

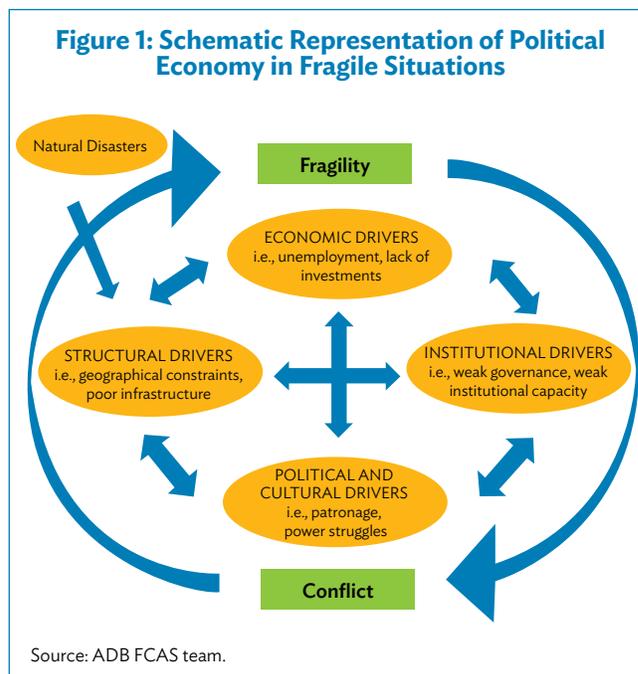
Practical Guide to Fragility Assessment

August 2014

A fragile situation is defined as the state’s failure to perform its function effectively and provide basic social services such as health, education, security; incapacity to uphold the rule of law; and inability to provide sustainable sources of income for the population to get out of poverty.¹ A fragile situation can be a vicious cycle of fragility and conflict and may result from a combination of economic, institutional, political and cultural, and structural issues (Figure 1). The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development’s (OECD) Fragile States Principles highlight that “it is essential for international actors to understand the specific context in each country, and develop a shared view of the strategic response that is required.”²

What We Do

A fragile situation can be understood through the lens of a country’s political economy (i.e., the interaction of political and economic processes and how these influence the distribution of wealth and resources).³ This guide provides the steps on how to understand the local context of a fragile country and how to come up with practical knowledge that could feed into development strategies, programs, and projects. The use of the methodology in this guide should be flexible and context-specific.



How We Do It

Step 1: Identify the main development sectors to be assessed. Include governance as an additional thematic area, and identify how governance issues link with the issues of the identified sectors (e.g., transport, energy).

¹ ADB. Forthcoming. *Fragility Index for a Differentiated Approach*. Manila.

² OECD. 2007. *Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States and Situations*. www.oecd.org/dac/incaf/38368714.pdf

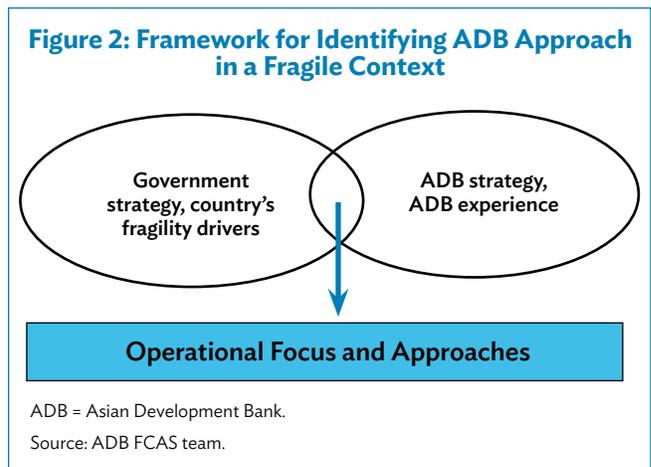
³ ADB. 2013. *Guidance Note: Use of Political Economy Analysis for ADB Operations*. Manila.

Step 2: Determine the main issue or, at most, three key issues in the sector. Outline what drives or causes the key issue in relation to economic, institutional, political and cultural, and structural drivers of fragility (Figure 1). Undertake research on each of these fragility drivers through desk study, fieldwork, or both. Clarify how a fragility driver leads to the key issue and determine its relationship with other fragility drivers.

Step 3: Analyze how the government responds to each of the fragility drivers; national strategies and development plans, news clips, government websites, and blog sites can provide a rich source of information. Where not enough information is available, interview government officials from the planning ministry and/or the relevant sector ministry.

Step 4: Study how ADB responds to each of the fragility drivers. Look into ADB project completion reports, evaluation reports, donor reports, and strategy documents on the ADB website.

Step 5: Identify the common threads between the government and ADB strategies vis-à-vis the country's fragility drivers and ADB's experience or niche areas. These common threads should inform ADB's future operational focus and approaches (Figure 2).



Why We Do It

Public dissemination of the results of a fragility assessment or political economy study should be handled with sensitivity, in lieu of ADB's Public Communication Policy.⁴ The full report may include sensitive information for internal use to inform ADB country strategies, programs, and projects. A summary of the report with focus on solutions rather than problems may be more suitable for publication to share knowledge and best practices with other development partners.

⁴ ADB. 2011. *Public Communications Policy 2011: Disclosure and Exchange of Information*. Manila.

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This quick guide is part of the regional technical assistance project, Enhancing ADB's Engagement in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations (TA 8065-REG). It has been developed based on the pilot fragile situations thematic assessment conducted to inform ADB-Papua New Guinea Country Partnership Strategy 2016-2020. Research and knowledge management specialist Cyrel San Gabriel developed this guide under the guidance of ADB's focal point for fragile and conflict-affected situations, Patrick Safran, with technical inputs from Papua New Guinea Resident Mission (PNRM) country director Marcelo Minc, PNRM country economist Aaron Batten, principal public management specialist Claudia Buentjen, and senior public management specialist Warren James Turner.