

Conflict, Stability and Security Fund Annual Reviews 16/17

The Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF) was set up in 2015 to tackle fragility in conflict affected countries and promote stability at the direction of the National Security Council (NSC). Programmes are designed to ensure they meet a particular country, region or theme's National Security Strategy. This paper provides an overview of the published Annual Review Summaries for the Financial Year 2016/17.

Nearly all programmes were subject to an Annual Review (AR), however we have not published all of our Annual Reviews as we are often working on sensitive issues and in situations with high security risks. We will not publish information that might put our staff or the staff of our implementing partners in danger. Our Regional Boards (chaired by FCO Directors) consider whether any information is too sensitive to publish. They base their decisions on the exemptions used in the Freedom of Information Act. We continue to review programme information and will publish further summaries, where we are able to.

ARs are conducted by teams drawn from both inside and outside of government and at least one member is independent of the programme being reviewed. The reviews score a programme's performance according to what outputs (activities) it was expected to deliver as set out in the programme's "results framework". They also assess the effectiveness of how a programme is delivered – including commercial partnerships and grants, financial management, risk management and value for money. Finally, all ARs consider the implications of the programme on conflict and gender sensitivity and on Human Rights.

The ARs include the programme's initial budget allocation, not the actual spend, and so cannot be used to calculate CSSF spend. Our [Annual Report](#) details our Official Development Assistance (ODA) and non-ODA spend splits, while the [Department of International Development's](#) annual ODA stats detail our ODA spend. The reviews are used to inform CSSF Regional Boards and Post Boards of a programme's progress and allows them to adjust programmes accordingly.

What works well?

The Annual Reviews highlight some of the excellent results the CSSF programmes have achieved. This includes:

- **Iraq Resilience and Stabilisation Programme** has supported the UN Mine Action Service to clear 2 million square metres of land from improvised explosive devices and other explosive threats including around schools and hospitals, which has helped over 1.2 million children return to school.
- In **Colombia**, the CSSF supported the peace process, which led to the signing of a peace agreement on 24 November 2016. Since then, funding has worked to support the implementation of this agreement. By the end of March, over 7,000 Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) members had assembled in 26 transition zones to hand over weapons to the UN.
- The **Northeast Nigeria Security and Conflict & Stabilisation Programme** works to contain the threat of Boko Haram by building the capacity of the Armed Forces of Nigeria (AFN) and establishing conflict and peace building architecture at state and community levels. Over 14,000 AFN personnel were trained this year and a gender advisor network established. The programme was also instrumental in introducing the screening of women by female officers at security checkpoints.

Across the whole of the CSSF the ARs demonstrate that the majority of programmes are delivering the intended results as set out in the results frameworks. High performing programmes across the CSSF demonstrate that our structure of cross government integration

from post level, through the regional boards and up to the National Security Council really works.

The reviews also note that our programmes are flexible and able to work in high risk locations, mitigating risk including through the use of third party evaluators. Where there are specific risks on human rights Overseas Security and Justice Assessments (OSJAs) are completed to assess human rights risks and identify suitable mitigation.

Where can improvements be made?

The reviews also highlight a number of areas where the CSSF could improve its processes and programmes. Programmes are able to demonstrate outputs (a specific activity) but less able to show how this contributed to an outcome (an overall change). For example the programme can demonstrate how many peacebuilding workshops were carried out, but less able to demonstrate how these workshops resulted in fewer community disputes. Programmes need to improve their data collection and monitoring tools to demonstrate how programmes deliver outcomes, as well as outputs, to meet National Security Objectives.

The reviews show that CSSF programmes are delivering results when it comes to female participation in peacekeeping and democratic processes, as well as delivering justice for victims of gender based violence. However more could be done at the programme design level to consider how all programmes impact gender dynamics. This issue is being taken very seriously at all levels. The previous National Security Advisor asked that all UK Government Strategies (from which the CSSF takes its direction from) include gender in relevant strategic objectives and analysis.

To ensure we can make improvements to programmes, particularly in terms of creating the same integrated board structures which we know are successful, we must ensure that the CSSF can get right number of staff with the right skills and expertise. The Joint Programme Hub, who centrally oversee the spend and direction of the CSSF, continue to work with Human Resources teams across HMG on this important issue.

How can CSSF continue to learn and share lessons?

The Annual Reviews, our lessons events and regional and CSSF training courses allow us to share learning and best practice, as well as where changes and improvements can be made regularly throughout the year.

To ensure that all staff working on the CSSF understand how we manage and report on our programmes, we run a bespoke three day training course for staff from departments working on the CSSF both in the UK and overseas. By the end of 2017 we will have trained over 420 members of staff.

The annual CSSF Lessons event brings together over 200 staff from all departments delivering CSSF programmes, both in the UK and overseas to share best practice and learnings from across the network. This year's event brought in experts from across government and outside it, to cover sessions on a wide range of themes, which aimed to improve CSSF programmes.

As the CSSF matures and grows it's important that we continue to improve our programme design, whilst still being able to programme responsively and take risks. Both the Annual Reviews and our lessons event summarised that in order to build high performing programmes it is imperative that a wide range of analysis is used to inform the programme design from the outset. This analysis should include government expertise on the local political situation, the role of the army and the position of other donors in this area. CSSF programmes are by their nature working in highly political, complex environments and a broad understanding of these issues ensures that programmes are more likely to succeed.