



# Practitioner's Guide:

## Conflict Analysis



### Participatory Local Conflict Analysis, South Caucasus



Deutsche Gesellschaft für  
Technische Zusammenarbeit  
(GTZ) GmbH



Bundesministerium für  
wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit  
und Entwicklung



**FRCS**  
Food Security, Regional  
Cooperation & Security  
(Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan)



# Conflict Analysis

### Example:



## Participatory Local Conflict Analysis, S. Caucasus

### 1. Introduction

The following example describes the application of the Local Conflict Analysis (LCA) method by the Food Security, Regional Cooperation and Stability Programme (FRCS). FRCS is a development project funded by the German Government and implemented by the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) in the South Caucasus. The Local Conflict Analyses or LCA was jointly undertaken by the FRCS project and its partner organisations in Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia, whereby this application example focuses on two districts in Georgia (Marneuli and Gardabani). The application example describes the procedural steps required to complete an LCA. Even though the LCA focused primarily on **local conflicts** in Georgia the effects of the international and regional tensions which define the South Caucasus could not be ignored, especially the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Knowledge of local conflicts was very much based upon information gathered from informal discussions, rumours, and anecdotal evidence. The LCA was designed to assess the exact nature of the conflict, its causes and impacts. As a direct result of the completed LCA local stakeholders and central government representatives noted that they now had a more objective assessment of the conflict facts. In addition, they noted that they also had a far better understanding of the local peoples perceptions and attitudes towards the conflict issues which in turn allowed for a more comprehensive discussion of ongoing dynamics and problems. A further result was that FRCS project could greatly improve its project design and targeting of interventions.

### 2. Background: Conflicts and conflict potential in the South Caucasus

The collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, and the ensuing difficult transition to democracy and market economies in the region led to drastic changes in the South Caucasus. The strain of transition coupled with social, economic and political backwardness allowed internal and cross-border conflicts to erupt in the region.

For more than a decade, Armenia and Azerbaijan have been locked in armed conflict over the status of the "Mountainous Karabagh" enclave. The conflict began when Karabagh- Armenians living in the enclave declared independence from Azerbaijan shortly after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Hostilities quickly escalated into an open war between Armenia and Azerbaijan, which ended in 1994 with an uneasy ceasefire agreement brokered by the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Despite the ceasefire, there is no official peace agreement between the countries. The border between Armenia and Azerbaijan remains closed and low level hostilities continue to occur. While contacts between Armenians and Azerbaijanis are not officially forbidden by the two governments, sanctions against such contacts are sometimes applied.



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The transition to democracy in Georgia has also been difficult. Two violent ethno-political conflicts in the regions of Abkhazia and Ossetia erupted when the regions announced their independence from Georgia in the early 1990s. Unresolved conflicts over issues of ethnic self-determination continue to destabilize Georgia and hamper transformation to market-oriented democracy. Additionally, Georgia struggles with conflict potentials in border districts inhabited by Georgian, Armenian and Azeri populations. These areas which wrestle with minority-majority ethnic issues and are directly affected by the international conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan are at high risk for instability and violent conflicts.

In the border region of the three South Caucasian countries, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, transition and conflict have led to a collapse of cross-border infrastructure, socio-economic hardship, and food insecurity. The negative experiences of the war and the accompanying violence coupled to the severe restrictions in contacts between the populations has cemented prejudices and stereotypes. This inhibits the growth of constructive conflict management techniques. At the same time, the neglect of local problems by the three central-governments has diminished feelings of responsibility at the local government level. Unless constructive means of dealing with the tensions and conflicts are developed, the region will continue to be unable to meet its development potential, reduce poverty and become food secure.

### 3. The Food Security, Regional Cooperation and Stability in the South Caucasus (FRCS) Project

Since 2001, the German Government has supported regional peace building efforts in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia through a Food Security, Regional Cooperation and Stability Programme (FRCS). The programme's area of operation is centred on the triangle between Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. In addition to addressing issues of rural livelihoods and food security, the programme promotes regional cooperation and cross-border trade in order to promote economic and political stability. The programme actively addresses and seeks work to resolve conflicts in the project region.

#### FRCS project area in Georgia and need for an LCA

In Georgia FRCS works in two border-districts (Marneuli and Gardabani) where the LCA was applied. Ethnically the districts reflect the complex mix often seen in border areas. Approximately 83% of Marneuli district are made up of ethnic Azerbaijanis and 6.4% ethnic Georgians. In Gardabani district the picture is more complicated. The ethnic composition is 45% Georgian and 42% Azerbaijani, with the remaining population a mix of Russians, Greeks, Armenians, and other ethnic groups. However, in both districts political and administrative control is maintained and exerted by the minority ethnic Georgians who are almost always appointed by the central government in Tbilisi.



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The lack of cultural and political integration among ethnic groups coupled with the disproportionate distribution of power is a constant source of low-level conflict in south-eastern Georgia. The area also struggles with significant socio-economic problems including high unemployment, severely degraded infrastructure, very poor economic and social networks and increasing social stratification. These problems are often made worse by the population's view that the source of the problems rests in the ethnic-political struggle. This leads to politically motivated accusations by the various ethnic groups. The application of the LCA in Georgia focused on the local conflicts. However, given the strategic location of the two-border districts sandwiched between Azerbaijan and Armenia it was also necessary to reflect upon the wider conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia during the LCA exercise.

In order to assure a constructive and conflict-sensitive approach FRCS needed to understand the determinants and dynamics of the various conflicts in the region. Only once a better understanding of these causes existed could effective measures be designed to address the various issues be developed. The LCA method was selected as an ideal participatory instrument.

#### 4. Brief overview of the implementation of LCA

The LCA implementation followed a three-stage process:

- (1) preparation;
- (2) creating ownership and committing partners; and
- (3) data collection and analysis.

Upon completion of the LCA further actions were undertaken including a peace and conflict impact assessment.

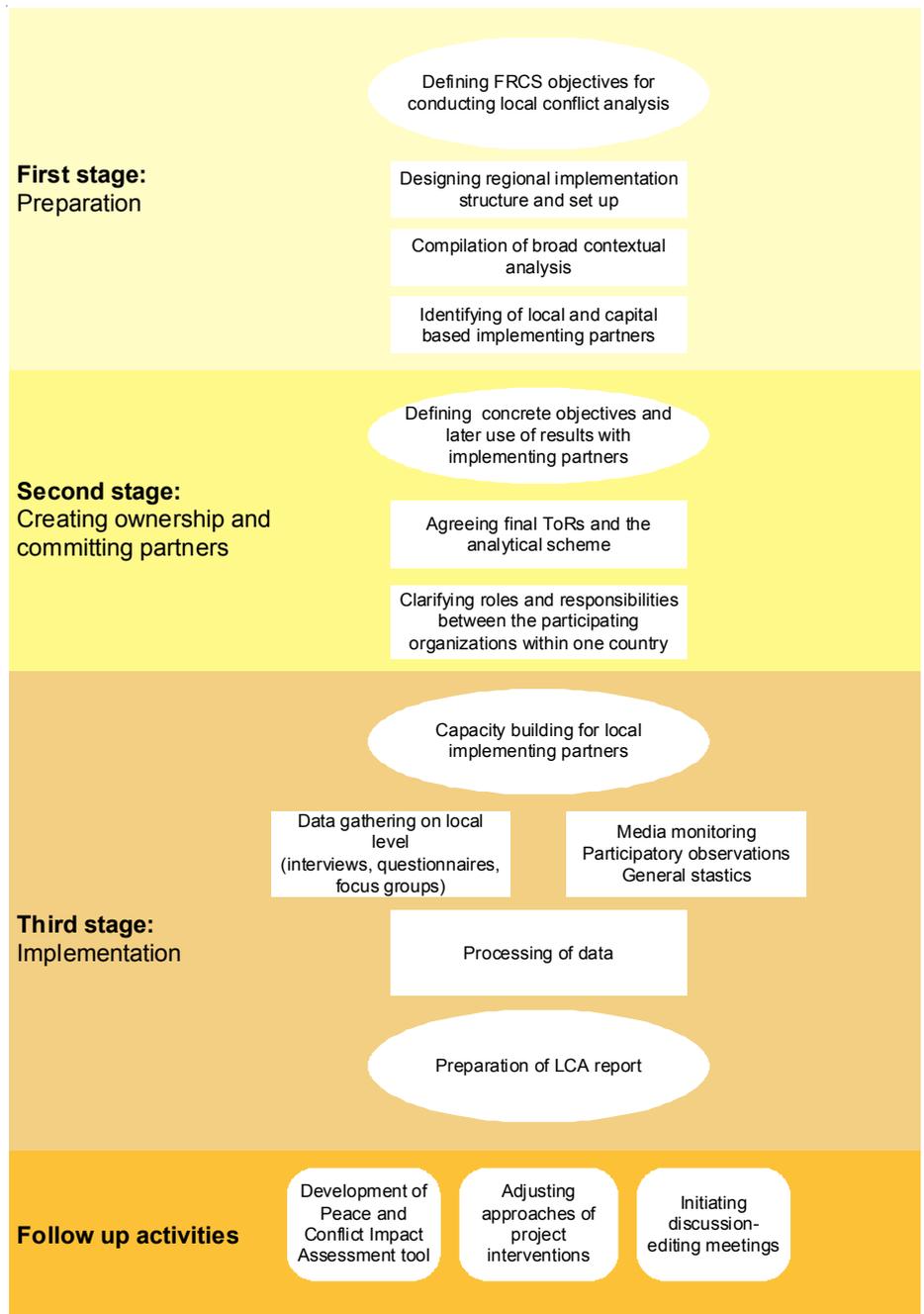
Each of the three stages involved numerous steps. While the FRCS project primary role during stages one and two was to implement the necessary steps, the implementing organisations increasingly took over responsibility for the implementation of stages two and three. This was only possible after extensive capacity building had been provided by the FRCS project. As the capacity of the implementing organisations grew, FRCS retracted from direct implementation more towards a monitoring, supervision and quality control role. Important is also the fact that the LCA not only actively involved the stakeholders in the two border districts but also involved stakeholders from the border districts in Armenia and Azerbaijan. Figure 1 depicts the stages and steps undertaken to complete the LCA in Georgia.



# Conflict Analysis

**Example:**

Figure 1: Overview of the process and required steps





## Conflict Analysis

### Example:

### STAGE ONE: PREPARATION

The preparatory stage was divided into four major steps:

1. Definition of the objectives and reasons for undertaking Local Conflict Analyses;
2. Compilation of a broad contextual analysis;
3. Identifying To form a realistic and clear picture of the possible benefits of an LCA, FRCS developed the impact chains and identified implementation partners; and
4. Designing the general implementation approach and regional set up in the border regions of the South Caucasus countries



### Step 1: Defining the objectives for undertaking a LCA

Initial meetings involving the FRCS team from all three countries commenced the process of defining the objective, benefits and eventual outcome of the LCA. A limited participation of local institutions was the preferred option mainly because their exact role still required definition by the project. The main reasons for conducting an LCA included:

- ▶ Better understanding of the conflicts and their dynamics would ensure more targeted interventions;
- ▶ The insights gained from a LCA would allow project staff, stakeholders and other international organizations working in the region to have an in-depth view of potential conflicts in the region;
- ▶ The results of the LCA would provide the FRCS programme with the necessary background information that would enable it to integrate greater conflict sensitivity into its approach and it would allow for organizational adaptation to accommodate the sensitive issues;
- ▶ The participatory approach of the LCA would enable local NGOs to increase their capacities in conflict analysis, management and resolution both in the short-term for those involved in the process and in the long-term through capacity building; and
- ▶ The LCA was to provide the necessary baseline data against which future evaluations regarding impacts and effects could be measured.



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**Example:**

The following “impact-chain” was developed in order to determine the expected benefits of an LCA

Table 1: Local Conflict Analysis: Impact Chain

|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| <b>Activities</b>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Define the objective, area of research and application of the conflict analysis;</li> <li>▶ Define and clarify the term 'conflict';</li> <li>▶ Compile of a broad contextual analysis;</li> <li>▶ Map out and weigh, in terms of relative importance, actual and potential sources and areas of tension and conflict;</li> <li>▶ Collect quantitative and qualitative data using questionnaires, interviews and focus groups;</li> <li>▶ Consult secondary sources like media, newspapers, resource persons;</li> <li>▶ Describe causes, problems and effects of conflict;</li> <li>▶ List all actors and stakeholders and identify the relationships;</li> <li>▶ Analyse the dynamics of the conflict, short and long-term;</li> <li>▶ Identify indicators for observing changes, impacts and response;</li> </ul> |
| <b>Outputs</b>          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Report on analysis of conflicts affecting development, tools and methods to understand and respond to conflicts and roadmap for conflict sensitive approaches in development work</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Use of Output</b>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Distribution of report;</li> <li>▶ Actors and stakeholders use the conflict analysis to gain a better understanding of the current, past and future situation. Furthermore the results will be used to devise strategies and activities to reduce tension and improve the situation;</li> <li>▶ Identification of priority conflict fields and compilation of best practice studies on conflict sensitive approaches by other actors in development;</li> <li>▶ Development of strategies and activities to improve the situation and to reduce actual and potential conflicts;</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Direct Benefit</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Stakeholders have a better understanding of existing and potential conflicts, that is the existence of conflicts and their impacts;</li> <li>▶ Stakeholders are familiar on how to deal with conflicts and recognize their roles;</li> <li>▶ Local and international knowledge concerning dealing with conflicts are documented and solutions available;</li> <li>▶ Stakeholders are informed on ways to react sensitively within a conflict situation and actions to reduce, avoid or eliminate the likelihood of a violent conflict;</li> <li>▶ Possible scenarios and effects of conflicts are available</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Indirect Benefit</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Other stakeholders and regions do/might follow the example;</li> <li>▶ Incidence of conflict or potential is reduced;</li> <li>▶ 'Forbidden' topics are discussed;</li> <li>▶ Actors embrace/own the process;</li> <li>▶ Other sectors not seen as conflict relevant are considered and analyzed</li> </ul>   |



# Conflict Analysis

### Example:

Quality assurance and impartial guidance for the LCA process was provided through an external consultant hired by the project. Important was that the consultant had: previous experience in the South Caucasus; good methodological and practical knowledge of the tools used in conflict analysis; good familiarity with the institutional landscape of potential partner organisations; and knowledge of Russian as the primary working language. Main responsibilities included: preparation of a background study; leading the process of selection and discussion with the implementing partners; developing and finalizing, in cooperation with the partners, the terms of reference and methodology to be used; backstopping the partners during the collection of data; and revising the methodology if necessary. The consultant accompanied the LCA process, initially intensively with a gradual change towards monitoring and supervision of the local organisations.



### Step 2: Overall contextual analysis

A literature review was conducted prior to the main data collection phase. The results of the review included a more focused understanding of the main conflict-lines in the region. This low-cost approach proved important in focusing the subsequent data collection process. A further positive result included a more precise set of terms of reference for the local and national Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) who were charged with data collection and analysis.

The main approach for the contextual analysis included the following key elements:

- ▶ Research on conflict history in the region;
- ▶ Review of secondary literature;
- ▶ Determination of key issues;
- ▶ Brainstorming on possible issues for conflict; and
- ▶ Drawing parallels and marking differences with regions where a local conflict analysis had already been carried out.

### Step 3: Selection of local implementing partners

One lesson-learnt is that the quality and value of data and information is directly related to the competency of the NGOs undertaking the data collection and analysis. This resulted in the project pairing local and national NGOs in the process. The local NGOs would ensure that their "local" knowledge was made use of, while the national NGOs would provide the necessary analytical skills often missing amongst local NGOs. This pairing process proved very efficient and also ensured know-how transfer from national level to local level.



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### Example:

The following criteria were used for selecting the local NGOs:

1. A positive assessment of the organization's objectives and whether the organisation was viewed with hostility by representatives or sections of the population;
2. Proof that the organisation understood what local conflict analysis is about, included local conflict analysis in its objectives, and had achieved these stated objectives;
3. Proof of current capacities for conducting a LCA as well as evidence of areas of assistance that the local NGOs may require in order to boost their capacity for the tasks required of them; and
4. Evidence of what follow-up steps the local organisation would undertake after completion of the LCA and ideas how it intend to achieve these targets and objectives.

Application of the criteria revealed that despite numerous local NGOs being available only two fulfilled the above four criteria adequately. Working with local as opposed to national NGOs has many advantages, including the fact that they have:

- ▶ Good knowledge of the local setting, i.e. customs, traditions, language, politics, history, culture, and economy;
- ▶ Well-established contacts with, and direct access to, stakeholders;
- ▶ Trust in the community, granting them access to sensitive information and knowledge which may not be accessible to foreigners or organizations from other regions;
- ▶ Sensitivity to respondents who do not offer direct answers, given that they have a background in the region and recognize many of the issues;
- ▶ Experience with local conflict prevention including 'cold or frozen' conflicts and open conflicts and tensions;
- ▶ An interest in maintaining or pursuing a conflict-free environment; and
- ▶ The ability to utilize the results of the LCA in their future work in the region.

Possible drawbacks of working with local NGOs include:

- ▶ Due to their engagement and relations in the region, local personnel may face conflicts of interest;
- ▶ It is not always easy to monitor professional conduct by the local NGOs and their staff;
- ▶ Local personnel may be identified with a certain ethnic or social group, resulting in mistrust from key stakeholders of different ethnic or social groups; and
- ▶ The choice of local organizations is often limited and compromise on some of the selection criteria may be required, as most local NGOs are still relatively weak in terms of capacity and skills.

The project actively worked to overcome these drawbacks especially through provision of intensive capacity building, intermittent backstopping by an international consultant, regular reflection meetings and spot-checks of data collected.



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### Example:

A positive by-product of the LCA exercise has been that the project has continued to cooperate closely with these local NGOs beyond the LCA exercise.

Selection of national NGOs was also criteria-based, these included:

- ▶ Having a good track record and experience in sociological research;
- ▶ Being operative at least since 1992 (shortly after Georgia gained its independence from the Soviet Union) and possessing extensive knowledge on longer-term conflicts as well as their development over the years;
- ▶ Possessing the necessary capacity for sociological research to complement the missing knowledge and experience of the local NGOs;
- ▶ Prior experience in conducting conflict analysis research, data collection and analysis;
- ▶ Some experience in research regarding national minority issues in the country; and
- ▶ Be well connected politically in order to facilitate the access to the necessary sensitive data and information.

In addition to being responsible for data analysis and interpretation, the national NGO was commissioned to oversee and monitor the entire LCA process and ensure the proper application of the methodology. Within the framework of the project, the national NGO was expected to conduct seminars and meetings with focus groups, undertake media monitoring, collect statistics at the national level, and process and analyse the primary data collected by the local NGOs. Finally, they were also expected to draft the main LCA report.

An important lesson-learned was that past knowledge of NGO personnel tended to restrict their receptivity to new ideas and approaches. It also restricted their ability to view data from multiple perspectives and thus generate new information regarding conflict assessments in the local areas. In other words, past experiences often served as blinders to different perspectives. This bias was partially overcome through the objectivity of an international consultant.



### Step 4: Designing the LCA implementation approach

Primary focus of the LCA was on the “local” conflict. However, the project ensured that both a regional and international perspective was maintained throughout the process. This was achieved through regular meetings that were held (in Tbilisi) between the various implementing partners in all three countries. The objectives of the meetings was to both develop a joint understanding and methodology for the implementation of the LCA as well as to synchronize the procedures and the regular exchange of information and experiences. Although data collection and analysis was undertaken simultaneously in all three countries, the project ensured that regional variations were allowed in recognition of the different experiences of the local NGOs carrying out the research. The coordination of information and experience exchange process is visually depicted in Figure 2.

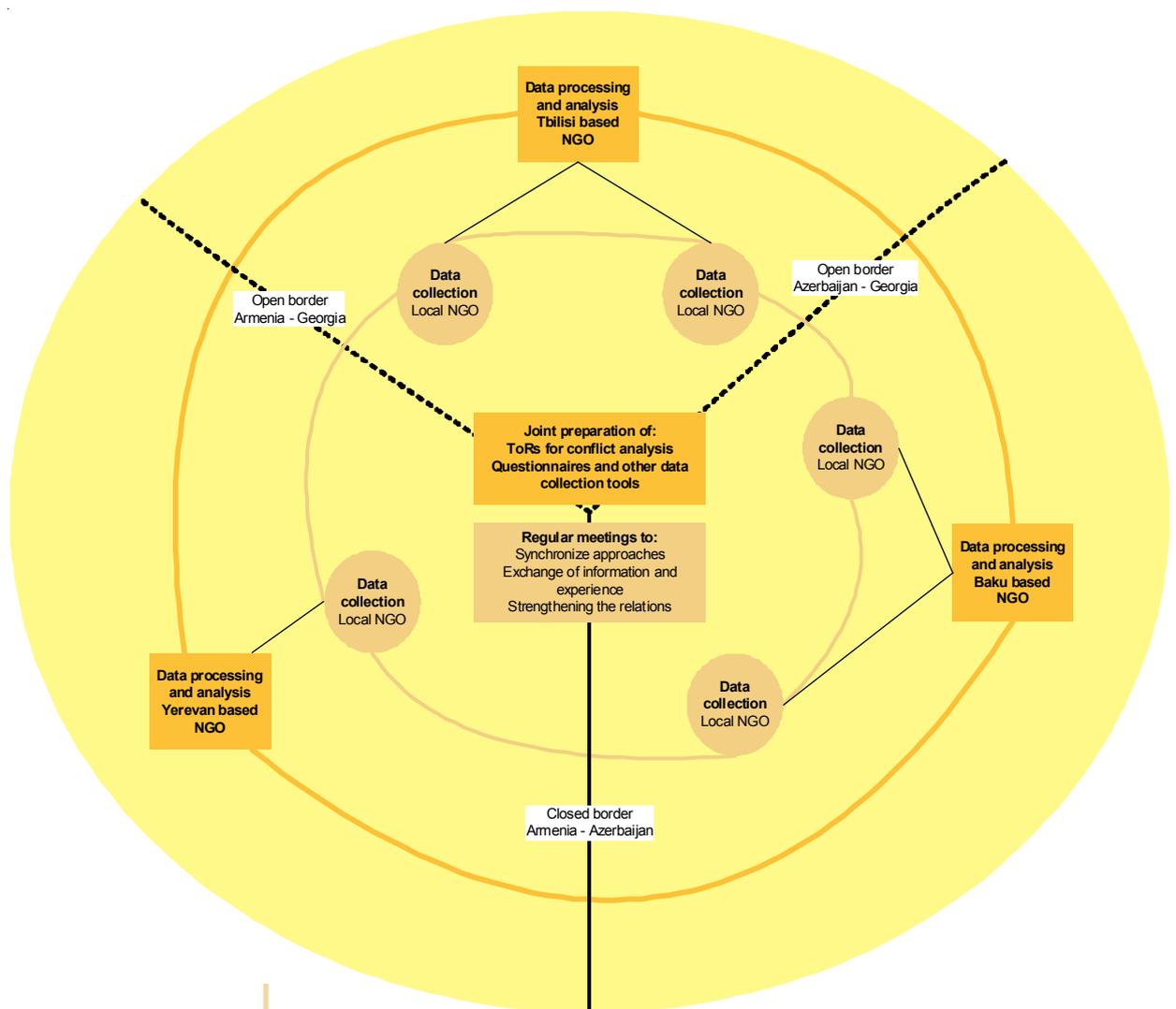


# Conflict Analysis

## Example:

Following the first stage, a draft Terms of Reference (ToRs) was produced, which proposed a detailed implementation or action plan. It was developed by the FRCS programme in close cooperation with the national NGOs. Prior to the onset of the data collection exercise, three regional meetings were conducted in Tbilisi, which included the participating national NGOs. Tbilisi was selected as the host location in light of its perceived neutrality as a city which is neither Armenian nor Azerbaijani, since representatives from the two countries refused to meet bilaterally. Further support was provided by international professionals who attended the regional meetings and were tasked with ensuring the smooth implementation of cross-border cooperation during the study.

Figure 2: Implementation design for all three countries/regions





# Conflict Analysis

### Example:



### STAGETWO: CREATING OWNERSHIP

The main objective of the second stage of the LCA process was develop a team of different organisations who would have the same vision, approach and understanding necessary to successfully implement the LCA. The second stage included three major steps:

1. Revising the concrete objectives and later use of the results with implementing partners and local stakeholders;
2. Agreeing to final ToRs and the analytical scheme; and
3. Defining and agreeing to the roles and responsibilities of the participating organizations within one country.

#### Step 1: Revision of the objectives jointly with the implementing partners and local stakeholders

Prior to conducting an “in the field” conflict analysis, clear and concise objectives had be agreed upon with local stakeholders. Additionally, potential areas of intervention and related follow-on activities were also defined. Particularly, the goals of the conflict analysis and the future uses of the insights gained from the analysis needed to be agreed upon.

The following five objectives were agreed upon:

1. Gain an understanding of conflicts;
2. Identify the main areas of conflict;
3. Develop an awareness of conflict dynamics;
4. Include a base for further activities directed at strengthening local capacities for conflict transformation; and
5. Monitor future developments and the impact of programme activities on the conflict dynamics.

While it was easy to gain a mutual understanding of the LCA objectives, it proved difficult to convince the organisations that the LCA was part of wider process and was not an end-in-itself. The impression was that once the LCA report was completed that was the end of the exercise. However, since it is part of a wider process, the LCA report marks only a small milestone. Reading and understanding about this was a necessary pre-condition in order to be able to successfully implement the LCA.

A lesson-learnt was that the furtheruse of the published LCA report by all organisations also had to be jointly agreed upon at the start of the process. The main reason for this is that publication of reports can actually lead to or even escalate conflicts. Therefore it was necessary to ensure that this did not happen. It was agreed by all the results of the LCA process documented in the report would be used to:

1. Initiate discussions/editing group meetings on specific issues identified and analysed in the LCA;
2. Develop together with its partners a Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment tool; and
3. Reflect and adjust FRCS approaches.



# Conflict Analysis

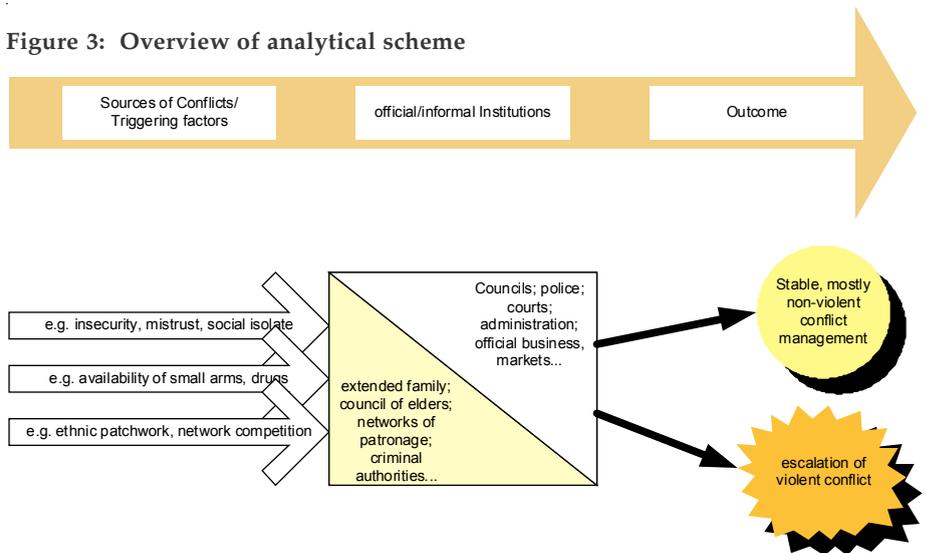
## Example:

### Step 2: Finalising the terms of reference and the analytical process

The draft terms of reference for both local and national NGOs were modified and adapted in order to reflect the strengths and weaknesses of the organisations as well as to take into account additional know-how gained in the process up to this point in time. Generally, it was agreed that the local NGOs would primarily collect data while the national NGOs would develop the following:

- ▶ **Conflict profiles**, detailing the “what,” “where” and “when” of the conflict. What is the conflict about, what is its extent, and what are its impacts? When and how did it start? How did it develop? Where exactly is it taking place and what are the main demographic and geographic indicators of conflict?
- ▶ **Stakeholder Analysis**, detailing the “who is who” in the conflict. Who are the conflict actors? How are they related to each other? Within or for which institutions do they work? What are their roles in the conflict? What would they desire or want related to the conflict?
- ▶ **Analysis of conflict processing institutions at the official and social level**, analysing the manner in which stakeholders deal with existing conflicts, their formal, informal and traditional ways, as well as the implications of the processes used to manage conflicts on further developments.
- ▶ **Conflict source analyses**, which identifies the so called “root causes” and “trigger factors” (i.e. factors escalating conflicts around specific origin causes).
- ▶ **Conflict trend and scenario analyses**, which detail the development of the conflict and the actions that could mitigate conflicts and tensions.

Figure 3: Overview of analytical scheme





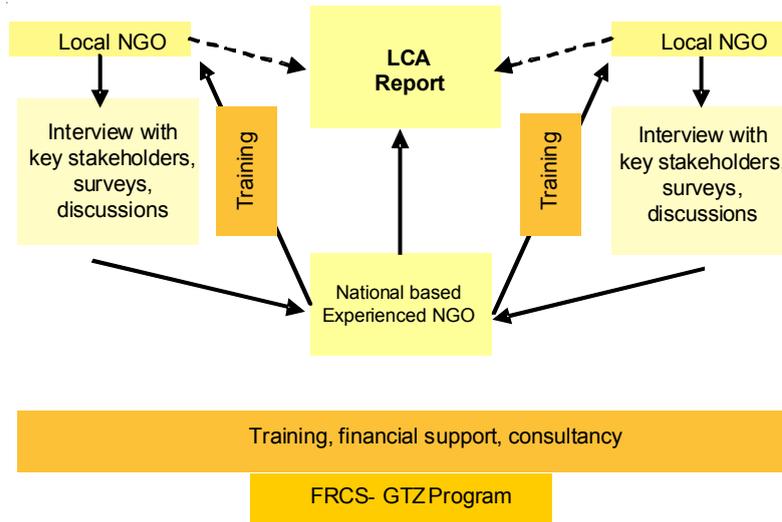
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**Example:**

**Step 3: Defining the roles and responsibilities of the participating organisations**

A total of eight organisations participated in the LCA process jointly with the FRCS project (e.g. five local and three national NGOs from each of the three countries). In view of the number of organisations and the spatial dimensions of the LCA the project had to ensure that all organisations clearly understood their roles and responsibilities. In Georgia this meant that local NGOs were tasked with collecting the primary data. The process was supervised by the national NGOs. All of this required extensive capacity building and training which was provided by the FRCS project. Figure 4 depicts the implementation arrangements for Georgia

Figure 4: Implementation design in Georgia



**STAGETHREE: IMPLEMENTATION**

Stage three involved the actual field work which was implemented by the NGOs. FRCS's role was capacity building, advising and monitoring. Stage three was divided into four steps:

1. Capacity building for local implementing partners,
2. Data-gathering,
3. Processing of data, and
4. Preparation of LCA report.



# Conflict Analysis

### Example:



### Step 1: Capacity building for local implementing partners

The local NGOs received extensive training from FRCS project consultants as well as from the national NGOs. This included training on general concepts of conflict analysis, methodologies, interview and survey techniques, group discussion approaches, training in conflict transformation, including conflict analysis and possible intervention tools (this was provided by experts from Germany). Training on conducting interviews, including: various styles of interviews; who should be interviewed; identifying key stakeholders; topics to be addressed during interviews; and structuring questions and sentences in order to ensure that they are short and precise was given. Finally, the project and the organisations undertook a careful appraisal of the questions to be asked in order to avert any possible negative sentiments, mistrust or fear being created.

### Step 2: Data Collection

A variety of data gathering methods were used these have been briefly outlined below. While there is no precise sequence of when to use which method the sequences does have some influence on both the focus of the inquiry as well as on the information collected. During the LCA process in Georgia the methods were grouped into quantitative and qualitative and the sequence in which the were applied is as follows:

#### Quantitative methods:

- ▶ **General statistical information from official national and local sources (background information):** The local NGOs spoke with national and regional administrators to gather available data and to determine their viewpoints on conflict issues. The information retrieved provided a preliminary idea of official data, including population data, composition of population, official crime rates, employment, and resource distribution. Older data and sources of information were used as a baseline to analyse and to establish changes and trends over the recent past.
- ▶ **Focused questionnaires (supplementary background information, when insider knowledge is not required):** A quantitative poll/survey with 1040 respondents was conducted. The questionnaires consisted of 74 enquiries ranging from respondents' personal possessions to naming issues of conflict. Because no specific expertise was required, this poll was quantitative rather than qualitative, and respondents were randomly selected. For example, depending on the size of a village, one in three or five respondents would be selected. The structure of the survey resulted in a comprehensive overview of a wide variety of issues and provided insight into what local people perceived as the most critical issues. In addition to providing the material for a descriptive analysis, which was completed later in the process, the data generated through these questionnaires enabled the researchers to design narrow, targeted questions for the focus groups and interviews which followed.



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### Qualitative methods

- ▶ **Focus groups (detailed information on pre-defined social groups, e.g. age-groups/generations, gender, education, ethnic/religious groups):** Five focus-groups were established in each district. Focus group participants were members of formal and informal organizations. Different categories of focus groups were formed, including 'mixed' focus groups, consisting of members of different ethnicity, as well as homogenous 'non-mixed' groups, which consisted, for example, of only young ethnic Azerbaijanis or women. The data collected from these focus groups was analysed according to qualitative methods.
- ▶ **Individual narrative interviews with representatives of focus groups:** Representatives from all ten focus groups conducted in the districts were chosen to report on the discussions and developments from their groups.
- ▶ **Guideline interviews with local key-actors/stakeholders (administration, political parties, NGOs, international organisations, local authorities, informal authorities):** Staff from the local NGOs performed twenty-three interviews in Marneuli and Gardabani with representatives of state and social institutions and groups.
- ▶ **Professional interviews with local experts:** Personnel from the local NGOs conducted interviews and two meetings with local experts on issues such as law enforcement, gender, social issues, agriculture and other issues deemed relevant to the LCA.

The qualitative methods listed above focused primarily on the way in which the stakeholders dealt with conflicts, their perceptions of others, and trends. It allowed for later analysis of the interests and positions of each party and the relations among them. The qualitative and quantitative methods were accompanied throughout the process with:

- ▶ **Participant observation (local knowledge):** Local NGO personnel, living and working in the region, provided first-hand information regarding day-to-day activities, developments, and indications of conflict.
- ▶ **Monitoring of local and national mass media and other sources of public opinion:** National and local media sources were monitored and analysed over a four-month period and the researchers employed a common sociological method to study the media. For example, a newspaper was studied over a certain period and the frequency of certain key words was recorded. In order to identify a relationship between words and issues, their frequency of appearance was compared. The Tbilisi-based NGO had experience in this type of research and was also able to judge the credibility or the relevance of stories



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### Example:

FRCS staff worked extensively with the partner organisations on the design of the data collection tools. The questionnaires and interview questions were modified several times to avoid bias and account for certain issues. One lesson-learnt is that starting the conflict analysis with quantitative methods bears the risk that it could pre-define and limit the scope of the research to only certain pre-selected topics at a very early stage of the LCA process.

The logic of using quantitative methods first was based upon the pragmatic consideration that the persons designing the tools already possessed a good knowledge of the local area. Nevertheless, open questions were included in the quantitative methods to provide the flexibility to react to issues not previously identified and to include additional topics for the qualitative research. In Georgia, not many additional topics or issues were mentioned by the respondents and the quantitative methods thus covered all major issues. A possible reason for the lack of additional topics being mentioned is the extensive local knowledge gained by the FRCS project through its active interventions in the area over more than one year period of time.

The project decided not to regular monitor the data collection exercise, mainly because of the fact that the presence of "outsiders" would affect the willingness of the respondents to be open and frank and thus would limit their willingness to share information, perspectives and opinions. Thus only spot-checks were undertaken by the project in order to ensure that the data collection was being properly conducted. FRCS participated in during the intensive debriefing with the implementing partners after each round of interviews and focus group meetings. Where necessary modifications and adaptations to the process were agreed upon during these debriefing sessions. An important lesson-learnt was that the approach was only possible since the project had undertaken extensive capacity building and training in advance and had actively integrated the organisations into the whole process. This ensured a greater understanding of the whole process.



### Step 3: Processing the data

The national NGO was given all the data and information that had been collected using the different methods. It used various quantitative and qualitative methods to analysis the data. The analytical methods employed ranged from statistical calculations to sociological interview analysis. After the data collection was complete, FRCS held another workshop with the participating organisations to remind them of the analytical scheme developed and agreed upon during the second step of stage two.



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### Example:



### Step 4: Preparation of LCA report

The experts from the national NGOs formulated the first draft report. The draft was structured in line with the various conflict aspects defined in the second stage of the process, and reflected the findings of the analysis. It included general information on conflict parties and stakeholders as well as specific information on conflict fields.

Based on the first draft report, the local NGOs and FRCS held several meetings to clarify and discuss the results of the data collection and analysis. On the basis of these discussions, and FRCS's comments, a final report was compiled.

After a preliminary analysis had been undertaken and some initial results were available, the project introduced a matrix structure that was designed to provide a framework to analyse interactions and links between the conflict dynamics that had been observed and analysed and to link these to the development initiatives that were being supported by the project. The intention was define linkages between project activities and conflict dynamics at a very early stage. One lesson-learnt was that the point in time selected to do this was too early. Examining the complicated interactions required more information before it could be completed effectively.

### Ensuring regional coordination

Throughout stage three the project ensured that proper coordination between the LCA exercises being conducted in all three countries were effectively coordinated. Meetings between the data collection teams in all three countries were undertaken every month. During these meetings that were held in Tbilisi the organisations synchronized their methodologies and approaches, discussed wider cross-border issues such as land privatization, and generally shared experiences and information. In general, the meetings were fruitful. Considering the difficult and highly polarised climate between Armenia and Azerbaijan, the meetings provided a unique opportunity for the organizations to get to know each other, exchange opinions, and converse. The need to discuss the methodological issues involved in conducting a local conflict analysis provided an early opportunity for participating organizations to work together on an apolitical topic. Sensitive issues were broached only after the organizations had developed confidence and trust. The meetings moved slowly from methodological to political discussions but never ceased to be an exchange of experiences and information gained from the LCA process. As a result concrete requests were made to address the needs of people living on the "other side" of the border.

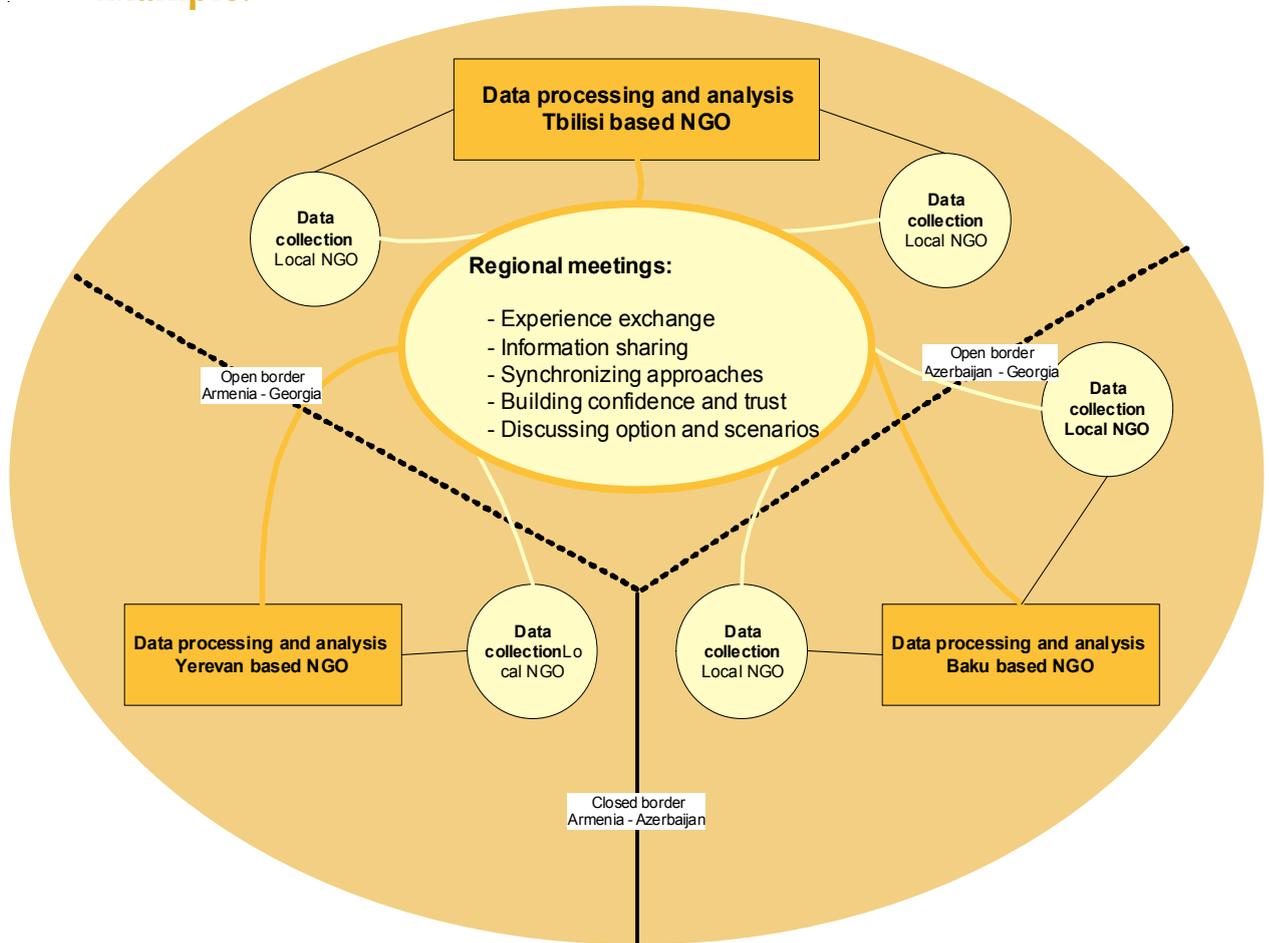
Figure 5 depicts the workings of the regional coordination meetings.



# Conflict Analysis

**Example:**

Figure 5: Cross-border coordination and information exchange



All methods and tools, such as questionnaires and sets of guiding questions, were intensively discussed with FRCS consultants and the international short term consultant before application. After an initial application of the tools, their validity was re-checked and adjustments made if necessary. This assured a high quality of data collecting methods. Because the international consultant participated in the process as an impartial third party, there were no major problems in reaching a level of standardization across the countries. Other questions and conclusions discussed in the course of the coordination meetings were:

- ▶ Can certain conflicts be summarized in clusters with similar characteristics of conflicts?

To a certain extent it was possible to identify conflict clusters based on the similarities of participants to the conflict, the resources that were the focus of conflict, and similar patterns in the way the conflict is processed.



# Conflict Analysis

## Example:

- ▶ How should discrepancies between information from official sources and information from interviewees be handled?

A conflict analysis is always only an approximation of reality. If there is different information from different sources, it should be made explicit since this in itself is an important aspect of a conflict.

- ▶ When is it appropriate to talk about possible solutions?

Discussion about interventions should come only after the analysis is finished and agreed upon. Brainstorming too early in the process about interventions hampers an objective analysis because any intervention is likely to appear biased towards one of the conflict parties.

During the coordination meeting, it was important to periodically refer to the terms of reference (ToRs). During the research phase, some organisations tended to deviate from the ToRs when new and interesting issues arose. For each of these new topics, a discussion was held and it was jointly decided whether the new topic should be included in the scope of the research and thus added to the ToRs, or whether the issue was not significant to the project. It was also necessary to constantly remember that the analysis should focus on the local level and include macro-level political conflict dynamics only if they directly impacted the region under study.



## Conclusions

Achieving a common understanding and agreed definition of the word 'conflict' is not just a matter of semantics, but is essential for a successful conflict analysis. The stakeholders in Marneuli and Gardabani districts believed that a less 'charged' word should be used - one which would generally apply more to the specific socio-economic problems in the region. The use of the term 'conflict' could in itself trigger further disagreement if stakeholders are presented with a limited definition or concept of the term. The programme initiated a discussion with the stakeholders on the wider meaning of the concept and the project did not attempt to limit their contributions or discussions. Additionally, the programme learned from the surveys, interviews and discussions that local stakeholders have a much broader definition of conflict than previously assumed.

According to the surveys conducted in the Marneuli and Gardabani districts, local stakeholders believe the five most important areas of potential conflict are:

- |                          |       |
|--------------------------|-------|
| ▶ Unemployment           | 89.2% |
| ▶ Roads                  | 46.4% |
| ▶ Low wages and pensions | 44.0% |
| ▶ Devastated production  | 31.9% |
| ▶ Power supply           | 30.2% |



## Conflict Analysis

### Example:



Problems traditionally viewed as areas of conflict were rated significantly lower:

|  |       |
|--|-------|
| ▶ Lack of knowledge of the state language                    | 15.9% |
| ▶ Privatization and distribution of land                     | 12.9% |
| ▶ Representation of minorities in state structures           | 7.9%  |
| ▶ Inaccessibility of resources                               | 2.9%  |
| ▶ Opposition between different resident groups in the region | 2.3%  |
| ▶ Interethnic opposition                                     | 1.4%  |

The different perspectives highlights the fact that the local population defines conflict much more broadly than international observers will likely do. However, important is also the fact that during qualitative interviews key stakeholders responded quite differently. During these emotional and intensive discussions ethnic and political issues such as language issues and land distribution were named as the most problematic. Having listened to the opinions of various affected parties, the term 'conflict' was ultimately defined as broadly described "...as any struggle for limited natural, political, and social resources which is apparent in all aspects of life: political, economical and private". Discussions on the term conflict continued throughout the LCA process. Initially the focus of discussions was on definition of the term. Then it shifted more towards determining the most appropriate intervention mechanisms. During the process, stakeholders were increasingly sensitized to different approaches and methodologies for conflict resolution, such as organisational development, conflict management/transformation and capacity building. The discussions still continue unabated and continue to provide the basis for the follow-up activities defined by both the project and the NGOs.

### Related methods

- ▶ Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment – PCIA
- ▶ Do No Harm (Local capacities for peace)
- ▶ Conflict Analysis