United Nations

Policy on Integrated Assessment and Planning

Approved by: Secretary-General on 9 April 2013
Following endorsement by the Integration Steering Group[1] on 15 March 2013 and by the United Nations Development Group on 13 March.

[1] The Integration Steering Group is composed of DPKO, DFS, DPA, OCHA, PBSO, OHCHR, DOCO, UNDP, UNICEF, UNHCR, WFP, and the EOSG.

Policy on Integrated Assessment and Planning

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A. Purpose and rationale

1. The purpose of this policy is to define the minimum and mandatory requirements for the integrated conduct of assessments and planning in conflict and post-conflict settings where an integrated UN presence is in place or is being considered, and to outline responsibilities of UN actors in this process.

2. Integrated assessment and planning processes are intended to maximise the individual and collective impact of the context-specific peace consolidation activities of the UN system. While there are important systemic constraints to integration within the UN, it is crucial that, at a minimum, the political, peacekeeping, humanitarian, human rights and development entities of the organization share a common analysis and agree on a set of common strategic objectives for peace consolidation as a starting point for planning and implementing their responses in conflict and post-conflict settings.

3. Integrated assessments and planning are essential to (i) improve the quality of the situational analysis, (ii) design interventions that are tailored to the requirements of each situation, (iii) support the effective management of integrated presences in line with mandates and the strategic vision of senior UN leadership, (iv) avoid gaps and overlaps between different UN activities, (v) identify opportunities for closer cooperation across different parts of the UN and (vi) make the UN a more coherent and consistent partner with host governments and other national, regional and international partners.

B. Status and compliance

4. This policy supersedes the Guidelines on the Integrated Mission Planning Process (IMPP)[2]. All other guidance materials on integration more generally remain valid[3].

5. This policy is consistent with Decisions of the Secretary-General no. 2008/24 and 2011/10 on integration and no. 2012/1 on Special Circumstances in Non-Mission Settings. It does not supersede and should be read in conjunction with related mandates and UN thematic policies[4]. This policy is complemented by a set of guidelines to facilitate implementation of each requirement.

6. Compliance with this policy is required by all UN departments, agencies, funds and programmes.

C. Scope

7. The requirements set out in this policy apply in all cases where a multi-dimensional peacekeeping operation or field-based Special Political Mission is deployed alongside a UN country team, or where such presence is being considered.

8. This policy focuses on the peace consolidation activities of the UN as defined in each particular context and in line with Security Council mandates and the relevant mandates of UN entities, agencies, funds and programmes. UN activities in response to critical needs in areas other than peace consolidation fall outside the scope of this policy.

9. While humanitarian action can support peace consolidation, its main purpose remains to address life-saving needs and alleviate suffering. Accordingly, most humanitarian interventions are likely to remain outside the scope of integration, which can, at times, challenge the ability of UN humanitarian actors to deliver according to humanitarian principles. Depending on the context, certain activities related to protection of civilians, return and reintegration and early recovery may be included in the UN's integrated strategic approach. Therefore, in all cases, shared analysis and coordination among humanitarian and peace consolidation actors should be supported in UN integration arrangements.

10. Integration occurs at several levels within the UN system, necessitating different levels of integrated planning. This policy relates primarily to requirements for integrated assessment and planning at the overall strategic level across missions and UN country teams.

11. During the integrated assessment and planning process, the level and depth of integration required between the different entities in specific areas shall be determined. While this policy does not govern entity-specific operational and budgetary planning

[2] Including the June 2006 Guidelines on the Integrated Mission Planning Process (IMPP), the May 2009 IMPP Guidelines on the Role of Headquarters and the January 2010 IMPP Guidelines on the Role of the Field.
[3] Including the 2006 SG Note of Guidance on Integrated Missions and the UN Guidelines on Strategic Assessments.
[4] For example, on issues such as electoral assistance, protection of civilians, human rights, gender or child protection.

processes, coordination on entity-specific operational and budgetary planning will be required for operational levels of integration within applicable rules and regulations.

12. Where there is no integrated UN presence and none is being considered but where a crisis demands closer coordination and a more comprehensive UN response, the UN Policy on Special Circumstances in Non-Mission Settings provides the coordination and support arrangements required.

D. Definitions

For the purpose of this policy and related guidance:

13. An *integrated UN presence* is the configuration of the UN system in all conflict and post-conflict situations where the UN has a country team and a multi-dimensional peacekeeping operation or Special Political Mission/office, regardless of whether this presence is structurally integrated.

14. A *multi-dimensional peacekeeping operation* is a peacekeeping mission comprising a mix of military, police and substantive civilian components working together to implement a mandate from the Security Council.

15. A field-based Special Political Mission (SPM) is defined as an in-country political mission or office implementing a mandate from the Security Council or General Assembly. For the purpose of this policy, SPMs do not include non-resident envoys and advisers; panels, monitoring groups and similar expert bodies; or regional offices (SPMs with regional mandates covering multiple countries).

16. An integrated assessment is defined as any UN analytical process at the strategic, programmatic or operational level which carries implications for multiple UN entities, and which therefore requires participation by concerned UN entities. The Strategic Assessment is the analytical process used to undertake integrated assessment at the UN system-wide level for the purpose defined in paragraph 28 of this policy. Assessments of a technical nature, such as technical assessment missions (TAMs) and sector assessments initiated by either Secretariat departments or agencies, funds and programmes, are integrated if and when their scope and operational implications relate to multiple entities of the UN system.

E. Guiding principles for integrated assessment and planning

The following principles guide the conduct of integrated assessments and planning processes:

17. Inclusivity: Where an integrated UN presence is deployed, integrated assessment and planning must be undertaken with the full participation of the Mission and UN country team[5] and in consultation and coordination with Headquarters.

18. Form follows function: The structural configuration of the UN integrated presence should reflect specific requirements, circumstances and mandates and can therefore take

[5] The UN country team will engage with the humanitarian country team in the context of integrated assessment and planning.

different forms. Under the same principle, decisions on modalities for working together in integrated settings, which may include integrated or joint structures, joint programmes and/or the use of external capacities (e.g. non-UN expertise), should be based on criteria of expected impact, transaction costs and assessment of risks.

19. Comparative advantages: Tasks should be allocated to the UN entity best equipped to carry them out and resources requested accordingly.

20. Flexibility to context: While adhering to the minimum standards outlined in this policy, the design and implementation of assessment and planning exercises should be adapted to each situation.

21. National ownership: National ownership is an essential condition for the sustainability of peace. Where and when clear national peace consolidation priorities have been developed on the basis of broad based consensus, integrated assessment and planning processes should aim to specify how the UN will support a diverse range of stakeholders in the implementation of these priorities.

22. Clear UN role in relation to other peace consolidation actors: While integrated assessments and planning are internal UN processes, they have to define the strategic positioning and role of the UN vis-à-vis national and international actors on the basis of UN comparative advantages and the activities being carried out by these actors.

23. Recognition of the diversity of UN mandates and principles: Integrated assessment and planning processes must take into account all recognized principles of UN engagement across humanitarian, human rights, development, political and security areas.

24. Upfront analysis of risks and benefits: Integrated assessment and planning processes must include an analysis of the risks and benefits that integration arrangements may result in, particularly for humanitarian activities. Integrated assessment and planning processes should provide a forum to assess these risks and benefits and decide on ways to manage them in a manner satisfactory to all UN entities involved.

25. Mainstreaming: All integrated assessment and planning processes should take into account relevant UN policies, including on human rights, gender and child protection.

F. Overview of minimum requirements

26. The minimum requirements set out in this policy apply throughout the life-cycle of integrated presences. Their application starts with the establishment of Integrated Task Forces as soon as an integrated presence is being considered. Their application concludes with the withdrawal of a Security Council or General Assembly authorized mission[6].

27. All integrated assessment and planning processes must meet the following requirements, which are described in more detail in the sections below:

(1) The joint conduct of **Strategic Assessments** to ensure a shared understanding of a conflict or post-conflict situation, role of stakeholders and core peace consolidation priorities, and to propose options for UN engagement on the basis of an assessment of risks and opportunities;

[6] See Policy on UN Transition in the Context of Mission Drawdown and Withdrawal

(2) The articulation of a **common UN vision, priorities and respective responsibilities** in support of peace consolidation, including relationship, if any, to national plans and priorities;

(3) The establishment of **integrated mechanisms** for joint analysis, planning, coordination, monitoring and decision-making on joint strategic and operational matters at both field and Headquarters levels;

(4) The conduct of **integrated monitoring and reporting** on the implementation of Integrated Strategic Frameworks.

G. Requirement 1: Joint conduct of Strategic Assessments

28. The purpose of a Strategic Assessment is to bring the UN political, security, development, humanitarian and human rights entities together to develop a shared understanding of a conflict or post-conflict situation, role of stakeholders and core peace consolidation priorities, and to propose options for UN engagement on the basis of an assessment of risks and opportunities. Ahead of Mission start-up planning or during the life-cycle of established integrated presences, the Strategic Assessment provides a basis for the development of recommendations on the nature and (re)configuration[7] of UN engagement for the consideration of the Secretary-General and, when required, subsequently the Security Council.

29. The decision to launch a Strategic Assessment is made by:
   a. The Secretary-General; or
   b. The Executive Committee on Peace and Security; or
   c. An Integrated Task Force at Director level or above

30. Strategic Assessments can be proposed by a number of UN entities including:
   a. A member of the Policy Committee
   c. A member of the Executive Committee on Peace and Security
   d. A member of the Integrated Task Force
   e. The head of a UN peacekeeping operation or field-based Special Political Mission
   g. The RC and/or HC, representing the UNCT

31. Strategic Assessments should complement, and draw on, any other analytical processes that components of the UN system may have undertaken on the ground.

32. Relevant interlocutors should be consulted including, to the extent possible, national authorities, civil society and other local representatives, as well as relevant regional and sub-regional organizations, international financial institutions and key member states.

Settings where an integrated UN presence has not been established

33. Strategic Assessments are mandatory in all cases where the deployment of a multidimensional peacekeeping operation or field-based Special Political Mission is being considered.

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[7] Including the specialised civilian capabilities that may be required and possible partnerships that should be established to meet such needs.

34. Where no integrated UN presence is in place, a Strategic Assessment is undertaken by a Headquarters-based Integrated Task Force, which may already exist[8] or may need to be established. The Strategic Assessment is then undertaken in consultation with the UNCT.

Settings where an integrated UN presence has already been established

35. Where an integrated UN presence is in place, Strategic Assessments should be carried out following a significant change in the situation or prior to a substantial change in a Mission's mandate. In these settings, Strategic Assessments can be initiated at field or HQ level.

Follow up to Strategic Assessments

36. Strategic Assessments result in a report and, where required, a recommendation to the Secretary-General through the Policy Committee. Strategic Assessments do not necessarily result in a recommendation to initiate planning for the establishment of a peacekeeping operation or field-based Special Political Mission or changes to existing arrangements. In all cases, the chair of the Integrated Task Force has the obligation to reflect any disagreements over findings and/or proposed options when finalizing the report and recommendations to the Secretary-General and/or the Policy Committee.

37. The decision on the options proposed in a Strategic Assessment, including whether to initiate planning for the establishment of an integrated UN presence or to propose changes to an existing presence, strategy or mandate, lies with the Secretary-General. The Secretary-General's decision is expressed in a statement of intent[9] containing a designation or reaffirmation of a lead entity at Headquarters for implementation. If a decision has been made to propose the establishment of a Mission, the recommendation is articulated in a report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council developed in accordance with paragraph 63 of this policy.

38. The Security Council, based on the recommendation of the Secretary-General, decides whether or not to authorize the establishment, reconfiguration or termination of a peacekeeping operation or field-based Special Political Mission and issues a mandate accordingly.

39. If the Security Council authorizes the establishment of a Mission or changes to an existing mandate, the mandate and Strategic Assessments should be used as a basis for the development or revision of the Directive to the S/ERSG, RC and HC and Integrated Strategic Framework as detailed in paragraphs 40-52.

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[8] Such as Inter-Agency Task Forces established under the UN Policy on Special Circumstances in Non-Mission Settings or other ad hoc inter-agency working groups. See Requirement 3 for further guidance on Integrated Task Forces.

[9] E.g. Planning Directive, PC Decision or other document spelling out strategic objectives and essential modalities for implementation.

H. Requirement 2: Articulation of a common UN vision, priorities and responsibilities in support of peace consolidation, including relationship, if any, to national plans and priorities

i. Directive to the S/ERSG[10], RC and HC

40. Based on the mandate from the Security Council, the Strategic Assessment and decisions of the Secretary-General and/or Policy Committee, the Directive to the S/ERSG, RC and HC is drafted by Integrated Task Forces as part of the integrated assessment and planning process.

41. The Directive provides strategic direction and priorities, initial responsibilities, an outline of structural and coordination arrangements, and basic planning parameters, including guidance on the development of an Integrated Strategic Framework. The Directive to the S/ERSG, RC and HC signifies the transfer of responsibility for subsequent planning of the integrated presence to the S/ERSG and the senior leadership team of the integrated presence.

42. The Directive to the S/ERSG, RC and HC is issued and updated by the Secretary-General upon a recommendation of the Integrated Task Force at Principal level. Updates will usually result from a significant change in the environment or mandate, supported as required by an updated Strategic Assessment.

ii. Integrated Strategic Framework (ISF)

43. On the basis of mandates, integrated assessments and the Directive to the S/ERSG, RC and HC the vision, shared objectives and means through which the UN will promote peace consolidation are further developed and updated through an inclusive analytical and planning process whose conclusions are reflected in an Integrated Strategic Framework (ISF) document.

44. The content of the ISF document must include:

a. The main *findings from integrated assessments* of the conflict and challenges to peace consolidation, UN role and comparative advantages;
b. A clear definition and expression of peace consolidation *priorities* for the UN, including for national capacity development and institution-building;
c. An articulation of all programmatic, functions and/or operational areas requiring an integrated approach, with agreed form and depth of integration;
d. Agreed results, timelines, responsibilities and other relevant implementation arrangements, including coordination mechanisms;
e. A common *monitoring and reporting framework* including indicators or benchmarks of progress.

45. Other UN planning frameworks (such as a UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF)) may serve as Integrated Strategic Frameworks if their content meets the standards outlined in paragraph 44. The decision to use such frameworks as the Integrated Strategic Framework or have a separate document is made by the S/ERSG, Deputy SRSGs, RC and HC in consultation with other senior managers and Headquarters, and on the basis of a gap analysis of existing planning processes and products. The opportunity for combining

[10] For the purpose of this policy, the term S/ERSG is used to refer to the head of a peacekeeping operation or Special Political Mission and therefore also applies to Special Coordinators.

planning frameworks and harmonizing planning processes should be regularly assessed, with due consideration for respective programming and budgetary cycles.

46. The title, timing for development, timeframe, structure, content and ownership of the process and its product are determined by S/ERSG Deputy SRSGs, RC and HC, in consultation with other senior managers. These parameters vary with context, with particular consideration given to national milestones and UN agency planning requirements and timelines.

47. The decision to develop an Integrated Strategic Framework jointly with national authorities and other partners rests with the S/ERSG, Deputy SRSGs, RC and HC following consultation with Integrated Task Forces.

48. Once developed and endorsed, the ISF document serves as a regular reference for an on-going field-based process of joint analysis and review of the UN-wide strategies and arrangements for peace consolidation. As such, its nature and content may shift over time and may combine elements of strategic, programmatic, communication and operational integration. It should also include measures to mitigate risks to all UN actors and activities, including to humanitarian operations.

49. The shared analysis should build on, where relevant, other assessments including Strategic Assessments, humanitarian needs assessments, risk analysis or those led by other national, regional and international institutions such as Post Conflict Needs Assessments (PCNAs) and Fragility Assessments. National authorities, civil society, other local representatives, affected populations and key international partners should be consulted as part of the process to ensure that, at a minimum, local perspectives are taken into account in the analysis and identification of UN priorities.

50. The Integrated Strategic Framework must include a monitoring and reporting framework to track adherence to responsibilities and progress towards results with a view to promoting accountability, making adjustments to activities or revising plans.

51. Integrated Strategic Frameworks are developed, updated and endorsed in the field under the leadership of S/ERSGs, DSRSGs, Resident/Humanitarian Coordinators and Heads of agencies, funds and programmes. ISFs are also endorsed at Headquarters by Integrated Task Forces at the Director-level and signed-off by the USG of the lead department.

52. Integrated Strategic Frameworks must be reviewed as necessary, especially after any substantial change in the mandate, Directive to the S/ERSG, RC and HC or circumstances on the ground, or at least every two years. The review of Integrated Strategic Frameworks is carried out by integrated mechanisms in the field and in cooperation with HQ as stipulated in paragraph 58 of this policy.

Linkages between Integrated Strategic Frameworks and other planning processes

53. A shared understanding of other existing planning processes, including content, timeframes, budgetary implications and degree of national ownership, must inform the development or revision of Integrated Strategic Frameworks.

54. Whenever possible and appropriate, the ISF must take into account and reflect existing national and international planning frameworks and articulate to which national peace consolidation priorities the UN will collectively contribute. To the extent possible and

appropriate, planning timelines should be aligned and ISF monitoring systems should seek to use and strengthen national monitoring indicators.

55. Agencies, funds and programmes must ensure consistency between the joint analysis, strategic priorities and responsibilities agreed to in the Integrated Strategic Framework and relevant parts of their various country programming frameworks including the UNDAF and the CAP, the country programme documents and the country programme action plan. Depending on the timing of its development and finalisation, the ISF informs the development or the revision of agency frameworks and annual plans, with due consideration for the various governance and budgetary considerations regulating such internal processes.

56. Peacekeeping and field-based Special Political Missions must ensure consistency between the joint analysis, strategic priorities and responsibilities agreed to in the Integrated Strategic Framework and relevant parts of their strategies for mandate implementation, including the Mission Concept which articulates the main objectives and tasks of the Mission for each phase of its operations. These strategies guide other Mission-specific planning processes and products, including related technical assessments, component and support plans, concepts of operation, administrative plans and results-based budgets. The Mission Concept reflects the responsibilities agreed to in the ISF, and is revised when the ISF is revised.

I. Requirement 3: Integrated mechanisms

57. At Headquarters, Integrated Task Forces (ITF) are the main forum for joint assessments, planning, coordination, sharing of information and analysis, consultations and decision-making support. Integrated Task Forces should consider all issues that have strategic significance or programmatic impact in integrated settings, including entity-specific planning and reporting processes that may have implications for other entities. ITFs should be used to resolve policy differences between UN entities, ensure information-sharing between Missions and UNCTs, and consult thematic entities as needed. Integrated Task Forces are established and chaired by lead departments on behalf of the UN system and include representatives of all relevant UN entities, including DPKO, DPA, DFS, PBSO, OHCHR and DSS as well as UNDG and ECHA members based on the “2+4” formula adopted in 2006[11]. Field presences should also be represented. Task forces meet at the Director or Principal level as needed or as required by the present policy.

58. At field level, integrated UN presences are required to put in place mechanisms for joint information-sharing, analysis, planning, decision-making, coordination and monitoring. Existing mechanisms should be used where appropriate. The configuration of these structures should be tailored to each context[12], but in all cases they should include:

a. A <u>senior leadership forum</u> for decision-making on joint strategic and operational issues. This forum should include the key in-country decision-makers such as the S/ERSG, DSRSG, RC/HC, Civilian Chief of Staff, Heads of Mission components and Heads of relevant UN agencies, funds and programmes. External partners should be invited to participate where appropriate.

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[11] Under this formula, the humanitarian and development actors are represented by OCHA and DOCO, respectively. In addition to these two, up to four representatives from the UN agencies, funds, and programmes may participate based on their involvement in the country in question and capacity to engage.
[12] Examples of field-level mechanisms are included in the How-to Guidelines.

b. A joint analytical and planning capacity to share assessments and analyses and develop, update, and monitor integrated planning frameworks. All entities that are part of the integrated presence should either be represented in or seek to otherwise contribute to the joint analytical and planning capacity.

59. It is a responsibility of senior leadership in the field and at HQ to convene integrated mechanisms on a regular basis to discuss and make decisions on joint strategic and operational issues.

J. Requirement 4: Integrated monitoring and reporting

60. Integrated Strategic Frameworks must include from the start a monitoring and reporting mechanism, including measurable and meaningful benchmarks 13 and risk indicators, as part of their implementation arrangements to support decision-making. Other existing monitoring and reporting frameworks may be used where relevant.

61. The joint analytical and planning capacity tracks progress and reports to the senior UN leadership forum and, through this forum, to Headquarters on progress towards common objectives agreed to and articulated in the Directive to S/ERSG, RC and HC and Integrated Strategic Frameworks. When appropriate, it provides recommendations for changes in strategy or objectives based on this analysis.

62. Additionally, progress against the UN priorities outlined in integrated plans must be reflected in the regular reports of the entities engaged in the implementation of these plans, as appropriate for the reporting format. This includes reports of the Secretary-General to the Security Council and UNDAF reporting mechanisms.

K. Responsibilities, authority and accountability for integrated assessment and planning

63. Under the guidance of the Secretary-General and in coordination with field leadership and Task Force partners, lead departments at HQ are responsible for:

a. Establishing, convening and chairing Integrated Task Forces where an integrated UN presence is in place or as soon as one is being considered;

b. Initiating, organising and conducting integrated assessment and planning processes in line with the present policy, including ensuring that consultations and information-sharing take place at all phases of the process, leading integrated assessment missions and coordinating the finalisation of Task Force-approved documents such as Directives to S/ERSGs, RC and HC;

c. Following consultations with relevant UN partners, drafting and finalising Strategic Assessment reports, submissions to the Policy Committee and reports of the Secretary-General to the Security Council. Lead departments must ensure that, where they occur, diverging points of view are reflected in a transparent manner in submissions to the Secretary-General or the Policy Committee.

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[13] Benchmarks should echo those used by the Security Council to monitor progress with peace consolidation.

64. Special and Executive Representatives of the Secretary-General, supported by Deputy SRSGs, Force Commanders, Police Commissioners, Chiefs of Staff and other senior managers, are responsible for initiating, organising and leading integrated assessment and planning processes at field level, for the establishment of the required integrated mechanisms and for the conduct of field-level consultations on draft planning and reporting documents. S/ERSGs are responsible for ensuring that responsibilities assigned to a peacekeeping or field-based Special Political Mission in mandates, in the Directive to the S/ERSG, RC and HC and Integrated Strategic Framework are reflected in the Mission Concept and prioritised accordingly in the Results-based Budget and component workplans.

65. UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinators are responsible, respectively, for ensuring, where relevant, consistency between the Integrated Strategic Framework and the UNDAF and the CHAP. They should promote, as appropriate, harmonization of the underlying analytical and planning processes.

66. Agencies, both at HQ and in the field, are responsible for participating in and contributing inputs to all phases of integrated assessment and planning, including integrated assessments and other joint analytical processes.

67. Heads of UN agencies, funds and programmes in the field are responsible for ensuring that responsibilities agreed to in Integrated Strategic Frameworks are reflected in agency plans for peace consolidation and prioritised accordingly in terms of resource mobilization and allocation.

68. The finalization, implementation, and regular review of Integrated Strategic Frameworks is a joint responsibility of S/ERSGs, Resident Coordinators, Humanitarian Coordinators and Heads of agencies, funds and programmes, including through cooperation in mobilizing resources against peace consolidation priorities.

69. Delivery against priorities outlined in the Directive to the S/ERSG, RC and HQ and Integrated Strategic Frameworks must be integrated into existing accountability mechanisms, including S/ERSG Compacts and existing performance systems for DSRSGs, RC/HCs and Heads of agencies, funds and programmes.

L. Implementation of this policy

70. Each UN entity is responsible for ensuring the implementation of this policy.

71. Lead departments, Integrated Task Forces and the senior leadership forum in the field are responsible for monitoring the implementation of this policy in each particular situation.

72. Disagreements over the interpretation or implementation of this policy that cannot be resolved by Integrated Task Forces at the Director or Principal level shall be referred to the Integration Steering Group, or the Policy Committee.

73. The policy should be reviewed no later than 1 March 2015, on the basis of an evaluation to be commissioned by the Integration Steering Group.