire between the government and non-Islamist rebels, after talks between the two sides in Kazakhstan.

US intervenes

2017 April	US President Donald Trump orders a missile attack on an airbase from which Syrian government planes allegedly staged a chemical weapons attack on the rebel-held town of Khan Sheikhoun.
2017 May	US decides to arm the YPG Kurdish Popular Protection Units. These fight alongside the main opposition Syrian Democratic Forces, which captures the important Tabqa dam from Islamic State.
2017 June	US shoots down Syrian fighter jet near Raqqa after it allegedly dropped bombs near US-backed rebel Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF).
2017 July	The Lebanese militant group Hezbollah and the Syrian army launch a military operation to dislodge jihadist groups from the Arsal area, near the Lebanese-Syrian border.

Islamic State retreats

2017 October–November	The Islamic State group is driven from Raqqa, its de-facto capital in Syria, and Deir al-Zour.
2018 January	Turkey launches an assault on northern Syria to oust Kurdish rebels controlling the area around Afrin.
2018 April	Claims of a new chemical attack in Eastern Ghouta's main town of Douma prompt the US, Britain and France to carry out a wave of punitive strikes on Syrian targets.
2018 July	Syrian army recaptures almost all of the south of the country, up to the borders with Jordan and Israeli-held territory.
2019 October	US withdraws troops from northern Syria, prompting Turkey to attack US Kurdish allies in the area.

Source: Syria Profile- Timeline: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-14703995

Annex 1B: Timeline of events highlighting aspects of fragility – Iraq

First US-Iraq war

1990	Iraq invades and annexes Kuwait, prompting what becomes known as the first Gulf War. A massive US-led military campaign forces Iraq to withdraw in February 1991.
1991 April	Iraq subjected to weapons inspection programme.
1991	Iraq's army was crushed in 1991 Gulf War that followed the invasion of Kuwait.
1991 April	UN-approved haven established in northern Iraq to protect the Kurds. Iraq ordered to end all military activity in the area.
1998 October	Iraq ends cooperation with UN Special Commission to Oversee the Destruction of Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction.

Operation Desert Fox

1998 December	US and British Operation Desert Fox bombing campaign aims to destroy Iraq's nuclear, chemical and biological weapons programmes.
2002 November	UN weapons inspectors return to Iraq backed by a UN resolution which threatens serious consequences if Iraq is in "material breach" of its terms.

Saddam ousted

2003 March	US-led invasion topples Saddam Hussein's government, marks start of years of violent conflict with different groups competing for power.
2003 August	Suicide truck bomb wrecks UN headquarters in Baghdad, killing UN envoy Sergio Vieira de Mello.
2003 December	Saddam Hussein captured in Tikrit.
2004 April–May	Photographic evidence emerges of abuse of Iraqi prisoners by US troops at Abu Ghreib prison in Baghdad.

Sovereignty and elections

2004 June	US hands sovereignty to interim government headed by Prime Minister Iyad Allawi.
2004 August	Fighting in Najaf between US forces and Shia militia of radical cleric Moqtada Sadr.
2004 November	Major US-led offensive against insurgents in Falluja.
2005 January	Elections for a Transitional National Assembly.
2005 May onwards	Surge in car bombings, bomb explosions and shootings: government puts civilian death toll for May at 672, up from 364 in April.

Saddam executed

2006 December	Saddam Hussein is executed for crimes against humanity.
2007 January	US President Bush announces a new Iraq strategy; thousands more US troops will be dispatched to shore up security in Baghdad.
2007 August	Kurdish and Shia leaders form an alliance to support Prime Minister Maliki's government, but fail to bring in Sunni leaders.

2007 December	Britain hands over security of Basra province to Iraqi forces, effectively marking the end of nearly five years of British control of southern Iraq.
2008 September	US forces hand over control of the western province of Anbar – once an insurgent and Al-Qaeda stronghold – to the Iraqi government. It is the first Sunni province to be returned to to the Shia-led government.
2009 June	US troops withdraw from towns and cities in Iraq, six years after the invasion, having formally handed over security duties to new Iraqi forces.
2010 March	Elections. Parliament approves new government of all major factions in December.
2011 December	US completes troop pull-out.

Violence intensifies

2013 April	Sunni insurgency intensifies, with levels of violence matching those of 2008. By July the country is described as being yet again in a state of full-blown sectarian war.
2014 January	Islamist fighters infiltrate Falluja and Ramadi after months of mounting violence in mainly-Sunni Anbar province. Government forces recapture Ramadi but face entrenched rebels in Falluja.
2014 April	Prime Minister Al-Maliki's coalition wins a plurality at first parliamentary election since 2011 withdrawal of US troops, but falls short of a majority.
2014 June–September	Sunni rebels led by Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant surge out of Anbar Province to seize Iraq's second city of Mosul and other key towns.

Offensive against Islamic State

2015-2016	Government and Islamic State forces fight for control of Tikrit and Anbar Province.
2016 April	Supporters of cleric Moqtada al-Sadr storm parliament building demanding new government to fight corruption and end allocation of government posts along sectarian lines.
2016 November	Parliament recognises the Shia Popular Mobilisation Units (PMU) militia as part of the armed forces with full legal status.
2017 September	Kurds back independence in referendum staged by Kurdish regional government. Baghdad imposes punitive measures.
2017 November	Government forces with Shia and Kurdish allies drive Islamic State out of all but a few redoubts.
2018 May	Parliamentary elections. The political bloc of Shia cleric Moqtada al-Sadr wins most votes.
2018 October	Parliament elects veteran Kurdish politician Barham Salih as president. He appoints Adel Abdul Mahdi as prime minister, with the support of the Shia majority of MPs.
2019 September–November	At least 400 people die in protests against unemployment and corruption in cities including the capital Baghdad, prompting Adel Abdul Mahdi to tender his resignation.

Source: Iraq Profile – Timeline: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-14546763

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