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# EXPLORING THE CONFLICT BLIND SPOTS IN CLIMATE ADAPTATION FINANCE

Synthesis report

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# KEY FINDINGS

In many fragile and conflict-affected situations, climate change and conflict tend to interact with each other, compounding risks and challenges for sustainable development. While not directly causing conflict, climate impacts can exacerbate issues that drive conflict, such as degradation of natural capital and livelihood assets, infrastructure damage, food insecurity and migration. Conflict, in turn, can amplify the impacts of climate change by increasing communities' and institutions' exposure and vulnerability to climate-related hazards and lowering their capacity to adapt.

Despite this relationship, there is limited evidence to date that climate adaptation programmes are being implemented in a conflict-sensitive manner. In addition, multilateral climate funds and some bilateral donors tend not to allocate funds in fragile and conflict-affected situations, seemingly due to perceived higher risks and challenges. This results in what amounts to 'blind spots' that both increase the risk of ill-designed adaptation programmes precipitating grievances and conflict situations, causing unintended harm, and prevent adaptation finance from reaching those arguably most in need of support.

This synthesis report explores: (1) whether and how climate adaptation programmes have been conflict-sensitive in fragile and conflict-affected situations; and (2) barriers and enablers to increasing adaptation finance to these contexts. It is based on an analysis of donors' approaches to conflict sensitivity in the Sahel and Horn of Africa – a region with a large concentration of highly climate-vulnerable and conflict-affected countries – and synthesis of findings from the application of such approaches to climate adaptation investments in Mali, Somalia and Sudan.

The study finds that there remains a lack of donor strategies and policies linking climate change to conflict and fragility, as well as a lack of expertise and incentives to cultivate human resources to support work at this nexus. Learnings from the Global Environment Facility and the World Bank clearly illustrate the negative impacts of a lack of conflict-sensitivity guidance for climate and environmental projects in fragile and conflict-affected situations, and the need for strategies that put conflict and fragility front and centre in these contexts to be impactful and sustained (GEF IEO, 2020; World Bank, 2020b).

The analysis of adaptation programmes in Mali, Somalia and Sudan produced weak evidence of conflict-sensitive practices. Programme proposals did not provide consistent evidence that conflict analyses informed project design and implementation over the programme duration. When projects carried out conflict analyses, the quality of these assessments, especially in considering the climate and conflict nexus, needed improvement – as local power dynamics were often missed.

Conflict risk analyses also tended to focus more on the operational hazards – what an escalation in conflict might cause to an adaptation intervention – and less on the potential impacts of the intervention on conflict dynamics. In other words, most projects focused on being 'security aware'. Addressing security challenges involved relocating project activities where possible or avoiding certain areas in the country, and contingency plans for outbreaks of conflict in conjunction with local conflict resolution mechanisms, including continuously updating site security, regular training of staff and beneficiaries, and accounting for cultural norms and internal dynamics in investment areas.

Projects that acknowledged the potential impacts to the conflict context tended to highlight the positive impacts (e.g. a reduction in tension, better shared resource use) in project documentation. However, there was rarely upfront, explicit analysis of the potential negative, unintended impacts adaptation programmes could cause.

On the barriers and enablers to increasing adaptation finance to fragile and conflict settings, between 2010 and 2018, global public adaptation finance was only 6% of cumulative international official development assistance (\$1.3 trillion) (OECD, 2020a). Over the same period, only 8% (\$5.9 billion) of global adaptation finance (\$77.8 billion) was committed to countries in the Sahel and Horn of Africa (CFU, 2021; OECD, 2021b). On a per capita basis, more than half of the countries in the region received less adaptation funding than the average for Least Developed Countries (\$2–13 vs \$18), despite sharing similar levels of socioeconomic development but ranking at the top of climate vulnerability indexes. This trend shows that the more fragile a country is, the less adaptation finance it received, supporting the idea that donors tend to favour safer places.

Within countries, donors have tended to approach conflict sensitivity by avoiding militia-controlled areas and those where insecurity and conflict levels were deemed too high. While climate finance is not intended to address directly the complex dynamics of insecurity or political conflict involving jihadist and terrorist armed groups, avoiding such areas has resulted in highly vulnerable populations living in areas under militia influence not being reached by adaptation projects. This tendency is influenced by donors' risk perception and risk management processes, with some seemingly more comfortable operating in less secure areas or continuing engagement when the security context worsens.

The challenges in accessing adaptation finance identified in this study, while not unique to fragile and conflict settings, are exacerbated by instability associated with conflict conditions. These include weak governmental capacities to meet fiduciary standards. In the three country case studies, state institutions lacked the public financial management systems to mitigate financial fiduciary risks, including on fraud and corruption. As a result, climate finance was almost entirely channelled through multilateral organisations or (international) partners on the ground.

Another key challenge is donor requirements to access climate finance, which are complex and rigid for the national institutions studied and do not seem to account for rapidly changing conflict contexts. This is especially the case for the Green Climate Fund (GCF). Despite different measures to address access problems – including a readiness programme, a dedicated-window pilot to enhance direct access for national organisations and a 'simplified approval process' pilot – considerable obstacles persist.

Other challenges include high staff turnover, loss of skilled personnel and loss of institutional memory, which contribute to the low institutional capacity, and the absence of minimum socioeconomic and climate data required for programme proposals due to conflict limitations. For example, there are missing meteorological monitoring stations, and armed groups have prevented access to areas for participatory assessments.

A key study limitation has been the lack of access to complete adaptation project documentation, monitoring and evaluation data, and post-programme impact assessments in the three countries analysed. Moreover, most historical funding has been humanitarian-focused, with varying levels of climate sensitivity, and the separation between funding for climate adaptation and for development is often unclear. Basic development needs are seldom

met in these contexts, and therefore it was challenging to identify 'pure' adaptation activities and their impacts. This has hindered analysis of the impact of adaptation finance on conflict. Thus, a large unknown remains in whether adaptation-financed activity is exacerbating, reducing or not impacting conflict and inequality.

Based on these findings, the study offers high-level considerations on the study's two research questions. These are reflections addressed mainly to climate donors and warrant further discussion and generation of evidence.

### **How can the design and delivery of climate adaptation programmes be improved so that they help reduce risk related to both climate and conflict?**

- Articulate the climate adaptation and conflict nexus across donor, government and implementing agency strategies, action plans, policies and guidance materials for investments. There is great scope for this.
- Improve guidance and capacities for conflict sensitivity analysis and support project portfolio reviews with a conflict lens to generate learnings to improve practice.
- Ensure local leaders and all key local stakeholders are actively participating in investment design and implementation via inclusive approaches that recognise the heterogeneity of communities.
- Create more flexible operational protocols during implementation of adaptation investments.

### **How can climate adaptation finance be increased to fragile and conflict-affected situations?**

- Improve coordination among donors on where to operate based on their different risk preferences (perception, appetite and tolerance). A starting point could be a systematic mapping of adaptation programmes within a country, identifying areas where multiple actors are operating, and should be working synergistically, and areas where there is limited investment and presence, needing greater attention.
- Revise donor modalities to provide capacity-building support for climate change adaptation.
- Consider increasing support to improve public financial management systems.
- Actively explore how access requirements of multilateral climate funds, such as the GCF, could be adapted to fragile and conflict-affected situations.

# ABBREVIATIONS

<b>AFD</b>	Agence Française de Développement
<b>AfDB</b>	African Development Bank
<b>DAE</b>	direct access entity
<b>FCDO</b>	Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (UK)
<b>FCS</b>	fragile and conflict-affected situation
<b>FGS</b>	Federal Government of Somalia
<b>GCF</b>	Green Climate Fund
<b>GEF</b>	Global Environment Facility
<b>IAE</b>	international access entity
<b>LDC</b>	Least Developed Country
<b>LCDF</b>	Least Developed Countries Fund
<b>MFA</b>	Ministry of Foreign Affairs (of the Netherlands)
<b>NAP</b>	national adaptation plan
<b>NAPA</b>	national adaptation programme of action
<b>NDC</b>	nationally determined contribution
<b>NDP</b>	national development plan
<b>NGO</b>	non-governmental organisation
<b>ODA</b>	official development assistance
<b>PFM</b>	public financial management
<b>SAP</b>	simplified approval process
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNEP</b>	United Nations Environment Programme
<b>WB</b>	World Bank

# GLOSSARY

## Climate and environment

### Accreditation

An assessment of whether institutional entities are capable of strong financial management and of safeguarding funded projects and programmes for multilateral climate funds such as the Green Climate Fund.

### Adaptation finance

Finance with the aim of improving preparation and reducing climate-related risk and damage, for both human and natural systems, as short-term climate impacts will continue to exact economic, social and environmental costs even if appropriate mitigation actions are taken.

### Climate adaptation programmes

1. Programmes with the principal objective to reduce vulnerability of human and natural systems to current and expected climate impacts, reduce exposure to them, and/or increase resilience. In other words, adaptation is the fundamental driver or motivation behind the programme, which would not have been funded (or designed that way) otherwise.
2. Development projects with other principal objectives, such as poverty reduction, where climate change is mainstreamed into activities. These are often called climate-related development programmes.

### Climate change

A change in the state of the climate that persists for an extended period: typically, for decades or longer. It refers to any change in climate over time, whether owing to natural variability or as a result of human activity.

### Climate change adaptation

The process of adjustment in natural or human systems in response to actual or expected climate change and its effects, which seeks to moderate or avoid harm or exploit beneficial opportunities.

### Climate finance

Climate finance aims to reduce emissions and enhance sinks of greenhouse gases, and reduce vulnerability and maintain or increase resilience of human and ecological systems to negative climate change impacts. It can be local, national or transnational financing – drawn from public, private or alternative sources of financing – that seeks to support these objectives.

### Climate risks

The adverse consequences that climate variability and change – or adaptation or mitigation responses to such a change – might have for lives, livelihoods, health and well-being, ecosystems and species, economic, social and cultural assets, services and infrastructure. Risk results from the interaction of vulnerability, exposure and hazard.

### Climate shocks

The realisation of climate risks, which fundamentally affects: peoples' lives, livelihoods, health

and well-being; ecosystems and species; economic, social and cultural assets; services; and infrastructure.

### **Climate variability**

Fluctuations in climatic conditions on all scales beyond individual weather events. The term is often used to denote deviations of climatic statistics over a given period of time. Variability may be due to natural internal processes within the climate system, or to variations in natural or anthropogenic external factors.

### **Context**

Refers to the operating environment, which ranges from the micro to the macro level – e.g., community, district/province, region(s), country or neighbouring countries.

### **Environmental degradation**

A process through which the natural environment is compromised in some way, reducing biological diversity and the general health of the environment. This process can be entirely natural in origin, or it can be accelerated or caused by human activities.

### **Resilience**

The ability of individuals, communities, institutions and systems to anticipate, absorb, adapt, respond to and/or recover from shocks and stressors caused by conflict, violence and hazards of various kinds without compromising their long-term prospects.

### **Sustainability**

The reconciliation of environmental, social and economic demands. Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

### **Vulnerability**

A condition brought about by physical, social, economic, environmental and political factors or processes that increase the susceptibility of a community or individuals to a specific shock or hazard. The term describes a person or group's inability to anticipate, cope with, resist and/or recover from the impact of natural or human-made shocks or hazards without compromising their long-term prospects.

## **Conflict**

### **Communal conflict**

Violent conflict between non-state groups organised by group identities (e.g. ethnic, religious).

### **Conflict**

Conflict occurs when two or more parties find their interests incompatible and express hostile attitudes or take actions that damage the other party's ability to pursue their interests.

### **Conflict analysis**

A structured process of analysis to better understand a conflict, by looking at its background/history, the groups involved, each group's perspective and the causes of conflict, for example.

### **Conflict prevention**

Interventions that seek to reduce tensions and/or prevent the outbreak or reoccurrence of violence.

**Conflict resolution**

The informal or formal process that two or more parties use to find a peaceful solution to their dispute.

**Conflict sensitivity**

An umbrella term for approaches used to manage negative or positive impacts of a given intervention in a conflict-affected context. Conflict sensitivity avoids negative impacts of interventions on peace and conflict and also implies taking steps to actively maximise potential positive impacts on peace.

**Do no harm**

An approach that recognises the presence of 'dividers' and 'connectors' in conflict. It seeks to analyse how an intervention may be implemented to support local communities to address the underlying causes of conflict, rather than exacerbating conflict.

**Fragility**

Fragility is the combination of exposure to risk and insufficient coping capacity of the state, systems and/or communities to manage, absorb or mitigate those risks. Fragility can lead to negative outcomes including violence, poverty, inequality, displacement and environmental and political degradation.

**Political conflict**

Violent conflict between non-state actors and the state in order to achieve political goals.

**Security awareness**

The knowledge and attitude of organisation members towards the conflict context in which they operate. This usually implies taking measures to protect physical assets and personnel from risks of violence.

**Stabilisation**

An approach, used in situations of violent conflict, to protect and promote legitimate political authority, through a combination of integrated civilian and military actions to reduce violence, re-establish security and prepare for longer-term recovery by building an enabling environment for structural stability.

**Violent conflict**

Resorting to psychological or physical force to resolve a disagreement.

# 1. INTRODUCTION



This synthesis report explores whether and how climate adaptation programmes have been conflict-sensitive in fragile and conflict-affected situations (FCSs). It looks also at the barriers and enablers to increasing adaptation finance to these contexts. The report refers to these two issues as the 'conflict blind spots' in climate adaptation finance.

In this study, climate adaptation programmes are defined broadly to include: (1) projects whose principal objective is to reduce vulnerability of human and natural systems to current and expected climate impacts by increasing resilience, and/or reducing exposure to them; and (2) development projects with other principal objectives, such as poverty reduction, where climate change concerns are mainstreamed into activities (these programmes are often also called climate-relevant development programmes).<sup>1</sup> Therefore, many of the issues identified throughout the report do not apply solely to adaptation finance but to official development assistance (ODA) more generally.

The report is based on an analysis of approaches to conflict sensitivity of donors operating in the Sahel and Horn of Africa – a region with a large concentration of highly climate-vulnerable and conflict-affected countries (Moran et al., 2018) – and synthesis of findings from the application of such approaches to climate adaptation investments in Mali, Somalia and Sudan. It is informed by, and should be read in conjunction with its sister report 'Exploring the conflict blind spots in climate adaptation finance in the Sahel and Horn of Africa', which documents in full the donor analysis and the three country case studies.

## 1.1. Defining the conflict blind spots in climate adaptation finance

In many fragile and conflict-affected situations, climate change and conflict tend to interact, creating negative feedback loops that compound risks and challenges for the sustainable development of these countries. The academic literature and international policy-making circles have widely accepted that climate change acts as a conflict risk multiplier and conflict accelerator (Adger et al., 2014; Rüttinger et al., 2015; UNSC, 2020). While not directly causing conflict, climate impacts can exacerbate issues that drive conflict, such as natural capital and livelihood asset degradation, infrastructure damage, food insecurity and migration. Conflict, in turn, can amplify the impacts of climate change by increasing communities' and institutions' exposure and vulnerability to climate-related hazards, and lowering their capacity to adapt (Crawford et al., 2015).

Despite this intimate relationship, there is limited evidence to date that climate adaptation programmes are being implemented in a conflict-sensitive manner (Peters, et al., 2020). In addition, multilateral climate funds and some bilateral donors tend not to spend in FCSs, seemingly due to their perceived higher risks and challenges (Hardaway, 2021). Between 2010 and 2018, only 8% (\$5.9 billion) of global adaptation finance (\$77.8 billion) was committed to countries in the Sahel and Horn of Africa (CFU, 2021; OECD, 2021). Global public adaptation finance in turn was only 6% of cumulative international ODA (\$1.3 trillion) over the same period (OECD, 2020a). This results in what amount to 'blind spots' that, on the one hand, increase the risk for ill-designed adaptation programmes to precipitate grievances and conflict, causing unintended harm, and, on the other hand, prevent adaptation finance from reaching those arguably most in need of support (Alcayna, 2020).

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<sup>1</sup> These correspond to the OECD DAC Rio Markers for Climate classification of 'Principal' and 'Significant' projects contributing to climate objectives (OECD, n.d.).

Already, the development and humanitarian agendas have recognised the centrality of conflict prevention in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development during a time when violence is increasing around the world (UN and WB, 2018). The influential report, *Pathways for peace: inclusive approaches to preventing violent conflict* published jointly by the UN and the World Bank has also demonstrated that conflict prevention works and is cost-effective (UN and WB, 2018). Informed by this experience, there is increasing agreement that climate adaptation programming in FCSs should be conflict sensitive (Smith and Vivekananda, 2009; Cordaid and IIRR, 2011; Peters and Vivekananda, 2014; Nagarajan et al., 2018; Nordqvist and Krampe, 2018; Twining-Ward et al., 2018). While not the focus of this report, the inverse is also being recognised – that peacebuilding and conflict prevention initiatives should integrate climate risks and resilience, to be effective and avoid unintended consequences (UN DPPA, 2021).

A recent study in FCSs also provides anecdotal evidence that development projects that can flexibly adapt to their contexts, which is a quality of conflict sensitivity, achieve better results – in terms of local buy-in, longevity, momentum and sustainability outcomes (Christie and Green, 2019). Conflict sensitivity, thus, can be an approach for climate donors to increase their ability to engage, and stay engaged, in FCSs despite the additional challenges brought by the quickly evolving conflict situations. In the long term, this may lead to increased volumes of adaptation finance reaching these contexts.

This synthesis report addresses the blind spots by seeking to answer two questions:

1. How can the design and delivery of climate adaptation programmes be improved so that they help reduce risk related to both climate and conflict?
2. How can climate adaptation finance be increased to fragile and conflict-affected situations?

## 1.2. Conflict sensitivity in climate adaptation finance

The concept of conflict sensitivity can be traced back to the late 1990s and early 2000s, when acknowledgement started to grow in humanitarian and development circles that development agencies' programmes and policies in FCSs could exacerbate conflict (APF et al., 2004). Mary Anderson adapted the 'do no harm' approach from the medical field to humanitarian action in the 1990s, as a way to work effectively in conflict-affected situations (Anderson, 1999). This was then extended into the development sector and evolved into the concept of 'conflict sensitivity' (APF et al., 2004). Do no harm and conflict sensitivity can be understood as minimalist and maximalist approaches along a spectrum (Tänzler et al., 2018). At one end of the spectrum, do no harm focuses on avoiding negative impacts of interventions on peace and conflict; at the other end, conflict sensitivity actively maximises positive social change to build peace (START Network, 2018).

Over the last ten years there has been increasing interest in integrating conflict-sensitive approaches into climate change contexts, especially in relation to natural resource management (UNDP, 2012; Bronkhorst, 2014), through in particular the development of guidelines for conflict-sensitive design and implementation of adaptation projects (GEA, 2018). This has been driven by both the limited but growing body of evidence that adaptation policies and programmes can exacerbate conflict if 'conflict-blind', reflecting many of the same problems affecting all development programmes (see Box 1), and the opportunities offered by the nexus of climate adaptation and peacebuilding. For instance, IUCN has highlighted

## BOX 1: PATHWAYS FOR CLIMATE ADAPTATION PROGRAMMES TO EXACERBATE CONFLICT

A limited but growing body of anecdotal evidence and case study examples from around the world is emerging on how climate change adaptation policies and programmes have exacerbated conflict, reflecting many of the same mechanisms that have long affected development initiatives. Here are a few examples:

- **Climate adaptation strategies focusing on natural resource management leading to increased insecurity of land tenure, marginalisation of minority groups, increased environmental degradation and loss of biodiversity.** For instance, Levine et al. (2014) found that Uganda and Ethiopia's climate adaptation policies had 'significant consequences for people's ability (or right) to continue current rangeland management strategies, with further implications for land rights, cultural identity and relations between citizens and the state' (p. 10).
- **Climate adaptation funding and policies being exploited or biased by elite groups and those in power.** Zhang (2015), for instance, found that climate change adaptation strategies favoured the politically dominant members of society, increasing inequalities in some urban areas in the Asia-Pacific. Similarly, Rüttinger et al. (2015) recognised that Uganda and Ethiopia's climate change policies were likely to increase marginalisation because they were politically driven by those in power.
- **Interventions that oversimplify the conflict context, triggering new conflicts or increasing the intensity of existing ones.** In Myanmar, UNDP (2017) concluded that international donors initiated investments and development projects in conflict-affected areas too quickly based on an interpretation of the country's democratic transition and peace process that was too positive. These efforts, including climate change projects and large-scale land deals, were not mindful of the fragility of the peace process and marginalised local stakeholders and communities, triggering new or increased conflicts over natural resources and land (Woods, 2015; UNDP, 2017).
- **Interventions that do not consider the history of conflicts appropriately, re-igniting and intensifying conflicts.** In Aceh, Indonesia, a forest-management initiative failed to understand historical political conflict dynamics, creating disagreements over decision-making, legal rights and control of finances, which led to the withdrawal of the initiative and exacerbated tension between different government actors. This then led to a relationship breakdown between these actors and became a focal issue during subsequent elections (Levine et al., 2014).
- **Adaptation measures that have transboundary implications increasing potential for conflict over shared resources.** For instance, adaptation measures of an up-river community could result in water scarcity in the down-river community, increasing chances for conflict over the shared resource (UNESCAP, 2018). Conflict may also arise in efforts to rehabilitate rangeland to adapt to climate change if there is no clarity on who is able to use and benefit from the land, and buy-in from communities and adherence to local laws, customs and social arrangements (Sieghart et al., 2018).

how conflict-sensitive approaches can be used to increase the 'peace-building potential of a variety of well-designed (adaptation) policies and projects, making climate change adaptation a "peace-multiplier"' (Bronkhorst, 2014: 1).

In parallel with this, there is also increased attention to the linkages between climate, gender, social inclusion and conflict dynamics (Yoshida et al., 2021). Women and girls tend to disproportionately face the impacts of both climate change – through their gendered roles providing water, fuel and food for the household – and conflict – especially environmental conflict and insecurity – while being excluded from participating in decisions to adapt to climate impacts or in peace processes (Yoshida et al., 2021). However, to date, the Women, Peace and Security agenda<sup>2</sup> has largely overlooked the impacts of climate change and environmental degradation on women and girls, and consequently the opportunities for environmental peacebuilding. Similarly, the climate security agenda has hardly incorporated any gender considerations (Yoshida et al., 2021). This is illustrated by the fact that guidance for carrying out gender-sensitive conflict analysis is not well developed (Strachan and Haider, 2015). As the recent UN report, *Gender, climate & security* put it: 'There is therefore an urgent need for better analysis and concrete, immediate actions to address the linkages between climate change and conflict from a gender perspective' (Halle and Kellog, 2020: 11).

Despite these trends, there is still limited research questioning: whether climate adaptation finance has indeed been conflict-sensitive, in part due to limited climate finance targeting FCSs; how these conflict-sensitive programmes have performed and their differential impacts on women, girls and other groups; and what may be lessons learnt for future climate adaptation efforts in FCSs. Such a lack of evidence is not unique to adaptation programmes, however, as the evidence for ODA seems also limited. A 2015 USAID review of development donors and implementing agencies' policies and practice with conflict sensitivity found that 'there is a very limited number of useful and reasonably recent case studies that document how different agencies have applied conflict-sensitivity in practice' (Goldwyn, 2016: 13).

To our knowledge, the only review that assesses the application of conflict sensitivity in environmental and climate adaptation programmes has been the *Evaluation of GEF support in fragile and conflict-affected situations*. This evaluation shows that a lack of official policy guidance led to limited, ad hoc application of conflict-sensitive strategies and operational measures across the GEF project portfolio, resulting on average in lower project quality, outcomes and sustainability, more delays and increased cancellations (GEF IEO, 2020). Moreover, the lack of policy guidance has meant that monitoring and evaluation systems of GEF projects did not capture information on unintended consequences of interventions, thus leaving unanswered the question about GEF projects' impact on conflicts.

### 1.3. Analytical approach

This report uses conflict sensitivity as a framework to analyse the findings from the research into donors and the country case studies. Conflict sensitivity is generally comprised of three essential components (Saferworld, 2008):

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<sup>2</sup> Enshrined in the UN Security Council resolution (S/RES/1325) reaffirming the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peace negotiations, peacebuilding, peacekeeping, humanitarian response and in post-conflict reconstruction, and stresses the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security.

1. comprehensive understanding of the operational context
2. holistic understanding of the two-way interaction between interventions and the conflict context (i.e. the intervention's influence on conflict, and how the conflict contexts affect the intervention)
3. commitment both to avoid reinforcing conflict dynamics and to maximise opportunities for positive impacts.

It is informed by a structured and participatory conflict analysis that focuses on the actors, causes, dynamics, triggers and scenarios of conflict (Herbert, 2017), which helps define the parameters of an intervention (i.e. what, who, for whom, where, when and how) and foresees potential obstacles to effective implementation (CSC, 2012). This is done by asking guiding questions over the course of an intervention (see Box 2).

While the purpose of a conflict-sensitive analysis is to reduce negative impacts on conflict, the analysis may reveal that there is no 'right' solution for the intervention to be accepted by all interest groups, as it may contribute to redistribution of power or resources or may affect the interests of those most powerful. This raises questions of how to address trade-offs and dilemmas. In such situations, the process through which interventions are made conflict sensitive and delivered is key. Hence, conflict-sensitive interventions should be guided by principles of responsibility, participation, transparency, inclusiveness, respect, accountability, timeliness and partnership (CSC, 2012) in how they deal with:

- selection of communities
- procurement and provisioning of resources
- establishment of feedback and accountability mechanisms
- building relationships with targeted communities, governments, donors and development partners
- the intervention's exit strategy.

This process should be applied consistently at the different levels of the intervention and used to inform all stages of the programme cycle (i.e. assessment, design, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and learning) (CSC, 2012; START Network, 2018).

## **Methods**

A mixed-method approach was used for data collection, consisting of: (1) a brief literature review of the climate–conflict nexus and established conflict-sensitive programming approaches; (2) descriptive analyses of climate adaptation finance flows at regional and country levels; and (3) in-depth qualitative assessment of conflict sensitivity in climate adaptation programme design documentation and via interviews with 41 key informants.

The selection of the Sahel and Horn of Africa for the regional analysis was motivated by the large concentration of highly climate-vulnerable and conflict-affected countries in the region. The countries considered are Burkina Faso, Chad, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan. The selection of Mali, Somalia and Sudan for the country case studies was based on climate adaptation finance volumes (targeting

## BOX 2: EXAMPLES OF BASIC CONFLICT SENSITIVITY QUESTIONS

### **What types of conflict exist in the area where I am planning my project?**

- Has a conflict analysis been conducted (at both the local and national level)? Does it include an assessment of underlying conflict factors and power dynamics as well as a stakeholder analysis?
- Does it distinguish which conflict issues are highly local and which link to higher-level dynamics? How has the design of the project been informed by this analysis?

### **How might the conflict(s) affect my project's success?**

- Have you considered whether and how project activities could make conflict worse, or spark conflict within or between communities? If so, how will risks be managed and monitored?
- Have you considered how your project would respond if there were to be an eruption of, or increase in, conflict within or close to the project sites? Are all staff and partners trained in how to respond in the case of an increase in conflict?

### **How might my project influence or interact with the conflict context?**

- How have the project beneficiaries and partners been selected? Has this been informed by the conflict analysis (e.g., accounting for any divisions along ethnic, political or social lines)? Were clear criteria for participant selection developed with the local communities (including both direct beneficiaries and surrounding communities)?
- Are communities involved in decision-making and planning around the programme design, implementation and monitoring? What feedback and accountability mechanisms have been built into the programme implementation plans?
- Does your monitoring and evaluation framework reflect the ways in which the project interacts with conflict dynamics? Does it capture the effects that the project will have on conflict, and impacts that the conflict dynamics could have on the intervention?
- How to address trade-offs between different interest groups and the programme's intentions?

### **Can my project do something to help minimise conflict or promote peacebuilding?**

Sources: USAID, 2015; START Network, 2018.

adaptation as their 'principal' objective) committed to the country, to maximise the chances of capturing existing experience and learnings, and different categorisations of conflict and fragility to achieve a representative range of contexts. Findings have been triangulated across all data sources. For more details, the sister report 'Exploring the conflict blind spots in climate adaptation finance in the Sahel and Horn of Africa' contains a full explanation of the methodology.

## Study limitations

The programme documentation review was not exhaustive as there was limited consistent publicly available access to documents. Programme proposals and concept notes were consistently available and analysed across all case study countries, whereas project monitoring and evaluation reporting, logical frameworks, theories of change and impact assessments were largely unavailable publicly and could not be obtained within the timeframe of this study. There is a reluctance among donors especially to disclose conflict analyses, as these are usually politically sensitive (Herbert, 2017).

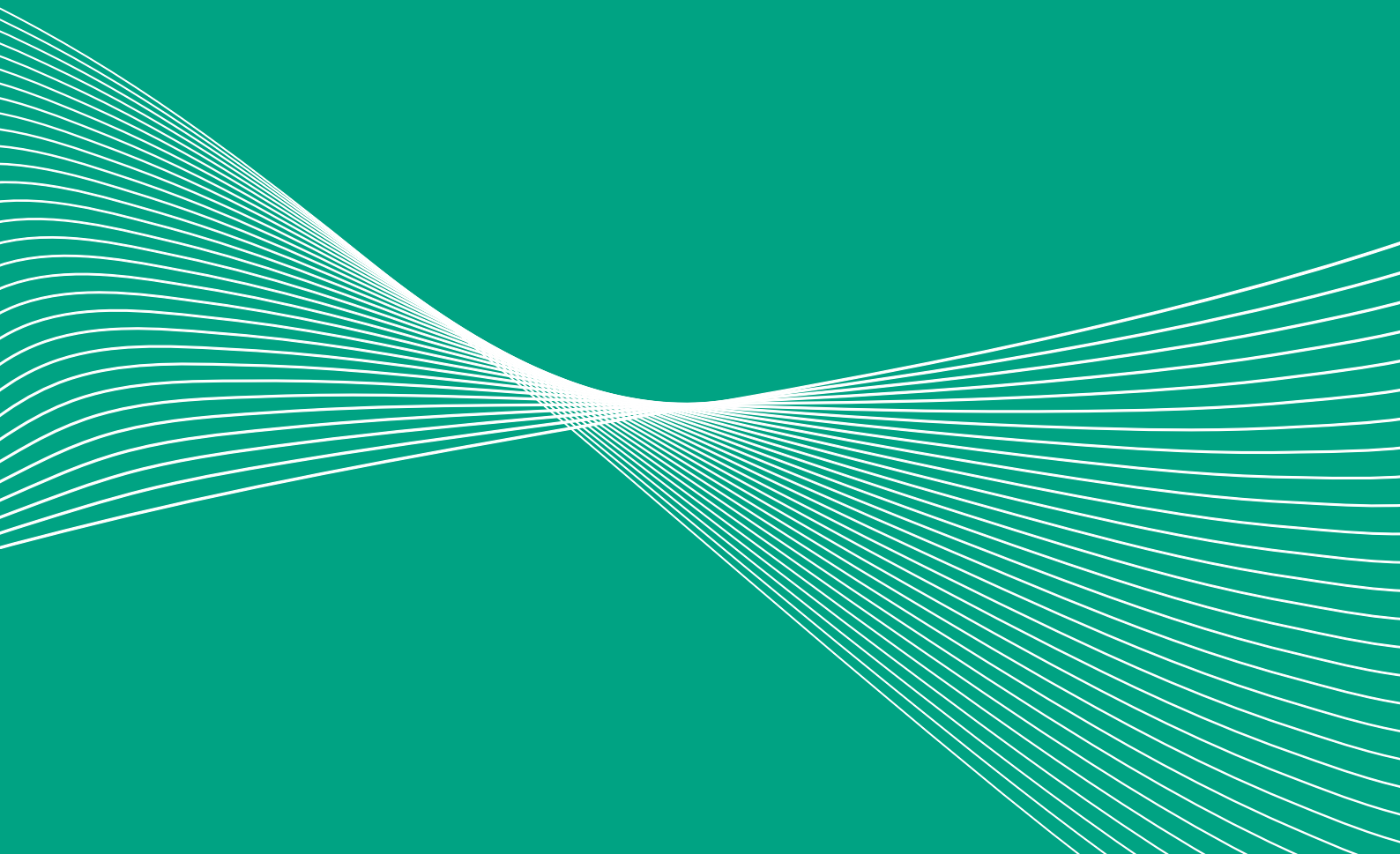
While a substantial number of key informants were contacted to participate in interviews, several stakeholder groups could not be reached. Perspectives from government and local non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in Mali and Somalia were sought but were not obtained due to limited availability of staff with other pressing concerns. Perspectives from government were gathered for Sudan. As the biggest multilateral climate fund under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Green Climate Fund (GCF) is also notably missing from the donor analysis due to unavailability of GCF staff within the timeframe of this research. Thus, findings on barriers and enablers of adaptation finance in these contexts do not necessarily represent the perspectives of the government or local NGOs.

## 1.4. Structure of the synthesis report

The rest of this report is organised as follows:

- Section 2 introduces the regional context of the Sahel and Horn of Africa region, looking at key indicators of climate vulnerability, fragility and conflict. It analyses adaptation finance flows and trends to the region between 2010 and 2018, and examines a set of donor approaches to conflict sensitivity for climate change adaptation programmes.
- Section 3 summarises the country case study findings on whether adaptation programmes have been conflict-sensitive, and the barriers and enablers to implement them in Mali, Somalia and Sudan. The full analysis of the three country case studies is available in the sister report of 'Exploring the conflict blind spots in climate adaptation finance in the Sahel and Horn of Africa'.
- Section 4 presents common themes, lessons learnt and knowledge gaps from across the donor analysis and country case studies.
- Section 5 discusses these key findings in light of the two research questions and provides high-level recommendations and conclusions.

# **2. THE SAHEL AND HORN OF AFRICA**



This section analyses the intersection of climate vulnerability, fragility, and conflict challenges across the 12 countries in the Sahel and Horn of Africa region: Burkina Faso, Chad, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan. It provides a brief appraisal of historical adaptation finance flows targeting these countries and the approaches to conflict sensitivity of five major donors implementing adaptation programmes in the region: the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands (Dutch MFA), the Agence Française de Développement (AFD) and the World Bank (WB).

## 2.1. Climate, fragility and conflict context

The 12 countries analysed in this section are among the most climate-vulnerable and fragile states in the world. Data from the Notre Dame Global Adaptation Initiative (ND-GAIN, 2021), which assesses countries' vulnerability and readiness to adapt to climate change, shows that Burkina Faso, Chad, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Mali, Niger, Somalia and Sudan are among the top 25 countries globally most vulnerable and least ready to deal with climate impacts. All countries in the region, except for Senegal, also score at the top of the global list of fragile states published every year by the Fund for Peace State Fragility Index, which measures fragility through 12 indicators across cohesion, economic, political, social and crosscutting dimensions. Moreover, Chad, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan figure in the group of 13 'extremely fragile' countries in the OECD's State of Fragility report 2020 (OECD, 2020b) (see Table 1).

Most countries in this region have experienced or are actively experiencing some form of conflict, with many having reported high numbers of casualties as a result. Based on the absolute number of conflict deaths and relative to the population, the 2021 update of the World Bank List of Fragile and Conflict-affected Situations categorises Somalia as a 'high intensity conflict' country, reflecting widespread and intense violence, and Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Niger, Nigeria and South Sudan as 'medium intensity conflict' countries, reflecting rapid deterioration of the countries' security situations.<sup>3</sup> Our analysis of the ACLED database, which tracks events of political violence around the world,<sup>4</sup> suggests that conflict episodes in most of these countries have also been deadlier compared to a hypothetical global mean, calculated as the average number of deaths per event tracked over 2018–2020 (see Table 1).

## 2.2. Climate finance trends

Between 2010 and 2018 a total of \$11.3 billion of public climate finance from bilateral and multilateral donors was committed to the region, with an almost even split for adaptation and mitigation programmes (CFU, 2021; OECD, 2021). Looking at adaptation finance, the countries in the region can be placed in three groups by the volume of funding committed to them:

1. The first group is comprised of Ethiopia, Senegal and Nigeria, with the former obtaining the most finance to date, at almost \$1.5 billion over 2010–2018, mainly through World Bank concessional lending and grants from bilateral donors including the US, Norway and the UK.
2. Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso are part of the second group, where each country has seen total funding of between \$500 million and \$600 million, receiving the biggest

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<sup>3</sup> For a detailed definition and methodology, see World Bank (n.d.).

<sup>4</sup> Events are organised into six categories: battles, explosion/remote violence, violence against civilians, riots, protests and strategic developments. We have excluded protests and strategic developments from the calculations. For more information on the ACLED database methodology, see: ACLED (2019).

TABLE 1: SNAPSHOT OF CLIMATE VULNERABILITY, FRAGILITY AND CONFLICT IN THE SAHEL AND HORN OF AFRICA

Country	ND GAIN Country Index (2018)	The Fund for Peace Fragile States Index (2020)	OECD State of Fragility (2020)	World Bank List of Fragile and Conflict-affected Situations (2021)	ACLED conflict fatalities per conflict event
Burkina Faso	23	37	Fragile	Medium intensity conflict	3.1
Chad	1	7	Extremely Fragile	Medium intensity conflict	4.8
Eritrea	4	18	Fragile	High institutional and social fragility	0.2
Ethiopia	25	21	Fragile	–	5.1
Mali	15	16	Fragile	Medium intensity conflict	2.8
Mauritania	32	33	Fragile	–	0.2
Niger	18	19	Fragile	Medium intensity conflict	2.8
Nigeria	21	14	Fragile	Medium intensity conflict	3.5
Senegal	70	71	Non-Fragile	–	0.3
Somalia	3	2	Extremely Fragile	High intensity conflict	1.7
South Sudan	n/a	3	Extremely Fragile	Medium intensity conflict	2.8
Sudan	7	8	Extremely Fragile	High institutional and social fragility	1.8
Global average	–	–	–	–	1.3

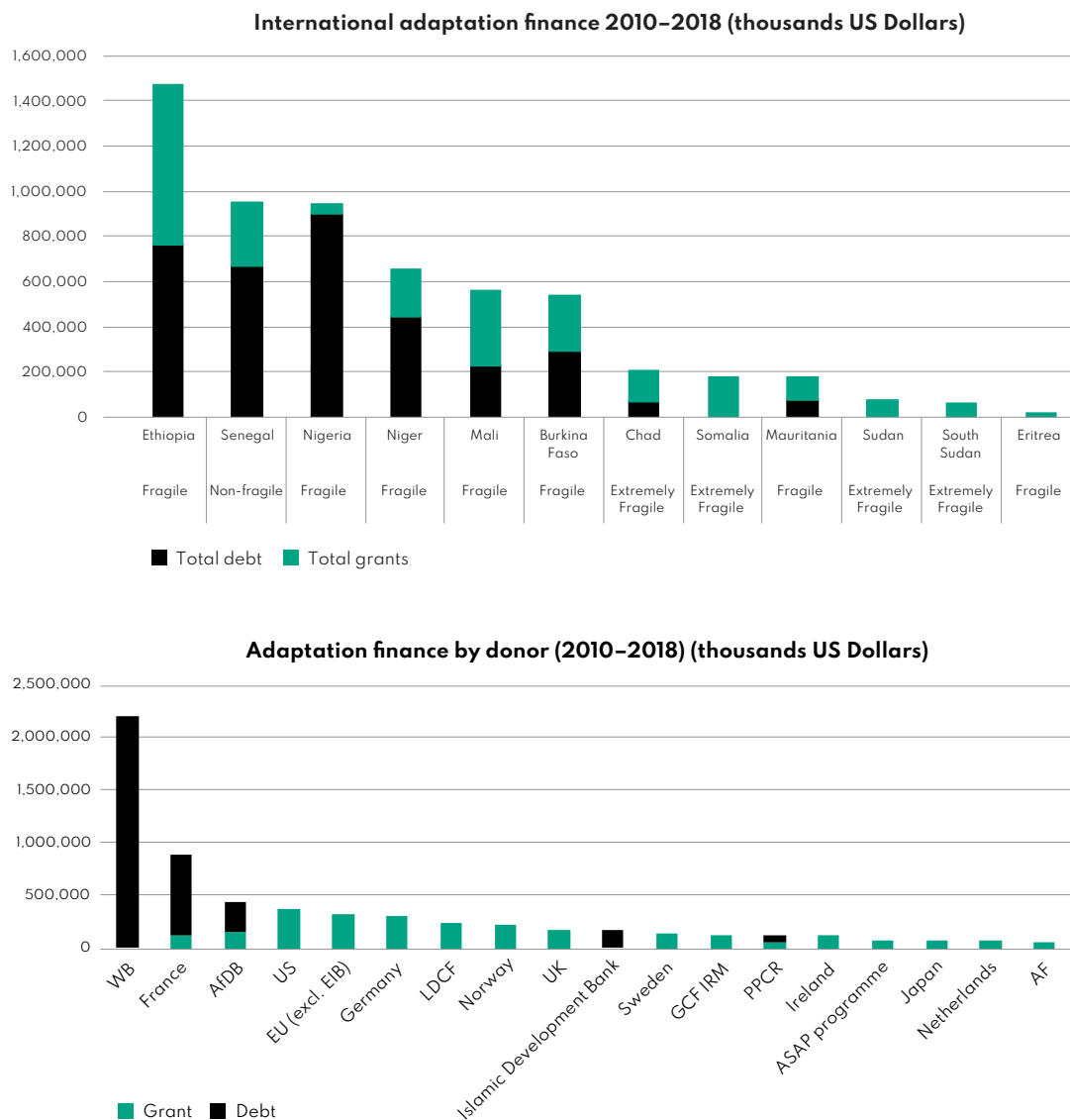
Sources: ACLED, n.d.; World Bank, n.d.; OECD, 2020b; ND-GAIN, 2021; Fund for Peace, 2021.

commitments from the World Bank, France and Germany and with a higher share of grants compared to the first group.

- The third group, where countries obtained the least funding (\$200 million and less each), includes Chad, Somalia, Mauritania, South Sudan, Sudan and Eritrea. Funding to these countries is almost entirely provided as grants from bilateral donors and the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) (see Figure 1).<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> These estimates are aggregates of national programmes, targeting adaptation as their principal objective, and do not account for regional or multi-country investments, as it is harder for donors to estimate flows per individual country. This is a common problem among donors and may lead to underestimates for certain donors, such as the Netherlands.

FIGURE 1: ADAPTATION FINANCE FLOWS TO THE SAHEL AND HORN OF AFRICA



Sources: CFU, 2021; OECD, 2021.

There are two notable trends evident from this data. First, the more fragile a country is, the less adaptation finance it received, suggesting that complex operating environments, often characterised by weak governance institutions, higher risks and fast-evolving conflicts, have resulted in smaller-scale adaptation programmes, posing significant challenges to increased access, programming and delivery of climate finance. This is similar to trends in ODA flows. Among these countries, Senegal stands out as the only 'non-fragile' country to have received a comparatively large amount of funding, highlighting a preference among climate donors to allocate money towards relatively 'safe' places albeit less vulnerable to climate change. Second, the Green Climate Fund (GCF), which is the biggest multilateral climate fund dedicated to supporting climate adaptation efforts under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, has provided limited adaptation finance to FCSs despite its allocation framework committing an equal 50% of funding to adaption, of which 50% is to be spent in

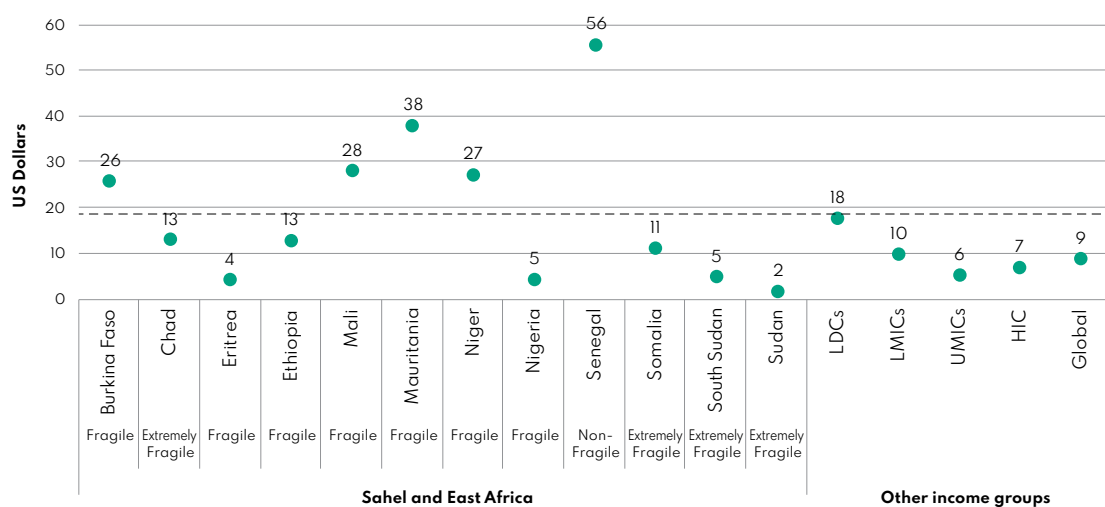
Least Developed Countries (LDCs). At the end of 2020, its portfolio of 159 approved and active projects and programmes was skewed towards climate mitigation (66%) versus adaptation (34%), though, when calculating the grant-equivalence contribution, funding was equally split between mitigation and adaptation (Schalatek and Watson, 2020).

A mixed picture emerges when considering the finance flows by the amount of population targeted on average (see Figure 2). On one hand, more than half of the countries in the region have seen fewer funding commitments per capita (between \$2 and \$13) than the average for LDCs (\$18), despite sharing similar levels of socioeconomic development but ranking at the top of the ND-GAIN Country Index. On the other hand, the commitments per capita for Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Mauritania and Senegal have been higher, with Mauritania and Senegal reaching twice (\$38) and three times (\$56) the average of the LDCs and more than four and six times the global average (\$9). This continues supporting the idea of adaptation finance flowing to relatively safer places.

It is positive to note that funding for countries in the second group has been higher than for their peers among the LDCs, indicating an attempt of international adaptation finance to target the most climate-vulnerable contexts, yet funding trends to countries in the first group should elicit concerns. Per capita finance to Eritrea (\$4), Nigeria (\$5) South Sudan (\$5) and Sudan (\$2) is markedly lower than the average for countries in higher income groups, who arguably require less support in comparison: low-middle-income countries (\$10), upper-middle-income countries (\$6), high-income developing countries (\$7), and the global mean (\$9). This is especially relevant for Chad, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan, classified as 'extremely fragile' countries and/or experiencing violent conflicts in addition to being highly vulnerable to climate impacts.

While there are mixed positive and concerning trends in the Sahel and Horn of Africa region regarding the targeting of adaptation finance, the overall flows fall short of what is needed. Globally, mobilised climate finance from high-income, high-emitting countries to low-income, low-emitting countries has been less than the pledged \$100 billion per year by 2020 in the

FIGURE 2: CUMULATIVE ADAPTATION FINANCE PER CAPITA (2010–2018)



Source: authors' elaboration with data from CFU, 2021; OECD, 2021; UNDESA, 2021.

Paris Agreement, with the OECD estimating \$62.2 billion and Oxfam estimating \$19 to \$22.5 billion in 2018 (Roberts et al., 2021). Only around 20% of this amount has targeted adaptation actions, while the rest went to projects mitigating greenhouse gases (Roberts et al., 2021).

## 2.3. Donor approaches to conflict sensitivity

The five donors analysed in this section have adopted diverse approaches to conflict sensitivity. Table 2 analyses these approaches against a set of common criteria, based on a review of donor strategy and guidance documents and triangulated with key stakeholder interviews and project documentation. The analysis is not an assessment of the effectiveness of these approaches due to a lack of publicly available documentation, including project monitoring and evaluation reports, theories of change, logical frameworks and impact assessments, which would be necessary to establish outcomes and impacts throughout the delivery chain. For a detailed description of each approach, please refer to ‘Exploring the conflict blind spots in climate adaptation finance in the Sahel and Horn of Africa’, the sister report.

TABLE 2: ASSESSMENT OF DONOR APPROACHES TO CONFLICT SENSITIVITY IN CLIMATE ADAPTATION PROGRAMMES

	FCDO	GEF	WB	AFD	Dutch MFA
<b>Donor type</b>	Bilateral	Climate fund	MDB	Bilateral development bank	Bilateral
<b>Approach type</b>	Implicit with some central guidance	Relying on implementers	Systematic ‘front and centre’ strategy	Dedicated fund	Implicit
<b>Objective</b>	Do no harm	Do no harm	Peacebuilding	Peacebuilding	Countering extremism and stability
<b>Application to climate adaptation</b>	Moderate	Limited	Moderate	Moderate	Limited
<b>Gender considerations</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Operational flexibility</b>	High	Low	High	High	High
<b>Risk appetite</b>	High	Moderate	High	Limited	High

(continued on next page)

(Table 2 continued)

<b>Key strengths</b>	Implicit system that creates flexibility, but still with a few in-built checks and balances. At times, this approach has seemingly allowed 'high-risk, high-reward' initiatives.	The GEF has higher willingness to fund projects in FCSs compared to other donors. In some instances, GEF early funding was catalytic to attract larger investments from other institutions that were initially reluctant to be involved.	Comprehensive FCS strategy committing the WB to fragile and conflict contexts for the long haul. It mandates adaptation of policies and practice in every area of WB engagement, including programming, finance models, risk management, monitoring and reporting, personnel and partnerships.	The dedicated Minka Fund has strong focus on the Sahel, Lake Chad, the Central African Republic and the Middle East, which are hot-spots of conflict and climate vulnerability. Clear maximalist approach to build peace and a commitment to act rapidly and nimbly (early activities to be implemented within six months of approval), as well as working mainly with NGOs instead of governments.	Apparently higher risk appetite concerning working in areas of political violence. Also in-built flexibility through working with a small group of trusted implementers.
<b>Key weaknesses</b>	Implicit system relies on time availability of advisers and professional ethos of civil service. The risks may be a lack of professional incentives for advisers to engage on these issues, or institutional changes driven by politics that lowers the size of the advisers' cadre.	No formal guidance on conflict sensitivity resulting in ad hoc approaches and generally low adoption of conflict sensitivity in programmes. This has resulted in a tendency to target 'safe' areas sub-nationally despite a general willingness to engage in FCSs.	The new FCS strategy has not been implemented yet, so it is not possible to judge weaknesses. The WB's approach to FCSs in the past has been criticised for being too technocratic and not paying enough attention to power dynamics causing conflict.	A small fund at the moment, whose processes have been applied to a limited number of adaptation programmes, but has a lot of potential to grow. Also the fund mainstreams conflict sensitivity into AFD's activities, which mainly provides loans and fewer grants.	The approach is implicit, relying on its application by policy officers. There have been few 'principal' adaptation projects in the Sahel and Horn of Africa region. More often, climate adaptation is a 'significant' objective of development programmes.

Source: authors' analysis based on literature and key informant interviews.

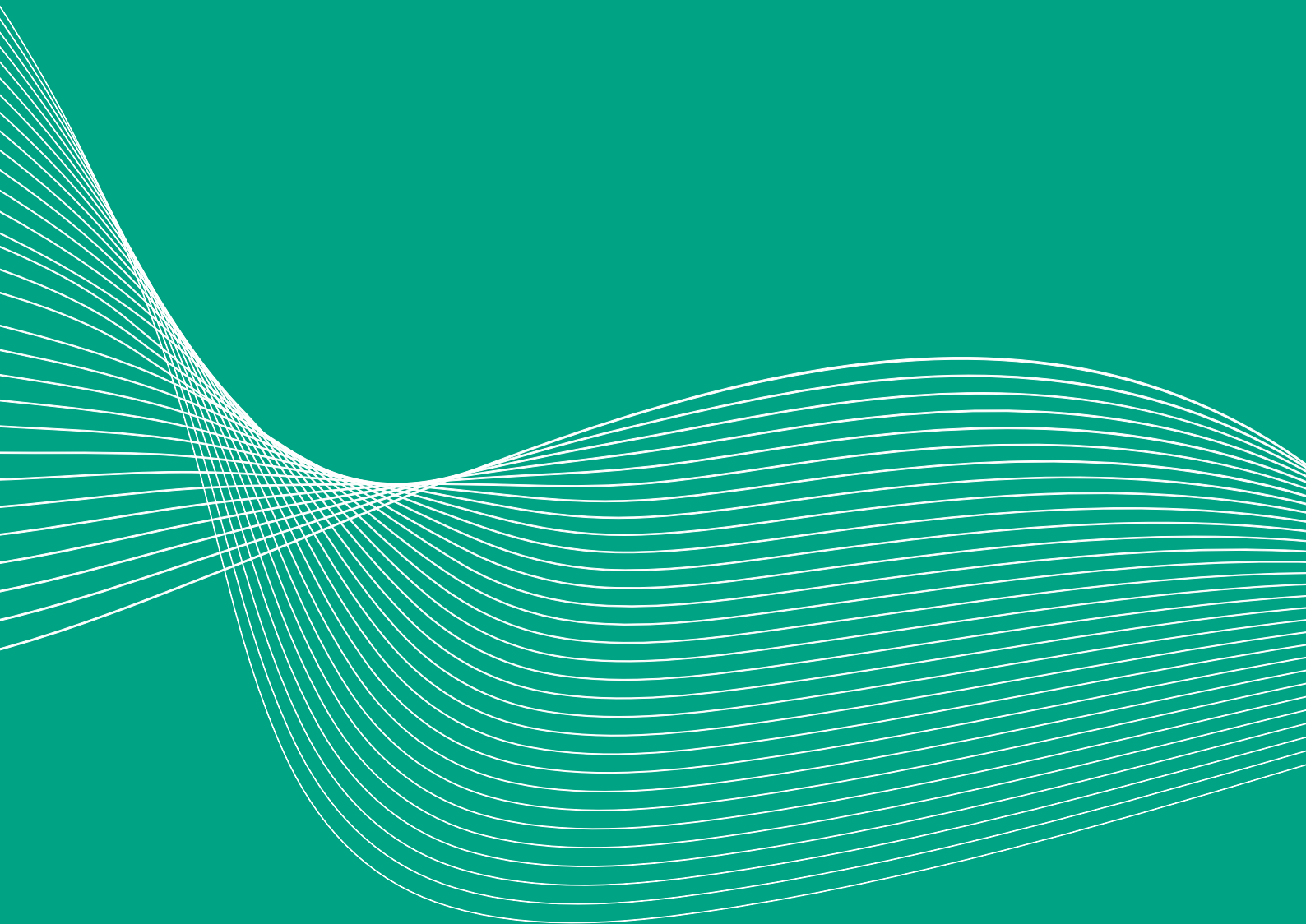
The approaches analysed have been developed to support wider development programming and are not necessarily specific to climate change adaptation (or mitigation). For several institutions, both conflict and climate change are crosscutting issues to be mainstreamed into programmes, and mechanisms have been set up for each accordingly. The Dutch MFA does not have formal mechanisms to render initiatives conflict sensitive, but has established implicit processes to consider the country and local conflict context through part or the entirety of programmes. This approach relies on the availability and interest of policy officers, technical advisers and implementing partners. The UK FCDO relies on a similar implicit system, but there are central rules around programming to 'do no harm' and manage risks, while also providing guidance on considering conflict sensitivity in the design of programmes in FCSs. In addition, the UK Government has also committed to spending more in FCSs and increasingly to address the drivers of conflict (HM Government, 2018).

The GEF relies mainly upon the regulations and policies of implementing partners, where these exist, to make projects conflict sensitive. This has resulted in ad hoc approaches and in overall low adoption of conflict sensitivity. AFD has created a dedicated fund to mainstream conflict sensitivity but uptake in adaptation programmes is in its early days due to the novelty of the fund. The WB has created a new strategy that puts the work in FCSs at the front and centre of WB's dual objective of ending extreme poverty and boosting shared prosperity (World Bank, 2020b).

All the approaches analysed establish minimum standards to avoid causing harm ('do no harm'), while the World Bank and the AFD go beyond this by targeting the drivers of conflict to proactively build peace. The Dutch MFA makes a step further towards stabilisation activities by pursuing opportunities to prevent violent extremism through development interventions. Although inconsistent, the Department for International Development (DFID, now merged into the FCDO) used to apply the Building Stability Framework (DFID, 2016) to its development spend in fragile states as a means to deliver on commitments to ensure more of its aid addressed underlying drivers of conflict. Excluding the GEF, all donors seem to have processes and mechanisms to maintain a high level of operational flexibility during programme implementation, including flexibility with budgets and contingency financing mechanisms, simplified or third-party monitoring and reporting systems, remote supervision technology, and continuous engagement with implementers that create different decision points at regular intervals.

The analysis also suggests different levels of risk appetite and tolerance between donors. While all donors have low acceptance for risks to financial management and environmental and social safeguards, their willingness to operate in insecure areas seems to differ. The WB and Dutch MFA seem to be more comfortable operating in areas of political violence, on average, given their respective strategic mandates to remain engaged during conflict and crisis situations and to try to maintain stability by countering violence and terrorism. By contrast, the GEF seems to have a more moderate risk appetite. While it has a substantial share of its portfolio (35%) invested in FCSs, the lack of conflict-sensitivity guidelines has resulted in projects targeting 'safer' sites. AFD seems to have a limited risk appetite compared to the other donors, despite the new Minka Fund, due to its status as a development bank providing mostly loans that have requirements for investment return. FCDO is an important donor to FCSs in the Sahel and Horn of Africa though it has provided minimal funding for the 'Extremely Fragile' countries. In the words of a key informant, the FCDO approach can be described as 'high risk, high reward' when opportune while generally seeking to mitigate risks (KII1 Donor, 2021).

# **3. SUMMARIES OF COUNTRY CASE STUDIES**



This section summarises findings from case studies in Mali, Somalia and Sudan, on whether adaptation programmes in these countries have been conflict sensitive, and on the barriers and enablers to increased targeting and implementation of adaptation finance. The case studies have a common structure: a brief background to the country's climate and conflict context, and a description of adaptation funding and the climate change policy landscape and institutions; an assessment of conflict sensitivity in adaptation projects; barriers to adaptation finance; and enablers to adaptation finance. The case studies are elaborated in full in the 'Exploring the conflict blind spots in climate adaptation finance in the Sahel and Horn of Africa' sister report.

### 3.1. Mali

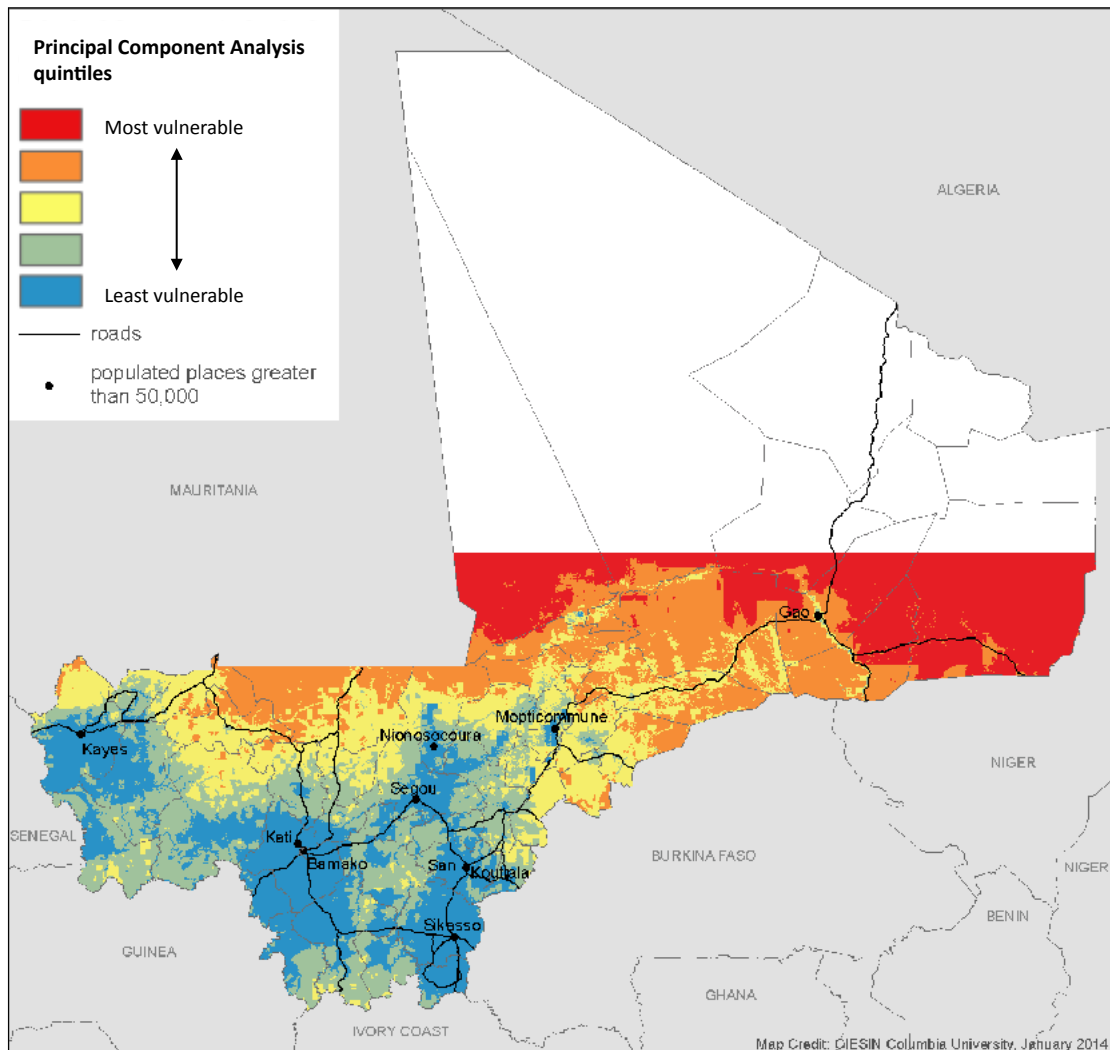
#### Background and adaptation finance

Malian weather shows strong variability within and between years, especially in rainfall (World Bank, 2021). Extreme weather events include frequent drought, heavy rains and flash floods, strong winds (especially in the Sahel and Sahara regions), bushfire, and destabilised rainfall patterns (Republic of Mali, 2007; 2016). Five priority sectors have been highlighted as most vulnerable to climate change: agriculture, energy, health, housing and transport infrastructure, and water and forest resources (Republic of Mali, 2018). High temperatures, rainfall variability (including low and extreme rainfall), irregular seasons, repeated droughts, and changing ecosystems are affecting seasonal calendars for planting, harvesting and grazing, increasing livestock mortality, destabilising food security and nutrition, reducing water availability and quality, increasing risks to human health from infectious disease transmission, damaging assets and infrastructure, causing land erosion and degradation (Nagarajan, 2020; USAID, 2012). The results are livelihood precarity, increased poverty, food insecurity, inequality and social vulnerability, breakdowns in social cohesion and increased polarisation between groups co-existing and competing over natural resources (ibid.) (see Figure 3 for a map of Mali's climate vulnerability).

Mali has been in near-perpetual conflict for decades. The complex conflict dynamics have evolved over time but can largely be divided into three principal phases: the Tuareg-Jihadist insurgency (2012); military pacification (2013–2015); and resurgence of conflict (2015–present) (SPARC, 2021). In addition to this conflict, clashes between pastoralists and farmers have a long history, as different livelihoods and ethnic groups have overlapped and co-existed for centuries. Recently these inter-communal clashes have become more deadly as land and resources become scarcer, access to arms is easier, and government policies favour agricultural over pastoralist livelihoods (ICG, 2016).

Several climate change policies exist in Mali. The National Action Plan on Adaptation to Climate Change (NAPA) was developed in 2007 and is closely linked to the development objectives in the Cadre Strategique pour la Croissance et al Réduction de la Pauvreté (CSCR) and the Stratégie de Développement Rural (SDR). The National Policy on Climate Change (PNCC) 2025 was passed in 2011 and serves as a reference framework for the different interventions related to climate change in Mali. There are no nationally accredited organisations to the GCF or GEF. Multilateral climate finance flows via UN agencies (such as UNDP) as the implementing agency, and execution may be shared with L'Agence de l'Environnement et du Développement Durable (AEDD), a government institution created in 2010, which is responsible for the coordination of activities to respond to climate change. The Mali Climate Fund (MCF), financed via Swedish and Norwegian aid, acts as a mechanism for national adaptation investment. The Mali Climate Fund, is managed by UNDP and housed in AEDD, whereby multi-donor

FIGURE 3: CLIMATE VULNERABILITY IN MALI



Source: Sherbinin et al., 2014, p.41.

Note: the vulnerability index is divided into quintiles where each category contains an equal number of pixels; the colour scale goes from blue (least vulnerable to climate change) to red (most vulnerable to climate change). For the full methodology, see Sherbinin et al. (2014).

groups formed of national NGOs, the Government of Mali, and UN Agencies (UN Women, the UN Development Programme (UNDP), the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Food Programme) access financing from the MCF (KII1 Mali, 2021). The FCDO has also supported decentralised climate finance linking AEDD to the local government via the BRACED project.

### Conflict sensitivity

National climate policies such as the NAPA, the nationally determined contribution (NDC) and the Green Investment Plan explicitly recognise the interplay between climatic variability, extreme weather, land-use pressures, transhumance, and the potential for communal conflict. For example, the first NDC states that improving and protecting the natural resource base may help to reduce conflict between farmers and pastoralists. The NAPA recognises that changes in natural flood systems and frequent droughts are weakening and degrading ecosystems, driving migration which may result in land disputes and conflict.

Almost all regions now experience armed violence, as conflict has spread. The areas most affected by the current conflict are the regions of Menaka, Gao and Mopti, especially near the border with Burkina Faso and Niger (ACLED, n.d.; SPARC, 2021) (see Figure 4). Adaptation programmes reviewed were being implemented within a conflict-affected region (such as Mopti) but were restricted to more stable areas, targeting *cercles* where 'security permits' and not in 'disputed areas' (KII2 Mali, 2021; IFAD, 2017; World Bank, 2018a; 2018b) (see Figure 4).<sup>6</sup> This review was based largely on proposals that were available. From these, we found that proposals did not provide consistent evidence that conflict analyses had been undertaken to inform project design. Some proposals also lacked clear plans on future conflict analyses that would be used to inform and adapt implementation over the programme duration. As climate finance is not intended directly to address the complex dynamics of insecurity or political conflict, the adaptation projects analysed tended to focus aims or objectives on reducing inter-community tensions over access to shared natural resources (land, water, grazing). To achieve these aims, the projects proposed typical participatory activities on increasing local actor capacity via training on conflict resolution. No evaluations of the adaptation programmes were publicly available for review as part of this study, therefore it was not possible to investigate the impact of the programmes.

## Barriers

### **Fundamental barriers to accessing international multilateral climate financing persist.**

These barriers are not unique to conflict settings, to Mali, nor necessarily to adaptation finance. They include: linguistic challenges for Francophone countries to complete lengthy paperwork required in English for GEF and GCF proposals; a lack of national experts familiar with the standards of the GCF and GEF, and the extensive portfolio of previous work; and underfinancing of the public sector and low technical capacity to manage the funds at regional or local level, limiting the government's ability to access financing and then manage adaptation programmes and strategies. These persistent challenges create a circular relationship between lack of access due to low government capacity, which the four readiness grants received from the GCF since 2015 are attempting to break.

Several factors associated with the conflict context also provided barriers to access adaptation finance.

### **The minimum data required for proposals is lacking in certain conflict-affected zones.**

Data of the granularity and specificity required in the GEF or GCF proposals is not available for certain areas of Mali, notably those with historic and on-going conflict. For example, data on climate observations and projections (rainfall or temperature measures) or the amount of carbon a given project will sequester are not available at the local level for many regions in Mali, and especially those that have had high levels of insecurity (KII1 Mali, 2021; KII2 Mali, 2021). Armed opposition groups routinely prevent teams from accessing areas to conduct participatory or gender assessments, which are a key component of many of the climate finance mechanisms (KII5 Mali, 2021).

**Bureaucratic processes are lengthy for such a rapidly changing context.** The process of developing projects via the GEF and GCF is heavy, which is not compatible with a rapidly changing landscape of conflict and humanitarian needs (KII5 Mali, 2021).

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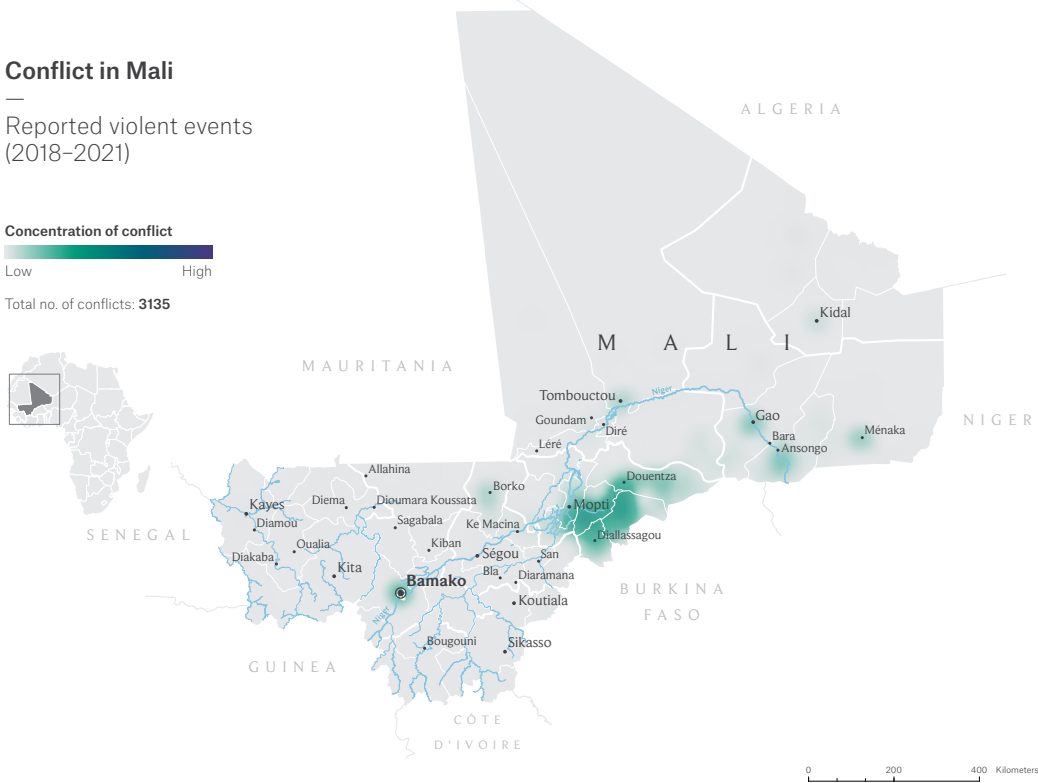
<sup>6</sup> This study did not find existing research geolocating climate adaptation programmes in Somalia and Sudan, akin to the one carried out by AEDD and GIZ (2017) in Mali, and was therefore unable to create similar maps for these two country case studies.

FIGURE 4A: GEOLocalISED CONFLICT EVENTS IN MALI

**Conflict in Mali**

Reported violent events (2018–2021)

**Concentration of conflict**  
 Low High  
 Total no. of conflicts: 3135



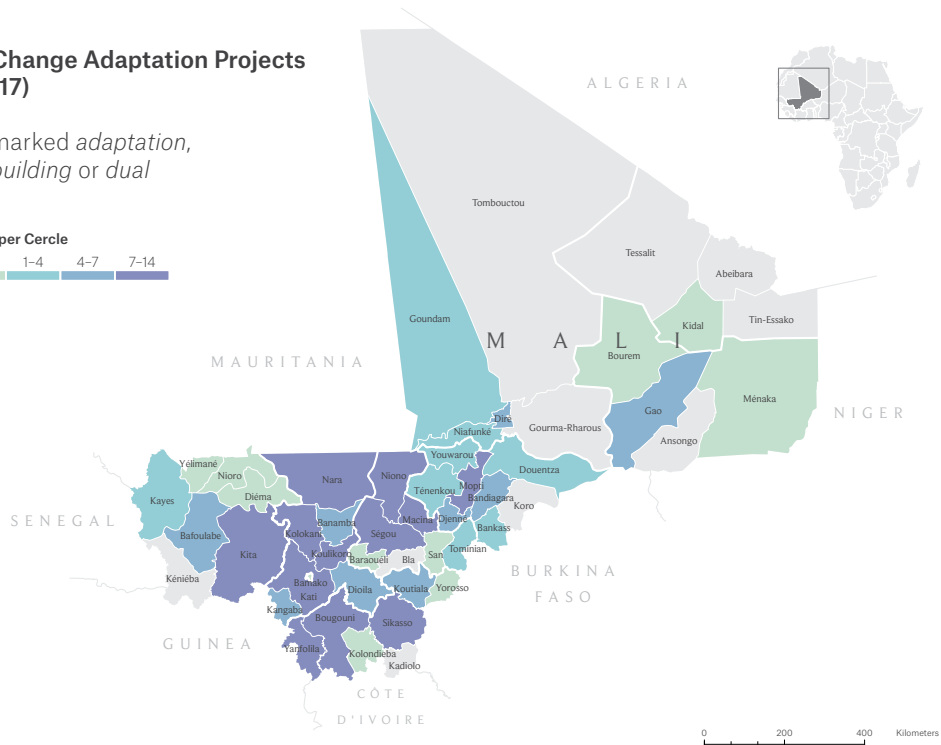
Source: Administrative boundaries: OCHA, Conflict data: ACLED

FIGURE 4B: GEOLocalISED CLIMATE ADAPTATION PROGRAMMES IN MALI

**Climate Change Adaptation Projects (2014–2017)**

Projects marked *adaptation*, *capacity building* or *dual*

**No. of projects per Cercle**  
 0 1 1–4 4–7 7–14



Source: AEDD & GIZ (2017) Mapping of Climate Change Projects in Mali (2014–2017)

Note: The geolocation of climate adaptation projects in Mali is only reported at the 'Cercle' level (2nd level administrative unit) in AEDD and GIZ (2017), whereas the conflict events in the ACLED database are reported in longitudinal and latitudinal coordinates and can therefore be located at the 'Commune' level (3rd level administrative unit).

**The conflict context in Mali presents challenges common to both development and adaptation financing.** The challenging, insecure operating environment is a deterrent to donor investment. Donors are hesitant to fund projects in areas in which investments may be destroyed by the activities of armed groups (KII5 Mali, 2021). Thus programmes often omit the conflict-affected zones, and some of the people most vulnerable to climate change.

**Some donors prefer to operate where the government is still present, to align adaptation finance with government development plans in order to maximise the possibility that interventions will be sustained** (KII2 Mali, 2021). When this is the case, huge swathes of the country in which the government has vanished have no possibility of accessing climate finance.

**The extent to which programmes can be flexible or adapt to flares in conflict appears limited.** Substantial time and bureaucratic procedures are required to change the target intervention area originally specified if an escalation in conflict touches the intervention area. This is a factor in choosing the more 'secure' areas for interventions.

**Malian institutions are unable to access national financing mechanisms directly.** While the Mali Climate Fund exists as a national financing mechanism for Malian institutions (NGOs and the government), not one national institution has yet accessed this money unless it is in partnership with a UN agency (WFP, UNEP, UN Women).

### **Enablers**

**Strong donor coordination which focuses on aligning projects.** GIZ conducted a mapping of the different climate change adaptation programmes in Mali across 2014–2017. Such mapping exercises are important in identifying areas in which multiple actors are operating, and should be working synergistically, and also those areas in which there is limited investment and presence.

**Dedicated and strong institutional partners who support technical and institutional capacity development at regional and local levels, to access and implement international financing.** While the AEDD is generally considered to have strong fiduciary processes, the public sector as a whole is underfinanced, with limited technical capacity to manage the funds at regional or local level.

**Ensuring that Mali's decentralised architecture is used to channel funds to local populations.** The BRACED DCF programme highlighted the importance of funds reaching the local populations who are best placed to create locally appropriate governance and adaptation plans (KII1 Mali, 2021). The BRACED Decentralising Climate Funds programme proved that it is possible to route the climate fund through the decentralisation system in place in Mali, whereby the local authorities can act as a 'gateway for all resilience and climate fund management planning' (NEF, 2019).

## **3.2. Somalia**

### **Background and adaptation finance**

Somalia's vulnerabilities lie in the agricultural and water sectors, exposure to cyclone and sea-level rise along the country's extensive coastline, and relating to vector- and water-borne diseases. Agriculture and water are particular concerns in the short to medium term. Increased

temperatures will severely impact the livestock sector via livestock feed intake, mortality, growth and production. With increasing temperatures, water consumption will increase while water availability will decrease, causing additional water stress (World Bank, 2021). Crops will require more water while being under increased water stress. Water scarcity is worsened by conflict-related destruction of supporting infrastructure and inadequate water management and maintenance (FRS, 2013).

Climate change is addressed in the NAPA (FRS, 2013), NDC (FGS, 2015), and National Development Plan (NDP) (MoPIED, 2020) policy documents. Climate adaptation programming is more influenced by the NDP, and more recently and to a lesser extent, the NDC (FGS, 2015). GCF and LDCF flows for climate change adaptation are limited. They fund capacity-building nationwide and within states, with projects implemented in areas free from conflict with militants. Funds flow primarily through the accredited UNDP and, to a lesser extent, the African Development Bank (AfDB). World Bank's recently approved Somalia Crisis Recovery Project (World Bank, 2020a), which addresses climate adaptation directly in part, runs from 2020 to 2024. Implementing agencies are primarily federal and state ministries and international NGOs with local CSO support. International institutions, including contractors, NGOs, and technical service providers, access climate, and other development and humanitarian, funding from bilateral and multilateral donors. Donors vary in how directive they are about controlling finance flows, project partnerships and implementation (KII8 Somalia, 2021).

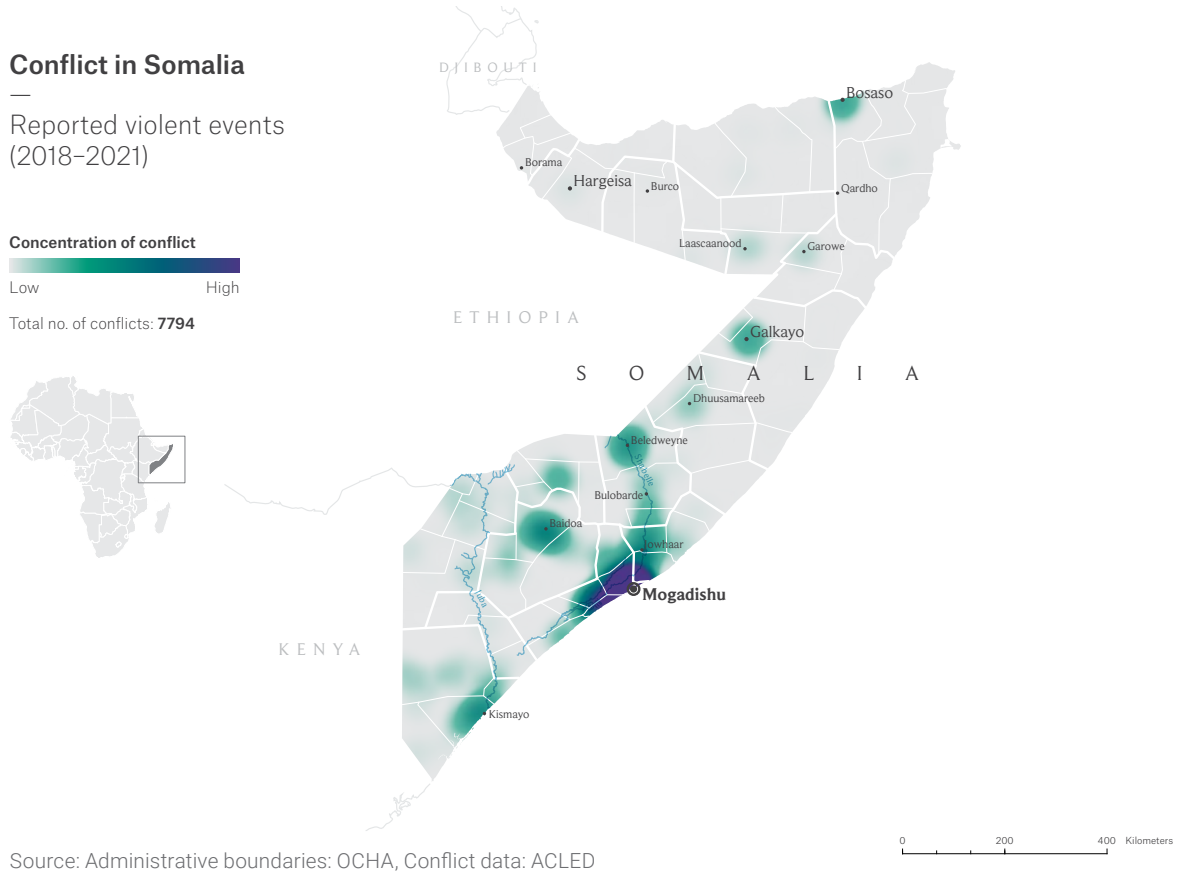
Donors including the EU, Italy, USAID, UK Aid and the World Bank have supported the Somalia Water and Land Information Management (SWALIM) programme since 2003 in various phases, implemented by FAO (FAO, 2021). The UK FCDO supports Building Resilient Communities in Somalia (BRCiS), taking a holistic approach to helping communities resist shocks without undermining poverty alleviation, including climate adaptation (NRC, 2021).

### **Conflict sensitivity**

The NAPA (FRS, 2013), NDC (FGS, 2015), and NDP (MoPIED, 2020) each recognise conflict and the different impacts caused by Al-Shabaab and local conflict drivers. The NDP goes further and acknowledges that Al-Shabaab exploits local struggles. Yet conflict is not defined and appears treated as a crosscutting dynamic, causing varying degrees of risk to national development and climate adaptation efforts (MoPIED, 2020). None of these national climate-related policies address how conflict sensitivity has or will be integrated into development and related programming in conflict settings.

Conflict sensitivity takes two forms; avoidance of areas controlled by militias like Al-Shabaab and addressing community-based conflict threatening project sectoral outcomes. Adaptation programmes in Somalia appear designed to cope with communal conflict, and avoid political conflict, and reduce environmental stressors. GCF, for example, focuses on sectors including livelihoods, water and health. Conflict sensitivity actively addresses, or copes with, historical communal conflict among beneficiaries represented largely by rural communities, including farmers, herders, and water user groups. Tools for mitigating conflict are generally vague and approaches depend on implementation agency practices, including the use of customary resolution mechanisms to resolve disputes, alongside consultation with local leaders over project implementation decisions (UNDP, 2014).

FIGURE 5: GEOLOCALISED CONFLICTS IN SOMALIA



## Barriers

### **Territory controlled by militias is currently excluded from climate investment opportunity.**

International institutions funding climate adaptation were clear in interviews that they will invest only in places that are stable now (KII5 Somalia, 2021), and anticipated to be so for years to come (KII4 Somalia, 2021). They emphasised that climate-related funding should not be seen as a substitute for stabilisation (KII1 Somalia, 2021) or humanitarian funding (KII6 Somalia, 2021), and would not intervene where there is serious conflict in general (KII7 Somalia, 2021).

**The Somali Government is uncoordinated and lacks the capacity to develop bankable climate adaptation projects.** Governance obstacles include: a lack of technical and management capacity in central and state government; conflict between central government and states; competition between ministries and personnel within ministries; high staff turnover and a lack of institutional memory; collapsed systems including those needed to demonstrate fiduciary responsibility; and corruption.

**There is limited knowledge and capacity to respond to climate change on national and local levels.** Ministries active in the environmental sector in all zones of Somalia have limited understanding of climate change and its impact on ecosystem services (KII11 Somalia, 2021). Other than the NAPA (FRS, 2013), there are few policies, strategies or development plans that effectively address adaptation to climate risk.

**Political divisions, particularly between the three distinct regions of Federal Somalia, Puntland and Somaliland, make programme implementation challenging** (UNDP, 2014). Administrative structures have been created since the establishment of Federal Member

States, and district councils are still being formed in a number of them, completing a process begun in the 1990s in Somaliland and Puntland (World Bank, 2020a). The National Development Plan makes clear the contrast between Puntland, considered supportive of the Federal Government of Somalia, and Somaliland with its own constitution and administration and self-declared as a separate state, unrecognised internationally or by the rest of Somalia (MoPIED, 2020).

**The GCF accreditation mechanism comes under heavy criticism from many non-accredited agencies** (KII11 Somalia, 2021). Becoming accredited is out of reach for most institutions. For many institutions like NGOs, GCF funding needs an entirely different approach to traditional ways of working, as project design must go through the government, NDC leads, and NDC Paris Agreement sectors. Proposal development requires one to two years of work, funded entirely by the applicant without guarantee of producing a bankable project (KII6 Somalia, 2021). Even globally accredited agencies may find it easier to seek funding at national levels through other certified partners (KII11 Somalia, 2021). This is a problem encountered for many LDCs and appears acute in fragile states where institutional capacity and memory are particularly limited.

**Finding co-finance for GEF applications is a substantial barrier.** For example, if a donor agency contributed \$10 million to a programme, GEF through AfDB may be able to add only \$3 million in co-finance, which may be too small a contribution.

### Enablers

**Any progress, albeit fragile, toward stabilisation will be an increasingly critical enabler.** This creates the opportunity to move away from short-term, essentially humanitarian-led, programming to a long-term focus on climate and other development investment.

**The appointment within the UN systems of a Climate Security Advisor is helping with more coherent approaches.** Dedicated attention to the climate–security nexus is providing opportunity to consider long-term approaches to addressing climate adaptation in conflict-affected places.

**Donor alignment with the NDP is empowering the government to select programmes it wants to be implemented, even if finance will not flow through its channels.** Somalia's NAPA appears undervalued, and the NDC is limited in influence.

**Programmes that have flexibility to adapt to changing conflict dynamics are best placed to implement work successfully.** Flexibility depends on donor regulations. It applies to both militia-based conflict, permitting rapid activity to start up in areas recently taken back into government control, and historical clan and community-based conflict. It also applies to responding to hazards such as drought, flooding and locust swarms.

## 3.3. Sudan

### Background and adaptation finance

Sudan has experienced increasing frequency of droughts and high rainfall variability, leading to disastrous floods, during the past decades (Government of Sudan, 2015). This is predicted to increase with climate change, contributing to: (1) increased unpredictability of seasonal rains, (2) increased average temperature of 1.5–3°C by 2050, (3) increased incidence of drought, and

(4) rising sea levels and higher storm surges (Met Office, 2016; USAID, 2016). This has and will continue to increase climate vulnerability in the region's rainfed agriculture and pastoralist systems, on which most livelihoods depend. The country's agricultural climate risks include the loss of productive land, pasture and water due to expanded desertification, shortened growing season, reduced yields and crop failure, and increased conflict between pastoralists and farmers over limited land and resources. In addition, the water sector will face: increased evaporation from water storage facilities, reducing water supply; decreased river flows from the Nile (up to 20–30% by 2090), reducing availability of water for irrigation, drinking and sanitation; and increased conflict over rights and access to water, especially given increased pressure on water supply (USAID, 2016).

Sudan's agriculture sector contributes 39% of GDP, employs 50% of the labour force and is a source of livelihood to approximately 65% of the population (UNEP, 2020). Some 46.5% of the population is living in poverty. The secession of South Sudan in 2011, along with prevalent fragility from previous regimes that had close links with Al Qaeda, has negatively impacted Sudan's economy, with a loss of 32% of GDP from 2015 to 2019 (World Bank Open Data). This included a reduction of land coverage by 24.7% (UNEP, 2020), economic sanctions imposed by the USA and a loss of 75% of national oil reserves to South Sudan (IFAD, 2013). In turn, it induced an influx of refugees into Sudan, contributing to already prominent population pressure. Sudan hosts high volumes of refugees from South Sudan, Eritrea, Syria, Yemen and Chad. Lastly, inflation has been continuously increasing: from 11% in 2009 to a soaring average of 197% in 2021 (Statista, 2021), increasing fuel prices and triggering violent protests.

Even though environmental policy development has advanced since 2005, the policies lack clarity in how to combat land degradation, desertification and climate change. The lack of data, including crucial climate information, affects the quality of these policies and strategies. The climate agenda is centrally led via the Higher Council for Environment and Natural Resources (HCENR) as of April 2020. This council is chaired by the Prime Minister and heads of ministries and acts as the national designated authority (NDA) for the GCF. There are no nationally accredited organisations to the GCF or GEF in Sudan. Finance mechanisms for climate adaptation have primarily been channelled through multilateral development banks and UN agencies to support government. Through the GCF readiness programme, UNDP and FAO accessed \$1 million each to support the Government of Sudan, for strengthening the NDA in 2017 and adaptation planning support in 2020, respectively. However, the UNDP readiness programme resulted in government returning left over funding due to administrative complexities and misunderstandings. The magnitude of this issue is not clear.

### **Conflict sensitivity**

All national climate policies (NAPA, National Biodiversity Action Plan, NDC, NAP) recognise the strong linkage between conflict resolution and climate adaptation. The NAPA 2007 recognises nature-based conflict as one of the many non-climatic factors contributing to the vulnerability of rural communities in Sudan. The identification of climate adaptation investment opportunities is led by donors, multilateral organisations and NGOs in close collaboration with the government. The NAPA has identified adaptation projects relevant for Sudan and has enabled multilaterals and donors to ensure alignment to this list.

Most adaptation investments reviewed have targeted areas in states in which there is communal conflict over natural resources, and a degree of stabilisation that would favour project succession. Across the country, climate-vulnerable areas experiencing armed conflict have been avoided, as operational risks and associated costs are deemed too high, and

FIGURE 6: GEOLOCALISED CONFLICTS IN SUDAN

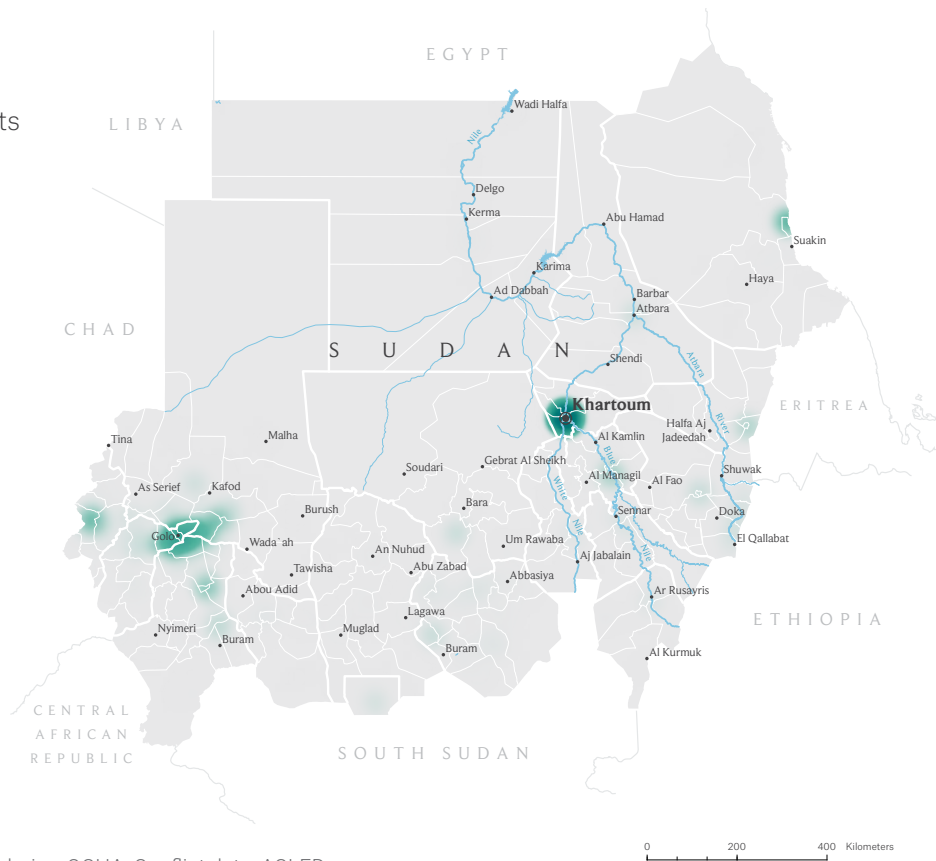
### Conflict in Sudan

Reported violent events  
(2018–2021)

#### Concentration of conflict



Total no. of conflicts: 3633



Source: Administrative boundaries: OCHA, Conflict data: ACLED

therefore present high levels of uncertainty. All climate adaptation investments reviewed have featured strong community participatory processes at the design stage and throughout the project cycle, ensuring inclusivity, relevance and overall ownership and uptake of investments. Even though assessment and analysis tools exist<sup>7</sup> and are referred to, there is a recognition across a multitude of actors that the nexus of climate change and conflict can be better understood and therefore better addressed.

### Barriers

**There is a lack of capacity for direct access by the Government of Sudan to climate funds such as the GCF.** Overall, the combination of the GCF's complex and rigid guidelines, criteria and accreditation process, and low government capacities, deters the government in directly accessing such funding opportunities. This includes funding directed towards capacity-building, where UN agencies are better placed to support access.

**Climate data is scarce, limiting the effective allocation of climate finance to the most vulnerable areas.** The limited weather stations available do not cover the whole of the country, and historic analyses from the data gathered do not represent the different climatic zones across the 18 different states in Sudan. This data is also extremely limited for assessing future projections for different climate scenarios.

<sup>7</sup> Such as the USAID conflict assessment and analysis tools, UNDP methods for analysing projects with conflict dimensions, and World Bank conflict analysis framework (CAF) – Identifying Conflict-Related Obstacles to Development (Shardesai, 2002).

**Flexibility to project changes is heavily dependent on donor requirements.** Most funders offer adaptive programming to changes in project implementation due to unforeseen issues, but there is recognition of the need to anticipate operational risks in the project design stage. In turn, implementing and executing entities have found that climate finance, from GEF and GCF, involves administrative procedures too complex and rigid to comply with, especially in areas affected by conflict. This includes the long time it takes to get a change approved, causing major delays in project activities.

## **Enablers**

**The 'enabling environment' has been improved, especially regarding Sudan's climate policies and plans.** This has increased international interest in supporting the Government of Sudan to benefit from climate finance. At the national level, the recently established HCENR puts the climate agenda at centre stage, being led by the prime minister and drawing on ministers across government to join as committee members. Even though it is too early to ascertain its effectiveness, this is a positive example of breaking the 'climate' institutional silo.

**There are various coordination mechanisms between climate actors, including government entities, multilaterals and NGOs, that help to avoid duplication of effort and to encourage partnership.** Many humanitarian actors and peacekeeping missions are involved in climate discussions and in a climate-change working group led by UNEP.

**Natural resource management adaptation projects have included relevant trainings of local project facilitators and leaders.** Training topics often covered include: participatory decision-making, management of conflicts over natural resources, understanding basic concepts related to resource management, gender issues related to resource management, and how to develop participatory action plans during implementation (ZOA, 2018).

**Several adaptation investments have contained contingency plans for when conflict breaks out, in conjunction with local conflict-resolution mechanisms.** This includes continuously updated site security and contingency plans, and regular trainings of staff and beneficiaries. Ensuring conflict sensitivity training to direct and indirect beneficiaries, especially on migratory routes, has been shown to increase awareness of investment benefits.

# 4. LESSONS LEARNT



This section synthesises key findings, common themes, and knowledge gaps from across the donor analysis and country case studies (please refer to the ‘Exploring the conflict blind spots in climate adaptation finance in the Sahel and Horn of Africa’ sister report to read these in full). The insights are clustered into the ‘three essential components’ of conflict sensitivity (outlined in Section 1.3), illustrating whether and how adaptation programmes have been conflict-sensitive, and around the barriers to accessing adaptation finance in FCSs.

#### 4.1. Limited information on conflict analyses informing adaptation

There was limited information on the depth, scale and regularity of conflict analyses informing planning and design of adaptation interventions. A comprehensive understanding and analysis of the conflict context is a key component of effective conflict sensitivity in programmes. However, project proposals analysed across the three countries did not provide consistent evidence that conflict analyses had been undertaken to inform project design. Often, whether a conflict analysis had been conducted was present only as a footnote or requested in the thematic review and revision process during proposal submission and funding decisions. A lack of donor strategies and policy guidance linking climate change with conflict and fragility may have contributed to gaps in integrated climate and conflict analysis. On a related note, key informants have shared that donor conflict programming is also not yet properly integrating climate risks into conflict analyses.

**Programme proposals varied in the evidence and degree of conflict analysis used to inform proposal design and inform implementation over programme duration.** In Mali, for instance, it was unclear whether conflict analyses were systematically carried out as part of the proposal design. When they were carried out, programmes that were more focused on infrastructure and providing basic services (such as access to water, sanitation and irrigation) tended to be concerned about the impacts of conflict in terms of ‘security awareness’ towards personnel and investments. On the other hand, programmes focusing on resilience tended to be more conflict sensitive by ensuring that regular conflict analyses and people-centred activities could be harnessed to promote conflict management and resolution. In Sudan, all the projects reviewed conducted conflict analyses that recommended conflict-mitigation measures. However, key informants felt that the quality of risk assessments for adaptation investments, especially considering the climate–conflict nexus, could be improved as local power dynamics were often missed.

**There is a lack of donor strategies and policies linking climate change to conflict and fragility.** Learnings from the GEF highlight the negative impacts of not having conflict-sensitivity guidance for climate and environmental projects in FCSs (GEF IEO, 2020). The World Bank’s experience shows the importance of adopting a comprehensive strategy that makes conflict and fragility front and centre of operations in these contexts, to be impactful and sustained (World Bank, 2020b). For some donors, however, the nexus of climate, conflict and fragility is a new focus area. AFD, for instance, is yet to develop a clear strategic approach to address the nexus (KII4 Donor, 2021), whereas the Dutch MFA has a clear approach rooted in a security perspective outlined in the 2018 Integrated International Security Strategy (MFA, 2018). Both conflict and climate change are issues with long timelines, requiring adequate long-term policies. In general, donors should have mid- to long-term time horizons if they are serious in their engagement in FCSs, but these decisions are often influenced by national political priorities. For instance, DFID in the UK had a time-horizon of 10–15 years as an international development agency, but this outlook is now being moderated by shorter-cycle foreign-policy priorities after the merger with the former Foreign and Commonwealth Office (KII1 Donor, 2021).

## 4.2. Risk analyses tend to neglect the two-way interaction between interventions and the conflict context

Conflict sensitivity involves a holistic understanding of the two-way interaction between intervention and the conflict context. However, the review of adaptation documentation in this study reveals that the most consistent focus was given to operational hazards – how an escalation in conflict might affect an intervention – with less attention to the potential impact of the intervention on conflict ('do no harm'). This may be caused by local adaptation planning not having a central role to reflect local priorities, including on conflict dynamics.

**Most projects have focused on being 'security aware', rather than on potential impacts on conflict dynamics.** Security-aware strategies involved relocating project activities where possible, or avoiding certain areas in the country. However, the level of flexibility granted to projects to do this varied and depended on donors' regulations. In Mali, substantial time and bureaucratic procedures were required to change the target intervention area originally specified if an escalation in conflict touched the intervention area. This led to choosing more 'secure' areas for interventions. In Sudan, projects also faced long waits for a change to get approved due to rigid administrative procedures of climate finance. In Somalia, international institutions funding adaptation programmes anticipated investing only in places that are stable for the foreseeable future. Several investments did create contingency plans for outbreaks of conflict in conjunction to local conflict resolution mechanisms, including continuously updating site security and contingency plans, regular trainings of staff and beneficiaries, especially along migratory routes, and accounting for cultural norms and internal dynamics in investment areas.

**Projects that acknowledged potential impacts to the conflict context focused on communal tensions, generally over land and water resources and typified by farmer–herder conflicts.** When this information existed in project documentation, the positive impacts (e.g. a reduction in tension, better shared resource use) were highlighted, but rarely was there upfront explicit analysis of the potential negative, unintended impacts an adaptation programme could cause. In all three case studies, projects adopted a variety of mechanisms and tools to increase conflict sensitivity and mitigate unintended consequences. These included: increasing local actor capacity via training on conflict resolution; and emphasis on community dialogues, participatory decision-making, gender issues, establishment of community committees, conventions and pre-agreed complaints procedures, which would be monitored via regular or periodic visits to the communities. In many projects, conflict-resolution strategies based on traditional norms and local administration systems were also implemented.

**A lack of conflict sensitivity may be explained by challenges of adaptation money flowing to the local level and empowering local planning.** Adaptation needs to happen at the local level, yet there was little evidence indicating that money is being channelled in a decentralised way to reach local actors, except for the experience of the BRACED Decentralising Climate Funds project in Mali (IIED, 2015; BRACED, 2021), deciding how best to manage resources. Even when there are dedicated national financing mechanisms for climate change, such as the Mali Climate Fund, neither the government nor NGOs have been able to access funding directly, but only through a UN agency. Beyond the challenges to accessing climate finance in FCSs, there are major challenges in channelling money generally to local areas for local priorities that may or may not be experiencing conflict. This may be due to donors and implementing agencies being biased toward their technical specialities, and central government biased towards geographically and ethnically preferred groups. For instance,

Somalia's NDP distinguishes the support provided to Puntland, considered supportive of the Federal Government of Somalia, and Somaliland, with its own constitution and administration and self-declared as a separate state, unrecognised internationally or by the rest of Somalia.

### 4.3. Investment often avoids armed conflict areas, leaving behind vulnerable people

In all three case study contexts, where insecurity and conflict levels were deemed too high, donors' commitment to avoid reinforcing conflict dynamics often manifested as active decisions not to invest in areas under militia control, leaving behind populations in these vulnerable areas. While climate finance is not intended to address directly the complex dynamics of insecurity or political conflict involving jihadist and terrorist armed groups, avoiding such areas means that the highly vulnerable populations living under militia control cannot be reached directly. The type of conflict also determined where adaptation projects were implemented, as most investments targeted areas prone to communal conflict over natural resources. Reducing inter-communal land-use and water disputes has been seen as an entry point for climate adaptation programmes to make joining rebel or armed groups less desirable. They aim to do this by improving living conditions through addressing pressures on public services, reducing poverty by enhancing resilience of landscapes and natural resource bases, stimulating employment and addressing consequences of displacement.

**Donors' decisions about where to operate seems to be influenced by their risk perception and processes to manage risks.** This in turn is influenced by their national parliaments' and public opinion's appetite for such risks and potential for failures. FCSs tend to involve large risks, even after taking mitigation measures (i.e. residual risks). In terms of security risks, AFD adaptation projects have tended to work in capitals, focusing on technical assistance, where there are fewer security risks (KII4 Donor, 2021: 4). Similarly, some GEF projects have targeted areas unaffected by conflict to reduce the level of risk (GEF IEO, 2020). The World Bank has reported on underestimating complexity and risks in FCSs and having to pull back operations once these materialise, which has been inconsistent with its role of tackling the most important development challenges (World Bank, 2020b). The FCDO, on the other hand, has demonstrated a higher risk tolerance in the Rural Water for Sudan (RW4S) project, which operates in Darfur where conflict events have been higher. The Dutch MFA, driven by its approach centred on security, seems more inclined to work in areas of political violence.

In general, there are different levels of fiduciary risk appetite and tolerance among the donors analysed in this study, which influences the level of flexibility for investments to respond to rapid changes in the conflict landscape and overall. For some donors, such as AFD and the Dutch MFA, there may also be concern with image risks associated with investing in FCSs, as their militaries or police forces are also supporting state-building activities (KII2 Donor, 2021; KII4 Donor, 2021). This may threaten their perceived neutrality.

**Donors may need more expertise or to provide more incentives to cultivate support for the conflict and climate nexus.** As mentioned, for some donors the nexus is a new focus area. Without a long-term strategy, such as the WB new strategy, donors and implementing organisations may not yet have adequate internal expertise and systems to address the nexus of conflict and climate. For instance, FCDO has around 65 climate advisers and over 100 conflict advisers but only one person is currently working across both cadres. Institutional incentives and support are required for employees to make personal career commitments to these issues and be willing to be deployed to these complex contexts. There is often a problem

of staff turnover within the donor organisation, which becomes an even bigger issue on the ground when people in partner governments, implementing organisations or civil society organisations leave, as building up trust again with newcomers takes time.

**Donor coordination is further needed to improve the geographic and programmatic range of conflict-sensitive climate projects.** There is an uneven distribution of programmes across FCSs that tend to focus activities in secure areas. This creates hotspots of investment and cold zones of communities left behind. The effectiveness of existing in-country donor coordination platforms is unclear. In Sudan, there are several coordination mechanisms involving government institutions, multilaterals and NGOs, including a climate change working group led by UNEP, which has been inactive, and a voluntary platform set up by the NGO ZOA in Darfur. Yet key informants argued that these platforms are not transparent and are marred by competition among international organisation for climate finance. While many humanitarian actors and peacekeeping missions participate in climate discussions, their interests do not always align with those of development and climate actors. Furthering partnerships with government, civil society and the private sector at subnational levels is especially needed to support communities overlooked in conflict and post-conflict settings.

#### 4.4. Adaptation programmes miss opportunities to support conflict prevention

Adaptation programmes have not consistently provided evidence of an intention to maximise opportunities for positive impacts on conflict prevention or resolution, despite these opportunities existing. A lack of access to complete adaptation project documentation, monitoring and evaluation reports, and post-programme impact assessments meant that it was not possible to determine the impact of climate finance on multi-dimensional levels of conflict. Moreover, most historical funding in FCSs has been humanitarian-focused with varying levels of climate-sensitivity, and the difference between funding for climate adaptation and development is often blurred. Basic development needs are seldom met in these contexts and therefore it was challenging to identify 'pure' adaptation activities and the impacts they have. This has made it difficult to analyse the impact of adaptation finance on conflict. Thus, a large unknown remains in whether adaptation-financed activity is exacerbating, reducing or having a neutral impact on conflict and inequality.

**There is substantial opportunity and increased appetite to use adaptation financing in programmes working on communal conflict.** As communal conflict often interacts, overlaps and is seized upon by political conflict, there is substantial opportunity to improve overall security via adaptation-financed programmes targeting shared ecosystem resource-use. In Somalia, UNEP has appointed the first UN environmental security adviser, who is emphasising approaching communities using the environment and climate change as hazards that all parties agree to mitigate, rather than commencing dialogue over current conflicts. Discussions also indicate an increased interest in focusing on southern, conflict-impacted areas and in general for projects to be more needs based and geographically uniform. In Mali, more recent programmes focused on communal violence have embraced holistic, nexus-integrated landscape use and area-based approaches to help reduce and prevent the competition and conflict between different user groups, and to help support the peace agreements and provide livelihoods to help stem the flow of youth joining extremist groups. Building on these programmes offers a refreshed approach, improving the way climate and security are integrated in programme finance and implementation, ultimately supporting the long-term adaptation of highly vulnerable populations.

## 4.5. Conflict worsens the problems of accessing climate finance

While not unique to FCSs, the persistent challenges in accessing adaptation finance are exacerbated by instability associated with conflict conditions. Donors need to consider three main issues to improve access to adaptation financing in FCSs: (1) Weak government capacity and governance, arising from or contributing to conflict, is central to understanding current climate-finance access and delivery modalities in conflict-affected contexts; (2) Donors' demanding bureaucratic requirements, especially concerning fiscal risks, result in the control of concept note and proposal development being ceded to international institutions; and (3) the minimum data required for proposals is often simply lacking in certain conflict-affected zones.

**The different levels of government understanding and knowledge of climate change challenges determine their engagement with international climate finance.** In Somalia, for instance, ministries have limited understanding of climate change and its impact on ecosystem services. There are also few policies, strategies and development plans that effectively address climate risks other than the NAPA, which is dated and addresses urgent, short-term adaptation needs. This has influenced the Somali Government's reactive stance to climate shocks, such as droughts, and slow-onset stresses, waiting for disasters to strike and then seeking humanitarian finance from donors (which has easier access compared to climate finance but is more expensive). Conflict is treated in a similar vein. Development partners are working with the government to shift this reactive mentality towards anticipatory preparation and longer-term climate adaptation, while improving their own understanding and practice, but this is proving challenging.

In contrast, Sudan's stronger climate policy environment, where linkages between conflict resolution and climate adaptation are clearly made in national climate and environmental policies, has led to strong international interest in supporting the government to benefit from climate finance. The newly created Higher Council for Environment and Natural Resources, led by the prime minister and with departmental ministers as committee members, is the national designated authority for the GCF and is making the climate agenda central to government work. In 2021, Sudan has two approved adaptation projects from the GCF, of which one is under implementation (GCF, 2021).

**Weak government capacity to meet fiduciary standards.** State institutions may lack the public financial management (PFM) systems and capacity to mitigate fiduciary risks, including on fraud and corruption, to manage climate funds (and indeed humanitarian and development funds). In Mali, the problem is concentrated at the regional and local level. In Somalia, UN institutions and other donors tend not to channel money through the government due to poor coordination and competition between ministries, and scope for corruption. Some donors, especially bilateral, address this problem by funding directly implementing partners and service providers locally, such as in Sudan for the Aqua4Darfur Partnership Water for Sustainable Development in Darfur project funded by the UK and the EU. There is an inherent tension and balance to strike between working via the government, in the hope of scaling up effective programmes and ensuring sustainability of programme impacts, and through international implementing partners, which entails generally higher transaction costs and less money reaching the ground but less concern about corruption.

**High staff turnover, and loss of skilled personnel and institutional memory, contribute significantly to governments' low institutional capacity.** Interviewees in all three countries mentioned that higher salaries in international organisations draw away technical expertise,

skills and capacity from the public sector across national, regional and local scales. Even when the capacity of staff members is raised, there are high chances that they will move to projects offering higher salaries or seek to emigrate. Poor knowledge transfer is also mentioned as a key problem. In Sudan, although nature-based-solution interventions have been implemented for over 20 years, even if not necessarily classified as climate adaptation efforts, high staff turnover and ineffective knowledge transfer has led to poor institutional memory. This will hinder the effectiveness of future investments.

**Donor access requirements for climate finance are complex and rigid for national institutions and do not seem to account for rapidly changing conflict contexts.** This is especially the case for the GCF, which has an accreditation system that is lengthy and complex, and too demanding for national institutions in FCSs facing rapidly changing landscapes of conflict and humanitarian needs. Key informants in all three case-study countries criticised the rigid guidelines and criteria for accreditation to multilateral climate funds. In Somalia, key informants indicated that proposal development may require one or two years of work, funded entirely by the applicant without guarantee of producing a bankable project.<sup>8</sup> Even in cases where projects are approved, the approval process seems too lengthy and not fit for the conflict context. In Sudan, it took four years to approve UNDP's GCF project 'Building resilience in the face of climate change within traditional rain fed agricultural and pastoral systems in Sudan', involving back and forth and further assessments required by the GCF, including a detailed conflict risk assessment. This questions the quality of upfront proposal guidance and technical assistance from the GCF to accredited entities. In addition, the lengthy paperwork required in English is a challenge for Francophone countries such as Mali.

In the three case-study countries, only multilateral organisations are accredited to the GCF. Globally, there were 124 international access entities (IAEs) and only 35 direct access entities (DAEs) as of October 2020, and, while the growth of the latter is faster than the former, multilaterals still acquire most of the funding. The round of proposals approval at the GCF Board's 27th meeting saw 81% (\$5.8 billion) channelled through IAEs and only 19% (\$1.4 billion) through DAEs (Schalatek and Watson, 2020).

The GCF has taken different measures and launched pilots to address access problems. It created a readiness programme to support countries to increase their capacity to access its funding, but only 22% of the overall readiness funding has been allocated to FCSs, with only 12% (\$29.7 million) disbursed in 2021 (CFU, 2021). Sudan faced issues with the readiness programme, with the UNDP programme being closed down and the government returning affiliated finances due to administrative complexities and misunderstandings.

The GCF has also launched a dedicated-window pilot to enhance direct access for national organisations, under which local institutions make their own decisions about how to programme resources once the funding has been approved. Individual projects do not need to be presented in the funding proposal or submitted to the board for approval. However, only two such proposals had been approved by the end of 2020, since the pilot launch in 2016 (Schalatek and Watson, 2020).

Additionally, the GCF launched a simplified approval process (SAP) pilot scheme in 2017 'to apply best practices to reduce the time and effort needed in the preparation, review, approval and disbursement procedures for proposals of certain activities, in particular small-scale activities'

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<sup>8</sup> Non-accredited entities can respond to a Request for Proposals, to propose projects to the GCF, and are prioritised for accreditation (GCF, 2020).



Sangha village, located on the plateau of Bandiagara, in Mali. Photo: Irina Mosel/ODI

(decision B.18/06 in Margarita et al., 2020: xvii). However, an independent evaluation carried out by the GCF Independent Evaluation Unit found the scheme to have been unsuccessful in simplifying requirements and accelerating processes (Margarita et al., 2020). The evaluation identified problems of predictability, transparency and efficiency, as well as multiple layers and duplications, which has limited the interest of accredited entities (Margarita et al., 2020).

All this indicates that access challenges persist. Until government institutions or national institutions achieve accreditation, IAEs will retain responsibility for programme design and fiduciary control. This raises issues of concentration risks and country ownership of adaptation efforts.

**The minimum data required for proposals is lacking in certain conflict-affected zones.**

For example, socioeconomic data of the granularity and specificity required in the GEF or GCF proposals is not available for certain areas of Mali, notably those with historic and on-going conflict. Armed groups routinely prevent teams from accessing areas to conduct participatory or gender assessments. These assessments are a key component of funding applications to many of the climate finance mechanisms.

Data for climate projections (on rainfall or temperature measures), or on the amount of carbon a given project will sequester, are not available in many areas – especially those that have had high levels of insecurity, as there are no monitoring stations. This can be exacerbated by the lack of any historical weather data collection, such as in Somalia from the 1990s while the country was in conflict. Developing detailed spatial mapping to inform risk reduction planning is extremely challenging under such circumstances. Climate data limitations are compounded by a lack of national coordination and capacity to manage and distribute timely and appropriate information.

# 5. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSIONS



Given the interrelationship between climate change and conflict in fragile and conflict-affected situations (FCSs), climate adaptation finance allocation to such countries needs to be conflict sensitive. Conversely, peacebuilding and conflict programmes should consider climate risks. This study's exploration of conflict sensitivity across climate adaptation investments in the Sahel and Horn of Africa, with country case studies of Mali, Somalia and Sudan, has sought to understand how the climate and conflict nexus is being addressed on the ground. The study has faced several limitations, including the low level of project information disclosure from donors, and the challenges of reaching key informants in fragile and conflict-affected countries during the Covid-19 pandemic. Government stakeholders especially, often hard to reach even in normal times, have been fully occupied with the Covid-19 response.

Building upon the key insights in the previous section, the report provides answers to the two overarching research questions in the form of high-level considerations for further discussion and research.

## 5.1. How can the design and delivery of climate adaptation programmes be improved so that they help reduce risk related to both climate and conflict?

**Articulate the climate adaptation and conflict nexus across donor, government and implementing-agency strategies, action plans, policies and guidance materials for investments.** Many donors and country governments have not yet found, or expressed sufficient interest in, approaches to deal with the climate and conflict nexus, and are thus lacking such policies and guidelines. Some donors, the World Bank for instance, have created a comprehensive strategy to adapt all areas of operation to work more adaptively and longer-term in FCSs, even when the context deteriorates. Developing strategies that link climate change to conflict and fragility and mainstreaming them through all areas of work would contribute to breaking existing siloes between the different sources of international finance (e.g. climate, development, humanitarian, peacebuilding) and their associated actors.

**Improve guidance and capacities for conflict sensitivity analysis and support project portfolio reviews with a conflict lens to generate learnings to improve practice.** Donors, multilaterals and NGOs included in this report have conducted conflict analyses. Yet, often, these did not capture adequately the conflict dynamics because of lack of attention to power structures. Due to a lack of publicly available monitoring and evaluation documentation, it was also not possible to judge whether the conflict risk management measures put in place have been effective or adequate. In general, there is a consensus across actors that the quality of such analyses warrants improvement. Donors, especially bilateral and MDBs, should also increase their disclosure of project documentation and support project portfolio reviews with a conflict lens to understand how practice could be improved, while balancing the challenge that conflict analysis can be politically sensitive.

**Ensure that local leaders and all key local stakeholders are actively participating in investment design and implementation via inclusive approaches that recognise the heterogeneity of communities.** Across the case studies analysed, it has been the case that access to local leaders and key stakeholders during vulnerability or conflict assessment, as well as implementation, may not have been possible for security reasons (e.g. in the Rural Water for Sudan programme). Nevertheless, the BRACED programme in Mali demonstrated that, when project personnel are hired locally, and when these people are well integrated in

their community and are aware of the evolving context, the project is able to continue even when the security situation deteriorates (Malo, 2018). Similar approaches to that adopted in the BRACED programme in Mali may be possible in other contexts, which need more evidence and understanding.

### **Create more flexible operational protocols during implementation of adaptation**

**investments.** Our findings suggested that the process of getting approval for changes in adaptation investment activities from unforeseen events (including conflicts) could take months and sometimes up to a year, adding further project costs, depending on the donor's flexibility. Lessons included in the World Bank (2020b) new strategy or from the humanitarian sector on improving flexibility, such as ALNAP's 'Shifting mindsets' (Obrecht, 2019), could be applied to adaptation investments. There is also evidence that 'crisis modifiers' work well to provide flexibility, bridging development and humanitarian financing, when accompanied by appropriate contingency planning, pace of action and clear guidelines (Peters and Pichon, 2017).

## **5.2. How can climate adaptation finance be increased to fragile and conflict-affected situations?**

**Improve coordination among donors, based on risk preferences.** Duplication of efforts in FCSs poses greater risks and may exacerbate conflicts or neglect many of those who need support. Donors, multilaterals and NGOs working in FCSs are participating in established working groups and donor coordination initiatives with country governments; however, their effectiveness has been uncertain. This study has shown that different donors have different approaches for working in FCSs, based on their general risk perception, appetite and tolerance. Donors could better coordinate where they operate within a country based on a deeper understanding of each other's risk approach. A starting point could be a systematic mapping of adaptation programmes within a country, like the one GIZ conducted in Mali, identifying areas in which multiple actors are operating, and should be working synergistically, and areas in which there is limited investment and presence, needing greater attention. A promising donor coordination mechanism is the Sahel Alliance, which has adopted common objectives, a common integrated territorial approach, a unified results framework, and a commitment to pay attention to fragile and vulnerable areas across the work of all its donor members (Alliance Sahel, 2021). Similar approaches may be explored in other conflict-affected and fragile countries, which would contribute to learnings about good practice and what works.

### **Revise donor modalities to provide capacity-building support for climate change**

**adaptation.** In particular, the readiness programme from the GCF still presents significant access challenges. The first readiness programme (UNDP) approved to Sudan in 2017 is said to have had administrative complications leading to unspent funding being returned to the funder. This warrants further exploration on how to best support such governments facing multiple economic threats with already low resources and capacity. Readiness support has traditionally been provided for 'soft' adaptation capacity-building – to improve climate policy and plans, knowledge and organisational processes connected to these activities. Perhaps an alternative form of support could be to concentrate more resources on developing public financial management capacities of governments.

**Support improved public financial management (PFM) systems.** Measuring a country's level of stabilisation as a means to effectively assess investment's operational risks is complex



Fishermen and Sahelian goats by the Niger River at Segou, in Mali. Photo: ILRI/Stevie Mann

and still poses uncertainty for the success of the investment itself. PFM systems are often not adequate, which affects mobilisation of resources and effective financial mechanisms. Supporting improvements in the PFM system (including transparency) may provide more certainty on the delivery of financial resources. In cases where delivery must happen through international institutions or other implementing partners, donor support should help strengthen the general social contract by crediting the government in the eyes of beneficiaries. Increasing trust in the government can, over time, create the conditions for mechanisms to manage conflict and climate risks to take root.

**Actively explore how access requirements of multilateral climate funds, such as the GCF, could be adapted to FCSs.** Dedicated funding windows with 'lower' or less burdensome requirements need to be created to channel more adaptation funding to FCSs. The GCF has piloted many schemes, such as those on enhancing direct access (DAE) and simplified approval (SAP), but these have had limited success. The World Bank Group has recognised that 'the traditional approach to aid effectiveness, in which countries with low institutional capacity received little finance, has at times limited the WBG's effectiveness in FCV [fragility, conflict and violence] settings' and that 'over the last decade this has changed, with a growing recognition that by allocating more resources through tailored mechanisms, impact in FCV settings is possible' (World Bank, 2020b: 9). In addition, further work is needed to assess where the opportunities are to ramp up capacity at national and subnational levels for national institutions to become accredited to access climate finance streams like GCF and LDCF.

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## List of Key Informant Interviews (KII)

- KII1 Donor (2021) Donor key informant interview 1. 26 April 2021
- KII1 Mali (2021) Mali key informant interview 1. 19 April 2021
- KII1 Somalia (2021) Somalia key informant interview 1. 19 April 2021
- KII2 Donor (2021) Donor key informant interview 2. 26 March 2021
- KII2 Mali (2021) Mali key informant interview 2. 22 April 2021
- KII4 Donor (2021) Donor key informant interview 4. 19 April
- KII4 Somalia (2021) Somalia key informant interview 4. 16 April 2021
- KII5 Mali (2021) Mali key informant interview 5. 29 April 2021
- KII5 Somalia (2021) Somalia key informant interview 5. 26 March 2021
- KII6 Somalia (2021) Somalia key informant interview 6. 6 May 2021
- KII7 Somalia (2021) Somalia key informant interview 7. 7 April 2021
- KII8 Somalia (2021) Somalia key informant interview 8. 30 March 2021
- KII11 Somalia (2021) Somalia key informant interview 11. 31 March 2021



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Cover: A woman trader brings shallots from a surrounding village to Bandiagara town, Mali, on market day. Photo: Irina Mosel/ODI



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