Conflict Prevention TOOL

Developing Multi-Stakeholder Strategies

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ICRC
DCAF Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary 2

What is the Value-Added of this Tool? 3

How Does the Tool Work? 4

Five Steps to Assess and Prevent Conflict 5

- Step 1: Assessing Country Level Factors
- Step 2: Assessing Corporate Culture
- Step 3: Assessing Site Level Factors
- Step 4: Identifying Salient Risks
- Step 5: Designing an Appropriate Response to Conflict

Stakeholders List 11

Considerations for Exceptional Circumstances 11

Desk Based Questionnaire 12

- Step 1: Country Level
- Step 2: Corporate Culture
- Step 3: Site Level

Field Based Questionnaire 14

- Internal Stakeholders
- External Stakeholders

Data Sources and Key References 17

Executive Summary

The Conflict Prevention Tool (CPT) was developed through a collaborative partnership of international experts, as an innovative framework for conflict management and resolution in relation to business operations. The overarching goal is to equip companies to proactively identify, analyze, and mitigate conflict-related risks. The CPT is therefore designed with a multi-layered approach in mind, focusing on identifying and analyzing risk indicators at three levels: country, corporate, and site. It supports the collection and synthesis of data gathered from a combination of desktop research and field-based consultations, leading to a practical measurement of conflict drivers to inform responsible stakeholder engagement for businesses operating in conflict-prone areas. A key feature of the CPT is in integrating a conflict prevention mindset across all company functions, fostering proactive risk identification and mitigation, with greater social awareness and responsibility. This is achieved by encouraging different teams within a company – such as enterprise risk, security, sustainability, human resources, procurement, and operations – to collaborate in conflict analysis, thereby ensuring a proactive risk management process, which can potentially reduce the direct and indirect costs of conflict on a company.

The tool introduces conflict analysis in five steps, with companion questionnaires to support the data collection efforts. The time required for conflict analysis will vary based on each company's unique context, situation and the number of stakeholders involved. The CPT is designed as a non-prescriptive, user-friendly approach to support companies to meet their due diligence obligations related to security and human rights, reinforcing the implementation of internationally recognized frameworks such as the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights. The CPT also offers a dynamic way to engage corporate and external stakeholders in conflict prevention, to safeguard their relationships with various partners, their operations, and reputation. The CPT is intended to equip company staff with a quick reference guide to proactively manage risk associated with conflict and is complementary to existing conflict analysis and conflict prevention tools. Overall, the CPT provides hands-on guidance for companies navigating complex operating environments.

The Conflict Prevention Tool is the culmination of a team project, which was designed as an incubator of new ideas to generate practical tools in support of conflict prevention and resolution efforts. It was developed by Dr. Stéfanie von Hlatky, Claude Voillat, Alan Bryden, Almero Retief, and Brian Gonsalves, with research assistance from Morgan Fox and Olusola Ogunnubi. Thank you to Isabelle Brissette, Ben Miller, Dr. Andrew Grant, Dr. Nadège Compaoré, and Jonathan Drimmer for their insightful feedback.

What is the Value-Added of this Tool?

Helps companies **establish clear priorities** to better manage the risks of conflict that are either independent from or linked to their operations.

Promotes a **conflict sensitive approach and offers a pathway to develop multi-stakeholder engagement strategies** (including both internal processes and external actors) that ensure a proactive, rather than reactive, risk management stance.

Reduces the **direct and indirect costs** that conflict imposes on a company, including: the increased cost of protecting staff and property, potential damage to the company's reputation, higher payments to security firms, the weakening of social capital, and resource degradation.

Favours a **conflict prevention mindset** across company functions through greater social awareness. Integrating corporate culture as suggested in the present tool has not been done in existing conflict analysis tools and produces a more accurate and complete picture.

Supports companies in meeting their **due diligence obligations related to security and human rights** and reinforces implementation of the *United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights* and *Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights.*

Encourages different teams to **work together in analyzing conflict** (eg. security function, human resource department, procurement department, community and social performance function, operations, etc.).

Guides companies and professionals in their efforts to **anticipate, prevent, and manage conflict**, through a combination of desk-based and site level data collection, supported by questionnaires.

How Does the Tool Work?

This tool involves data collection through desk-based research and field-based stakeholder consultations. It is comprised of the following sections: an overview of the tool's purpose, the five steps to assess conflict, companion questionnaires, and practical tips on how to map stakeholders, handle exceptional circumstances, and conduct additional research.

It is important to note the tool requires insights and contributions from all areas of the company, including at the site level and from corporate management, as well as national, regional and local stakeholders. It also relies on engagement and discussions with external stakeholders. See the DCAF-ICRC Toolkit for more details.

The tool is designed to be practical, non-prescriptive, and user-friendly, to facilitate smooth integration into existing business processes and to improve corporate risk assessments. The tool is particularly relevant for companies with operations in fragile and conflict affected contexts, but the time required for the conflict analysis will vary based on each company's unique conflict analysis requirements and the number of stakeholders included in consultations.

Five Steps to Assess and Prevent Conflict

STEP 1 Assessing Country Level Factors

What: This step focuses on identifying risk indicators related to the overall situation at the country level.

How: By collecting information that is as precise as possible on the country's situation in order to identify the main risk indicators. The questionnaires starting on p.12 are designed to help with the collection of data and 5 sample priority questions are included below. Refer to the risk indicator example list for a non-exhaustive list of potential indicators.

Sample Priority Questions:

- Is there a significant urban-rural divide (in terms of quality of services, economic growth, etc.)? What is infrastructure like outside the major urban centres?
- How prevalent are national crises (ie. protests, public health crises, etc.)? How capable is the government at anticipating and handling them?
- Does the national long-term unemployment rate (as a percentage of the labour force) vary significantly by region, particularly between urban and rural regions?
- Has violence been associated with elections or a political party's activities in the past 5 years?
- What is the size of the national armed forces? Has the size of the state army increased over the past 5 years?

Helpful Resources

DCAF-ICRC Toolkit: Chapter 1 – Working with Host Governments
Overseas Security Advisory Council Country Reports
Control Risks

STEP 2 Assessing Corporate Culture

What: This step focuses on identifying risk indicators related to corporate culture (e.g. structures and processes like governance and operating models, risk acceptance, management of resources, internal training, relations with stakeholders and other routine corporate practices).

The *OECD Principles of Corporate Governance* make particular note of "mechanisms for employee participation … and [the ability] to freely communicate their concerns about illegal or unethical practices."

How: By finding out relevant information regarding corporate culture in order to identify the main risk indicators. The questionnaires starting on p.12 are designed to help with the collection of data and 5 sample priority questions are included below. Refer to the risk indicator example list for a non-exhaustive list of potential indicators.

Sample Priority Question:

- What methods currently exist to ensure that knowledge about community needs and expectations is not dependent on individual staff members? What kind of information do you collect and how is it stored?
- How does your company handle legacy issues (inherited from past operators, contracts, teams, etc.) between the company and the community? Have these methods been successful?
- What practical initiatives exist that reflect the company's mission and values? Describe the culture and the organizational structure.
- How are different teams (operations, security, health/safety, management, etc.) involved in risk/conflict analysis and community relations?
- How does the company manage its commitments/promises vis-à-vis local stakeholders?

Helpful Resources:

Company website
United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights
Harvard Business Review
Report of International Roundtable on Conflict Management and Corporate Culture in Mining Industry

STEP 3 Assessing Site Level Factors

What: This step focuses on identifying risk indicators related to the overall situation at the site level.

How: By collecting information on stakeholders that are involved (directly or indirectl y) in company operations at the site level in order to identify the main risk indicators, and facilitate multi-stakeholder consultations. The questionnaires starting on p.12 will support the collection of data and 5 sample priority questions are included below. Please use the additional field-based questionnaires for a more in-depth review of site-level dynamics. Key stakeholders may include government officials, security sector actors, and community representatives. For more information on stakeholders, see our list below. Refer to the risk indicator example list for a non-exhaustive list of potential indicators.

The *United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights* note that "in order to gauge human rights risks business enterprises should [have] … meaningful consultation with potentially affected groups and other relevant stakeholders," as well as effective non-judicial grievance mechanisms.

Sample Priority Questions:

- What does the community think of the company's business activities? How has it changed over time?
- Does the community/region have historic grievances against the state?
- Are there local elections in the near future? Have past elections typically been associated with violence and conflict?
- Are there militias/criminal groups operating in the region? Do they control territory? Be sure to consider violent crime rates at the country vs. community level.
- Have large populations relocated within the region in the past 2 years?

IMPORTANT: Stakeholder Considerations

It is important to consider how stakeholder relations impact conflict and conflict analysis. An up-to-date stakeholder map should be kept and verified at each stage of the business cycle, and consultation should happen regularly. A non-exhaustive list of stakeholders and several mapping tool examples can be found below. For more details, see the DCAF-ICRC Toolkit.

Helpful Resources:

Business Risk Register
Community grievance mechanisms
Employee complaints/ grievances
Site security incident reports
Stakeholder communication plans
Site level performance reviews
Media reports | Local crime statistics

The *Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights* (VPs) recognizes the "value of engaging with civil society and host and home governments to contribute to the welfare of the local community."

STEP 4 Identifying Salient Risks

What: This step focuses on identifying the 'centre of gravity' - meaning the high concentration of risk factors - that the company has to manage, in order to tie the main conflict trends to the company's attitude and responses.

How: By filtering the results of the three previous data collection steps to identify potential conflict risks, knowledge gaps, and blind spots. This is accomplished by identifying the number of risk indicators from each level (country, corporate, and site) to pinpoint the conflict's 'centre of gravity' and prioritize company resources based on where they are most needed. Refer to the risk indicator example list for a non-exhaustive list of potential indicators.

Guiding questions for identifying the 'centre of gravity':

- Based on the three levels of data collection (country, corporate, site), is one more salient than the others in terms of the number of risk indicators identified and/or their intensity or salience?
- Does one level appear directly related to the existence/continuation of conflict?
- Would the conflict fundamentally change or not exist if certain risk indicators were absent?

Helpful Resources:

Methods for Evaluating Conflict Prevention
Output, Outcome, Impact: Focusing the Analytical Lens for Evaluating the Success of Corporate Contributions to Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention

STEP 5 Designing an Appropriate Response to Conflict

What: This step focuses on determining the company's response strategy to conflicts based on where the 'centre of gravity' is located (country, corporate, or site level).

How: By analysing the different indicators, response strategies can be identified that focus on prevention, resolution, or resilience. Risk mitigation is identified as a cross-cutting issue because mitigation measures for all risks identified in the questionnaires should be considered on an ongoing basis.

The *UNGPs* also suggest that "where it is necessary to prioritize actions to address actual and potential adverse human rights impacts, business enterprises should first seek to prevent and mitigate those that are most severe or where delayed response would make them irremediable."

Conflict Assessment Results

- **A majority of country-level risk indicators** leads to a **resilience** posture, to ensure business continuity. While these country-level indicators are likely to impact operations in numerous ways, no single action taken by the company is likely to affect these macro-level trends decisively. Depending on the severity of conflict, it might also be advisable to halt all activities.
- **If most risk indicators are at the corporate level**, there is a clear opportunity for **conflict prevention**, which entails improving corporate practices to address grievances and potential indicators of conflict in a timely and transparent manner. Manifestations of conflict, combined with many risks identified at the corporate level, suggest that conflict might escalate due to the company's own actions (or inaction).
- **A majority of site-level risk indicators** suggests that there could be multiple causes of conflict or grievances impairing company-community relations: **conflict resolution** should be prioritized, involving engagement, collaboration, and consultation with multiple stakeholders. If there are regular instances of violence, conflict resolution might not be immediately possible – focus on resilience instead as a temporary outcome.

Country-Level Indicators	Company-Level Indicators	Site-Level Indicators
Resilience Strategy:	**Prevention Strategy:**	**Resolution Strategy:**
If conflict has occurred and cannot be resolved in the short term due to regional or country-level dynamics, the company must have the capacity to absorb the effects and costs of conflict for an extended period, to ensure business continuity.	The company may have the opportunity to intervene with no further escalation by fixing company-level issues. Timely improvement of corporate practices, through better information and communication management, can help in managing grievances and preventing conflict.	Conflict has occurred but identifying appropriate solutions should be prioritized through multi-stakeholder engagement, collaboration, and consultation.

Risk Mitigation:

For each of the conflict risks identified, the company can be empowered to respond to, or lessen, the impacts of risk factors, by developing solutions in concert with both internal and external stakeholders.

- These three options are not mutually exclusive but help in terms of establishing priorities, given resource and personnel constraints.
- To identify or validate **appropriate response strategies**, refer to the Security and Human Rights Knowledge Hub and the Addressing Security and Human Rights Challenges in Complex Environments toolkit, developed by the Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance (DCAF) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

Helpful Resources:

Conflict Trends and Conflict Drivers: An Empirical Assessment of Historical Conflict Patterns and Future Conflict Projections

Core Elements of Conflict Analysis

Collaborative Learning Projects (CDA)

DCAF-ICRC Knowledge Hub

DCAF-ICRC Toolkit

Risk Indicator Examples

Each of the three text boxes below includes an illustrative and non-exhaustive list of risk indicators to consider. When completing steps 1-4, refer to this list, alongside the information drawn from the questionnaires, to add missing risk indicators and determine the 'centre of gravity':

Country Level	Corporate Level	Site Level
▪ Increasing military presence ▪ Dramatic economic downturn ▪ Upcoming or recent elections (+/- 6 months) ▪ Ongoing conflict (possibly severe) across the country ▪ Widespread violence ▪ Widespread poverty and unemployment ▪ Downward socio-economic trends ▪ Climate change ▪ Food insecurity ▪ Epidemics / pandemics	▪ Legacy issues ▪ Lack of practical community relations initiatives ▪ No self-evaluation or lack of measurable performance goals ▪ Poor knowledge/communication on security issues across the corporate hierarchy ▪ Gap between corporate policy and reality in terms of managing community relations ▪ Inadequate communication and information management strategies ▪ Inadequate stakeholder engagement	▪ Increase/escalation in security requirements ▪ Violence within the local community ▪ Tensions between the community and company/security forces ▪ Violence or intimidation by the company/security forces ▪ Economic poverty specific to the region/community ▪ High/unrealistic stakeholder expectations ▪ Internal (or cross-border) migration is disrupting the social, ethnic, or religious balance ▪ General feeling of discontent within the community

Stakeholders List

Note that this list is not exhaustive, and that different stakeholders are more relevant at different stages in the business lifecycle:

Mapping Tools

World Health Organization
World Bank
BSR
DCAF-ICRC

Helpful Resources

Small Reservoirs Toolkit
DCAF Toolkit – Chapter 1
Working With Conflict: Skills and Strategies for Action

Considerations for Exceptional Circumstances

There are numerous exceptional circumstances that make direct discussions and contacts with external stakeholders difficult, as has been shown by the COVID-19 pandemic. In those cases, here are some questions to consider:

- How is communication being impacted by the near elimination and restriction of site visits?
- How have security plans and priorities been adjusted?
- How are private security assets being reevaluated?
- How are company relationships with public security forces changing given shifting priorities under COVID-19?
- Are site-level incidences of crime being handled differently by the company and by security forces?
- What measures has the company taken to help local communities deal with exceptional circumstances?
- How has the company's internal culture shifted and adapted to the exceptional circumstances?

Desk Based Questionnaire

STEP 1 Country Level:

1. Is there ongoing violence in the country, or has the country recently emerged from intra-state or international armed conflict?
2. How has the annual military expenditure as a percentage of GDP changed in recent years? Has the size of the national armed forces increased over the past five years?
3. Are the national armed forces underpaid? Does the government struggle with controlling public security forces, private use of small arms, and activities of private security companies?
4. Are there incidences of group violence in neighbouring countries? How are other regions affected by the company's industry?
5. Where does the country stand on the Corruption Perceptions Index and the Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)?
6. Is there a noticeable urban-rural divide, and how does infrastructure quality vary? How does the national long-term unemployment rate differ between urban and rural regions?
7. Has violence been tied to elections or political party activities in the past five years? Are there any restrictions on the right to free speech?
8. Has the country faced any recent economic crises? How do national and regional economic trends compare?
9. How prevalent are national crises, and how effectively can the government manage them?
10. What role does the international community play in the governance and affairs of the country?

Helpful Resources

United Nations Human Development Reports
SIPRI Databases
The Military Balance
Small Arms Survey
Crisis Watch
CIA Factbook
UNESCO Communication Indicator
Human Rights Watch
Country Security Reports
Governmental Travel Advisories

STEP 2 Corporate Culture:

1. Are there any legacy issues tied to this company or others in the community? How does your company address and resolve such inherited issues?
2. How would you describe the current and historical relationship between the company and the host government? Could you outline the company's culture and organizational structure?
3. What initiatives represent the company's mission and values?
4. How much funding does the company allocate to the community/region, and what specific initiatives or programs benefit from this?

5. How diligent is the company in assessing current and past corporate practices when considering acquisitions?
6. How does the company integrate its approach to address security, human rights, and community-related concerns? How does the company ensure that community relations, security, and health/safety are everyone's responsibility?
7. How does the company uphold its commitments to local stakeholders? How are human rights considerations integrated into dealings with security providers?
8. How do different departments (operations, security, health/safety, etc.) collaborate on risk/conflict analysis and community relations? Is respect for communities or human rights factored into the performance reviews of teams or individuals?
9. What systems ensure knowledge is not solely dependent on individual staff members? Is there a grievance mechanism in place aligned with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights?

Helpful Resources

Mining Industry Perspectives on Handling Community Grievances: Summary and Analysis of Industry Interviews

Report of International Roundtable on Conflict Management and Corporate Culture in Mining Industry

Conflict Management and Corporate Culture in Extractive Industries: A Study in Peru

STEP 3 Site Level:

1. Does the community/region have historical grievances against the state or with this company/industry? Is there a history of conflict between certain groups within the community?
2. Is the local economy heavily reliant on the company's industry? How would you describe the unemployment rate, especially among the youth?
3. Are there specific groups within the community that face economic disadvantages? How does this manifest regarding access to housing, education, employment, sanitation, and public services?
4. Have there been significant population relocations within the region in the past two years?
5. Is there a significant security presence in the community/region?
6. Are there militias or criminal groups actively operating in the region?
7. Are there militias or criminal groups that control territories or strongly influence the area?
8. How do violent crime rates at the community level compare to national rates?
9. Are there upcoming local elections, and have previous elections been linked with violence or conflict?
10. Is there a regional dimension to past or present conflicts?

Helpful Resources

Population and housing censuses, refined to the regional or municipal level

Local news websites

Congressional Research Reports

Local community and business associations

Community leaders and members

Local municipalities

Local law enforcement

Field Based Questionnaire

It is important to note that many of the answers to these questions will be qualitative and cannot be easily quantified into a matrix or dashboard. Further, some questions will apply to certain interviewees and not others – use the most relevant questions for the internal and external stakeholders you are engaging with (a stakeholder list can be found above).

Internal Stakeholders:

1. How would you describe your company's corporate culture, primary shared values, and any additional team responsibilities beyond official expectations?
2. How would you describe the company's internal and external transparency? How is knowledge communicated, and have there been instances of knowledge silos?
3. What kind of staff training is provided, especially around conflict sensitivity, and how are lessons from past incidents integrated?
4. How are security staff chosen, what training and equipment are they given, and do you find them adequate for protection?
5. How does the security team work with external stakeholders in risk/conflict analysis, and what is the nature of interactions with public security forces?
6. Describe any tensions within the community related to the company and any recent incidents.
7. How has the public's view of the company's operations changed over time, and what does the community think of the company?
8. How does the company address violence or conflict when it arises, and what standard operating procedures are in place?
9. How frequently is force used for site protection, and what policies regulate its use?
10. How does the company interact with the community, and are any links or bonds created for better relations?
11. Describe the company's relationship with private and public security teams.
12. How is the community relations team engaging with the local population, and what initiatives exist to strengthen bonds with them?
13. What kind of information is shared with the community, through which channels, and how promptly?
14. How does the company define, measure, and adjust community relations processes? How is the community's perception of the company gauged over time?
15. How do local/regional/national authorities support the company, especially in community engagement?
16. How is the community reacting to the company's presence, and what tensions or vulnerabilities exist among different groups?

17. What mechanisms assess the various impacts of company operations on local communities, and how is the company proactive in detecting early signs of building tensions?
18. What mechanisms exist for de-escalation before resorting to hard security measures, and how are sources of conflict with the community analyzed?
19. How are past security incidents reviewed, lessons drawn, and integrated into future strategies?
20. How are security and community grievances communicated within the company, especially before major business decisions? How often are risk and conflict analyses updated?

External Stakeholders:

1. Overall, how is the community viewed, and is it considered a safe place to live and work?
2. What is your assessment of security in this community? In your view, does the community feel safe and how has this perception changed over time?
3. How does the community perceive the company's operations, and what changes have been noticed since the company's arrival?
4. What do you think of the local company and their operations? What is your relationship with them like?
5. How does the company engage with and listen to the community, and how easy is it to express grievances?
6. What impact has the company had on the community, and what changes have been noticed?
7. What do you think generally causes conflict in the community? Have incidents increased due to the company's presence in the region?
8. What sort of tensions exist in the community? How are different people and groups working to solve them?
9. What sort of tensions exist in the community, particularly related to the company operations? Can you describe a recent incident?
10. What do you think of the local politicians and leaders? How do they serve you and provide for your needs?
11. What does the community think of the public security forces and their role? Are their presence and resources adequate?
12. Can you describe your recruitment and training process, including vetting and local area recruitment?
13. What do you think of the in-house security staff that work for the company? How do they interact with the community? How do they handle conflict and violence?
14. Has the community's relationship with public security evolved over time – and if yes: why or what triggered the evolution?
15. What are the competing priorities of the public security forces in this community?

16. If you work at headquarters level, how much interaction do you have with the local company operations? Are you frequently called on to respond to incidents on and around the site?

17. How much interaction do you have with the local company operations? Are you frequently called on to respond to incidents on and around the site?

18. How is information shared and coordination managed with the company's security personnel during incidents? What is the division of labour between you and the in-house security staff employed by the mine?

19. How do you respond to violence or conflict when it surfaces? What are some standing operating procedures?

20. What do you think the community will be like in 10 years? Will it be better or worse?

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