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Schweizerischer Verband
für Personelle
Entwicklungszusammenarbeit

Swiss Association for the
Exchange of Personnel
Cooperation

Associazione Svizzera per lo
scambio di persone nella
cooperazione internazionale
(Swiss association for the

Terms of reference for Unité's study on the Triple Nexus (humanitarian – development – peace) within its member organisations

1. Context

Unité is the Swiss association for the exchange of personnel in development cooperation. It has been ensuring that the assignments of its member organisations meet high quality standards for 60 years through standard setting, evaluations and training. The association consists of 9 regular and 4 associate members. Together with their partner organisations in the countries of the Global South, they contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Unité is committed to effective, sustainable and fair development cooperation with the partners in the Global South.

Personnel Development Cooperation (PDC) is a well-established and valuable element of Swiss development cooperation. PDC refers to the assignment of qualified professionals in volunteer status (national or international volunteers) to partner organisations of the Global South. PDC is a form of international cooperation, which does not focus on money or technology, but on personal and professional exchange between people from different cultural backgrounds. Together, they work to improve the living conditions in countries of the Global South.

Almost half of the Unité programme is implemented in fragile countries, according to the list drawn up by the OECD¹. In addition, many of the programme's contexts have deteriorated in recent years as a result of conflicts, health crises, economic crises, socio-political tensions and natural disasters, which have necessitated emergency humanitarian measures such as food aid.

Conflict-sensitive management of programmes and projects is therefore essential. This is why all member organisations implement conflict-sensitive project management based on the Do no harm principle. Conflict-sensitive management is one of the requirements of Unité's quality standards and is also taught to the professionals during preparation for their assignment. A study carried out for Unité following the Covid-19 pandemic showed that the robustness of the partnerships between the member organisations and their local partners gave them the capacity to remain and act in fragile contexts, when this was no longer possible for other foreign development players.

In recent years, the concepts of the double nexus of humanitarian aid and development, and then of the triple nexus including peace, have emerged in donor countries, particularly in the face of long-term crises and conflicts. In the context of programmes and projects in the global South, the triple nexus has little or no formalisation, but is a reality that has often already been in place for many years. For example, all the member organisations of the Unité programme have or have had projects in two or three of the triple Nexus areas (development, peace, humanitarian) as part of their response to the needs of their partner organisations, particularly with emergency aid in the context of Covid, conflicts or natural disasters. The networking of

¹ [States of fragility 2022 report](#), OECD, 2022.

partner organisations within their own contexts is also supported. Some of these experiences were shared by Unité in issue 11 (June 2021) of its magazine Praxis, dedicated to this theme².

The desire to work as closely as possible with the most vulnerable people should lead us to strengthen these aspects, which are closely linked to working in fragile contexts. In this context, the triple nexus needs to be better formalised and systematised within the organisations' programmes.

The Triple Nexus (Humanitarian Aid - Development - Peace) has gained in importance in international and national development policy discussions over the last five years. In particular, this theme has been included in the SDC's co-financing criteria and has been the subject of a recommendation by the OECD's Development Assistance Committee in 2019. This document defines the Triple Nexus as follows

Nexus refers to the interlinkages between humanitarian, development and peace actions. Nexus is an approach that aims to strengthen collaboration, coherence and complementarity. It seeks to capitalise on the comparative advantages of each pillar - to the extent of their relevance in the specific context - in order to reduce overall vulnerability and the number of unmet needs, strengthen risk management capacities and address root causes of conflict.

It works towards the achievement of collective outcomes, referring to a commonly agreed measurable result or impact enhanced by the combined effort of different actors, within their respective mandates, to address and reduce people's unmet needs, risks and vulnerabilities, increasing their resilience and addressing the root causes of conflict³.

Until now, Nexus approaches involving the three dimensions of humanitarian aid, development and peace have rarely been strategically structured or formalised within member organisations' programmes. Experiences in this area have also rarely been shared or analysed between member organisations or with other development actors. On this basis, Unité and its member organisations believe that it is now useful to identify the potential for strengthening the Nexus approaches within the member organisations' programmes on the basis of the experience gained.

2. Objective

The aim of the study is to identify and highlight Nexus approaches within the programmes of Unité member organisations, in order to:

- a) Capitalising on practical experience of Nexus approaches;
- b) Identifying good practice
- c) To draw up recommendations for a relevant implementation of Nexus approaches, adapted to the size and resources of member organisations and their partners.
- d) Strengthen the common understanding of the Triple Nexus concept within member organisations

² [Der Dreifach-Nexus, Le triple nexus](#), Praxis, No. 11, June 2021.

³ [OECD DAC Recommendation on the HDP Nexus](#), February 2019.

3. Target audience

The study should be of use primarily to Unité's member organisations. It could also be of use to other organisations active in development cooperation or to partners of Unité member organisations in the global South, such as in Switzerland.

4. Final product

The final product will be a written report in French, German or English including :

1. A brief explanation of the Triple Nexus concept ;
2. Selecting key indicators to measure the application of Nexus approaches ;
3. An overview of the application of Nexus approaches within member organisations' programmes based on the indicators ;
4. A qualitative analysis highlighting the potential and challenges for strengthening Nexus approaches within Unité member organisations ;
5. Recommendations to Unité member organisations and to Unité as an umbrella association, for the implementation of Nexus approaches proportionate to the nature and size of Unité member organisations and their partners ;
6. A bibliography and other useful resources.

We estimate that this work requires 12 to 15 days of research.

5. Methodology

The following methodologies are proposed and must be agreed with the commissioned expert.

1. Review of literature, guides and documents from member organisations, the SDC, the OECD, etc;
2. Surveys of member organisations ;
3. Targeted interviews with Unité member organisations, local co-ordinations and local partner organisations (videoconferences, regional meetings of member organisations, people on South-North assignments, etc) ;
4. Workshop with member organisations and possibly other relevant organisations, to validate the initial results.

The aim of the study is not to verify the work of the partner organisations, but to observe and highlight what is being implemented as part of Nexus approaches.

6. Resources

Non-exhaustive list:

- [States of fragility 2022 report](#), OECD, 2022.
- [OECD DAC Recommendation on the HDP Nexus](#), February 2019.
- [Der Dreifach-Nexus. The triple nexus](#), Praxis, Unité, No. 11, June 2021.
- [A Learning Journey on the Triple Nexus Synthesis report](#), SDC, October 2022.
- [Policy brief. Triple Nexus in Fragile Contexts: Next Steps](#), Dr. Fritz Brugger, Joane Holliger, Dr. Simon J. A. Mason, Nadel, ETHZ, September 2022.
- [Quality Standards for Personnel Development Cooperation](#), Unité, 2024.
- 2021-2024 and 2025-2028 Unité programmes
- Programmes and reports from Unité member organisations

7. Research questions

The research questions below are suggestions to be evaluated and completed by the expert as part of the study:

- How do we define the Triple Nexus?
- In what is achieved by local partner organisations, what comes under the triple Nexus as conceptualised by the OECD (e.g. contribution to the resilience of partner organisations and local communities, contribution to networking, etc.)?
- What is the best practice of member/partner organisations?
- What potential for the future?
- What formalisation or structuring of existing activities would be appropriate for the size of the organisations and their resources?
- What are the specificities/differences between contexts and what approach should be applied?
- What are the obstacles to implementing the Nexus (e.g. funding in Switzerland)?

8. Calendar

The final product must be delivered by 13 December 2024 at the latest. The expert will include a detailed timetable for his work in his offer.

9. Supervision and support

The main point of contact for the expert will be the Unité secretariat. The Unité PDC exchange group has a supervisory role and provides feedback on the direction of the work.

10. Code of conduct

The expert undertakes to sign and comply with the *Code of Conduct for Unité office staff, members of the quality commission and Unité mandate holders*.

11. Qualifications required

The expert will have solid experience in development cooperation and qualitative research methods. Specific knowledge in the field of humanitarian work and/or peace work and/or Personnel Development Cooperation would be an asset.

12. Expression of interest

Experts interested in carrying out this mandate for Unité are asked to send an offer by 31 August 2024 to Raji Sultan, Secretary General of Unité, r.sultan@unite-ch.org. The offer should include a one-page letter of interest highlighting the key skills relevant to carrying out the work, as well as the approach envisaged. A CV, a proposed timetable for the work, and a budget for research days and any expenses should also be attached.