International Security and Stabilization Support Strategy

2013-2017

Executive Summary

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I. DIAGNOSIS

1. Conflict Analysis and Mapping

Between 1996 and 2003, the Democratic Republic of Congo experienced two wars in which nine foreign armies and some thirty armed groups clashed on its territory. The wars led to the temporary partition of the country and the death of millions of people. The 2002 Sun City peace agreement allowed for territorial reunification, the installation of a transitional government and the formation of an army of national unity. Ten years later, despite the signing of several peace agreements, the organization of two presidential elections (in 2006 and 2011), and a significant investment of international resources, eastern DRC continues to host many armed factions and experience regular cycles of violence. The complexity and longevity of the Congolese conflict should be seen in the context of a profound disintegration of Congolese society over the last decades, and the interplay of two mutually reinforcing cycles of conflict – one regional, the other local, with local, national and regional dimensions.

The eastern DRC conflicts system can be explained as follows. The ability to meet basic needs in a patrimonial system depends on one's networks and relative position within the system. To be able to exploit institutions, they are purposefully kept weak. The results are (1) that the Congolese state is vulnerable to external interference; (2) the DRC Armed Forces (*Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo* - FARDC) and security institutions lack the capacity to provide public security and may be used instead to secure private interests; (3) the state does not provide a functioning regulatory framework. The consequence of these three dynamics is that people live in physical and institutional insecurity, which exacerbates their reliance on exclusive (mostly ethnic) in- and out-groups. These tensions are manipulated by armed actors to turn violent.
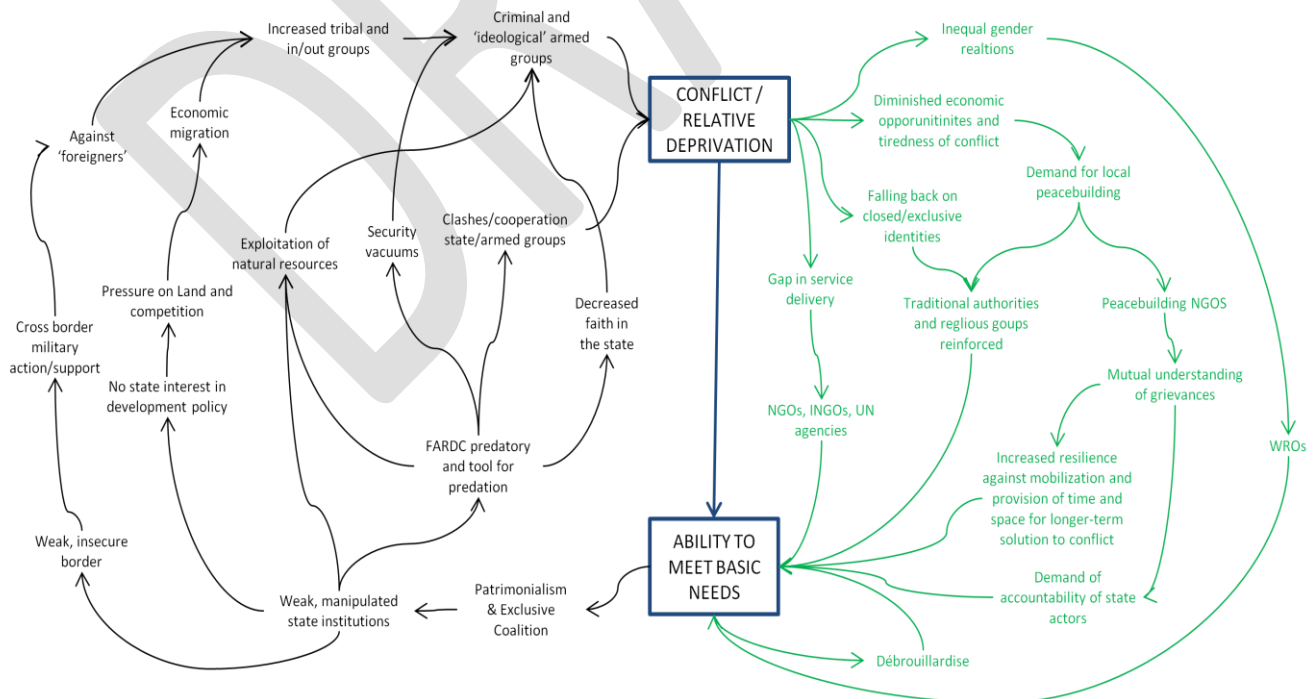
From this map, four main negative dynamics can be identified.

1. **Security dilemmas.** As a result of the patrimonial nature of the state, which has kept institutions, in particular defence and security, weak and fragmented, the state is unable or unwilling to protect people and their livelihoods. Communities tend to rely on armed groups for self-defence. The security 'vacuum' presents an opportunity for multiple, competing armed groups to nourish and expand their influence and agendas. This increases the possibilities for mobilization and leads to a heavily militarized eastern DRC, which further entrenches violence in people's minds as a tool to resolve conflict.

2. **Mobilization around land and identity.** As livelihoods are difficult to come by, communities fall back on exclusive tribal identities (in-groups) as a source of solidarity and resources and identify themselves in contrast with other communities (out-groups). The association of land with tribal identity adds an economic dimension to this process and solidifies identities even further. These grievances are easily manipulated by political or armed actors (conflict entrepreneurs).

3. **Exploitation of natural resources**. The availability of valuable, marketable natural resources, which can be exploited by methods requiring relatively small financial inputs, and high-labour intensity, is also attractive to armed groups. In particular, young men are drawn into an exploitative economic situation which leaves them vulnerable to recruitment by those armed groups.

4. **Regional dynamics**. A combination of extensive and highly porous borders with neighbouring state, decades – if not centuries – of uncontrolled population flow, and seasonal migration patterns, and the lure of the Congo's vast natural resources, have created a situation in which the DRC is not the only state with a stake in the future of the East. However legitimate or not these interests may be, the fact now is that individuals, criminal networks and state actors all pursue a complex web of agendas which contribute to prolonging the conflict, either directly, by proxy, or – occasionally – both. One clear result has been to polarize public opinion against Congolese Rwandophone communities and provide neighbouring countries with an excuse to interfere further.

The four negative dynamics, or 'drivers of conflict', are inter-linked and produce different outcomes upon interaction with each other. It is those interplays of dynamics which stabilization interventions target.

Interplays 5 & 6 are not depicted on this figure
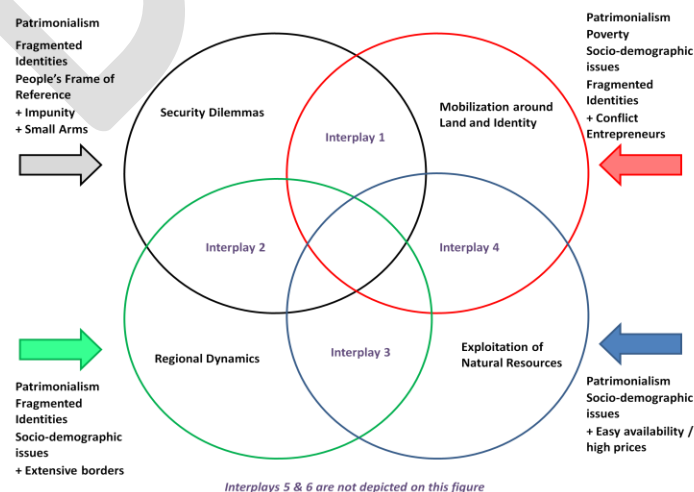
2. Policy and Programmatic Responses ISSSS First Phase (2008-2012)

International stabilization efforts were launched in 2008 following the rapprochement between Rwanda and the DRC (Nairobi Communiqué of 2007), the 2008 Goma *Actes d'Engagement*, and the 23 March 2009 Agreements between the government, CNDP, and 14 local armed groups. The Government of the DRC (GoDRC) launched first the Amani programme in 2008 and then the Stabilization and Reconstruction Programme for War-Affected Areas (STAREC), which the UNSSSS, then ISSSS aimed to support.

The ISSSS – modeled after counter-insurgency principles, supports the restoration of state authority and the provision of a peace dividend to the population to decrease the attractiveness of armed groups. Joint programmes were set up around the five pillars of the ISSSS (Security, Support to Political Processes, Restoration of State Authority - RSA, Return Reintegration and Recovery – RRR, and Fight against Sexual Violence - FSV) along specific strategic axis in North-and South-Kivu and Ituri[1].

Between 2008 and 2012, a total of 69 projects were implemented for a total worth of USD 367 million. Significant results were achieved, mainly under the RSA, RRR and FSV pillars. Supporting security reforms and political processes proved more complex.

With the passing of time, partners began questioning the actual impact of the ISSSS as eastern DRC remained unstable and insecure. However, it was difficult to reach any conclusions about the impact of the ISSSS on the conflict dynamics of eastern DRC beyond the level of programmatic outputs. The reasons were:

- For many stakeholders, it was unclear what 'stabilization' meant, and what it was supposed to achieve. In **absence of a common vision and objectives**, partners set up programmes in a diffused way, based on different understandings of conflict dynamics. This made it difficult for partners to target their programmes towards a singular stabilization objective and created difficulties for the monitoring and evaluation of the strategy's impact.

- The **monitoring and evaluation** framework of the ISSSS was **rather basic**, focused mainly on quantitative indicators and placed greater emphasis on measuring the concrete outputs of individual projects, rather than the outcomes and impact of the strategy as a whole.

Despite the limited evidence of the impact of ISSSS programmes on the eastern DRC's conflict dynamic, internal and external evaluations tend to agree on the reasons for the strategy's seemingly limited success in stabilizing eastern DRC:

- Due to the emergency context in which the ISSSS was first set up, programmes were **designed in a top-down manner,** without much initial consultation of the provincial authorities and stakeholders or in-depth analysis of the conflict context. As a result, programmes were often rather static and not always able to adapt to the complex and ever-evolving local dynamics of conflict.

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[1] The six priority axes were chosen with the government on the basis of a quick assessment of where armed groups were active, where returnees were most likely to return to and where grassroots conflicts were ongoing. They were Sake-Masisi and Rutshuru-Ishasha in North Kivu; Miti-Hombo, Burhale-Shabunda and Baraka-Fizi-Minembwe in South Kivu; and Bunia-Boga in Ituri. More information about the stabilization zones is available from SSU.

- Programmes were developed based on the assumption that the government would be an equal partner in the stabilization process. However, **the government became less engaged in the stabilization programme and long-term solutions** and reforms were delayed or ran aground due to competing, or sometimes conflicting, political or economic interests.

- Similarly, within the UN, the ISSSS progressively became one of a constellation of technical programmes increasingly divorced from the political content necessary to provide coherence and ensure the long term sustainability of interventions.

To summarize, while the ISSSS may have provided much-needed support to many people, the strategy was not sufficiently connected to the root causes of conflict and operated on a number of incorrect planning assumptions. Due to the absence of an effective monitoring and evaluation framework, measuring its impact was difficult and the strategy couldn't easily be adapted to the changing security context.

3.   The New Political and Strategic Environment

The revised ISSSS will function in a political and strategic context that is fundamentally different from that of 2008. The fall of Goma to the M23 in November 2012 underlined the limitation of an approach which was largely based on technical support to state institutions without addressing the political root causes of the conflict. In early 2012, the regional states of the Great Lakes, including the DRC, Rwanda, and Uganda, with support from the AU, the UN and the international community, signed the *Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework* (PSCF). In order to implement this agreement, the UN appointed a Special Envoy and MONUSCO received a more robust mandate through SC Resolution 2098, including the deployment of the first-ever UN offensive force, the Force Intervention Brigade (FIB). MONUSCO was also requested to support the GoDRC in developing a comprehensive DDR/RR programme; giving a new impetus to Security Sector Reform; and supporting STAREC through the revised ISSSS.

The humiliating military defeat of the FARDC against the M23 triggered also a national response in the form of the **National Consultations**. The GoDRC also expressed its intention to expand the STAREC to the entire DRC. Since the signing of the PCSF, several positive steps have also been realized on key reforms (army, police, justice, decentralization, land reform) and critical laws finally adopted.

These different initiatives may represent a real opportunity for the establishment of long-lasting peace in the DRC However, a few **uncertainties** remain:

- The peace agreements and interventions take place in a **fragmented fashion**.
- Government plans for Security Sector Reform and how this will be implemented are still unclear.
- Consultation with international partners concerning key issues, such as the development of benchmarks to orientate international support and allow transparent monitoring of progress on the PSCF commitments and the future role of STAREC need to be better structured. This focus should create an atmosphere of mutual trust necessary if both the GoDRC and international partners are to work together in a meaningful partnership to assure long-term progress.

II. STRATEGIC CONCEPT

1. Defining 'Stabilization' in the DRC

Stabilization is a comparatively new concept in international security which lacks a widely accepted definition and often overlaps with more accepted concepts, particularly with 'p.

Stabilization can be described as a process which aims to reinforce mutual trust and legitimacy between state and society in order to enable them to jointly address or mitigate conflicts. It aims to bring about changes in state-society relations by supporting a continual negotiation of mutual responsibilities of state actors and communities, on the basis of which accountability and trust can start to emerge. Stabilization is therefore both top-down – enabling the state to deliver, and bottom-up – empowering the population to hold the state accountable. By doing so, stabilization sets the ground for longer-term development and governance interventions. Faced with the extreme complexity of the DRC, the stabilization response needs to be (1) holistic- addressing multisectorial and multidimensional challenges; (2) integrated – all stakeholders working together towards a common goal; and (3) targeted – high-impact interventions concentrated in specific geographic areas and implemented in a relatively short timeframe.

As such, 'Stabilization' in the context of the DRC will be defined as follows:

> *Stabilization is an integrated, holistic but targeted process of enabling state and society to build mutual accountability and capacity to address and mitigate existing or emerging drivers of violent conflict, creating the conditions for improved governance and longer term development.*

Taking this definition, keeping in mind the current conflict dynamics in the eastern provinces and projecting it on a 2013-2017 timeline, the goal of the revised stabilization programme is:

> *The International Community's support to stabilization in eastern DRC will enable the Congolese state and society to have the mutual accountability and capacity to address and mitigate the main drivers of violent conflict in the eastern provinces, and conditions will be in place to reinforce the legitimacy of the social contract and foster long-term economic development.*

2. Three-pronged Strategic Approach to Stabilization

a) Re-engagement of high-level government and international support for stabilization

The new strategic approach recognizes the necessity of high-level engagement of both the GoDRC and international partners for stabilization interventions to succeed and be sustainable. In order to do so the following measures will be undertaken:

- *Revitalizing stabilization coordination structures to increase Government engagement and participation.* The success of ISSSS's second phase will rely on reciprocal engagement and commitment, and on improved coordination between international and national partners. It is absolutely critical to revitalize the dialogue between the GoDRC and International stakeholders around stabilization issues. An important focus must be on improving the flow of information among and between the local, provincial and national levels of Government and between national and international partners.

- *Developing a Compact between the GoDRC and the international partners.* Interventions during the first phase have suffered from a lack of reciprocity between international and GoDRC engagements. For the revised ISSSS, it is therefore proposed to outline benchmarks for both GoDRC and international partners in each of the programmes to ensure a common understanding of their respective responsibilities to make stabilization succeed. This could take the form of a Statement of Mutual Commitment or a compact, in line with the framework of the 'New Deal'.

- *Linking STAREC/ISSSS to Broader Peace Processes and Reforms* not only to ensure that structural changes are taking place in the long run and that international support can be sustained after the end of the ISSSS, but also that progresses and lessons learned on stabilization can inform broader processes and reforms.
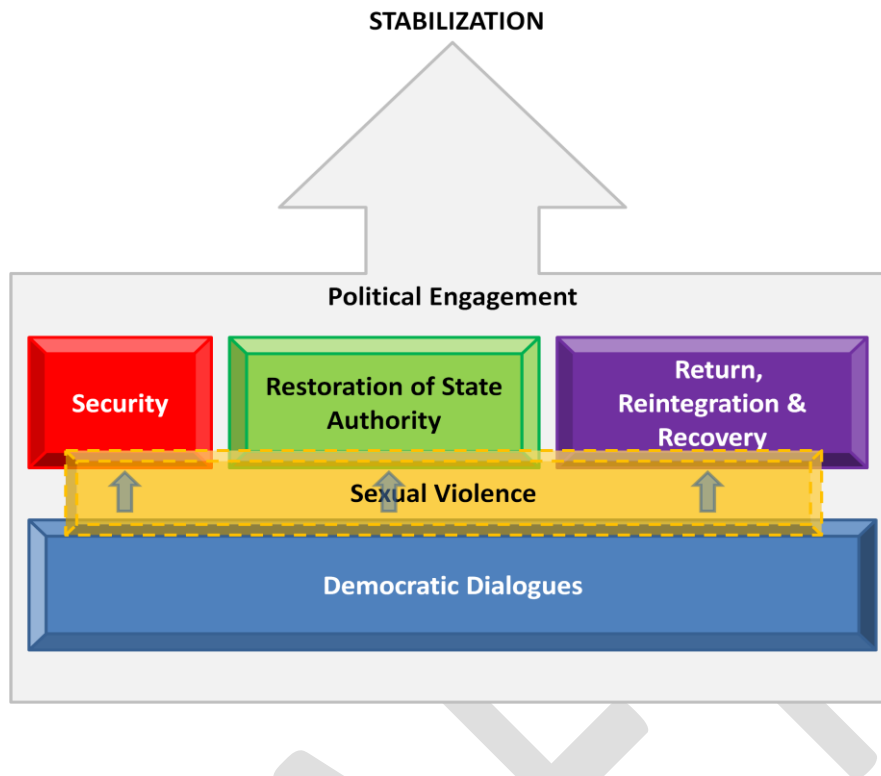
b) Development of complementary mechanisms to create an inclusive peace process

The ISSSS complements ongoing peace initiatives by integrating communities within the analysis and search of solutions to the current conflicts and in doing so:

- *Lays the foundations for a more inclusive and transparent system of governance that promotes peace and social cohesion.* By increasing public participation in decision-making and improving transparency around the implementation of these decisions, the democratic dialogues could strengthen public confidence in state institutions and encourage people to take greater responsibility regarding matters concerning peace and development in the DRC.

- *Puts the people directly affected by the conflict at the centre of the search for non-violent solutions to inevitable social tensions without an automatic recourse to negotiation with armed groups.* The Dialogue will enhance people's understanding of the causes of conflict and their dynamics and provide them with the capacities to formulate concerted actions in favour of peace in their community.

- *Links peace dividends to peace efforts and ensures that economic recovery activities are focused on supporting peace processes and social cohesion.*

c) Re-orientation of the pillars towards local community-based solutions to produce visible impact for the population on the ground

The third aspect of the ISSSS's strategic approach focuses on developing alternative ways of producing visible changes on the ground for the population, and by doing so start a long-term process of behavioural and structural change. Each pillar is re-orientated towards (1) calming tensions at the local level by addressing locally identified causes of- and solutions to conflict; (2) the transformation of the wider conflict environment.

STABILIZATION

Political Engagement

| Security | Restoration of State Authority | Return, Reintegration & Recovery |

Sexual Violence

Democratic Dialogues

3. Theories of Change for the Revised ISSSS

At the overall objective level:

- If individuals increasingly feel that the state is providing them with physical, institutional and livelihood security in an open, transparent, equitable, non-discriminatory manner, and they develop capacities to analyze conflicts and formulate solutions which are supported by the state, then they will progressively feel empowered to become agents of peaceful change and will start longer-term planning and investments in peace and livelihoods.

- If the communities and the state are in constant negotiation on the basis of which mutual responsibilities are established, and state institutions are enabled to deliver the services demanded by the communities in an open, transparent, equitable, non-discriminatory manner, then trust will progressively emerge and the population will be less reliant on armed groups for protection, thus diminishing the mobilizing power of armed groups.

- If a relationship of trust emerges between state institutions and the communities and capacities to peacefully manage conflict are built, then Congolese stakeholders will be empowered to take the lead in stabilization, and longer-term peacebuilding and development.

At the strategic level:

- If the stabilization coordination structures are revitalized (in particular at national level, for example through developing a compact is developed between the GoDRC and international partners setting clear benchmarks and reciprocal responsibilities), and if stabilization efforts in the East are able to inform and benefit from progress on broader reform processes, such as the PSCF, then GoDRC and international engagement for stabilization will be ensured,

national-international partnerships (STAREC/ISSSS/PSCF) will be more effective, and the stabilization in the East will be able to produce results at provincial and local levels.

- If the populations directly affected by conflict are put at the center of the search for solutions by using or replicating existing peace initiatives at the local level, and the diffusion of their findings and their translation into national policies is supported, then communities and state actors will be empowered to contribute to peaceful structural and institutional change, laying the foundations for a more inclusive and transparent system of governance that promotes peace and social cohesion.

- If ISSSS interventions are based on an in-depth participatory analysis of the conflict *and* are re-orientated to diffuse tensions at local level by supporting locally identified solutions and to transform the conflict environment by supporting programmes targeting root causes of conflict, *then* stabilization interventions will produce visible impact for populations on the ground.

At the level of the pillars:

- If a culture of dialogue is established and institutionalized in the process of finding solutions for peace in eastern DRC, and the authorities respect commitments made, and if national and international stabilization strategies are coordinated and reinforce each other, then trust will increase among communities and towards the State, and conflicts will increasingly be managed non-violently, and causes of conflict will be addressed better, creating the basis for stable institutions and consolidating peace.

- If principles of protection of civilians and of accountability are integrated in the functions of the FARDC, and if the army's capacity to "hold" key areas increases, then the Government of DRC will be increasingly able to protect its civilians and implement a gradual transition to civilians.

- If the state provides relevant services and increases its authority in stabilization zones, and if sources of authority are gradually regularized and become less patrimonial, and if an enabling regulatory framework for RSA is put in place, the state will be increasingly perceived as an enabling presence and the institutional insecurity endured by the population will decrease, and it will not need to resort to community strategies for their protection and that of their interests.

- If the population of eastern DRC engages in socio-economic recovery activities that focus on social cohesion and resilience, and if the authorities and the international community are aligned in their support for these initiatives, then communities will be able to manage external shocks more peacefully, and there will be a possibility for development and more equitable distribution of wealth.

- If civil and state structures are empowered to fulfill their responsibilities in terms of protecting men and women against sexual violence, and if gender roles are perceived and challenged as factors perpetuating sexual violence, then trust in peaceful prevention and response actions will increase, incidents of sexual violence will decline, the needs of survivors and their communities will be addressed and peacebuilding efforts will be more resilient to external shocks.

III. OPERATIONALIZATION

1. Operational Principles

Throughout the programmes for the revised ISSSS, there will be three cross-cutting operational principles:

- **Conflict transformation, conflict sensitivity, and gender.** The Dialogues will be used to conduct in-depth, common, and participatory analysis in each of the stabilization priority areas and interventions will aim at transforming conflicts. In addition, interventions will be designed, planned, implemented and evaluated to avoid a negative impact on conflict dynamics and enhance a positive one, and to have a positive impact on men, women, boys and girls, and the relations between them.
- **Assuring the sustainability of interventions.** Programme design will be based on an analysis of (1) the needs of beneficiaries as expressed through the Democratic Dialogue to ensure the participation of populations and local authorities; and/or (2) the (financial) capacity of the national and provincial government to support the programme.
- **Linking stabilization interventions to GoDRC strategies and budgets to be part of a broader planning cycle** to increase ownership and accountability and ensure the sustainability of international support initiatives.
- **Linking project outputs to stabilization outcomes through a revised M&E system.**

2. Area-Based Stabilization Programming

The revised stabilization strategy is operationalized through area-based programmes implemented a limited number of zones (2 to 3 for each of the target provinces – North- and South-Kivu, and Province Orientale the first instance; and Maniema and Katanga at a later stage).

The following characteristics and considerations will be taken into account when defining the zone(s):

- Zones where conflict drivers – security dilemmas, mobilization around land and identity, natural resources and regional tensions, interact to create either direct conflict or a fragile situation which may be manipulated to turn violent within a relatively short time span;
- Zones recently cleared of armed groups through military operations or through political negotiation (see ISSSS 2013-2017, Annex 2: Excerpts of the 'Islands of Stability' Concept Note);
- Zones were interventions are feasible and can demonstrate results in a relatively short timeframe. This includes considering the level of state presence, the pre-existence of interventions, in particular ISSSS's, and the capacities of international and local partners to deliver on stabilization programmes in the area;
- Each zone should have a potential for inclusive interventions – i.e. interventions which bridge social divides across identity and occupation, in order to avoid a potential backlash from excluded groups;
- Linkages with other areas, such as economic, migration and displacement patterns, should also be explored and taken into consideration.

Each zone will be identified through the conduct of an inclusive assessment at provincial level on each of the characteristics and considerations mentioned above under the leadership of the STAREC coordination and SSU teams.

Once the zones are identified, the formulation of each area-specific programme will be informed by a detailed conflict analysis of the intervention zones supported through information emerging from early stages of the Democratic Dialogues.

3. Coordination

Current coordination mechanisms will be maintained but revitalized to ensure their efficiency and adequacy with ISSSS coordination needs.

The coordination of the ISSSS will be ensured at district, provincial and national levels and this among ISSSS partners and with governmental authorities and institutions and Congolese civil society.

4. Monitoring and Evaluation

The revised ISSSS will be monitored and evaluated based on 70 indicators, which will be measured through a series of tools and methods for collection of statistical information and perceptions. Data responds both to requirements of the logical framework and to contribute to inform programme decisions and risk management by providing information on changes to the context and stakeholders engagement.

5. Strategic Communication

An effective **strategic communication** component will play an important part in the overall success of the second phase of the ISSSS strategy. It will ensure that the proper planning and resources are in place to allow effective communication between the various levels of ISSSS and each of the partnering organizations, with the various groups that it is working to help and support, and with external players, such as donors and the media. A more focused approach to communications activities aimed at government engagement, real and consistent involvement with communities and key actors, such as local, provincial and national government and civil society, and a better use of M&E results about ISSSS achievements and potential resources could have helped to achieve more successful outcomes.