

POLICY BRIEFING

# Linking relief, rehabilitation and development: Towards more effective aid

## Abstract

The concept of *linking relief, rehabilitation and development* (LRRD) has been on the international agenda for decades. The model was conceived as a response to the funding gap that was identified between relief operations and longer-term development operations following disasters. While the LRRD concept has evolved over time, its implementation on the ground has remained difficult, as demonstrated by the high number of relatively uncoordinated EU responses to crises.

Yet climate change, the increase of major natural disasters, and the emergence of increasingly complex conflicts calls for an effective implementation of LRRD. The EU has repeatedly endorsed LRRD, although many challenges remain at the conceptual and operational levels. Current preparations for the financing instruments for the period 2014-2020 — and, more specifically, the Development Cooperation Instrument — provide an opportunity to reinforce the legal provisions associated with LRRD and prepare for a better implementation on the ground.

This policy briefing has been requested by the Committee on Development in anticipation of a hearing to be held on 3 September ('LRRD: Towards more effective aid'). This note should be read in conjunction with the study commissioned by the Policy Department on behalf of the Committee on Development: 'Strengthening the link between relief, rehabilitation and development in the EU's financing instruments for development and humanitarian aid under the MFF 2014-201'.

This Policy Briefing was requested by the European Parliament's Committee on Development in view of a public hearing on 3rd September 2012

#### **AUTHOR:**

Valerie RAMET  
Directorate-General for External Policies of the Union  
Policy Department  
WIB 06 M 093  
rue Wiertz 60  
B-1047 Brussels

Feedback to [valerie.ramet@europarl.europa.eu](mailto:valerie.ramet@europarl.europa.eu) is welcome.

Editorial Assistant: Sabine HOFFMANN

#### **LINGUISTIC VERSIONS:**

Original: EN  
Translation: FR

#### **ABOUT THE PUBLISHER:**

Manuscript completed on 03 July 2012

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*Printed in Belgium*

This Policy Briefing is available on the intranet site of the Directorate-General for External Policies, in the [Regions and countries](#) or [Policy Areas](#) section.

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## 1. Linking relief, rehabilitation and development: An evolving concept

### 1.1. The evolution of the concept: From continuum to contiguuum

The concept of LRRD has figured on the international agenda for decades.

The concept of LRRD (*linking relief, rehabilitation and development*) is not new. It originated in the 1980s when practitioners and academics identified a funding gap — a 'grey zone' — between humanitarian assistance, rehabilitation and development activities surrounding the food crisis in Africa.

The basic idea of LRRD is to link short-term relief measures with longer-term development programmes in order to create synergies and provide a more sustainable response to crisis situations. As stated in the Principles of Good Humanitarian Donorship, humanitarian assistance should be provided in 'ways that are supportive of recovery and long-term development, striving to ensure support, where appropriate, to the maintenance and return of sustainable livelihoods and transitions from humanitarian relief to recovery and development'. In turn, well-designed development cooperation programmes should reduce the need for emergency relief, and LRRD development activities should include measures for conflict prevention, disaster risk reduction, disaster preparedness and the development of early warning systems.

The concept has evolved over time and today implies adopting a *contiguuum approach*.

Initially, LRRD was conceived as a linear **continuum sequence**: rehabilitation would follow the relief phase, to be succeeded in turn by classic development co-operation. However, experience from the 1990s demonstrated that treating relief, rehabilitation and development as separate processes failed to respond to the complexity of a number of crisis situations. In certain cases, such as protracted or post-conflict situations, the changing nature of the operational environment makes it difficult to adopt each response separately and in turn. As a result, the continuum approach was abandoned in favour of a **contiguuum approach**, which departs from a scenario of simultaneous and complementary use of different aid instruments.

Since 2000, security policy actors have entered the debate on LRRD and provided another perspective. Privileging questions related to security transition, these actors call for a more comprehensive approach to ensure greater coherence between security, development and humanitarian assistance.

### 1.2. The approach taken by the European Union

The EC has published communications on LRRD in 1996 and in 2001.

The European Commission published a first **communication** on LRRD in **1996**. This note underlines the need to link relief, rehabilitation and development in order to improve the coherence and efficiency of the EU's response. The communication highlights the benefits of smooth coordination between rapid humanitarian relief and sustainable

development response. Consistent with the continuum approach that was then prevalent, rehabilitation was defined as a bridge between relief and development.

The shift to a contiguous strategy is reflected in the second **communication from the Commission**, published in **2001**. This note recognises that the complexity of many crisis situations may require different instruments to be used at the same time. The communication identifies a number of challenges and specifies measures to overcome them. Measures include, notably, revising tools/instruments to reduce delays, adopting greater flexibility and accepting a greater degree of risk in post-crisis situations.

The communication distinguishes three categories of crisis where LRRD could be applied. First, in the case of *natural disasters*, the recommendation is to increase attention to disaster preparedness and disaster prevention, both in humanitarian assistance and in development co-operation strategies and programmes. Second, for *armed conflicts*, the communication stresses that LRRD must be placed in a broader context and should be part of a consistent EU approach towards crises that links instruments in an integrated way. Finally, the publication identifies *structural and other types of crises*, such as those besetting countries suffering from declining political, economic or social conditions.

While the humanitarian and development community welcomed the 2001 communication, a number of organisations, such as CISP and VOICE, expressed concern over the lack of practical or financial measures to ensure implementation.

The EU's commitment to LRRD has been reiterated in a number of additional policy and strategic documents. The **2007 'European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid'** underlined that 'achieving better linkage between Relief, Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD) requires humanitarian and development actors to coordinate from the earliest phases of a crisis response and to act in parallel with a view to ensuring a smooth transition. It necessitates mutual awareness of the different modalities, instruments and approaches on the part of all aid actors and flexible and innovative transition strategies'. The action plan accompanying the Consensus identified a number of measures to better link humanitarian aid with longer-term development and other assistance. Unfortunately, a 2010 mid-term review of the action plan judged that 'little progress' had been made on LRRD. The review suggested that further work was needed in the field of disaster risk reduction and in the transition from emergency response to recovery.

LRRD is also mentioned in a number of other European Commission communications: 'Towards an EU response to situations of fragility' (COM (2007) 643); 'A thematic strategy for food security' (COM (2006) 21) and 'EU strategy for disaster risk reduction in developing countries' (COM (2009) 84).

The EU has repeatedly endorsed LRRD, notably in the 2007 'European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid'.

Finally, LRRD features in the 'Agenda for Change' from October 2011, in which the Commission stresses the importance that the EU ensures a smooth transition from humanitarian aid and crisis response to long-term development cooperation.

## 2. Implementing LRRD

### 2.1. Overview of current EU instruments relevant to LRRD

The financing instruments most relevant for LRRD purposes are the Instrument for Humanitarian Aid, the Development Cooperation Instrument and the Instrument for Stability. The Cotonou agreement also contains specific provisions on LRRD.

The **Instrument for Humanitarian Aid** (N°1257/1996) covers humanitarian aid interventions. Although LRRD is not explicitly mentioned, the Instrument does specify that humanitarian assistance should include short-term rehabilitation and reconstruction work and 'help those affected regain a minimum level of self sufficiency, taking long-term development objectives into account where possible'.

The Instrument for Humanitarian Aid allows funding LRRD activities.

A few provisions on LRRD can also be found in the **Development Cooperation Instrument**, or DCI (N° 1905/2006). The geographic section (Article 19) refers specifically to countries directly involved in, or affected by, a crisis or a post-crisis situation. For these countries, 'multiannual indicative programmes shall place special emphasis on stepping up coordination between relief, rehabilitation and development to help them make the transition from an emergency situation to the development phase; programmes for countries and regions regularly subject to natural disasters shall provide for disaster preparedness and prevention and the management of the consequences of such disasters'. The DCI foresees the possibility of adopting special measures in cases of unforeseen needs related to a crisis when these cannot be covered by other instruments (Article 23). These special measures may also be used to fund the transition from emergency aid to long-term development operations, including measures to better prepare people for recurring crises. A reference to LRRD is made in relation to the food security thematic programme (Article 15).

Legal provisions on LRRD are included in the current DCI (2007-2013) and the Instrument for Stability.

The **Instrument for Stability** (N°1717/2006) is composed of a short- and a long-term component. The short-term component ('Crisis response and preparedness') aims to prevent conflict, support post-conflict political stabilisation and ensure early recovery after a natural disaster. The long-term component supports measures in the fields of non-proliferation, the fight against terrorism and organised crime. The long-term component may also finance activities linked to pre- and post-crisis preparedness capacity building.

The ACP-EU partnership agreement (commonly called '**Cotonou agreement**') includes specific provisions for LRRD, particularly articles 60, 72, 72a and in annex IV (third revision of 22 June 2010). The 'B-Envelope' of

the European Development Fund aims to provide partner countries with a flexible means of responding to unforeseen needs. ECHO can access 25 % of each B-Envelope to finance post emergency actions to phase out humanitarian aid, thereby linking short-term relief, rehabilitation and development.

## 2.2. The challenges of implementation

LRRD has proved challenging to implement.

The EU has supported LLRD in a number of ways: by committing to the concept in its policies, incorporating legal provisions in the financing instruments and creating mechanisms to facilitate the transition (by adapting humanitarian tools and setting up an LRRD working group). Yet LRRD has been difficult to implement in practice. Recent humanitarian crises demonstrate the persistent difficulty in filling the gap between immediate humanitarian relief assistance and more sustainable development programmes. In the case of the EU response to the Haiti 2010 earthquake, for example, a serious funding gap was diagnosed, and the reconstruction was inadequately funded because the 10th EDF was not adapted to such post-crisis situations<sup>1</sup>. Recent evaluations suggest that LRRD has only been implemented on a case-by-case basis, rather than systematically.

Challenges stem from fundamental differences between humanitarian aid and development cooperation.

In part, this may be due to the distinct nature of humanitarian aid and development cooperation. The two sectors have **different goals and objectives**. They also differ in terms of **mandates**, basic **principles**, **implementing modes and timeframes**. The divide between the two is reflected in the organisation of the European Commission: a clear separation exists between Directorate-General ECHO (Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection) on the one hand and the European External Action Service (EEAS) and Directorate-General Development and Cooperation-EuropeAid (DEVCO) on the other.

Existing procedures for mobilising humanitarian aid are designed to be rapid and flexible to allow for a speedy response. Humanitarian aid is also based on fundamental principles of impartiality, non-discrimination, independence and neutrality, and it is dispensed via non-governmental and international organisations.

On the contrary, development programmes are usually run in conjunction with the government, and the programming — set in the Country Strategy Papers and the Multi-Annual Indicative Programmes — involves consultation with partner countries. Managing project cycles to identify/formulate specific actions is a lengthy process, and projects in the thematic programmes (food security, non-state actors...) are usually selected through a call for proposals — a cumbersome procedure. These time-consuming processes have often been criticised for impeding

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<sup>1</sup> For more details, please consult the external study which also provides lessons learned from Chad, Horn of Africa, Afghanistan (Study: "Strengthening the link between relief, rehabilitation and development in the EU's financing instruments for development and humanitarian aid under the MFF 2014-2020", DG EXPO, Policy Department, July 2012.

smooth and rapid links with humanitarian interventions in post-crisis and transition situations.

EU internal rules are also to be blamed for the ineffective implementation of LRRD

The funding gap can therefore be partly explained by the significant time required to mobilise development funds, the Financing Regulation's lack of flexibility, EU internal procedures and the structure of the various financing instruments, which were not conceived from the outset to operate in a coordinated way.

The effective implementation of LRRD may also suffer from the **absence of common strategic framework** between humanitarian and development actors. To remedy this, the EU has developed a LRRD analytical framework tool to maximise its response. However, assessing needs and programming are not always undertaken jointly, further complicating the identification of clear priorities and the sequencing of LRRD activities.

### 3. LRRD: Perspectives for the future

#### 3.1. The renewed interest in LRRD

The importance accorded to LRRD has varied over the years. However, the changing global context (more large scale disasters, climate change, increasingly complex crises, etc.) requires humanitarian and development actors to work more closely to ensure a coherent EU response.

Recent initiatives taken by the Commission show the willingness to advance with LRRD

A number of recent, innovative initiatives taken by the Commission demonstrate an increased willingness to advance with LRRD. In 2011, Commission services developed a methodology to design a 'Joint Humanitarian Development Framework' (JHDF) for transition situations, which integrates different views, the analysis of ongoing and/or planned EU interventions and the identification of strategic priorities.

This framework has been applied in the Horn of Africa to guide the analytical work of the Supporting Horn of Africa Resilience (SHARE) initiative. In April 2012, the Commission released a staff working document on the topic that recognises the 'need to follow on from humanitarian interventions and to strategically build resilience to food insecurity and malnutrition in the Horn of Africa to avoid a repetition of large-scale disasters'. The document further identifies areas to be improved, including:

- coordinating response strategies to enhance resilience,
- focusing humanitarian and development assistance on respective comparative advantages,
- exploiting the flexibility offered by existing financing instruments,
- encouraging 'cross-learning' of humanitarian and development experiences in projects supporting resilience, and
- organising early exchanges of information and opinions between



humanitarian and development services on all proposed 'resilience' programmes and projects.

The OECD/DAC has also expressed an interest in LRRD in its recent peer review of EU humanitarian and development policies (released in March 2012). This report states, 'there is a renewed political will at the Commissioner level to develop a coherent approach to programming in post-crisis and transition contexts, but this has yet to be translated into an operational framework or sufficiently flexible instruments'. The report recommends that ECHO, DEVCO and the EEAS develop joint planning and analytical frameworks and lobby for sufficiently flexible and rapid financial instruments.

### 3.2. The new generation of financing instruments: an opportunity for LRRD?

In parallel to the renewed interest in LRRD, preparations for the next generation of financing instruments (for 2014-2020) may lead to the strengthening of the legal basis for LRRD and allow for a more effective transition from relief to recovery and development phases.

As discussed above, the EU's financial support of LRRD has been insufficient and ineffective, despite the LRRD provisions included in the 2007-2013 financing instruments and the Cotonou Agreement. In its proposal for a new DCI, the Commission has acknowledged that provisions for fragile states and countries in post-crisis situations have been inadequate, and that a holistic approach is needed to address transitional situations. The Instrument for Stability has not proven adequate for financing LRRD measures, as it has been principally mobilised to finance security-related projects.

The Commission's proposal for the **new DCI Regulation** (COM(2011)840 final) adopted in December 2011 includes a number of provisions that could increase opportunities for LRRD:

- **Article 10.3** specifies that determining multiannual indicative allocations within each geographic programme should take into account 'the particular difficulties faced or regions that are in crisis, vulnerable, fragile, in conflict or disaster prone'.
- **Article 11.5** specifies that some funds in the multiannual indicative programmes may be left unallocated. It also states that 'indicative allocations may be increased or decreased as a result of reviews, particularly in the light of special needs such as those resulting from a crisis, post crisis or fragility situation'.
- **Article 12** is dedicated to the specific 'programming for countries in crisis, post crisis or fragility situations'. This article explicitly states that special attention shall be devoted to stepping up coordination between relief, rehabilitation and development. In the case of countries affected by natural disasters, provisions are made for disaster preparedness and prevention, and for managing the consequences of such disasters. This article also provides the

The next generation of financing instruments might increase opportunities for LRRD.

The current draft DCI includes some specific provisions for countries in crisis, post crisis or fragility situations.

possibility of using the 'urgency procedure' to modify the strategy papers in cases of crises, post-crisis and fragility situations.

The DCI draft includes provisions that could potentially increase flexibility and provide specific arrangements for countries in crisis, or in post-crisis and fragility situations. Provided that the use of unallocated funds is explicitly linked to LRRD objectives, this would be likely to increase flexibility in the thematic and geographic programmes. Allowing modification of the programming documents through accelerated procedures would also increase the level of reactivity on the ground and speed up implementation of new or reoriented interventions.

The external study commissioned by the Committee on Development provides a critical analysis of the proposed changes and makes additional suggestions for reinforcing LRRD, not only in the regulations but also during the programming phase. The study recommends adopting LRRD as a 'guiding principle', rather than positing it merely as an option, and mainstreaming LRRD in programming humanitarian and development cooperation programmes in countries prone to disasters or in situations of fragility. The study further states that LRRD should be incorporated into the country strategy papers, the multiannual indicative programmes (DCI terminology) and the national indicative programmes (EDF terminology), which should include, where relevant, specific LRRD provisions.

The Commission's draft instructions (released on 15 May 2012) for programming the 11th EDF and the 2014-2020 DCI include a number of elements that could facilitate incorporating LRRD in the programming phase. Flexibility is for example identified as a key guiding principle for aid programming, particularly in relation to conflict prevention, post-crisis and fragility situations. As a rule, EU programming should be based on existing national/regional strategies. However, in the case of fragile/conflict-affected countries, the instructions recommend taking other considerations, such as transition plans, into account. For disaster-prone countries, the instructions state that it is necessary to adopt specific disaster/climate risk assessments. When it comes to the rule limiting EU bilateral programming in three sectors, the instructions also foresee some flexibility, with additional intervention possible in fragile states and situations of conflict and crisis.

Besides advocating LRRD legal provisions in the future DCI and in the programming phase, the study also argues that successful LRRD will require additional funding for humanitarian aid and for DCI allocations, increased understanding and interaction between the humanitarian and development actors through capacity building, training and awareness raising. Reinforcing the existing coordination arrangements between EEAS, DG DEVCO and ECHO should also be considered.

Enhancing LRRD will also require better understanding between humanitarian and development actors, more funding and a reinforcement of existing coordination arrangements.

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