

# Problem analysis

The problem analysis is based on the context analysis and consists essentially of confronting the priority areas to be supported with key social, political, economic and environmental dimensions; this will allow for identification of opportunities and constraints related to the range of possible interventions.

Human rights and constitutional rights that are not presently being fulfilled in partner countries constitute problems and needs that should be analysed and systematically assessed. In all cases, gender, environment and climate change, conflict sensitivity and resilience will be mandatory and key components of analysis, being by definition priority areas for the EU.

Field work, framed by these strategic boundaries, must be carried out with the active participation of relevant stakeholders affected by the problems and needs the intervention is supposed to address. Involving duty bearers and rights holders, particularly women and people living in vulnerable situations, in the analysis of problems and needs, is a requirement.

Clear problem statements should be agreed upon with concerned stakeholders as well as understanding of their causes and effects. Relevant problems and needs already being addressed by partner countries and other development partners are integrated into the analysis to ensure coherency, complementarity and coordination

The problem analysis helps define the response strategy (which appears as the initial logic of the intervention). Alternative response strategies to the problems and needs are identified taking into consideration the added value the EU can bring to the solution of the identified problems in comparison and accordance with other actors which may be operating in the same priority sector. This is considered with adherence to the alignment principle: the analysis will focus on partner policies in the defined sector of intervention.

In conflict and/or fragile situations, the problem analysis should also focus on dimensions of fragility (societal, economic, political, environmental, security) and how the intervention seeks to address these. The problem analysis should also seek to anticipate possible negative interactions between the actions proposed and conflict dynamics, as well as the risks of doing harm, through appropriate conflict-sensitivity assessments. Within resilience, disaster preparedness and disaster risk reduction should be considered and mainstreamed for both natural and human-made disasters.

Response strategies to identified problems should describe: (i) the products and services the intervention intends to deliver, (ii) the benefits to target groups arising from their use and (iii) how such benefits will contribute to the expected changes in society and the economy. The response strategy also needs to take into account the available financial allocation.

When drafting the Action Document, the feasibility of response strategies is further assessed through benchmarking and risk analysis. Response strategies are benchmarked through the analysis of lessons learned on interventions that have used similar techniques, technologies, methodologies and approaches in relevant contexts. An in-depth analysis of relevant evaluation reports of past interventions should form the basis for a benchmarking exercise, and lessons learned should be considered in the response strategy.

Response strategies and the technical solutions supporting them are then further delineated into primary activities and the time and resources required to implement these. Developing the activities and their resource requirements should take into consideration the social, economic, environmental and institutional dimensions described in the context analysis.

For actions that require an [Environmental impact assessment and environmental management plan](#) (EIA) and/or a [Climate risk assessment and climate risk management plan](#) (CRA), these are normally prepared during the preparation of the Action Document, and will provide insight into opportunities to minimise adverse impacts and maximise opportunities that should be captured in the problem analysis. This is also achieved in the case of budget support through interventions that require a [Strategic environmental assessment](#) (SEA)

The risk analysis of the response strategies will provide input to further assess the intervention's feasibility from operational (time and resources), behavioural (ownership by stakeholders) and strategic (partner commitment) points of view. Conflict-sensitivity assessments with a Do-No-Harm perspective can enhance risk analyses and risk management.

Finally, products and services to be delivered by the intervention and their benefits should be systematically assessed within the availability, accessibility, acceptability and quality (AAAQ) framework to guarantee adherence to the human rights-based approach.

An intervention is ready for implementation if its response strategy is feasible, when considering its economic, social, environmental and institutional context; the known risks arising from it; and lessons captured in previous interventions.

*Methodological fiche(s):*

[Problem and objective tree](#)

[The Human Rights Based Approach \(HRBA\)](#)

[Climate risk assessment and climate risk management plan](#)

[Environmental impact assessment and environmental management plan](#)

[Strategic environmental assessment](#)

[Guidance for conflict analysis](#)