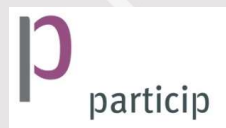


Adapting for Change: Evaluation of Finland's Country Strategy Approach in Fragile Contexts

Launch Seminar

7th May 2020



Three main questions

1. To what extent did the Country Strategy approach **promote Finnish and partner country policy objectives** and **guide Finland's cooperation** in fragile contexts?

2. To what extent did the approach support **policy coherence**?

3. How can it be **further developed** for use in fragile situations?

What is the Country Strategy approach?

Purpose

To bring Regional Department- managed country-level policy and programmatic engagement into a broader framework of Results-Based Management

Scope

- Applies to long-term partner countries
- Encompasses bilateral & earmarked multi-bilateral development assistance under control of MFA's Regional Departments

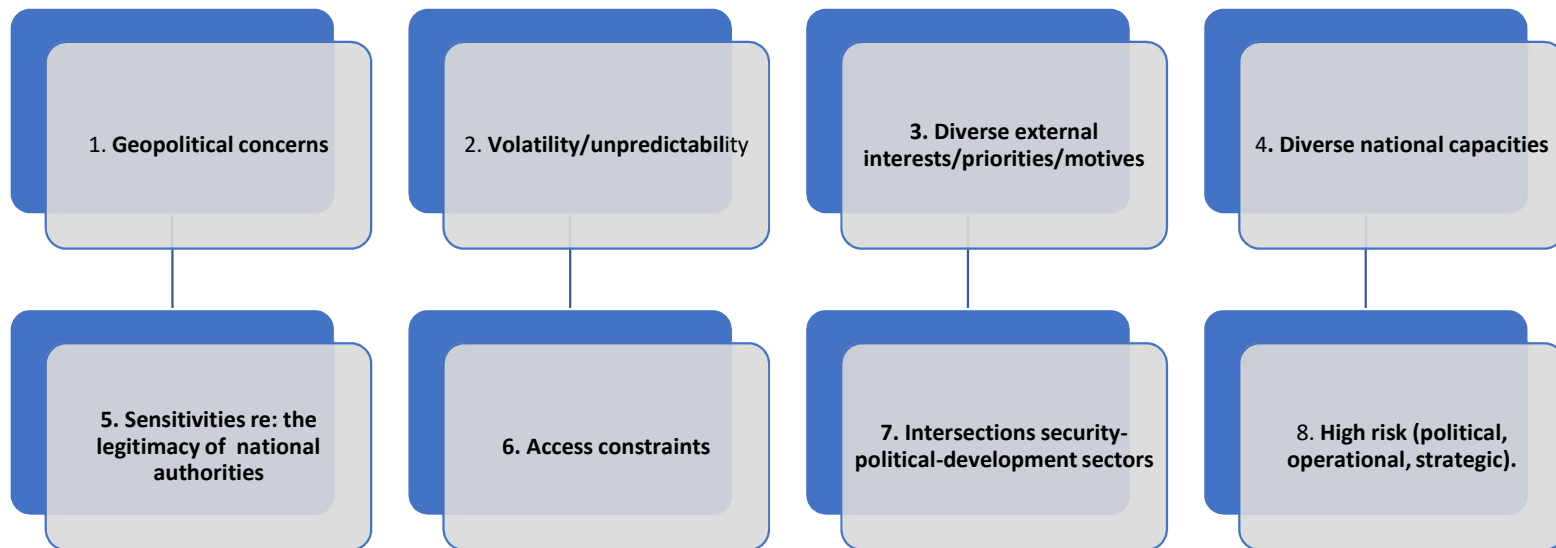
Does not include

- Core contributions to multilateral system
- Humanitarian support
- CSO programme-based support (PBS)
- Private sector engagement/trade support
- Project support for civil society organisations
- Foreign policy, security, peacebuilding and mediation support
- Higher Education Institutions Institutional Cooperation Instrument (HEICI)

Diverse 'first generation' Country Strategies

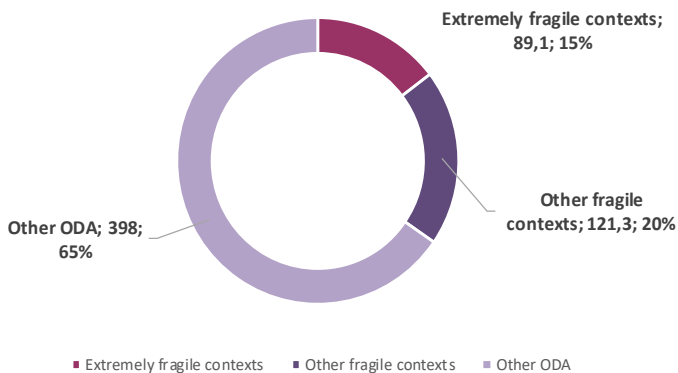
- Afghanistan - White Paper encompasses foreign/security/trade policy
- Regional strategy Syria/Iraq Strategy focuses on the effects of the Syria regional conflict

What makes fragile/conflict affected contexts special?

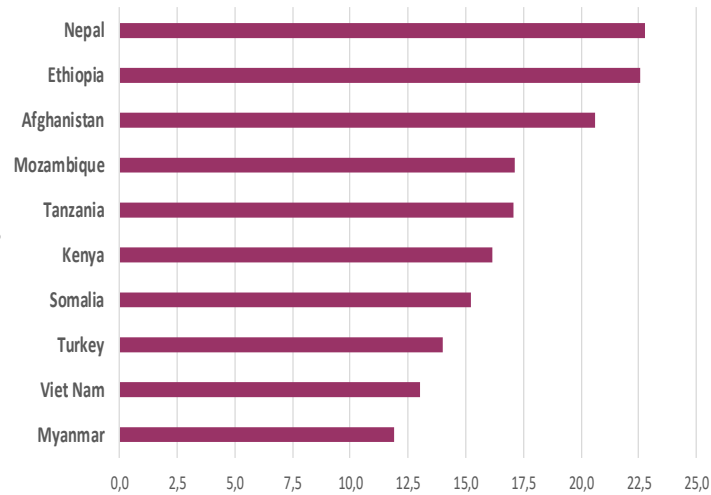


What does Finland's assistance to fragile contexts look like?

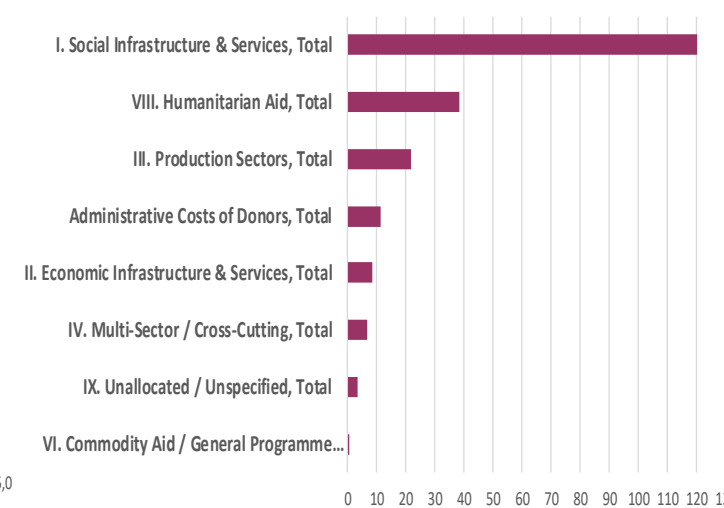
gross disbursements, percent of total ODA, 2017



gross disbursements, million USD, current prices

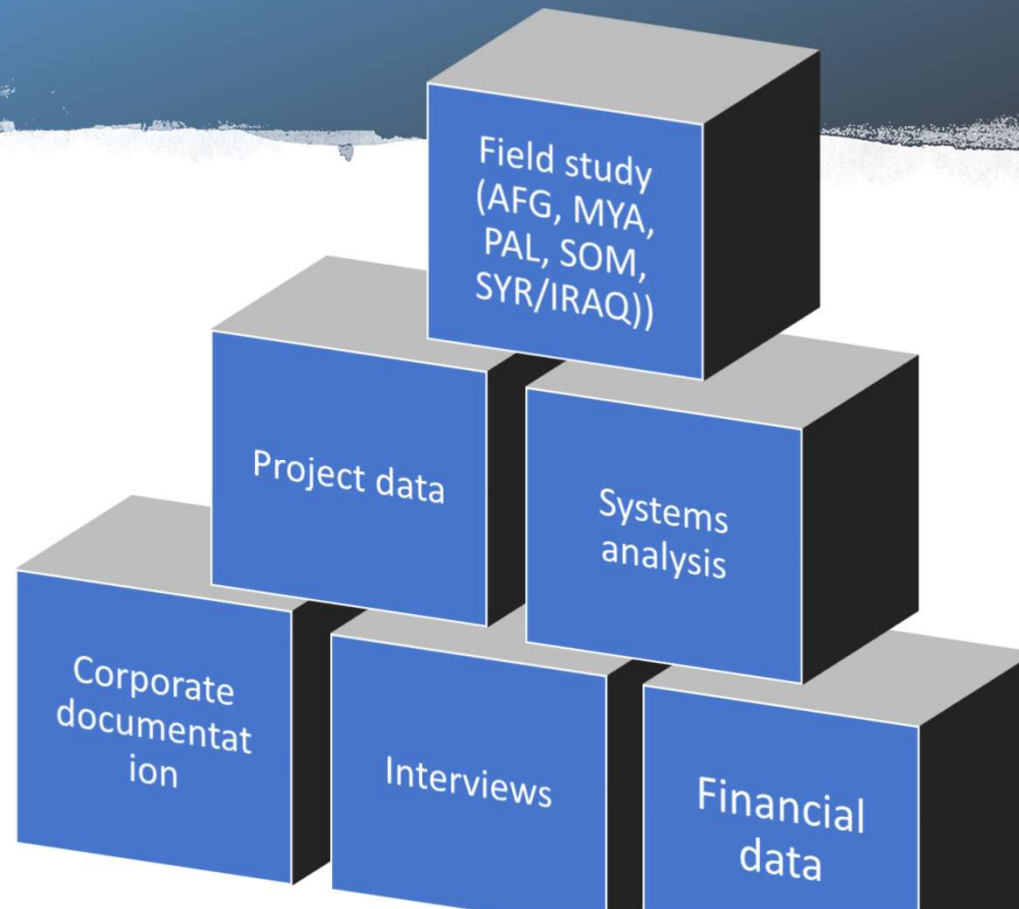


gross disbursements, USD Million, 2017

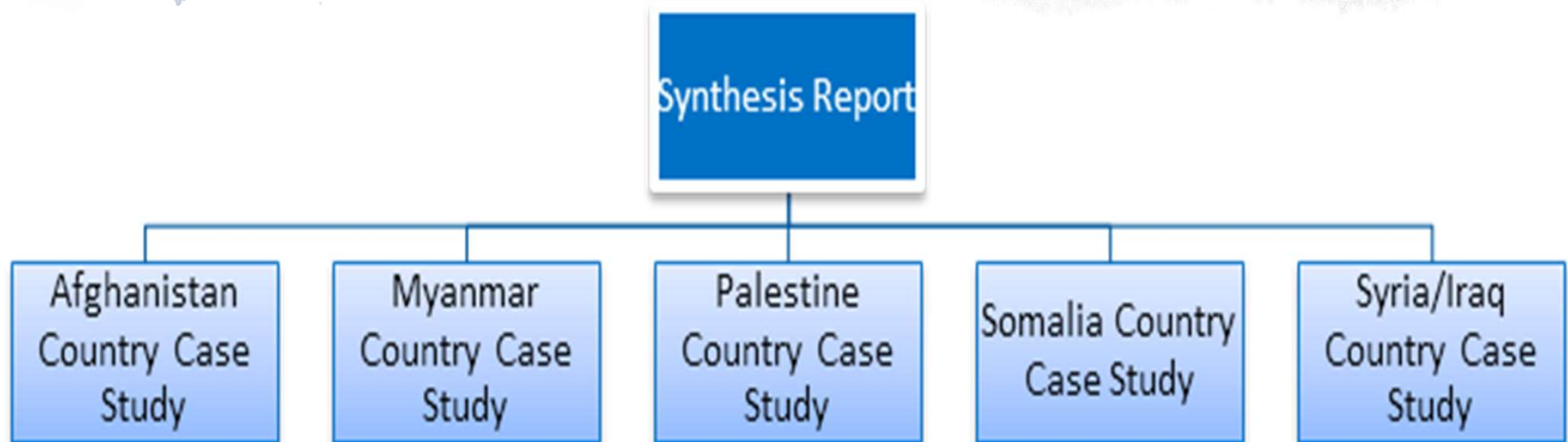


Source: OECD data 2018

The study: How were findings built?



Structure of report



Limitations

1. Results data

Limited - project reports/evaluations & MFA annual reporting

2. Timing

Findings up to December 2019 – Revised Country Strategy guidance issued January 2020

3. Component case studies

Not full evaluations of Finnish assistance

1. How did the Country Strategy approach help ensure relevant Finnish assistance?

Overall – Assistance relevant to needs but not shaped by the Country Strategy instrument

‘Country strategies’

- Diverse e.g. Syria/Iraq
- Strategic priorities aligned with – but not determined by – conflict and fragility
- Weak conflict and fragility analytical base

Finnish assistance relevant in itself

- Projects - Well-aligned with (inter)national strategies /national needs
- Policy dialogue - appropriate to context with focus on statebuilding
- Some adaptive capacity over time

But few intersections between the assistance and the Country Strategy

- CS provided limited guidance on targeting/programmatic choices
- Did not impede (but also did not support) adaptation
- Little awareness/use of the CS outside MFA

2. How did the Country Strategy approach help ensure effective Finnish assistance?

Results Based Management

- Applied; added value; & maturing over time
- But 'linear' approaches to RBM questioned

Aid modalities

- Choice and balance appropriate
- For volatile contexts, helped enable risk management
- Multilateral system use validated (incl. multi-bi)
- But not strategically managed

Policy dialogue

- Some strong effects
- Finland reputation as a principled donor (gender/HRBAs)

Results achieved

Patchy against CS impact areas Densest areas of results:

- Gender
- Education
- PSG 5: Capacity for accountable and fair service delivery built
- Some limited contributions to reduced fragility
- Emerging work on disability but little on climate

But:

- Individualized not aggregate
- Little CS influence on results

- **Somalia** – Finland built significant foundations in gender and 'statebuilding' – but results 'per project'
- **Palestine** – Finland contributed to tangible results especially in education sector - but difficult to verify 'Finnish' contributions

3. How did the Country Strategy approach help ensure coherent Finnish assistance?

Strong external coherence

- Finland a committed & conscientious partner
 - 'Principled'
 - 'Measured'
 - 'Balanced'
- Clear areas of Finnish leadership/strength:
 - Gender
 - Human rights

But - the Country Strategy approach did not play a role in fostering external coherence

Limited internal coherence

- *(Exception: Afghanistan)*
- Assistance mostly dispersed across departments and units; systemic constraints
- Gaps in strategic oversight
- Poor internal communication & few attempts to 'join up' assistance

- **Afghanistan** – White Paper an attempt to join up assistance across Government departments
- **Syria/Iraq** - Assistance well-aligned with international agreements on humanitarian financing – but run effectively as three independent programmes (regional Syria crisis, Iraq & Turkey)

4. How did the Country Strategy approach help connect Finnish assistance to wider priorities?

Inconsistent attention to human rights

- Human rights language = sensitivities in some contexts
- Country Strategies strongly articulate human rights commitments
- Follow through in policy dialogue forums
- Programmatic attention to human rights and other international concerns (IHPs/AAP/DNH) inconsistent/partner-dependent
- No clear monitoring on human rights based approach usage

Emerging connections to longer term concerns ('nexus')

- Country Strategies = strong attention to statebuilding and peacebuilding – but no clear conceptual approach
- Inconsistent medium to long-term view in programmes
- 'Nexus' mostly humanitarian-development (plus resilience in Syria/Iraq & Palestine)
- Some emergent peacebuilding / reconciliation work

Financing systems

- A constraint
- Split into 'humanitarian' and 'development',
- No 'bridging' finance available.
- Local Co-operation Funds valued but mostly discontinued

In Myanmar, Finland seems to encourage dialogue between conflict parties through participation in the Joint Peace Fund

Eight key conclusions

1. **Purpose of the Country Strategy** in fragile contexts requires clarification

2. Country Strategy can further support **internal and external coherence**

3. Assistance **relevant to needs** – but Country Strategy a **'benign but largely passive'** role

4. Finland can enhance **peacebuilding & statebuilding** role

5. **Results Based Management** processes high value – scope to further mature

6. **Valuable results** delivered – but **largely independent** of the Country Strategy

7. Scope for enhanced **linkage to medium term**

8. Country Strategy can further enhance use of **human rights based approaches**

Recommendations 1: Structural

1: Conceptualise the Country Strategy approach as a **tool for adaptive management in fragile contexts - links between humanitarian and development assistance**

- i.- Define intent in fragile situation
- ii.- Gear Finnish contributions to peacebuilding & statebuilding
- iii.- Explicit statement on humanitarian-development links

2: Ensure adequate human resources to enhance the **technical rigour of Country Strategies in fragile situations, geared to **peacebuilding and statebuilding** and with strong attention to risk**

- Improve analytical basis
- Embed principles of conflict and fragility sensitivity
- Ensure that all financed activities conflict and fragility-sensitive

3: Increase **financial flexibility for work in fragile contexts and develop appropriate **financing modalities****

- Approve the Country Programme for a four-year duration
- Consider thematic windows for assistance

Recommendations 2: Procedural

4: Enhance **the RBM systems** allied to the Country Strategy to maximise their value with a specific emphasis on risk

- Gear results to conflict/fragility reduction & peacebuilding/statebuilding
- Formalise Self Assessments into Mid Year Reviews
- Ensure risk management directives fully implemented

5: Refresh or revise the **key policy frameworks** for working in fragile contexts.

- Update the 2014 Fragile States Policy
- Develop an MFA-wide Risk Policy

6: Ensure more rigorous treatment of the **Human Rights Based Approach** in fragile contexts.

- Add human rights analysis into Political Economy Analysis
- Include specific statement on human rights in Country Strategies
- All financed initiatives include approach to human rights