

The Integration Dividend: How Connecting Climate, Environment, Peace and Security Multiplies Impact

The political climate is shifting. Hard power is back, mediation is conceding ground and development assistance is undergoing its largest overhaul in decades. And, while the political climate hardens, the physical environment is becoming more volatile. Drought is intensifying competition over water, pasture and farmland before agreements and peace prospects can take root. Floods are displacing communities and mediators alike, undermining the relationships that dialogue depends on. Environmental degradation is weakening livelihoods, as the margins to recover grow thinner over time. Each shock makes it increasingly difficult for communities and political actors to avoid maladaptation, anchor resilient recovery paths and keep the risk of conflict at bay. Yet, if approached strategically, climate and environmental pressures can also form the ground on which dialogue, cooperation and resilient stability are built.

Against this background, adelphi research, the Berghof Foundation, the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (HD) and the European Institute of Peace (EIP) launched the Weathering Risk Peace Pillar¹ – an initiative that integrates climate, environment, peace and security (CEPS) programming in regions most severely affected by conflict and climate risks. The proof emerging from the five programming contexts – Iraq, Nigeria, Somalia, Yemen and the Bay of Bengal – is clear: integrated programming does not simply add value, it creates capabilities and outcomes that siloed approaches cannot replicate.

An important point of departure is that neither integration nor its dividends happen by default. Realising both requires sustained effort, deliberate design and the right conditions. Drawing on four years of experience across five conflict-affected contexts, this paper outlines both what integrated CEPS programming can deliver and how it can be achieved in practice.

Two questions run through the paper:

1. What can integrated CEPS programming deliver?

This question is particularly relevant to national policymakers and funders seeking to understand the approach's value and impact.

2. How can integrated programming be achieved in practice?

This question speaks to practitioners, funders and national policymakers seeking to understand what it takes to make integration work.

1 The Weathering Risk Peace Pillar was launched in 2022, and is implemented by adelphi in partnership with the Berghof Foundation, HD and EIP, with support from the German Federal Foreign Office. The projects in Iraq and Somalia are implemented by the Berghof Foundation, the projects in Nigeria and the Bay of Bengal by HD, and the project in Yemen by EIP. For more information about the Weathering Risk Peace Pillar, see: <https://weatheringrisk.org/en/peacepillar>

The Integration Dividend

Five dimensions of additional value created through integrated climate and peace programming

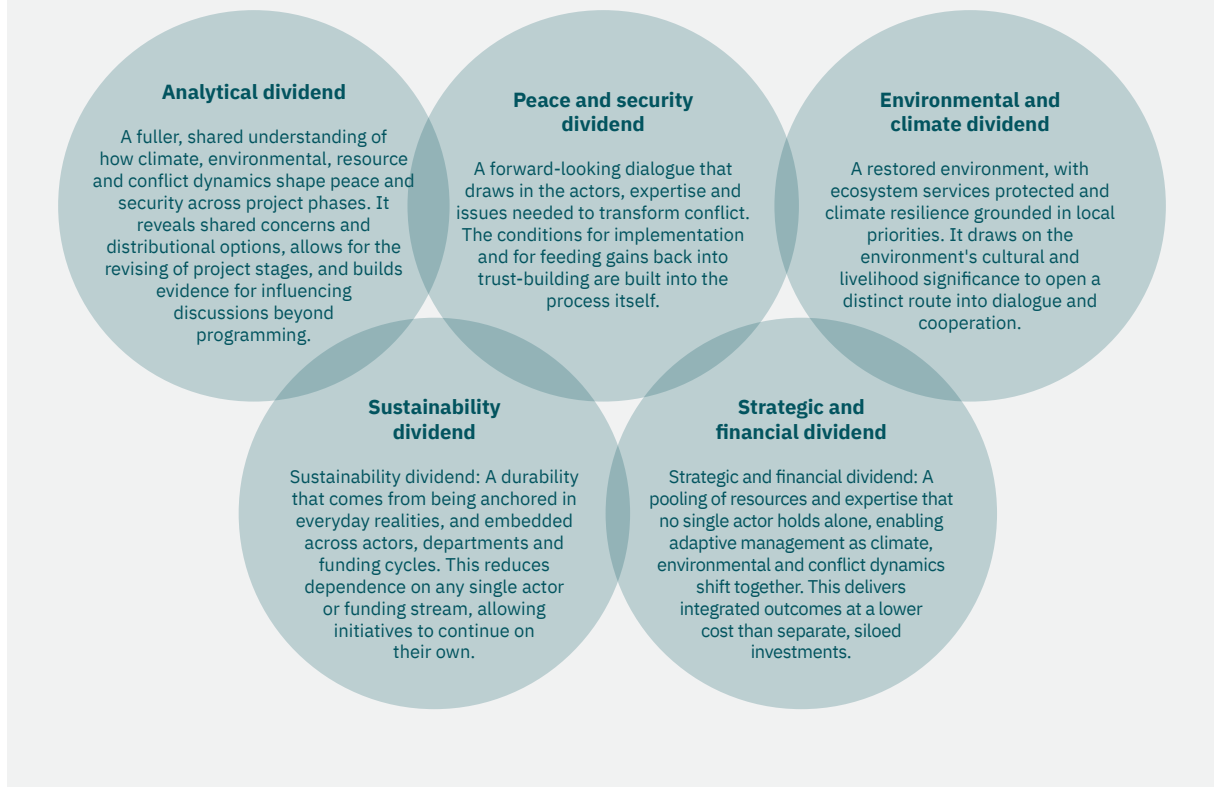


Figure 1. Highlighted mutually reinforcing dividend dimensions from integrated climate–peace programming.

1. From Pilot to Proof

Four years of implementation has produced a clear picture. Peace Pillar projects built trust between actors divided by conflict, fostered dialogue across lines long closed, and supported locally owned agreements rooted in shared climate and environmental concerns. Where competition over land, water and grazing had fuelled grievances, communities began managing those resources jointly, shifting the dynamic from contestation to cooperation. Moreover, working as a consortium amplified this effect: aligning evidence and key messages across contexts gave partners a credible collective voice, while open exchange among projects accelerated learning and enabled approaches to be adapted more quickly than any single project could have done alone. What follows highlights the outcomes that stood out as the most innovative and recognisable across the consortium, illustrated with evidence from individual projects.

OUTCOME 1:

FROM SILOED ANALYSIS TO INTEGRATED UNDERSTANDING

Viewing CEPS dimensions as deeply intertwined, and not as isolated or parallel dimensions, necessitates tools that capture and translate interlinkages into action. Before the Peace Pillar, such tools did not exist in an integrated form. The five projects revealed how climate change, environmental pressures and conflict dynamics interact, while the consortium's shared work connected lessons from each context into a broader

conceptual framework. This iterative process is a key part of the Weathering Risk methodology, a state-of-the-art approach for translating CEPS insights into peace programming. In Iraq, for example, the methodology's pathways framework helped practitioners understand how environmental and climate factors translate into insecurity, and identify entry points for dialogue.

With this, the Peace Pillar developed an analytical lens to capture CEPS interlinkages that can be applied in other contexts and policy discussions. This created a joint understanding across organisations and contexts that has since actively shaped how responses are designed. The UN Resident Coordinators Handbook explicitly highlights the Weathering Risk methodology, bringing climate security into guidance used by UN country teams worldwide. In Mali, assessments using the Weathering Risk approach informed MINUSMA's efforts to mainstream climate security within the mission and contributed directly to the UNEP/UNDP Integrated Environmental Assessment of Mali. Beyond these institutional channels, partner organisations report that improved CEPS analysis has become embedded in organisational practice, with projects beyond the Peace Pillar now incorporating elements of the methodology during design and conception.

OUTCOME 2:

INTEGRATION MULTIPLIES IMPACT

Siloed programming produces siloed results. Across the five contexts, the Peace Pillar showed that gains in one dimension consistently strengthened outcomes in the others. Integration did not simply produce gains but multiplied and reinforced them. In Nigeria's Middle Belt, three natural resource peace agreements now benefit over half a million people, simultaneously reducing violence, strengthening the sustainable management of shared natural resources and supporting the recovery of resilient livelihoods. Where farmers and herders had previously competed over land and water, locally led committees now regulate access to shared resources. Climate adaptation measures embedded in the agreements supported the adoption of climate-smart agricultural practices among local communities, while a market previously closed by violence has since reopened, restoring access to food and income for farmers, traders and livestock owners.

In the Bay of Bengal, science diplomacy has advanced environmental cooperation, and helped bridge political and security divides. The Kochi Declaration on Marine Science Cooperation and the creation of a regional research network of more than 40 scientists have brought researchers, policymakers and maritime security actors together in one process, generating co-benefits for fisheries governance, regional cooperation and trust-building. The people who choose to make peace, and manage their environment more collaboratively and intentionally are also the ones who receive and share the benefits, and carry the process forwards. This is the crux of CEPS integration and how it multiplies impact.

OUTCOME 3:

DURABILITY BEYOND THE PROJECT CYCLE

When a project ends, its benefits and the momentum it has built often come to abrupt stop. The Peace Pillar countered this from the outset, anchoring strong local ownership, engaging follow-up stakeholders early and co-designing structures so that dialogue and natural resource management would continue. For this, dialogue was grounded in people's everyday concerns – access to water, land and agricultural production – and was paired with practical steps to address these concerns before any formal agreement was reached. Early dialogue sessions in Iraq identified water stress as a shared and lived concern. Dialogues were complemented by confidence-building measures, including water infrastructure and clear rules for water use, which made the benefits of dialogue tangible early on and gave communities ownership over the direction of the process. In Somalia, dialogue was reinforced in communities through micro-grants that enabled locally-led activities to strengthen trust and social cohesion. In Yemen, locally identified environmental concerns led to informal agreements among community members on risks affecting livelihoods and peace, enhancing local ownership and willingness to engage beyond the project cycle.

Moreover, structures that could independently carry the process forwards were carefully identified, designed and supported. Peace agreements stipulated or leaned on locally owned bodies with responsibility for follow-up and implementation. In Nigeria, the peace committees established through the agreements continue to oversee progress with increasing independence from external support. In Iraq, trained and supported water users' associations now increasingly manage natural resource dialogues themselves. Regional coordination instruments have produced draft guiding principles for maritime law enforcement agencies operating in the Bay of Bengal and helped establish BIMReN, a collaborative marine science network. These efforts will continue to strengthen institutional capacities to anticipate and respond to shared challenges, such as unintended escalations at sea linked to illegal cross-border fishing.

Another key element was involving the necessary actors early. In Iraq, the process expanded horizontally by connecting natural resource management associations, and vertically by involving policymakers and relevant authorities, embedding dialogue in wider governance structures and creating the conditions for continued support. In Nigeria, the project team realised the need to brief potential implementers on dialogue progress and worked on implementation plans during the negotiation phase, increasing the likelihood that what was agreed was implementable and that the actors needed to deliver it were already engaged.

OUTCOME 4:

EVIDENCE THAT SHARPENED PRACTICE AND SHAPED THE FIELD

Monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) systems tend to function as compliance mechanisms, capturing effects in isolation and generating little that feeds back into practice or builds the evidence base. The Peace Pillar made MEL a core programme function to capture the interlinked effects of CEPS programming, and develop distinct learning and evidence products. Therefore, integrated MEL enabled projects to identify, assess and communicate the relationships between CEPS outcomes. Specifically, the use of mixed methods – outcome harvesting, contribution analysis, interviews, focus group discussions and perception surveys – produced a more credible and nuanced account of what integration achieved. In Iraq, the process of developing impact stories, which involved engaging communities to understand how dialogue and the resulting agreements affected them, created a powerful, unexpected ripple effect. Communities that were consulted about the agreements' impacts took the initiative to write their own impact stories about the agreements. This community-led storytelling raised awareness, strengthened local ownership and produced accounts that were more credible than those from external actors alone.

Regular MEL exchanges between organisations allowed for the sharing of best practices and methodologies, and the collective refinement of approaches, building a jointly held understanding of what CEPS integration requires. Over four years, the consortium established a MEL Lab, a dedicated space to interrogate and pilot MEL methodologies, apply good practices, and learn from what did not work. This allowed the consortium to identify which approaches worked best for different types of integrated programming. This collective tailoring of MEL systems to CEPS integration produced evidence in forms suited to different audiences, including outcome reports, impact stories, podcasts, radio programmes and social media content. The result was not only better learning and adaptation within projects, but also a stronger evidence base for advocacy and wider discussions on integrated CEPS programming. In Somalia, storytelling created opportunities for women to discuss climate impacts and participate in processes from which they might otherwise have been excluded. At the national and international levels, impact stories complemented formal evidence by showing why climate and environmental peacebuilding matters, helping policymakers and donors understand both its human significance and practical value.

Outcomes and outputs alone do not show how integrated programming works. The following section examines how such programming is built and implemented in practice.

Key project Weathering Risk Peace Pillar outputs

This covers specific highlights from Peace Pillar projects, not a comprehensive list.

INCREASING UNDERSTANDING OF CLIMATE-RELATED RISKS TO PEACE

3,600+

Yemenis consulted

82% prioritise addressing climate risks

300+

governmental authorities, mediators, community leaders trained in Iraq

87

radio episodes in Somalia that raised awareness

Helped communities and decision-makers better understand climate-related risks and their links to conflict.

PROMOTING TRUST AND COHESION

150+

key stakeholders participated in policy discussions in the Bay of Bengal

350+

track 1.5 and Track 2 stakeholders engaged in Iraq

57

initiatives in Somalia

91%

of participants felt more connected to others in Yemen.

Strengthened relationships, social cohesion, regional trust, resource management and environmental protection.

INCLUDING FORMAL CLIMATE AND/OR ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS INTO AGREEMENTS AND FRAMEWORKS

5

local-level agreements established in Iraq

3

natural resource peace agreements established in Nigeria, benefiting over half a million people

10

ethnic communities across Benue State signed Nigeria's first statewide natural resource peace agreement in June 2026

100

members of divided communities engaged in Somalia through 22 sustained dialogue sessions

40+

marine researchers connected through a collaborative network established as a result of the Kochi Declaration on Marine Science Cooperation in the Bay of Bengal

2

major regional maritime coordination instruments supported towards adoption in the Bay of Bengal

Addressed challenges like shared land and water resource management and strengthened social cohesion, fostered cooperation and reduce conflict

SUPPORTING INCLUSIVE PEACE PROCESSES



7

large-scale community dialogue sessions in Somalia

The Yemen project expanded participation among underrepresented groups

In Iraq, a locally driven social pact between displaced families and host communities set principles for fair access to resources and services

Bringing together women, youth and elders, who are often underrepresented in peace processes

IMPROVING ACCESS TO FOOD AND INCOME OPPORTUNITIES

Reduced violence in Nigeria has enabled the:



Re-opening of one local market



Lifting of access restrictions to another market



Clearing of roadblocks on five roads

2. The How

Integration did not come with an instruction manual. Project teams had to determine how to make gains across CEPS dimensions mutually reinforcing, how to generate change across governance levels and how to sustain change over time. Context shaped many of these decisions, but certain choices proved consistently consequential across all five projects. What follows distils the most important of choices, alongside the conditions that lie beyond project teams.

2.1. Designing integrated CEPS programming Design analysis and evidence systems around integration

The starting point for the Peace Pillar was dedicating time to reconciling understandings of what CEPS integration means and what it should achieve. This established a clear conceptual base for everything that followed. These discussions also foregrounded the need for a MEL approach tailored to the interlinkages of CEPS, combining methodological robustness and versatility with an orientation towards both action and evidence. The Weathering Risk methodology provided a shared reference point for understanding CEPS interlinkages, while each project tailored its tools to its context, risks, actors, available data and access constraints. Later on, MEL plans then linked the theory of change (ToC), logframe and overarching evaluation questions, while also incorporating learning questions and learning indicators. Here, indicators and evidence collection methods were treated as living elements of the programme, and revised as implementation generated new learning or as climate, environmental and conflict dynamics changed. Peer exchange and transparent discussion of methodological limitations, challenges and failures further supported learning across the consortium.

Notes from the field: Developing an integrated analytical and MEL approach involved trial and error. Frameworks can quickly become overloaded when they are expected to capture every CEPS dimension and the relationships between them. Data collection itself also required care. Environmental resources and sites may be closely tied to cultural identity, heritage and customary rights. Therefore, accessing and measuring them can be experienced as extractive unless communities have a meaningful role in defining, contributing to and using the evidence. Interactions and contributions are also harder to measure than discrete outputs, requiring survey questions and evidence tools to anticipate these relationships from the outset. At the same time, MEL must support learning and adaptation rather than become a reporting burden that restricts the flexibility integration requires.

PAIR DIALOGUE WITH PRACTICAL COLLABORATION

Across the Peace Pillar projects, dialogue was deliberately paired with concrete environmental collaboration. The motives differed, informed by a deep understanding of CEPS linkages in each context. Nevertheless, a common thread ran through each project: certain natural resource and climate issues are directly connected to everyday challenges and shared across conflict lines. Consequently, these issues can offer a less politically charged entry point for engagement. This provided parties a practical basis for cooperation, delivered visible benefits and gave communities a direct stake in keeping the process going. This logic was also used at different stages of interventions and across levels. In some contexts, trust-building on environmental issues delivered tangible benefits early on. In others, these issues supported longer-term outcomes, linked different levels of governance and strengthened local institutions.

Notes from the field: Pairing dialogue with practical collaboration is not without risk. The practical measures themselves must be conflict-sensitive: improved access for some communities can generate new grievances among others if benefit sharing is not carefully considered from the outset. Equally, tangible gains should not be assumed to automatically outweigh the political cost some actors perceive in engaging with counterparties at all. There is also a real risk of overburdening processes by asking parties to negotiate, collaborate and implement simultaneously.

DESIGN MEDIATION AROUND THE ENVIRONMENTAL AND INSTITUTIONAL CONDITIONS FOR PEACE

Integrating CEPS into programming required bringing new actors and new issues into the mediation space. In practice, this meant three things. Firstly, environmental and natural resource expertise entered negotiations while terms were still open, helping parties account for environmental conditions and resource limitations. More specifically, this expertise helped identify climate and resource dynamics, and conflict drivers that initial participatory conflict analysis had missed. Secondly, prospective implementers participated early on. Implementers brought an understanding of what delivery would demand into negotiation phases. They also gained a better understanding of the sensitivities that formal agreements might not capture through text alone. Thirdly, agendas addressed not only the terms of settlement, but also how commitments would be sequenced, financed and monitored. Here, agencies or structures to carry out and monitor the agreement were created.

Notes from the field: Involving additional expertise and implementation requirements can make negotiations more complex, shift authority away from affected communities and create expectations that programmes cannot meet. If promised or anticipated improvements do not materialise, or if benefits are delayed or distributed unevenly, trust in the agreement, implementing institutions and the wider process can weaken. Therefore, communities and groups that are often underrepresented – including women, young people and traditional elders – must retain a central role in defining problems, setting priorities, designing rules and institutions, and reviewing evidence. External expertise should support, rather than replace, local ownership, with clear communication about what can realistically be delivered and opportunities for communities to adapt or discontinue measures that do not reflect their needs.

BUILD IMPLEMENTATION AROUND CEPS INTEGRATION NEEDS

Peace Pillar partners conceptualised implementation as a continuation of the negotiation phase, recognising that any implementation affecting natural resources, services or decision-making can change local conflict dynamics, for example, by creating new grievances or distributing benefits unevenly. To address this, structures were created that kept dialogue open, allowed parties to revisit agreements, and addressed emerging grievances as climate, security and political conditions changed. Projects also connected local implementation to decision-making at higher levels of governance, recognising that environmental pressures and resource systems rarely respect administrative boundaries, and that communities experiencing climate and resource stress as immediate security concerns are rarely heard in the forums that govern them. Therefore, practitioners channelled locally identified climate and resource concerns into national and international forums, and – where possible – maintained two-way feedback so that communities could see how their priorities shaped wider decisions. This kept local environmental dimensions visible, while creating the policy support, institutional mandates and resources that local action depends on.

Notes from the field: Delivering CEPS commitments required additional authorities, technical agencies, implementers and funders, whose mandates, funding procedures and timelines did not always align. However, expanding the circle of actors can weaken the setting in which trust develops. Therefore, the projects had to clarify responsibilities, maintain dialogue and manage expectations, while adapting when benefits were delayed, unevenly distributed or failed to materialise. Material improvements could reinforce confidence in an agreement, but could also generate grievances and undermine trust if results did not meet expectations.

INTEGRATE STORYTELLING INTO MEL TO STRENGTHEN LEARNING, OWNERSHIP AND ADVOCACY

Peace Pillar projects deliberately complemented quantitative indicators with qualitative storytelling to capture the mechanisms driving change behind the numbers. Impact stories, and other storytelling approaches such as radio programmes and podcasts, formed a key part of the Peace Pillar's MEL approach. They helped make the evidence meaningful and useful for action. At the implementation level, stories connected abstract CEPS interlinkages to lived experience, raising awareness and informing programme adaptation. In peace processes, stories about community experiences, climate impacts and locally identified solutions created space for dialogue, encouraged participation and helped bridge social divisions. Impact stories also revealed shifts in relationships, trust, perceptions, behaviour and local cooperation, as well as the pathways through which climate, environmental and peace outcomes reinforced one another.

Notes from the field: Integrating qualitative and quantitative approaches to capture CEPS interlinkages requires methodological care and transparency. Logframes and indicator frameworks can appear neutral because they present measurement through technical categories, predefined indicators and numerical targets. Yet, they also reflect choices about which changes matter, whose experiences count and how success is defined, while making those choices less visible. Impact stories make the interpretive nature of evidence more apparent: their framing, language, perspective and choice of actors centred all shape what a story conveys. Impact stories also raise questions of representation, since no programme can capture every experience and no single story can automatically stand for wider change. The difference is, therefore, not that indicators are apolitical while stories are political, but that impact stories make the judgements involved in producing evidence easier to see. This matters for an organisation that also mediates between the parties it describes. Such organisations must recognise the partiality of all evidence, avoid privileging one narrative and protect the trust of those whose experiences are being told.

2.2. The institutional conditions that make integration work

The conditions that determine whether integration delivers span organisations, funding structures and governance levels beyond any single team's control. The Peace Pillar generated evidence on what each of these actors needs: what project teams require to do this work, and what funders and national policymakers can do to enable it.

What project teams need:

- **Sufficient time to establish the conditions for change.** An organisation cannot simply catapult itself into a context, however sound the CEPS logic is. Knowing who holds influence and how institutions actually work takes time, as does building the cross-sectoral partnerships that CEPS integration depends on. This understanding is the foundation upon which a mediator's credibility rests.
- **Flexible budgets that can respond to changing needs.** Programme teams need the ability to adjust activities, budget allocations and implementation arrangements when political, security, climatic or dialogue conditions change. Fixed budgets assume a predictable path from agreement to outcome, which CEPS contexts rarely offer. Yet, this flexibility should be supported by clear processes for documenting and approving adaptations, which ensure accountability, and clarify what everyone involved must do and when.
- **MEL designed for CEPS integration.** CEPS programming generates outcomes that cannot be anticipated during design or captured by rigid logframes. This includes opportunities for practical collaboration, and the ways CEPS results interact with and reinforce one another. Capturing these outcomes requires dedicated resources for analysis, monitoring, evaluation and learning in the programme budget from the outset. In addition, reporting systems must also document emerging outcomes and the programme's contribution to them, alongside activities and indicators. Learning indicators, outcome harvesting, qualitative methods and contribution analysis can complement conventional logframes for this purpose.
- **Structures that incentivise open learning and joint working.** Overcoming silos and competition between organisations requires specific incentives and structures for joint reflection on CEPS integration, so that implementation, learning and strategic decision-making remain linked across contexts rather than running separately. This depends on a culture of trust and openness in which partners can discuss what went wrong as readily as what worked. A consortium structure, with established partnerships between organisations, can help absorb some of these usual tendencies towards competition and closed reporting.
- **A shared integration framework.** A common set of principles and questions gives partners a consistent starting point for what CEPS integration means in practice, while leaving room for each organisation to adapt the approach to its own context.

Best practices by funders:

- **Funding cycles aligned with CEPS integration.** Many aspects of CEPS integration take time, such as building cross-sectoral relationships, understanding sensitivities and developing shared practices across CEPS dimensions to enable outcomes. These foundations are hard to build on a one-year budget. Multi-year funding proved critical in enabling these conditions to develop. Such funding provided implementing partners the stability to invest in collaboration rather than compete against one another for the next grant. It also enabled a more productive working relationship between the consortium and the funder, grounded in trust and open communication rather than transactional reporting cycles.
- **Foregrounding quality funding.** The flexible grant structure gave the Peace Pillar sufficient room to fund trust-building measures, coordination and short-term responses to emerging needs. In addition to flexibility, the funding focused on quality, reflecting a shared understanding with the funder that much of the change produced by CEPS integration is not captured by the indicators. This was complemented by the flexibility to adapt activities, budgets and indicators as conditions changed, ensuring the programme remained relevant to conditions on the ground rather than those anticipated when it was designed.
- **Investing in institutional CEPS capacity.** In addition to funding CEPS work, building the internal infrastructure to understand and stay connected to it was critical. This included establishing a dedicated

position at the interface of climate and security that works between departments and teams. Additionally, setting up structures that allowed information to flow in both directions between project teams and the funder was key. Rather than receiving reports at a distance, having funders participate in learning exchanges alongside project teams builds a lasting understanding of CEPS dynamics within the funding institution itself. This model appears to have found resonance beyond the Peace Pillar: the UK's Integrated Climate Security Task Force has adopted a similar logic of building dedicated institutional capacity at the climate–security interface.

Best practices by national policymakers:

- **Policy coherence across climate, environment, peacebuilding and resource governance.** Structures, interests and incentives at the national level can reinforce the very silos that CEPS integration tries to bridge – a mediator requiring travel permits across administrative boundaries, a locally negotiated resource agreement with no standing in national resource law, an infrastructure decision taken by a ministry with no peacebuilding mandate. Some degree of cross-policy work is, therefore, essential. In Iraq, project team expertise fed into the drafting of the nationally determined contributions, connecting local CEPS experience to national climate policymaking.
- **Embed dialogue outcomes in regional institutions.** Embed dialogue outcomes and cooperation frameworks within the mandates and coordination mechanisms of relevant regional institutions. Provide these institutions with the political backing, resources and clear responsibilities needed to lead and sustain the initiatives over time, while working through existing structures rather than creating parallel ones. Support networks that connect regional institutions with national authorities, communities and technical experts to strengthen regional leadership, coordination and ownership.

2.3. Adaptive management in practice

Even with institutional conditions in place, CEPS programming does not always unfold as planned. Fragile and conflict-affected contexts are volatile by nature, with political situations shifting, climate shocks arriving unexpectedly and dialogue processes breaking down or opening new doors. Integrating climate and peace together requires sustained recalibration as circumstances change. Programmes that cannot adapt risk becoming irrelevant to the context they are trying to address or, worse still, reinforcing the tensions they set out to reduce.

Across Weathering Risk Peace Pillar projects, adaptive management has been triggered by five types of contextual shifts: political change, climatic events, security deterioration, and dialogue dynamics. These have led to emerging opportunities that teams on the ground were able to seize thanks to adaptive management practices.

Political change can rapidly redraw the institutional landscape. In Yemen, the collapse of a key dialogue partner mid-process closed off national-level tracks entirely, forcing a reorientation towards community-level work and opening new opportunities for locally grounded engagement.

Climatic events both create new vulnerabilities and accelerate existing conflict dynamics. In Somalia, as flood risks increased, the radio programmes supported community-level early warning and response by amplifying official warnings, highlighting humanitarian and conflict risks, and exploring practical response pathways. In Iraq, drought further reduced water availability, requiring the original agreement to be adjusted to reflect the changing context and enable communities to allocate and manage diminishing water resources while incorporating conflict resolution mechanisms responsive to rising tensions.

Security deterioration severs the physical access a programme depends on. In Somalia, when travel to programme areas became unsafe, the team convened dialogue in safer locations, allowing engagement to continue while reducing risks for everyone involved.

Dialogue dynamics can produce both breakdowns and blind spots. In Nigeria, a breakdown in relations between two groups within a broader 10-party dialogue threatened the entire process, prompting a shift to de-escalation and the introduction of a bilateral parallel track alongside the plenary process. In the Bay of Bengal, the original dialogue design proved insufficiently informed by realities, which led the team to commission dedicated field research on community needs around fishing bans. This ensured the inter-state process became more inclusive, credible and relevant.

Emerging opportunities can also trigger adaptation. In Nigeria, local level community dialogue dynamics created new opportunities and triggered adaptation, by generating the credibility and momentum needed to expand the process to regional and state-to-state dialogue on transboundary climate and environmental issues - an opportunity that was not part of the original design but proved too significant to pass up.

FROM DIALOGUE BREAKDOWN TO RENEWED ENGAGEMENT: SUSTAINED SITUATION MONITORING AND ISSUE-BASED PROJECT DESIGN ENABLE ADAPTATION WITHOUT LOSING STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Following the December 2025 military offensive in the eastern governorates in Yemen by one of the parties engaged in the conflict, the focus and stakeholders involved in the dialogue needed to shift. In this new context, the project had to be reviewed, which was accomplished quickly thanks to three assets that were in place before the crisis: (1) discreet contact with both parties, and a rolling assessment of potential short and medium-term scenarios, (2) building relationships with different key actors – including ministries, governorate authorities and civil society – over three years, and (3) an urgent agenda (i.e. climate security and water scarcity), which remain at the forefront regardless of political contestation. The joint outcome documents from the 2025 dialogues informed the project review and these two environmental topics served as entry points to continue engagement with the authorities following the developments.

To enable adaptive management in practice, Peace Pillar projects **treated monitoring frameworks as living tools rather than fixed reporting instruments**. Teams continuously reviewed whether their **indicators remained relevant and fit for purpose**, and whether they still captured changes in the context, especially the interactions between climate, environmental and peace dynamics. This is particularly important in integrated CEPS programming, where risks, relationships and pathways of change can evolve quickly, and where indicators that were appropriate at the outset may no longer reflect what is driving or reducing conflict.

The Nigeria project held a data analysis workshop in May 2026 as a dedicated reflection point to review the impact of its work and the continued relevance of its indicators. This illustrates a core strength of the Peace Pillar approach: it did not only adapt activities when contexts changed; it also continuously tested whether the evidence used to guide those adaptations remained fit for purpose.

3. The Frontier Ahead

The Weathering Risk Peace Pillar has demonstrated that integrating CEPS is not only effective but also efficient and durable, creating dividends across the analytical, peace, environmental, sustainability, strategic and financial dimensions.

The Peace Pillar provides a strong foundation for the field to build upon. The priority now is to scale what has been learnt, deepen what is working, and embed integrated approaches into peace and climate strategies. In concrete terms, this means:

Mainstream the integrated CEPS approach into policy and programming, moving beyond individual projects. Governments, UN agencies, regional organisations and donors can embed integrated climate–peace analysis and programming into their policies, funding decisions, assessments and operational frameworks, helping shift it from a specialised approach to established practice.

Scale approaches that have shown promise through partnerships and shared learning. Governments, regional organisations, donors and practitioners can strengthen cooperation across peacebuilding, climate, environmental and development sectors, sharing evidence, tools and experience to adapt promising approaches in different contexts. This can align funding and institutional support, while preserving local ownership, and responding to specific conflict, climate and environmental dynamics.

Capitalise on the longer-term climate and environmental benefits generated by Peace Pillar projects. As many climate and environmental gains take time to materialise, future integrated programming should build upon and amplify these emerging benefits, ensuring that they continue to reinforce peace and livelihood outcomes over time.

Apply the integrated climate–peace approach to a wider range of geographic and thematic contexts. Future programming can test integrated CEPS approaches in regions not yet covered by the Peace Pillar and across challenges that go beyond natural resource management, including terrorism and violent extremism.

AUTHORED BY

Josephine Collier, Fynn Kaltenpoth, Alexandra Steinkraus
and Emma Whitaker

SUPPORTED BY**PUBLISHED BY**

adelphi research gemeinnützige GmbH
Alt-Moabit 91, 10559 Berlin, Germany
+49 (0) 8900068-0
office@adelphi-research.de
www.adelphi-research.de/en

LAYOUT

Odile Stabon

COPYEDITING

Jonathan West

DATE

October 2026

LICENSE

For texts in this publication, the publishers grant a license under the terms of Creative Commons Attribution No Derivatives 4.1 International. You may reproduce and share the license material if you name adelphi as follows: ‘© adelphi research CCBY ND 4.0.’ Photographs and graphics are not covered by this license. In case of doubt please contact adelphi research prior to reusing the material.

© adelphi research, 2026

SUGGESTED CITATION

adelphi research. (2026). The Integration Dividend: How Connecting Climate, Environment, Peace and Security Multiplies Impact. Weathering Risk Peace Pillar. Berlin: adelphi research.

COVER PHOTO

Inga Israel