



REPORT

Resilience in complex settings - lessons learned from the EUTF in the Horn of Africa

DG INTPA InfoPoint Conference, Brussels

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This conference presented the key findings from the evaluation of resilience programmes funded by the **EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF)** in the **Horn of Africa (HoA)**. The study, commissioned by the European Commission, DG INTPA, to the **European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM)** and **Particip**, assessed the impact, challenges, and lessons learned from EUTF interventions. It provided recommendations for improving resilience programming in complex settings.

The speakers were:

Mr. Volker Hauck, Senior Executive for Peace, Security and Resilience, ECDPM

Mr. Tony Land, Associate for Peace, Security and Resilience, ECDPM

Mr Matthieu Zamecnik, Policy officer Resilience, Peace, Security, DG INTPA, European Commission

Mr Enrique De Loma-Ossorio Friend, Trust Fund Manager, HoA, DG INTPA, European Commission

EUTF Implementation, Objectives, and Scope

As the EUTF nears its conclusion in December 2025, this evaluation aims to assess its achievements and extract lessons for future EU resilience programming. The EUTF was established to address fragility, poverty, and illegal migration through flexible and timely interventions. The evaluation focused on **Strategic Objective 2 (SO2)**, which aimed to strengthen the resilience of vulnerable communities, refugees, and displaced people in complex environments.

The study examined 25 projects across the region using field and remote missions, surveys, interviews, and document analysis. The main analytical framework identified six **key drivers of resilience**:

1. Food insecurity
2. Natural disasters
3. Weak governance
4. Long-standing conflicts
5. Marginalisation and lack of services
6. Limited economic opportunities

Mr. Hauck, presented the **Evaluation Questions (EQ)** under Strategic Objective 2 (SO2):

EQ 1 - Strengthening resilience – To what extent did interventions improve resilience among vulnerable communities and their relations with public authorities?

EQ 2 - Sustainability – Have SO2-supported resilience efforts been sustained over time?



EQ 3 - Design and implementation – Were interventions designed and delivered effectively to achieve and maintain results?

EQ 4 - Flexibility and timeliness – Did interventions adapt quickly to emerging needs?

EQ 5 - Added value – What unique contributions did the EUTF provide in promoting community resilience?

The study examined EU policies, financing mechanisms, and implementation approaches, particularly focusing on the **Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) Nexus** and the **Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF)**.

Overall Assessment

Mr. Land started the session related to the Overall Assessment of the programmes under the EUTF and presented the **10 Conclusions** regarding the SO2.

Key conclusions:

1. **Food security** efforts were appropriate for vulnerable communities.
2. **Natural resource management** was a critical component of SO2 interventions.
3. **Disaster risk management (DRM)** was relevant but not prioritised.
4. The **Humanitarian-Development Nexus** was well integrated into SO2 strategies.
5. The **CRRF** framework was a valuable tool for resilience interventions.
6. **Implementation strategies** were adapted to specific country contexts.
7. The **EU's institutional setup** helped facilitate interventions.
8. SO2 interventions were particularly valuable in **remote areas** with weak governance.
9. **Long-term sustainability** remained a major challenge in highly vulnerable regions.
10. **EUTF funding priorities** were well-chosen, but better targeting and strategic focus were needed.

In general, the evaluation found that SO2 interventions helped reduce vulnerabilities among host communities, refugees, and internally displaced persons (IDPs), but their impact was limited due to insufficient geographic focus and resources.

Recommendations

Mr. Hauck then presented the **15 key recommendations** made on the base of the evaluation of the programmes:

1. Prioritise food security and natural resource management (NRM) in vulnerable regions.
2. Increase disaster risk management (DRM) efforts for at-risk communities.
3. Improve coordination between EU Delegations and HQ for remote and cross-border areas.
4. Maintain a multi-sector approach in resilience-building efforts.
5. Further promote the HDP Nexus, especially in protracted crises.



6. Continue applying the CRRF framework where relevant.
7. Expand partnerships and collaboration, recognising that the EU alone cannot address all challenges.
8. Assess the capacity of implementing partners (e.g. UN agencies, NGOs) before contracting them.
9. Strengthen analytical work in designing resilience support.
10. Ensure flexible funding for vulnerable communities.
11. Retain knowledge from EUTF research and monitoring systems beyond 2025.
12. Maintain experienced staff to oversee resilience-related interventions.
13. Promote localisation and strengthen public authorities at national and local levels.
14. Incorporate clear exit strategies into project designs.
15. Leverage EU and non-EU expertise to improve resilience programming.

Final Comments

Mr. Zamecnik, emphasised the need for the EU and its Member States to adopt a context-specific approach when addressing fragility and resilience, rather than applying a one-size-fits-all global strategy. He highlighted the Global Gateway Instrument as a valuable tool for strengthening resilience efforts, particularly in governance, security, and migration management.

Mr. De Loma-Ossorio Friend, underscored the importance of the EUTF's unique monitoring system, which has provided valuable insights for resilience programming. He noted that future funding decisions remain under discussion for the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF). Additionally, he stressed that the sustainability of resilience interventions depends on pre-existing conditions, with more durable results observed in stable contexts such as Kenya and Uganda. Given limited resources, the EU must now determine its strategic next steps for resilience programming in the region.

Conclusion

The conference highlighted the achievements and challenges of the EUTF's resilience efforts in the Horn of Africa. While the fund has positively impacted vulnerable communities, concerns remain about long-term sustainability and strategic focus. Moving forward, the EU must refine its approach, ensuring better targeting, enhanced coordination, and sustained impact in complex and fragile settings.