

Phase 4: On-site assessment

Step 4.2: Things to consider during on-site consultations

What needs to be considered during consultations in conflict-sensitive situations?

When conducting consultations in conflict-sensitive situations, tour operators should be particularly careful not to negatively impact the interviewees or exacerbate existing conflict. In order to really understand the impact of business activities on human rights in a post-conflict country or destination, both the conflict and the current situation need to be carefully analysed. Note that in transition phases from violent conflict to peace, there is a high risk of renewed conflicts.¹

The “Do No Harm’ Toolkit” and the publication “Tourism in fragile contexts. Guidelines for Product and Communication Managers for the Implementation of Human Rights-Related Due Diligence” developed by the Roundtable Human Rights in Tourism provides tour operators with a set of questions to support the identification of human rights related risks in fragile states.

To understand the general situation and potential power dynamics in a fragile country or destination, and to conduct conflict-sensitive consultations, the following aspects need to be considered:

- What were the causes of the conflicts? Which parties are/were involved?
- What is the current situation? Are there regional differences?
- How openly can I expect people to talk about issues related to the conflict?
- Which groups of the population might be particularly vulnerable due to (post) conflict situations in the country?
- Who are my interviewees and where do they stand in the conflict context?
- When organising focus group discussions, are there any groups that should not be interviewed in the same session?
- Is the distribution of benefits from tourism development evenly distributed between conflict groups in the population?²

¹ Business Innovation Facility (2017): Do No Harm. A Toolkit for the Tourism Industry, <https://www.humanrights-in-tourism.net/sites/default/files/media/file/2020/rc044do-no-harm-toolkit-tourism-industry-1133.pdf>, p. 8-9.

² Roundtable Human Rights in Tourism (2016): Tourism in Fragile Contexts – Guidelines for Product and Communication Managers for the Implementation of Human Rights-Related Due Diligence, <https://www.humanrights-in-tourism.net/sites/default/files/media/file/2020/rc019tourism-fragile-contexts-1178.pdf>, p. 4.