DANISH DEFENCE

Assembling the Wheels of Stability

Mapping Steps of Stabilisation through the Concept of Facilitated Dialogue

By Hüseyin Yücel and David Vestenskov
Centre for Stabilisation
Royal Danish Defence College

ROYAL DANISH DEFENCE COLLEGE

Assembling the Wheels of Stability

Mapping Steps of Stabilisation through the Concept of Facilitated Dialogue

By Hüseyin Yücel and David Vestenskov
Centre for Stabilisation
Royal Danish Defence College

2019

By Hüseyin Yücel and David Vestenskov
Assembling the Wheels of Stability: Mapping Steps of Stabilisation through the Concept of Facilitated Dialogue.

© Royal Danish Defence College
All rights reserved. Mechanical, photographic or other reproduction or photocopying from this book or parts thereof is only allowed according to agreements between The Danish Defence and CopyDan.
Any other use without written consent from the Royal Danish Defence College is illegal according to Danish law on intellectual property right. Excepted are short extracts for reviews in newspapers or the like.

Copenhagen September 2019

Royal Danish Defence College
Ryvangs Allé 1
DK-2100 Copenhagen
Denmark
Tel.: 728 17000
Editor in chief: Peter Dahl Thruelsen, Dean at the Royal Danish Defence College
Printed in Denmark by Rosendahls A/S
Layout: RDDC
ISBN: 978-87-7147-266-0
Number printed 100

Abstract

This report defines the concept of *Facilitated Dialogue* that aims at contributing to stabilisation by promoting cooperation between states (and non-state groups). The report formulates programme theories for two distinct levels within the concept. The institutional level focuses on creating institutional cooperation, whereas the individual level emphasises social interaction between influential individuals as ways in which cooperation between states (and non-state groups) can be encouraged. The programme theories, based on experience and inspired by the concepts of Track II and Track 1.5 diplomacy, are meant as a template for future projects as well as a benchmark for evaluation of current and past projects.

Contents

1. Introduction 6
   1.1. Organisational Context 7
2. RDDC's Facilitated Dialogue Concept 9
   2.1. Stabilisation 9
   2.2. Symptoms and their Causes 10
      2.2.1. Purpose 11
   2.3. Track II and Track 1.5 12
   2.4. Foundational Theory of Change 15
   2.5. Features of Facilitated Dialogue 16
   2.6. Results Framework 19
      2.6.1. Indicators 21
   2.7. Meaningful Social Interaction as Prerequisite 21
   2.8. Contextual Factors: Purposes, Opportunities, and Limits 22
      2.8.1. Conflict Intensity 22
      2.8.2. Need for Mediation 23
      2.8.3. Levels of Dialogue 24
      2.8.4. Denmark as Facilitator 25
3. Institutional Level 27
   3.1. Objectives and Assumptions 29
   3.2. Programme Theory 30
      3.2.1. Before the Event 31
      3.2.2. At the Event 34
      3.2.3. After the Event 38
      3.2.4. Impact 41
4. Individual Level 42
   4.1. Objectives and Assumptions 44
   4.2. Programme Theory 45
      4.2.1. Before the Event 45
      4.2.2. At the Event 49
      4.2.3. After the Event 51
      4.2.4. Impact 53
5. Conclusions 54
   5.1. Future Projects and Envisioned Usage 55
6. Bibliography 57

About the authors

Hüseyin Yücel is a political scientist and consultant for the Centre for Stabilisation at the Royal Danish Defence College. He has worked on several projects under the Danish Peace and Stabilisation Programme and recently served as temporary teacher on the history and politics of Afghanistan. His current work focuses on international security issues, regional peace building in Afghanistan, stabilisation activities in the Gulf of Guinea, and program theories on and implementation of various stabilisation projects.

David Vestenskov is chief consultant for the Centre for Stabilisation at the Royal Danish Defence College that coordinates projects within the frame of the Danish Peace and Stabilisation Programme for Afghanistan and Pakistan. His analytical work and research have primarily focused on security developments in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and the surrounding region, subjects on which he has published several articles and books. His current work comprises research, international networking, and project implementation in areas facing international security issues, counterinsurgency and counterterrorism, as well as regional peace building.

1. Introduction

Since 2014, the Royal Danish Defence College (RDDC) has launched several projects that aim to contribute to stability in Afghanistan through bilateral dialogue with Pakistan under the framework of the Danish Peace and Stabilisation Fund (PSF). During the last five years, a considerable amount of knowledge and experience has emerged from these projects. Based on this, and with the inclusion of theoretical considerations, the report defines the concept of Facilitated Dialogue and builds archetypical programme theories, applicable as a template in various current and future stabilisation initiatives. The term *programme theory* is thus central to this report. It may be described as follows:

> "[A]n explicit theory or model of how an intervention contributes to a set of specific outcomes through a series of intermediate results. The theory needs to include an explanation of how the program's activities contribute to the results (…)" (Funnell and Rogers 2011, 31).

This report aims at creating *archetypes* that "*transcend a particular program and can help program theorists avoid the trap of presenting implausible solutions that are not well grounded in wider theories*." (Funnell and Rogers 2011, 319). The quote also illustrates one of the four main arguments in favour of utilising archetypical programme theories:

The first argument relates to the establishment of a framework. Archetypes can function as both a point of departure for future projects and a point of reflection for existing projects. They provide a framework developed in accordance with established theoretical considerations and practical experiences, thus reducing the risk of engagement in unrealistic or futile projects. Second, the archetypes work as a communication tool between partners and for purposes of innovation. Programme theories clearly state assumptions and mechanisms, thus facilitating an informed dialogue about elements within projects.

Furthermore, incorporation of evaluation and feedback from projects into the archetypes allows them to function as a crucible of continuous improvement and innovation. Third, this report contributes to the overall understanding of a role that RDDC (and the Danish Defence) can undertake in stabilisation operations. This is highly relevant now and in the future as stabilisation as a key strategic concept will most likely remain relevant. Furthermore, this report aspires to serve as inspiration in developing other projects that will be

working with stabilisation in other countries and regions. Fourth and lastly, clarifying the programme theory and consequently designing more effective projects strengthen RDDC's ability to establish or expand international research networks in countries of conflicts and instability and also strengthen RDDC's international profile. An example of this is the privileged access that RDDC enjoys to the Pakistani National Defence University (NDU) through previous projects along with connections to international subject matter experts in relevant fields of research.

While all Facilitated Dialogue projects share the same core premise, experience has shown that the dialogues operate at two distinct levels: The *institutional level* and the *individual level*. They function differently, but have the same goal: To create cooperation between states and/or non-state groups.

1.1. Organisational Context

The concept of Facilitated Dialogue is usually implemented as a **project**, which - according to one definition by Dahler-Larsen[1] - refers to the temporary **delivery of specific services** that aim to bring about some form of change. In this report, the term *project* refers to a specific instance of Facilitated Dialogue in a particular context. A project operates under a mandate from a **basis organisation** which has provided funding for and authorised the project. In relation to dialogue projects between Afghanistan and Pakistan, the PSF authorises and funds projects through Defence Command Denmark. The PSF does not process the applications on a project basis. Instead, the PSF approves general programmes for a geographical area (country programmes), comprising several projects. An **implementer organisation** is responsible for executing the project and has organisational autonomy within the framework approved by the basis organisation. In this case, the implementer organisation is RDDC. The projects often consist of one or multiple **events** where people interact (conferences, seminars, lectures, and similar meetings). A project may also include non-event type activity such as research cooperation between institutions. Lastly, the **time frame** of projects ranges from a few months and upwards to a year – but none are permanent. Consequently, change in and cooperation between the involved countries and institutions may not be detectable in the aftermath of a single project. Change in Afghanistan-Pakistan relations is dependent on multiple factors and even more actors. RDDC projects may contribute to a positive development, but will likely not be decisive in themselves.

(1) (Dahler-Larsen 2013, 19) (Danish)

Projects and programme theories have different functions: The former is designed to be explicitly applied in order to achieve given aims in a given context, whereas the latter is a theoretical approach removed from any specific context that aims at guiding the design of projects. Projects must be examined individually to determine whether they fulfil what they set out to do as designated in this programme theory. Scrutinising projects based on programme theories is one way of doing this. Establishing archetypical programme theories are therefore not a theoretical thought experiment, but serves as a guideline for improvement of future projects in terms of mapping best practice in accordance with theory, at the same time working as a tool for assessment and evaluation toward the broader objective of contributing to stabilisation processes.

2. RDDC's Facilitated Dialogue Concept

This report seeks to unfold how the role of RDDC as a facilitator of a dialogue platform in one area (Afghanistan-Pakistan) is applicable in other areas of conflict. The concept of Facilitated Dialogue provides an archetypical theoretical framework in which RDDC's experiences along with theoretical considerations (from Track II and 1.5 diplomacy) can assist in creating cooperation between states and/or non-state groups when such collaboration would benefit all parties. As a prelude, stabilisation as a concept should be clarified.

2.1. Stabilisation

The term 'stabilisation' is central to the Peace and Stabilisation Fund (as the name suggests), but the term is not well defined in a Danish context (Jacobsen and Engen 2017, 5). The concept has multiple interpretations, and in a Danish military context, for instance, it is military capacity building of a partner (military) organisation through the support of human resources (advisors, trainers, and mentors) as well as material or financial assistance (Jacobsen and Engen 2017, 14–16). Avoiding combat engagement of Danish soldiers is central when conceptualising capacity building (Jacobsen and Engen 2017, 16).

Stabilisation in a Danish military context has five main aims, i.e. to contain and deescalate adverse effects of conflict, address root causes to solve or avoid conflicts, enable weak states to provide sustainable security, rebuild military capacities, and finally strengthen Denmark's relation to (NATO) partner countries (Jacobsen and Engen 2017, 10–13). The concept of Facilitated Dialogue does not fit neatly into any of these categories, but do overlap with multiple of the abovementioned aims, depending on the context. In cases where bi- or multilateral engagement is necessary to address or contain a problem, the Facilitated Dialogues can contribute by facilitating contact between relevant parties. Maintaining sustainable security through bi- or multilateral cooperation is also a possible aim in which the Facilitated Dialogue concept may be useful. Lastly, an added benefit of the concept is the promotion of Danish public diplomacy, which is not necessarily strengthening Denmark's relation to partners, but rather branding Denmark in the countries where an engagement takes place. Furthermore, the concept provides a way of initiating whole-of-government thinking on project level through cooperation with Danish embassies in the project countries - in contrast to other tools in the stabilisation toolbox which usually only allow for whole-of-government coordination on a strategic/inter-ministry level.

2.2. Symptoms and their Causes

What does piracy in the Gulf of Guinea have in common with terrorist activity in the border regions between Afghanistan and Pakistan? While the causes of these problems may vary, they share a central trait; i.e. a cross-border aspect. This section aims to explain how these transnational problems can be addressed – at least partly – if the affected countries cooperate.

Cross-border problems such as piracy or terrorists crossing borders are often the visible *symptoms* of underlying adverse conditions or *root causes*. Terrorism in Afghanistan and Pakistan does not appear out of thin air - neither does smuggling, human trafficking, or piracy in the Gulf of Guinea. These symptoms may not share the same root causes, but may be a result of diverging security interests with a neighbouring country, poverty, unemployment, or lack of socioeconomic opportunities, along with negative enablers such as lack of law enforcement or maritime domain awareness. What is noteworthy about the symptoms here is that they affect multiple countries. They are not strictly national issues constrained to a single state. In other words, Facilitated Dialogue is relevant when symptoms affect various parties, and when cooperation is rare because of a conflict between involved states or non-state groups. In this way, the concept of Facilitated Dialogue entails that "[N]ational security (…) is not in itself a meaningful level of analysis. Because security dynamics are inherently relational, no nation's security is self-contained."[2] Consequently, it makes little sense to observe insecurity in Afghanistan as an exclusively domestic phenomenon and piracy in the Gulf of Guinea as a particular Nigerian or Ghanaian problem. While symptoms may have domestic as well as transnational causes, the Facilitated Dialogue concept focuses on the latter. The concept is an attempt to address such symptoms through a focus on the mutual ground by involving relevant regional actors in a dialogue.

Defining the symptoms in PSF's Afghanistan programme (2018-2020) is an example of how complicated such definitions can be. Insecurity, for instance, is an easily recognised problem in Afghanistan, but its root causes include both political, economic, military, and social factors. It entails *ongoing insecurity* (the state's lack of military capabilities along with an ongoing insurgency), *weak and bad governance* (lacking rule of law, unmet basic social support expectations from the public, wanting education), *organised crime* (human trafficking, drug smuggling), and the *involvement of foreign countries* among other things. As these root causes interact with each other

(2) (Buzan and Wæver 2003, 43)

in ways that are not easily separable, comprehensive efforts are needed to address insecurity. Whichever root causes may be involved, Facilitated Dialogue is useful when cooperation between affected parties - be they states or non-state groups - is fragile or non-existent. In most conflicts, these actors maintain a focus on obstacles rather than opportunities for improvement, often to the mutual disadvantage of all parties.

2.2.1. Purpose

Facilitated Dialogue projects can attempt to redirect such focuses, but it is important to stress that the concept cannot directly address or solve the root causes of conflict on its own. Such a goal would be far too ambitious to realise for several reasons. First, reality is never so simple as to discern root causes from each other. Second, these root causes refer to underlying societal tendencies and conditions, not just the actions of a single unified actor. Third, the Facilitated Dialogue activities are limited to a small circle of individuals organised with a somewhat limited financial capacity. For what purposes, then, can the concept be applied?

While the concept cannot directly address root causes, there is no doubt that the organisational context wherein the concept has hitherto been applied does have an overall ambition of addressing root causes. Any instance of Facilitated Dialogue seeks to contribute to this ambition through dialogue as a platform for stabilisation. While the concept cannot reduce intercommunal violence, economic inequality, or any humanitarian crisis, it does have an ambition of bringing together influential individuals from opposing sides in a given conflict in order to generate ideas and build trust and social networks among these. The facilitation of dialogue in itself is assumed to be the first step in order for the parties to find common ground and understanding and thereby contribute to the overall ambition of addressing root causes.

Consequently, all projects must consider the overall ambition of the organisational context. The projects must be designed in such a way that they contribute to the realisation of this overall ambition of addressing root causes. In this perspective, the concept does aspire to affect root causes indirectly in the long term.

2.3. Track II and Track 1.5

The concept of Facilitated Dialogue borrows from the theory behind Track II and Track 1.5 diplomacy. This section defines these two terms and examines similarities and differences with Facilitated Dialogue.

Track II

The work by Peter Jones on Track II diplomacy (2015) constitutes a comprehensive examination of the term. Therefore, this report takes his definition as a point of departure. Track II diplomacy is

> "[U]nofficial dialogues, generally between two antagonistic parties, and often facilitated by an impartial Third Party and involving individuals with some close connections to their respective official communities, focused on cooperative efforts to explore new ways to resolve differences over, or discuss new approaches to, policy-relevant issues." (Jones 2015, 24)

Many different definitions of Track II exist (Davidson and Montville 1981, 153; Kaye 2007, 6–8; McDonald 1987, 1; Montville 1987, 7), but no description is authoritative as various authors tend to emphasise different aspects of the concept. Building on multiple interpretations, Peter Jones has identified recurring themes and objectives of Track II dialogue: (Jones 2015, 24–25)

- The events are small and informal.
- They bring together people from various sides of a conflict.
- An (impartial) third party usually facilitates the event.
- Participants usually have access to decision makers in their respective countries and the ability to influence policy.
- The participants are supposed to explore the root causes of the conflict and not reiterate their official positions.
- The dialogues are supposed to be an ongoing process and not a single instance.
- Addressing the deep-seated psychological aspects of the disputes tends to be seen as just as necessary as a discussion of specific differences.
- The dialogues are conducted quietly to create an atmosphere in which out-of-the-box thinking is encouraged.

Another trait that Jones does not explicitly mention, but which remains imperative for reasons described above, is the necessity of *transfer* of outputs from a Track II event onto circles beyond the initial participants. Jones

mentions that the participants usually have access to decision makers or can influence policy in some way. Unless the event has no ambition of contributing to change in policy direction, transfer is necessary. Such possible and desirable policy changes are (Jones 2015, 25–26):

- *Changed perception* of the conflict and the other side.
- Opening new channels of communication between parties.
- Identification and development of new options for future negotiations – or *idea generation.*
- Creation of a community of experts.
- Preparing the *transformation* of ideas developed at similar events to the official decision makers (Track I).
- The *development of networks* of influential people.

Track 1.5
Another relevant concept is Track 1.5 diplomacy, defined as

> "[U]nofficial dialogues within which all or most of the participants from the conflicting sides are officials, though they can also be nonofficials acting under something approaching "instructions" from their respective governments. Despite this semiofficial status, they participate in dialogues in their "private capacities," and often rely on an unofficial third party to facilitate the process as a nonofficial dialogue, often in strict secrecy. The essential element of [Track 1.5] is that it is very close to an official process but one which the two parties do not wish to refer to as such, often because of issues relating to "recognition."(Jones 2015, 19)

Here, transfer happens directly because the proxies of the decision makers operate with the knowledge and, to some degree, the mandate of the decision makers. Table 1 illustrates three critical differences between Track 1.5 and Track II.

Table 1 Key Differences between Track 1.5 and Track II		
Difference	Track 1.5	Track II
Purpose	Secret[3] negotiations between individuals authorised by decision makers.	Informal discussions of specific differences and deep-rooted psychological aspects of the conflict.
Participant background and relation to decision makers and official policy	Official and non-official participants, acting in their private capacities, acting under something approaching 'instruction' from governments.	Official and non-official participants, acting exclusively on own behalf.
Degree of informality	Low: While participants are not bound entirely by a mandate, their words and actions carry formal weight.	High: While participants have access to decision makers or are otherwise able to influence policy, they are free to do as they please.
Degree of secrecy	Medium/high: 'Quiet negotiations' taking place, because parties may not wish to recognise or admit that negotiations are taking place.	Low: While Chatham House Rules are often applied, the event itself or the participant's names are not secret.
Representation of official positions	Yes, to some degree.	No.

Diplomacy

Peter Jones argues that Track II dialogues do not constitute 'diplomacy' which he defines as official state representation (Jones 2015, 10). Participants at Track II events are not supposed to represent, defend, or stay within the limits of the official policy. Instead, they have the freedom to brainstorm without hewing to official policy. The realities are murkier for Track 1.5: Such events have a negotiation-element to them, but they do not constitute official diplomacy as their purpose is often to give all participating sides deniability. Therefore, calling Track 1.5 outright 'diplomacy' may be going too far, but because participants at Track 1.5 are acting on instructions (not an outright 'mandate'), there is a representational aspect to their participation. The term 'diplomacy' is not used in this report when referring to Track II, Track 1.5, or Facilitated Dialogue.

Other relevant literary tendencies

This report takes Track 1.5 and Track 2 diplomacy as a point of departure, but the application of other theories and fields could lead to a more expansive,

(3) Neither type of Facilitated Dialogue can be said to occur in secrecy. In table 1, the reference to secrecy is a citation of the literature.

accurate, and nuanced programme theory. Additional perspectives lie beyond the scope of this report, but some possibilities deserve a brief mention in order to guide future research. The conflict resolution literature and related subgenres (Bercovitch and Jackson 2009; Leng 2000; Long and Brecke 2003) would offer valuable additional perspectives: For instance, detailed context analysis of the settings in which Facilitated Dialogue could be useful, a more robust theoretical foundation for understanding the term *conflict* (Axt, Milososki, and Schwarz 2006), and insights into the role of a third-party facilitator (Kleiboer 1998). Network theory and social network analysis could also prove insightful in order to understand how transfer happens in both institutional and individual level dialogues: Such analysis could guide whom to invite (individuals connected to decision makers) and whom to involve in a network created at the activities themselves (Kadushin 2012; Kilduff and Tsai 2003; Wasserman and Faust 1994).

2.4. Foundational Theory of Change

The Facilitated Dialogue essentially seeks to create cooperation between states or non-state groups who share a common problem. The following theory of change and the assumptions embedded into it form the basis of the Facilitated Dialogue:

> IF we bring institutions or individuals together in Facilitated Dialogue, and IF these institutions and individuals can affect policy in their respective countries, THEN it is possible to foster cooperation between countries who have a stake in a given issue.

The first assumption entails that relevant institutions or individuals are willing and able to participate. Experience shows that this may not always be the case. Everything ranging from flat-out denial to participate and practical issues of visas, security clearance, or travel plans may hinder participation. If such problems emerge, it is essential to identify the reason for non-participation to see if such matters are practical and can be solved, or whether they are symptomatic of a broad tendency that may fundamentally challenge the utility of Facilitated Dialogue in the specific context. The latter would call for a change in for instance participants, the institution of cooperation, or a change of venue.

The setting in which institutions and individuals are brought together needs to be conducive for cooperation, as shown in the programme theories. However, participation and interaction cannot lead to change in itself as the participants at Facilitated Dialogue events are not necessarily decision makers.

Besides, the reason for bringing them together is not to take political decisions directly, but to affect the development of policies within societies that can transform into sustainable political choices in their respective countries. The participants can be officials from institutions and thus wield power within these, but it is not a necessity that the circle of participants exclusively includes institutional or national decision makers. The core objective is that outputs (ideas, experiences) from the Facilitated Dialogue is *transferred* to decision makers. Peter Jones defines transfer as "*the business of moving the results (…) into the official process, or into a broader dialogue in each society, or to some other audience.*" (Jones 2015, 136). In the same way, the outputs from Facilitated Dialogue must move to circles beyond the initial participants. For that to happen, the participants must have some form of connection to and influence on the formal decision-making process – the policy level.

Lastly, if both prerequisites mentioned above are met, then Facilitated Dialogue can potentially foster cooperation between states. However, it is important to stress that Facilitated Dialogue is a forum within which individuals from conflicting countries meet, and positive and constructive outcomes depend mainly on the attitude and interests of participants. While RDDC can facilitate discussion, the participants make the actual difference. As argued by Peter Jones (Jones 2015, 82), such projects are a multiyear and multilevel process. Facilitated Dialogue may *contribute* to cooperation and stability, but it would be too ambitious to assume that fruitful dialogues are automatically going to transform into cooperation.

2.5. Features of Facilitated Dialogue

Based on the conceptual comparison of Track 1.5 and Track II, this subsection compares aspects of the institutional and informal levels of the Facilitated Dialogue concept to extract key features of both. Sections 3 and 4 expand upon both levels.

Desired Impact and Means of Achievement

The long-term objectives at both levels are similar, as both seek to contribute to establishing cooperation between states and/or non-state groups in order to solve problems that the affected states or non-state groups share. The issue itself is usually not something that a single event or project can change on its own which is a limitation of these dialogues in line with Peter Jones's argument that "*You are not alone. Avoid the tendency to think that your activity is, by itself, going to 'make peace'. Real peace is the product of a multilevel, multiyear process of which your activity is likely but a small part.*" (Jones 2015, 82). Therefore, Facilitated Dialogue on both levels is an attempt to move in the

'right' direction. However, the institutional and individual level vary with respect to means of achievement. The former seeks to build cooperation between states/non-state groups through institutional collaboration whereas the latter seeks to affect change through influential individuals who participate at an event and thereafter share their experiences and ideas with decision makers in their state/group.

Table 2
Key Differences within Facilitated Dialogue

Difference between	**Institutional level** (Similar to Track 1.5)	**Individual level** (Similar to Track II)
Nature of the problem	The problem involves *multiple parties,* and its consequences are *adverse for all*.	
Desired impact	Establishing cooperation between states and/or non-state groups in order to address common problems.	
Means of achievement	Through initiation and development of sustainable institutional cooperation.	Through informal meetings between influential individuals who transfer outputs to decision makers in the states or to non-state groups.
Participant background	Employed by or otherwise connected to a relevant institution.	Connected to decision makers or possessing the ability to influence policy.
Formal/informal	**Semi-formal**: Participants are acting on their own behalf – but also behalf of their institutions.	**Informal**: Participants are acting on their own behalf.
Degree of secrecy	**Not secret**, but Chatham House Rules may apply. Subjects and contents of discussions are partly publicised after the event as policy briefs and similar publications in order to provide the participants with written material that can be of use after the project, and also to promote Danish public diplomacy.	
Representation of official positions	**Limited**: While participants are not expected to leave their institutional affiliation at the door, neither are they supposed to negotiate or defend their official viewpoints.	**None**: Participants are actively encouraged to brainstorm without hewing to their side's official positions, although they may explain their side's perceptions.
Third party role (RDDC)	RDDC as facilitator and moderator, RDDC as a participant.	RDDC as facilitator and moderator.
Danish interest	Danish Public Diplomacy.	

Participant Background

'Participant background' refers to the background, affiliation, education, and other such qualities of a participant in the Facilitated Dialogue, and here the institutional and individual levels differ the most (as the names imply). Because the Facilitated Dialogue at the institutional level seeks to create cooperation between institutions, typical participants have a current affiliation

with an institution, but their knowledge about the subject of discussion is a crucial aspect of their presence. They do not participate just because of their affiliation. Their knowledge and subject matter expertise are an essential component. In some cases, it may prove useful to include participants without any present affiliation, but rather based on their knowledge, as long as other participants have an institutional affiliation. This institutional alignment of some participants is necessary as it allows the outputs of the dialogue to disseminate in the respective institutions. It also means that the participants are not just participating on their own behalf. Instead, they represent their institutions – but without the dialogue being considered negotiation. For dialogue at the individual level, the participants must have some form of access to decision makers in their respective countries. 'Decision maker' is not specified in this report, but refers to leaders and policymakers who have power or influence over the policy and decisions of their state or non-state group.

Formal/Informal

Individual level dialogue resembles Track II as the dialogue itself is attempting to create an environment in which participants can discuss freely without their statements being interpreted as the official policy of their country or organisation (Allen and Sharp 2017, 109). Institutional level dialogue resembles Track 1.5, as this level puts less emphasis on brainstorming and more on specific opportunities for institutional cooperation. A further difference between Track 1.5 diplomacy and institutional level dialogue is that statements and discussions are somewhat ascribable to the institutions in question. In other words, as individual level dialogue seeks to create room for brainstorming, it is essential that participants do not feel pressured to stay within the policy confinements of their state or non-state group. Institutional level dialogue on the other hand envisions less brainstorming as the goal is to encourage the creation of formal cooperation between institutions.

Role of the Third Party

A key difference between the two levels is how to conceptualise the role of RDDC. In Track II and Track 1.5 diplomacy, the facilitator of dialogue is not a 'part.' This also goes for the individual level, but not for the institutional one. Here, RDDC is facilitating cooperation between two or more institutions, but RDDC may also use this opportunity to form bonds and networks between itself and other relevant institutions. While the central premise of the dialogue remains the same – i.e. to facilitate cooperation between institutions to promote cooperation between countries – this also means that RDDC can use the institutional level project to develop collaboration between itself and

another institution. When promoted to a proper level, this cooperation can be applied to establish collaboration with other institutions.

An example of this is the cooperation and relation between RDDC and Pakistan's National Defence University (NDU). Initially, this cooperation meant to include Afghan military institutions from the start, but this turned out to be impractical for various reasons. The relationship between RDDC and NDU continued. Because of this relationship, RDDC will gradually improve its position to facilitate dialogue between the security establishments of Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Danish Interest: Public Diplomacy

Promotion of Danish public diplomacy is a remarkable difference between Track II/Track 1.5 on the one hand and the Facilitated Dialogue on the other. Both levels of the Facilitated Dialogue concept seek to promote and brand Denmark in three ways. First, the participants of the dialogue are made aware that the Danish Peace and Stabilisation Fund is sponsoring the event, and that Denmark is attempting to contribute positively to stabilisation through talks. Second, the Royal Danish Embassies in the countries are actively involved as a partner, thereby expanding their network and outreach to the institutions and individuals involved in the dialogue. Third, through press releases, media appearances, and social media activity, the broader public in a given country is informed about Denmark's engagement. These elements may promote and brand Denmark as a responsible country with constructive aims that seeks to create dialogue. The promotion of Danish public diplomacy is not the core output or argument, but it serves as a significant added benefit. The role and interests of Denmark and the implication of these interests will be further explored in section 2.6.4.

2.6. Results Framework

Inspired by Allen and Sharp (2017) (Allen and Sharp 2017, 107), the following framework is applied to describe activities and results at different stages during a project.

Input consists of everything used and considered during the *planning stages* of the event. It encompasses all aspects of the project before its realisation as an event(s). This includes, but is not limited to, prior decisions such as what to achieve, whom to invite, which venue to utilise, how to achieve the desired goal, contextual considerations, etc.

Activity refers to the processes that take place during an event. This relates primarily to the social interaction that takes place before, during, between, and after sessions of the event. This social interaction can lead to different outputs.

Output is the results and experiences from the activities. For instance, an output is the increased trust between participants (trust building), the established networks of individuals from the event (network building), any perception change triggered (perception change), any (new) idea proposed (idea generation), and knowledge exchanged among participants (knowledge exchange). Moderation is a way to ensure the quality and direction of the outputs. 'Activity' and 'output' do not take place at a defined time or space during or after the event. It can occur after, or it can develop during an event. For this reason, 'activity' and 'output' belong in the same category in figure 1 ('at the event').

Outcome is layered in the sense that some outcomes are immediate, and some are intermediate. As every facilitated dialogue aims at creating cooperation between states or groups, a necessary early outcome is the *transfer* of experiences and results from the event to other stakeholders and decision makers in the affected states or groups. An intermediate outcome is changes in personal or official approaches toward the other involved states or groups or a change in policy toward increased cooperation. Outcomes are generally hard to measure as they reveal themselves over varying periods and in small steps.

Lastly, **impact** is the desired result of Facilitated Dialogue projects from a long-term perspective: Cooperation between states and/or non-state groups involved in the project. The impact of a programme can only be viewed over long periods, and the impact of a single project may be impossible to determine as other similar projects take place both during and after the project at hand. Furthermore, impact is also affected by political decisions beyond the scope of any program, which must be taken into consideration in all phases of a project.

Organisers and facilitators of projects have the most influence in the early stages of a process as it is here decisions about the project are made. At later stages of the project, more and more actors and stakeholders become involved. This has two significant effects: First, at some point, the organisers have little or no influence on what happens – this is likely to be the case after the output phase. Second, it becomes harder and harder to discern the results of a single project as more and more stakeholders and actors become involved. Therefore, organisers should pay close attention to the things they can measure, perceive, and change in the initial parts of a project

2.6.1. Indicators

An essential aspect of a results framework is the indicators used to measure, i.e. to 'indicate' whether a specific activity, output, outcome, or impact occurs because of a project's stages of activity, output, outcome, and impact. Indicators vary between projects, and it would thus not be meaningful to attempt to make a complete list. Instead, this subsection seeks to give examples of indicators while simultaneously insisting that every project or measurement should tailor these to match the actual circumstances of a project.

As the organisers gradually have less and less influence over the direction of the project, it becomes more challenging to measure and ascertain whether and how outputs develop and if they lead to desired outcomes. For this reason, the indicators during the early stages of a project are much more visible and specific than those in the later stages.

Table 3
Indicators

Stage	Element	Indicator (examples)
Activity	Social interaction	The participants socialise: They exchange cards, go beyond pleasantries and talk about subjects at hand, share their personal experiences or beliefs.
	Moderation	The moderators chair the discussions/sessions in an orderly fashion, avoid dominating the discussion with their own views. Participants do not object to the conduct of the moderator.
Output	Changing perceptions	Participants state that they have changed their perceptions. Perception changes in written material. Participants are (more) willing to participate in future events.
	Building relationships & networks	The participants interact on multiple occasions during an event, exchange business cards, reach out to each other afterwards.
	Idea generation	Ideas and recommendations appear from the discussions that go beyond simple 'should' statements.
Outcome	Transfer (immediate)	Presence at the event of institutional decision makers. Presence at the event of known affiliates of decision makers. Sharing of post-event publication among decision makers. Decision makers express familiarity with the event/project.
	Cooperation (intermediate)	Signed agreements, joint projects or change in official policy toward the other part.
Impact	Cooperation	Official cooperation (with references to the project).

2.7. Meaningful Social Interaction as Prerequisite

Before moving on to the programme theories of the institutional and individual levels, proper attention must be paid to a fundamental mechanism at all Facilitated Dialogue projects and events: *Meaningful social interaction*.

While the two levels vary in terms of the mechanisms that produce outputs, all outputs require social interaction to some degree. Without social interaction, the rest of the envisioned elements at the events on either level cannot take place. The participants need to engage with each other, during the formal parts of the events (during the planned debates and interactions) and more importantly, during the informal parts (breaks, dinners, icebreakers). It is through social interaction that interpersonal relationships are built and ideas appear.

However, a simple exchange of courtesies is not enough. Small talk is social interaction, but it is hardly enough to achieve the outputs described in the programme theories below. Instead, *meaningful* social interaction is required which goes beyond small talk and involves a substantial exchange of arguments, views, and so on.

2.8. Contextual Factors: Purposes, Opportunities, and Limits

In what contexts can the concept of Facilitated Dialogue be applied? Since all past instances have been organised by RDDC under the Danish Peace and Stabilisation Fund, it would be natural to associate the concept with the Fund. In order to present a more meaningful answer to the question, however, this section will explore four themes. The first part deals with the conflict scenarios in which the concept is useful. The second part explains why there must be a need for mediation in order for the application of the concept to make sense. The third part discusses the context in which the institutional level dialogue is useful compared to the individual level. The fourth and final part briefly explores which effect it may have on the dialogue that Denmark – and not some other country – acts as a facilitator.

2.8.1. Conflict Intensity

Application of the Facilitated Dialogue concept makes sense in contexts where some form or level of conflict exists between multiple parties, but where such conflict is not too intensive. Implementation of Facilitated Dialogue requires some level of contextual stability and physical safety. This has three implications. First, in a scenario where there are ongoing active hostilities between involved parties or when bilateral tensions are rising sharply, it becomes harder to gather relevant individuals, to encourage them to engage in constructive dialogue, and to transfer the results and experiences from the activity onto decision makers from the involved parties. An ongoing war between two states would thus render institutional dialogue meaningless as the military organisations of the states are actively fighting each other.

The individual level dialogue, however, would keep its raison d'être as it can function as a diplomatic backchannel, much like Track 1.5 diplomacy, but it can also have a diminished effect in a high conflict scenario as such backchannels can be seen as a possible 'Trojan horse' for decision makers at home.

Second, as explored in sections 3 and 4, there is an inherent preference in the theory to organise activities in the countries where the conflict unfolds in order to keep the participants in the conflict context. In a high conflict scenario, it would be ill advised to carry out activities in or near combat zones, but the activities can take place in another (perhaps neighbouring) country. Such an approach is not without cost as removing the activity from the conflict situation has disadvantages, as explored later.

Third, as the tensions between countries rise, so does the requirements for practical aspects of an activity. It will be harder to get the necessary paperwork, cancellation of flights is a possibility, the parties may refuse to meet, or high-ranking people may object or disallow the project going forward. Such difficulties can also be present in low-intensity conflicts. When working in conflict environments – no matter the intensity – these factors will always be present.

In reality, large-scale conventional war is scarce. Past projects and activities have taken place in more low-scale armed conflict scenarios (insurgencies, proxy wars, etc.). Operating in such a context is not as serious a hindrance as the above-mentioned high-intensity scenario. Usually, parts of the countries involved in a low-intensity conflict will be relatively safe, and activities can be organised there when taking the necessary and sufficient security measures required to ensure physical safety.

2.8.2. Need for Mediation

Without a need for mediation, Facilitated Dialogue makes little sense. If countries or parties agree completely, cooperate fully, enjoy sufficiently good relations to address symptoms or root causes on their own, are not co-stakeholders in the same conflict, or if the conflict is already being addressed by negotiations between the parties, it would not make sense to utilise the concept. The usefulness of Facilitated Dialogue is limited to instances when two or more parties in conflict do not have a functioning dialogue platform through which they can discuss the issues at hand. The concept aims at providing the initial, informal, and primarily explorative conditions as a prelude to more regular or meaningful contact between the parties. It is

precisely for this purpose that the concept underlines that actual negotiations are not the aim of activities. In summary, in order for the application of Facilitated Dialogue to make sense, there must be a need for a mediator, even though mediation alone does not automatically create a sustainable dialogue platform – this remains the joint task of the involved parties.

2.8.3. Levels of Dialogue

As seen below, the Facilitated Dialogue concept consists of two different types or levels. Institutional dialogue seeks to enhance cooperation between institutions from different sides in the conflict. RDDC seeks to include military research institutions in general, and a principle of 'balance' is important when considering which institutions to include. When engaging with the national defence university (NDU) in one country, it is assumed to be best to try to engage the NDU of the other instead of – e.g. – the given ministry of foreign affairs. An equilibrium between the participants in terms of rank and status is vital in order to avoid a symbolic imbalance that may adversely affect dialogue. Of course, when one country is a regional hegemon, and the other country is relatively minor, there is an inherent imbalance in the conflict itself. This renders it even more critical to maintain an equilibrium.

In some conflict settings, it is difficult to engage with the military research institutions of both countries at once. In the case of the Afghanistan-Pakistan projects, RDDC has created and maintained a strong relationship with Pakistan's NDU, but is still struggling to establish the same level of cooperation with the Afghan counterpart for several reasons. These include an initial resistance to engage with the Pakistani NDU and bureaucratic restriction of access to the relevant individuals and also that the Afghan NDU is a relatively new institution and therefore challenged with regard to academic proficiency vis-à-vis their Pakistani counterparts. In this situation, attempts have been made to contact the ministries of defence and foreign affairs. In this scenario, the dialogue is becoming something of a hybrid between the two levels, as the main objective is to clear the way for future activities where both institutions can participate (along with other outputs as discussed in section 3). Generally, if the two institutions cannot be brought together immediately, it may be worthwhile to initiate contacts with one institution initially and work toward including the other at a later activity.

The assumption that 'balance' is essential in the relation between participants also has implications on the kind of participants who may be involved. Thus, an institutional level dialogue with an institution on the one hand and influential individuals without institutional ties on the other makes little sense.

In such a case, it would not be meaningful to follow the programme theory for institutional level dialogue. Consequently, application of the institutional level dialogue only makes sense when the involved parties are official institutions. If both principal parties in any given conflict are not representing official institutions, it would make more sense to envision such a dialogue as an individual level dialogue.

2.8.4. Denmark as Facilitator

Which interests does Denmark have in conducting Facilitated Dialogue? How is Denmark perceived in the role of facilitator? Which effect do these things have on facilitation? It is essential to consider that the perception of Denmark's role may vary considerably among Danish practitioners and non-Danish partners. Therefore, a critical reflection on the Danish role is necessary. These questions are very expansive, and a comprehensive answer cannot be adequately rendered here. Thus, the ambition of this section is to explore possible themes and sharpen the attention to these questions.

Besides the public diplomacy benefits that facilitation may have, as explored in section 2.3., Denmark may have other interests, including commercial/economic, security, and political interests. By e.g. fighting piracy in the waters around Africa, Denmark may seek to ensure the safety of Danish shipping, a vital part of the Danish economy. By being present in Afghanistan, Denmark may contribute to denying jihadis the possibility of a safe haven that might be used as a terrorist platform for attacking the West. Simultaneously, by building societal stability in Afghanistan, Denmark might aim to ensure human security in the region, thus reducing the need for people to seek refuge elsewhere. By engaging in global issues in general – and especially on issues that have relevance for NATO or coalition partners – Denmark can 'brand' itself among partners and allies. Being aware that Denmark may have such interests – or be perceived to have such interests – is essential for programme theory for two reasons: First, such interests form the basis for the mandate that the Danish Peace and Stabilisation Fund may have. This may have an impact on how, why, and with whom to organise projects. Second, being clear on why Denmark is motivated to act as a facilitator may increase transparency and reduce misunderstandings and distrust.

The general attitude toward Denmark in and with the countries involved in a Facilitated Dialogue project is another critical dimension to consider. Hitherto, RDDC has emphasised the Danish role as a small and honest broker, and in the narrative of Denmark as a small and benign actor, it might be easier to build relations with partners to bring relevant sides together. A negative turn

in public attitude toward Denmark or a sudden deterioration in the bilateral relations between Denmark and a given country can have the opposite effect. While it is hard to know for certain, it might e.g. have been impossible to organise Facilitated Dialogue in the immediate aftermath of the 2005 'cartoon crisis'. When organising Facilitated Dialogue projects, the organisers must carefully consider such contextual factors.

3. Institutional Level

What characterises the institutional level is the involvement of individuals embedded in institutions from states who share a problem. Through facilitated discussion and social interaction, relations are built between these institutions to create mutual cooperation and in so doing, create cooperation between the states to which they belong.

An example is RDDC's projects that seek to create cooperation between security institutions in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Several issues affect both[4] countries amid adversarial and potentially worsening bilateral relations. These adverse relations inhibit attempts to combat common issues. The underlying assumption behind these projects is that security institutions (such as the military or intelligence agencies) in Afghanistan and Pakistan play a significant role in formulating the security and foreign policy of their respective states. Therefore, the engagement of these institutions in a facilitated dialogue frame simultaneously addresses the specific security-related problems that the countries share, at the same time contributing to mend bilateral ties. The model in figure 1 illustrates how cooperation between institutions can lead to cooperation between states and non-state groups.

Theory of change for institutional level Facilitated Dialogue
IF we bring individuals from relevant institutions together in Facilitated Dialogue,
AND IF these individuals and their institutions agree to (increased) cooperation,
THEN it is possible to foster cooperation between states relevant to a given issue.

Another example is combatting piracy in the Gulf of Guinea.[5] The primary objective is to facilitate cooperation between relevant institutions. The context would be a little different as the Gulf of Guinea programme in the PSF focuses on combatting piracy by promoting cooperation between states in a maritime region. Such cooperation would not directly aim at improving

(4) Some of these issues no not only affect Afghanistan and Pakistan alone – they also affect other regional countries (for example Iran) and other international neighbors and stakeholders. Therefore, the institutional level can involve more than two countries.

(5) This is a hypothetical example and not based on experience.

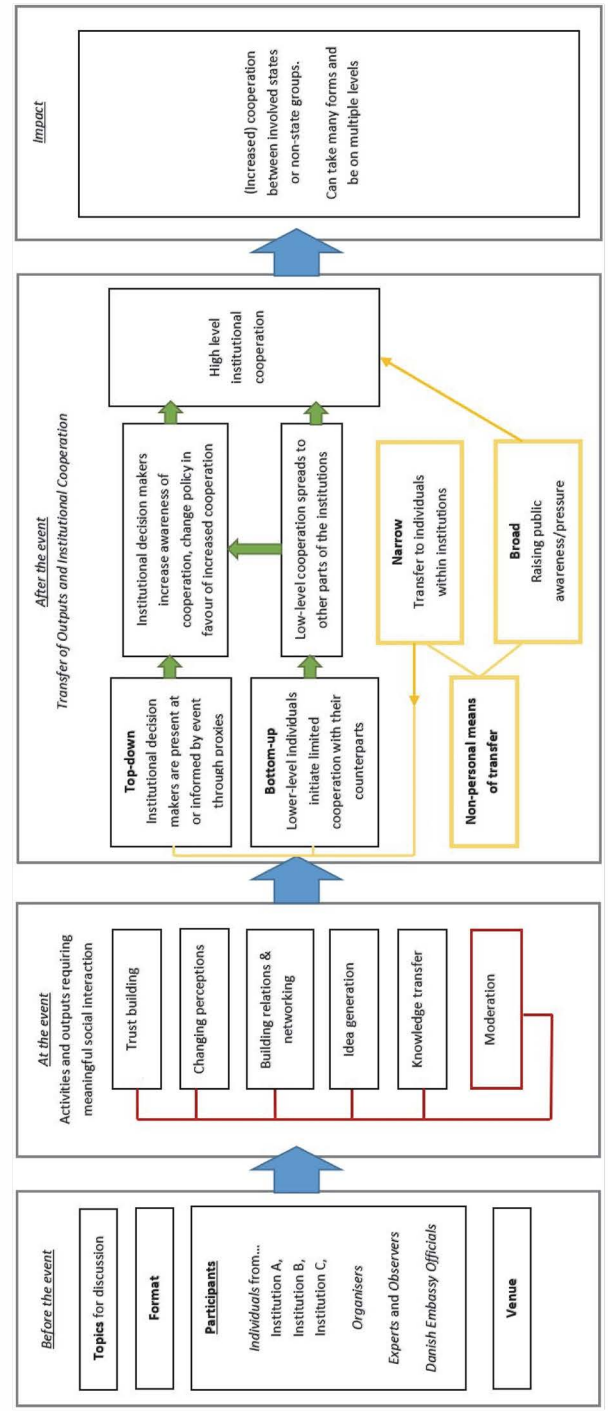

Figure 1 - Logic Model for Institutional Level Facilitated Dialogue

bilateral ties, although it may be an added benefit. Another difference is that the project in the Gulf of Guinea example is aimed at combatting symptoms of the problem – not the root causes.

Change takes time. What piracy in the Gulf of Guinea and stability in Afghanistan have in common is that such issues are simply not resolved through a single project, lasting under a year. By nature, it takes years and many actors to solve such issues (Jones 2015, 82). Thus, projects organised by RDDC plays a numerically small, but still potentially significant role.

3.1. Objectives and Assumptions

The objective of the institutional level is to facilitate dialogue between institutions as a starting point in order to create sustainable cooperation (e.g. without RDDC facilitation) between relevant institutions. Three central assumptions lay the groundwork for reaching this objective:

- Sufficiently **skilled** individuals exist in the institutions.
- These individuals are **able** to attend events within a project (not obstructed by formal and physical barriers).
- These individuals are **willing** to attend (not obstructed by societal, ideological, cultural, or political barriers).

The first assumption relates to skill. The institutions are supposed to cooperate on a given topic or issue. Thus, participants must be knowledgable about the topic of discussion. If a project in Afghanistan seeks to enhance the prevention of drug trafficking from one country to another, the participants must somehow relate to this topic. Otherwise, the meeting will revolve around general themes which are harder to condense into some form of cooperation. If specific topics are to be discussed to create cooperation in these specific areas, then it is necessary for the participants to have some fundamental knowledge about that topic. However, at least in the initial phase, the level of individuals' expertise can be limited due to many factors in a state in conflict, e.g. general level of education, other immediate priorities for the best-suited participants, the network of the individual participant, and so on. There must be an acceptance that some initial projects may have a more general 'get-to-know-each-other' objective as a necessary stepping stone for future content-driven projects.

The second assumption relates to formal or physical barriers to attendance, such as leadership approval and visa restrictions. The leadership of the institutions must approve – or at least not oppose – cooperation with the

counterpart. Visa restrictions can also block a project. Therefore, proper and timely planning, support from Danish embassies, and relatively long and potentially cumbersome application processes must be anticipated. Another matter is the means of transportation. Project planning must assess whether the chosen means of travel will be available, and contingency transportation must be considered. These assumptions may seem trivial, but experience shows that such practical matter cannot be taken for granted. Consequently, formal procedures must be initiated well ahead of the project itself. If the participants are not able to visit each other's countries, a third country can be considered as explained below.[6]

The third assumption relates to psychological factors. As identified by the PSF's Afghanistan programme (2018-2020) "*Some Afghan participants in earlier phase of engagement under Af-Pak II refused to attend events in Pakistan*." (Denmark's Ministry of Defence 2018, 34). The programme specifies that Afghans can be hostile toward Pakistan, as they are suspicious of Pakistan. Therefore, they may hesitate to participate in events with/in Pakistan. A sudden or temporary increase in tension between Afghanistan and Pakistan may also result in an unwillingness to participate. Such *force majeure* cannot be wholly mitigated when planning and facilitating projects, but careful, sound, and step-wise explanation of project objectives to participants can often neutralise most of the reluctance among the individual participants.

3.2. Programme Theory

The programme theory illustrates how Facilitated Dialogue at the institutional level works to create institutional cooperation, and thereby cooperation between states. The programme theory consists of four stages: The first two stages, *before the event* and *at the event*, describe the activities that take place before and at events. The reader should keep in mind that a single project might contain multiple events. The third section, *after the event*, looks at the accumulated outputs and outcomes of all events within a project. The fourth section, *impact*, looks at the accumulated envisioned impact. For reasons described above, the impact of a single project is often immeasurable as multiple projects and stakeholders affect what happens. Thus, the impact level describes the envisioned impact of Facilitated Dialogue events if this project was the only relevant variable.

(6) This option is perhaps more relevant for Informal Dialogues (IDs). If participants are not able to visit each other's countries, how can they be expected to initiate formal cooperation?

3.2.1. Before the Event

The first stage consists of pre-event considerations and decisions, such as **topics** to be discussed at the event, the **format** of the event, the **participants** invited to the event, and the **venue** (both country and facilities) in which the event will take place.

Topics

The first type of input covers topics that relate to the problems that the project attempts to address. While the overall objective may be stability in Afghanistan, this is too broad. Instability is a multi-faceted problem, including many diverse aspects, some of which are endogenous to a single country while others arise through interaction with other states or groups within other states. Therefore, a topic must be further sub-categorised to facilitate productive discussions. Otherwise, discussions may remain on a very general and trivial level. The topics must be specified, so they do not constrain the participants by being too specific or technical. At the same time, the topics should not direct participants toward superficial discussions.

Format

There is no specific way institutional level projects must be organised, and the format of the project can take different forms: Seminars and conferences, including workshops, speeches, lectures, and other things. When deciding the format, it is essential to consider that devoting time to informal chats, breaks, dinners, and other social settings where participants can interact and socialise outside the formal programme is a vital component. These are not just mental breaks, but an essential part of social interaction which can lead to the envisioned outputs: Trust building, network building, and changing perceptions. All these changes initially take place at the individual level.

Participants

The third type of input relates to which institutions and individuals are involved in the projects:

Institutions from the relevant countries

The *raison d'ĕtre* of institutional dialogues is the involvement of institutions relevant to a given conflict. In the case of Afghanistan and Pakistan, security institutions in the form of military institutions of higher learning – such at the National Defence University (NDU) in Islamabad and Marshal Fahim National Defence University (MFNDU) in Kabul – are obvious candidates. Both countries have security-related challenges, and it is therefore crucial to

identify institutions that are involved in security policy in their respective countries.

In the Gulf of Guinea example, the participating institutions would also be security institutions of higher learning, but the participants would be either institutional decision makers or individuals who work within the maritime domain and piracy. In this case, the focus would be on identifying institutions and forums where the influence on engaging in developing constructive policies toward regional cooperation on maritime security would be the main priority. This differs from the case of Afghanistan, where the main priority is more directed toward general conflict resolution. Many of the mechanisms, however, remain the same.

The number of participating institutions should reflect different or conflicting policies/perceptions in a conflict. However, previous experience shows that it can be difficult to organise a conference between two institutions if their countries suffer from bad bilateral relations. In this case, it is necessary to create trust, cooperation, and shared understanding between RDDC as a facilitator and the partner institution. Such initial step can be made for two reasons: First, by 'starting slowly', RDDC and the institution(s) can agree on the intention of future projects before launching the primary sequence of the project. Second, even if no other institution participates, the project can still lead to productive results, such as insight into the conflict, idea generation, and strengthening the ties between RDDC and the partner institution, which in turn will lead to an expansion of the project in the future.

When it comes to the participating individuals from the institutions, the following descriptions are not to be understood as requirements, but as a guidance on best practice based on experiences made by RDDC. Top-level officials from the institutions, in the case of defence institutions usually a high-ranked military officer, serve as the formal head of the delegation from the institutions. Other senior officials may also be present, perhaps possessing some expert knowledge about the topics at hand. The participation of high-level participation from all institutions is necessary to draw sufficient attention to the project in order to promote opportunities for formal cooperation between the institutions. Analysts, researchers, or other non-top-level participants usually possess the most detailed knowledge about the subject at hand, making their participation vital to secure content driven elements. They attend the event in the capacity of their present or former area of work and expertise. These participants are fundamental to future institutional cooperation with other institutions as well as with RDDC. It is also among

these participants that an active individual network can be created which is a critical factor in active future engagement. The number of participants can vary according to objective, but it is essential to strike a balance between participating sides in order to have symbolic equilibrium between sides.

Organisers and experts from RDDC
Individuals from RDDC participate in dialogues by virtue of their role as organisers. These individuals should be part of the project from the very beginning when the concept for each project is developed. This improves their ability to facilitate constructive dialogue, assist with both practical and academic matters, and provide the best frame for reporting on each project. Furthermore, depending on the setting, an RDDC VIP should attend as head of the facilitating institution as the formal representative of RDDC. This sends a signal to the cooperative institutions about the level of engagement. It is essential to understand that RDDC is not only a facilitating partner in the project, but also *participate* in knowledge exchange, trust building, idea generation, and networking. Subject matter experts from RDDC can attend and contribute to the discussions in addition to the things mentioned above.

Experts or observers
International experts can also attend the conference to help facilitate the meeting or contribute to the subjects and discussions. The primary purpose of their inclusion is to contribute to the discussion based on their expertise in an objective manner, in contrast to the more partisan contributions expected from the institutions themselves.

Inviting observers is also a possibility as it can be an excellent tool to expand knowledge about a project. Observers have no role in the formal parts of the programme, but they may participate fully in the informal part. However, it is crucial that all sides present at an event are comfortable with their presence – otherwise, observers can become a disturbing element.

Individuals from the relevant Royal Danish Embassies (RDE)
An added benefit of the projects is the enhancement of Danish public diplomacy in the countries of the participating institutions – and particularly in the country of venue. To enhance public diplomacy gains, RDE officials are present at the event, where they may take the opportunity to brand Denmark among the participants, at the same time creating and maintaining networks with the participants.

Venue

The last type of input is the *venue* of the event, understood as both the specific facilities used in the dialogues and the country in which they are placed. Peter Jones (2015) wrote on the importance of venue, "*The selection of a location should not be an afterthought, but rather a prime consideration in planning* […]." (Jones 2015, 126)

In the most optimal scenario, the involved institutions take turns in hosting the event throughout multiple projects in order to promote balanced ownership from all involved parties. On the other hand, if one party cannot host a project (e.g. for security reasons), an imbalance between the participating institutions can apply, thereby giving one side more symbolic and physical power.

There may be other potentially unbalancing factors that do not directly relate to the institutions themselves, but the overall political context. Thus, if a project was to take place in Pakistan, but some participants from Afghanistan were not able to obtain visas, the project will be negatively affected. The central requirement of the programme theory is social interaction between participants which is impossible if one side is underrepresented. There is also a risk that it will damage the relations between the institutions if one side repeatedly has bad experiences with the counterpart's country. Such considerations may render it more appropriate to facilitate dialogues in third countries, at least initially until a more sustainable solution can be found. However, eventually this situation must be solved in order to build sustainable cooperation. Assessing the venue is thus a central consideration when organising events.

Stabilisation projects should generally be conducted in relevant countries to provide participants and institutions with ownership and responsibility. Venues in third countries create a distance to the problems. If a risk analysis deems it too uncertain that two sides can be brought together in one of their respective countries, a neutral venue can be considered.

3.2.2. At the Event

As described in section 2.5, meaningful social interaction (and moderation) forms the basis for the envisioned outputs of Facilitated Dialogue. These outputs are trust building, changing perceptions, building relationships and networks, idea generation, and knowledge exchange. Some, but not necessarily all such outputs must be present for an event to be successful.

Moderation

Moderation is an enabler of outputs, but not considered an output itself. Inspired by Allen and Sharp (2017), effective moderation entails two aspects (Allen and Sharp 2017, 110): First, the characteristics of the moderator in terms of knowledge about the issues at hand, cultural sensitivity, and language skills. Second, the perceptions of the participants. The scholarly literature does not agree on whether the moderator should be neutral or not (Jones 2015, 77–79). Both scenarios have pros and cons, but experience shows that when a moderator chooses to linger too long on his or her own opinions, it may be perceived negatively. It is reasonable to assume that this is not dependent on the moderator's institutional affiliation, but more his or her ability to keep personal opinions out of the equation. Of course, a moderator may contribute to the discussion with own opinions, but doing this too much may lead to less effective moderation with adverse effects for the other activities as the moderator may be seen as partisan. It is preferable that either RDDC or experts from third countries moderate the dialogue. They have no affiliation to either country or institution, they participate in an impartial capacity, and their moderation does not risk giving either side 'symbolic power.' As a second option, participants from the delegations can function as moderators, but this option implies a risk that the moderation is perceived as partisan and that 'symbolic power' or 'ownership' is unbalanced in favour of one side over the other. If this option is utilised, a balance should be pursued in terms of dividing moderator roles equally. It can also be shared with the host nation institution, which then will equal itself in the long run as the institutions take turns hosting the activities.

Trust Building

A strong feature of institutional level dialogue is the ability to facilitate social interaction and trust building between participants (Allen and Sharp 2017, 109). "*Trust is central to all human relationships at some level*" as stated by Peter Jones, who also listed different kinds of trust and distrust (Jones 2015, 100). Interestingly, he mentions that professional/institutional and personal trust are separate things, sharing some similarities while diverging on other factors. The purpose of the institutional level dialogues is to create institutional trust by first promoting personal trust among participants. For this reason, some form of high-level participation from institutions is an essential element.

If participants experience meaningful social interaction, **and** they have positive experiences with each other, **then** they will trust each other more, **and in turn**, their institution will be more trusting toward the counterpart's

institution. The **output** of this is increased trust among participants - and by extension between institutions.

Specifically, the institutional level dialogues attempt to build two kinds of trust:

- **Knowledge-based**: "a sense of trust based on repeated observation of the other in various situations, which allows one to develop a strong knowledge and understanding of the other's likely behaviour in circumstances where trust is called for."
- **Identification-based:** "… stems from the ability to identify with, understand, and appreciate each other's desires and wants to such an extent that parties can begin to share some of the same needs and choices with respect to the issue at hand" (Jones 2015, 100).

At first, institutional level dialogues aim at creating knowledge-based trust: By interacting in both a formal and informal way, the participants gain knowledge about each other's positions, viewpoints, and opinions. Repeated interaction means that participants from the institutions can anticipate each other's positions. In turn, this ability makes it possible to understand and appreciate each other's perspectives, thereby leading to identification-based trust. Naturally, such spill-over of trust requires multiple instances of institutional level dialogues to develop on an individual level, but even if the same individuals do not participate more than once, the common denominator in institutional level dialogues is the repeated interaction between individuals from the same institutions. Therefore, the trust building output assumes that individual trust building will lead to institutional trust building. This assumption also applies to the other outputs below.

Changing Perceptions

Perception change is also alluded to in the section above and entails that participants nuance their perception of the counterpart by exchanging ideas and viewpoints.

If participants experience meaningful social interaction, **and** they try to understand each other's points of view, **then** their understanding of the counterpart will be more nuanced, and their perceptions on the issues and the counterpart will change. **In turn**, this changed perception will spread to their respective institutions. **Repeated interaction** strengthens this relationship. The **output** of this is a perception change on the issues discussed at the event and on the counterpart.

Building Relationships & Networks

Another central output of institutional level dialogue is its ability to serve as an opportunity to build a relationship between individuals from different institutions. Much like Track II events, the ability of institutional level dialogue to contribute to relationship-building between people from different institutions by ensuring that they meet (thus, *humanising* the individuals from the other institution (Allen and Sharp 2017, 109)) is a central output. This is naturally closely related to the assumption that meaningful social interaction takes place at the event. Furthermore, by allowing participants to become familiar with each other, the event also serves as an occasion for building professional and personal networks.

If participants experience meaningful social interaction, **then** they will become familiar with individuals from the other institutions(s). If they already know each other (**repeated interaction**), the event will strengthen their bonds. The **output** here is the creation of personal and institutional relationships and networks.

Idea Generation

When people come together in a relatively unofficial setting, they can discuss and generate ideas on sensitive topics with 'no strings attached' as such ideas and remarks will not constitute official negotiating positions. The free brainstorming enabled by the project allows for the emergence of new ideas that contribute to solving problems at hand. Institutional level dialogues cannot be utterly unofficial as is the case in Track II or individual level dialogues. The participants are deliberately selected based on their institutional affiliation. As the institutions participate in an official capacity, and as the participants will need to consider the positions of their institutions, the discussions of problems and solutions cannot be assumed to allow entirely free brainstorming. They probably do not have the mandate to go directly against institutional policy and may suffer reprisals if they contradict their own institution. Consequently, idea generation requires institutional openness to promote innovation and creativity, but openness is not a binary state. Institutions can be more or less open to new ideas, depending on timing, the issue at hand, recent developments, etc. It is also essential to consider institutional interests and to ensure that there are consistency and mutual understanding of the goal of the activity between all participating parties. Some ways to promote institutional openness to new ideas and free brainstorming among participant are by assuring that ideas do not equal decisions, that decision-making is indeed not on the agenda, and – if necessary – by applying the Chatham House Rules to ensure confidentiality.

If participants experience meaningful social interaction **and** feel comfortable that the dialogue is somewhat unofficial and confidential, **and** they can brainstorm without being strictly bound by institutional/political standpoints, **then** they can generate new perspectives and ideas on common issues. The **output** here is new, innovative, or otherwise useful in order to proceed with the issues at hand or enhance cooperation between institutions.

Knowledge Exchange
Gathering people from different institutions will – if they interact and share different views – ensure knowledge exchange. Discussing issues facilitate the exchange of viewpoints and knowledge between the participants, thereby building confidence between institutions. Knowledge exchange is advantageous because it does not require complex interaction between participants. Just meeting and being exposed to other viewpoints may inform the participants, making them better able to understand other positions on a given topic. This also reduces uncertainty in the sense that all parties will be better able to understand and therefore predict future behaviour in a crisis.

If participants experience meaningful social interaction, **then** they will gain knowledge about the other side's viewpoints and perceptions, making all parties able to understand and predict future actions and events more comprehensively. The **output** here is the knowledge exchanged and experienced at the event.

3.2.3. After the Event

Now that the activities and outputs of a single event are established, this section will focus on immediate and intermediate outcomes. *Transfer* constitutes an immediate outcome of a project; it refers to the movement of outputs from a given event to circles beyond the event in order to lead to institutional cooperation. *Transfer* refers to all the ways and channels in which this movement takes place. Without transfer, there is no link between the event and potential impact. Understanding and mapping transfer thus becomes imperative in assessing whether and how a project can lead to institutional cooperation. Transfer is an immediate outcome because it must happen first - before other outcomes – in order that a change in official policy can take place. The following subsections list possible ways of transfer. The list is not exhaustive, but rather a listing of possible ways and means of transfer. Not all ways of transfer may be applicable or necessary for a project to succeed, and multiple ways of transfer may be triggered at the same time.

Top-down Approach: Institutional Decision Makers or Proxies
The first way of transfer is arguably the most direct: When the aim is to build cross-institutional cooperation, the presence of institutional decision makers can serve as a straightforward and instant form of transfer. *The institutional decision maker* is a senior official of the participating institutions who may have the authority to initiate cooperation, or who is a part of the decision-making process, which can affect such a decision.

A more indirect way is transfer through 'proxies' of the institutional decision makers, which entails that individuals with connections to the institutional decision (e.g. senior advisers) participate at the event and inform the institutional decision makers of the outputs. The **immediate outcome** is the influencing of decision makers in favour of more cooperation, which can entail multiple things, including increased awareness of the benefits of cooperation, opinion change in favour of seeking more cooperation, or reinforcing of existing thoughts on cooperation. The **intermediate outcome** is the establishment of some degree of cooperation between the involved institutions. A further intermediate outcome is the continuation of cooperation without third party facilitation.

Bottom-Up Approach: Analysts and Researchers from Institutions
Analysts and researchers from the institutions themselves constitute another way of transfer that entails a bottom-up approach. It differs from 'transfer by proxy' as described above as bottom-up transfer does not directly aim at informing institutional decision makers, but rather at initiating low-level cooperation with other institutions and influencing policy development in the capacity of case officers in a specific department or section of an institution. This way of transfer, while limited in terms of its capacity to make decisions, is a bottom-up approach where change is designated to first develop within the institutions. This approach can be more sustainable in the long run because of the initial institutional ownership, because the cooperation develops on the stakeholders' terms, and because the experts can use their knowledge to influence public opinion in some instances, depending on their network and platform, thus prompting popular and elite support for cooperation.

Transfer through such institutional experts is an **immediate outcome** when it leads to low-level (and even low-intensity) cooperation with the counterparts in the other institution(s). An early **intermediate outcome** is the spreading of this cooperation to other areas and levels of the involved institution. A later intermediate outcome is seen when the institutions initiate high-level official cooperation.

Non-Personal Means of Transfer

Transfer can also happen through a range of non-personal means of communication, which includes written (reports, policy briefs, news articles) and non-written (press conferences, TV-interviews) means of communication. The form is less important than the intended recipient base. Two ideal types exist: The first form is **narrow** in scope as the intended recipients are people in or related to the participating institutions or other relevant actors. The second is **broad** as it aims at individuals beyond the participating institutions, including the public in relevant countries. However, non-personal means of communication are seldom produced with either ideal type in mind. The purpose of making this distinction is to illustrate that the theory of change differs substantially between these scopes. An essential trait of this form of transfer is that the organisers have more influence over it: They can be involved in its production and can thus shape both methods and recipients.

When transfer happens to individuals in the participating institutions, it supports the transfer processes described in the previous subsections. It is just an additional way of transferring the output to decision makers and experts. The difference is e.g. that the recipients of these reports do not need to have participated to be informed of the outputs of the project.

When transfer has a broader aim, the rationale for transfer changes. First, it may function to inform institutional stakeholders. Second, it informs the broader public of involved countries of the output, which may create public pressure and awareness with regard to cooperation. Whether this pressure is negative or positive depends upon contextual factors, and the approach involves some degree of risk. Third, non-personal means of communication may also involve public diplomacy benefits for Denmark, but naturally, this depends on the context, content, and format of the communication.

A complete mapping of these factors requires comprehensive contextual analysis and may indeed only be fully visible and understandable in the aftermath of the events themselves. It can be quite challenging to comprehend and even harder to predict, but the factors illustrate that contextual factors exert influence on the programme theory in multiple ways.

Lastly, not all outputs are communicable – some things (such as personal network building, trust building) will not be experienced if they have not been present at the event itself. Knowledge exchange may be communicable, but the effect on the recipient is not comparable to the experience of the participants at the event. Communication by non-personal means can only inform about

the outputs to a limited extent, but remains one form of transfer controllable by the organisers, as it depends on their active involvement.

3.2.4. Impact

The last stage, *impact,* entails increased cooperation between relevant states. Cooperation can take many forms, including official cooperation between the countries, but it can also have societal dimensions such as economic cooperation and student exchange programmes. Before this, there will have been institutional cooperation which contributes to the realisation of political decision makers and the public in the relevant countries that cooperation is a mutual interest. As seen above, the means to achieve this are through the initial cooperation between relevant institutions at various levels. In a *top-down* scenario, the institutional decision makers make a declaration in favour of cooperating (e.g. a multiyear research agreement, agreement on student exchange, agreement to repeat the institutional level event, or a memorandum of understanding). A *bottom-up* scenario involves researchers, analysts, and subject matter experts on lower levels, e.g. by writing a joint report or by initiating cross-institutional projects such as research and regular meetings. *Formal* cooperation can be initiated on joint projects, and *informal* networks can also be created. The central impact is that interaction between the institutions contributes to increased cooperation between opposing parties on addressing issues, small or great.

4. Individual Level

The individual level of the Facilitated Dialogue concept focuses on bringing together influential individuals from states or non-state groups that share a common problem. Through facilitated discussion and social interaction, it is the purpose of the individual level to create networks, improve relationships, change perceptions, and generate ideas among participants in order to create understanding across borders. The participating influential individuals are supposed to have some form of access to the decision makers in their 'home' states or non-state groups. Through active or passive dissemination or *transfer* of the outputs from the event, the participants share their experiences from the event with the decision makers, which in turn can influence them to seek more conciliatory or cooperative policies toward the other state or non-state group. The ultimate impact is (more) cooperation between the states or non-state groups in question. Figure 2 illustrates how individual level Facilitated Dialogue can lead to cooperation.

Theory of change for individual level Facilitated Dialogue
IF we bring influential individuals together in Facilitated Dialogue,
AND IF these individuals actively or passively through available channels transfer project outputs to decision makers in their 'home' states or non-state groups,
THEN it is possible to promote cooperation between states or non-state groups relevant to a given issue.

An example of individual level dialogue is the *Bilateral Reconciliation* project launched by RDDC and the Pakistani non-governmental organisation Regional Peace Institute. That particular project identified the antagonistic relationship between the states of Afghanistan and Pakistan as the main obstacle to cooperation that would secure stability in Afghanistan. The insecurity and instability in neighbouring Afghanistan have adverse effects for Pakistan, such as militancy, smuggling, trafficking, and flows of refugees. Because these problems have adverse effects on both countries, they would benefit from cooperating to solve these problems – especially since the issues mentioned cross borders and do not respect the sovereignty of states.

Simply put, just like in institutional level dialogues, cooperation is instrumental in addressing common problems, but unlike the institutional level, the individual level seeks to enhance cooperation through influential individuals who come together in an unofficial and informal setting to form relationships and generate ideas. These relationships and ideas are then expected to transfer from the participating individuals to decision makers.

In that way, the individual level dialogues can help improve relationships and enhance cooperation between states.

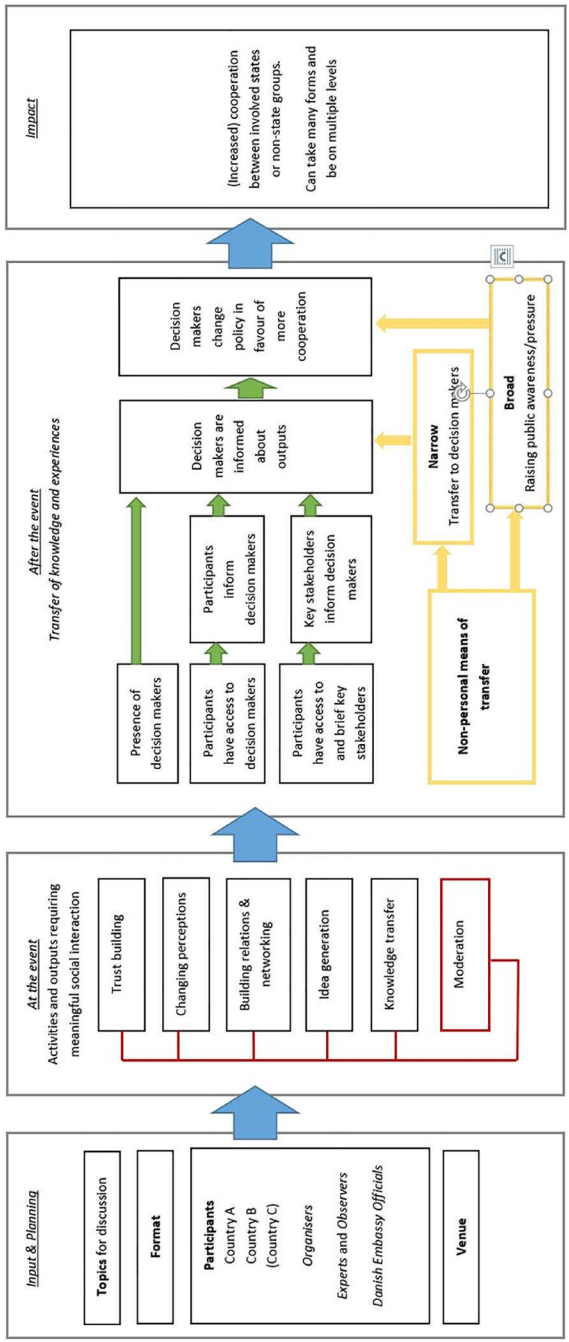

Figure 2 - Logic Model for Individual Level Facilitated Dialogue

4.1. Objectives and Assumptions

The objective of the individual level is to facilitate dialogue among influential individuals as a vehicle to affect the thinking and approach of decision makers in relevant states or non-state groups in favour of a more cooperative stance toward the opposing side. To achieve cooperation, the dialogues seek to provide good conditions for free brainstorming and relationship-building that is not inhibited by the contemporary political context. In this approach, the facilitator (RDDC) has a more hands-off approach in the sense that it can only set the stage for facilitation, but not for the later stages in the project. In contrast to the institutional level, the facilitators are not participating. They may participate in discussions and engage in social interaction, but the role of the facilitator is just that – to facilitate. Furthermore, RDDC may join forces with relevant NGOs to ease planning and facilitation.

These assumptions are central to the individual level:

- **Influential** individuals with ties to decision makers in the respective 'home' states exist.
- These individuals are **able** to attend events (not obstructed by formal and physical barriers).
- These individuals are **willing to attend** (not obstructed by societal, ideological, cultural, or political barriers).
- The influential individuals can participate **without *a priori* limitation** (official mandates or official negotiating positions).
- The influential individuals **can affect decision makers** in their respective states or non-state groups. A consenting decision-making environment that allows influential individuals to contribute with out-of-the-box perspectives.

The first assumption refers to the existence of individuals who are influential in the sense that they can influence policy to some degree. If such individuals do not exist on all relevant sides, there is no basis for conducting individual level projects. The second assumption relates to the formal and physical ability to participate in such projects. Participants need to obtain a visa (and be allowed to attend) to participate in dialogues. This is especially important when the projects take place in either of the countries in question. Based on experience, such permits are not always given. This, of course, depends on and have consequences for the venue where events take place (see section 4.2.1.).

The third assumption relates to the willingness of influential individuals to participate. If participation has adverse personal consequences, influential

individuals may not be interested in attending. Thus, if the relations between the relevant states or non-state groups undergo a sudden deterioration, individuals may not want to participate. It is also possible that decision-making environments oppose the participation of influential individuals in such dialogue projects. Consequently, they may refuse to participate – or the decision-making environment may be closed to such pro-cooperation perspectives.

The fourth assumption relates to both the participating individuals and the decision-making environment to which they are connected. If participants operate under limitations from official positions or seek to exercise official mandates, they cannot engage in out-of-the-box brainstorming on issues or free and candid discussions on the issues. The goal of the individual level dialogues is not a negotiation between states and/or non-state groups. Rather, it is to explore new solutions and build relationships between people. Both will be inhibited if participants are confined to official positions. The fifth and final assumption relates to both the ability of influential individuals to affect the thinking of decision makers and the openness of decision makers to receive input from such individuals. If these conditions are not met, dialogue cannot contribute to improving ties between states and/or non-state groups.

4.2. Programme Theory

The following programme theory illustrates how Facilitated Dialogue at the individual level works to create cooperation between states and non-state groups. As was the case for the institutional level, the programme theory consists of four stages: The first two stages, *before the event* and *at the event*, describe the sessions at the events. A single project might contain multiple events. The third section, *after the event*, looks at the accumulated effects of all events within a project. The fourth section, *impact*, looks at the accumulated envisioned impact of multiple projects.

4.2.1. Before the Event

Four main elements are considered before the event: The **topics**, which the event will deal with, the **format** of the event, the **participants**, and the **venue**.

Topics

Topics refer to the areas of discussion at the event as determined by the organisers. In the Bilateral Reconciliation project, the adverse bilateral ties between Afghanistan and Pakistan were a central explanation as to why the states did not cooperate. Because of this finding, the topics for discussion revolved around outstanding bilateral issues, such as border management

and recognition, human security, lack of intelligence cooperation, and so on. The chosen topics need to be sufficiently specific to permit the generation of constructive ideas on the problems at hand, to avoid too general or unspecific remarks, and to ensure that the participants do not fall into known rhetorical trenches.

Format
Just as the institutional level, the format of the project can take different forms: Seminars and conferences, including workshops, speeches, lectures, and other things. It is crucial that sufficient time is set aside for informal socialisation outside the programme – such as breaks between activities, but also as (icebreaking) dinners, lunches, and informal meetings with VIPs. Time for informal socialisation is not just for purposes of taking breaks, but also serves as a time where key activities take place (see section 4.2.2).

Participants
The third and arguably most crucial pre-event consideration is whom to invite. Three overall categories of people may be invited to attend:

First, **influential individuals** from at least two states or non-state groups between whom the project tries to create cooperation. As these individuals function as the vehicle for the transfer of positive experiences from the event to decision makers, their role is crucial. Because of this, the participating individuals need to be influential in the sense that they have some form of connection to decision makers – either directly or through intermediary stakeholders. It may be retired politicians, ministers, retired military officers, or similar ex-officials with affiliation to decision makers or stakeholders in the decision-making process. It may also be journalists and opinion makers with informal ties. The official title and occupation of participants are not essential – their connection to decision makers or stakeholders within the decision-making environment is.

Another consideration is the number of participants at the events. The number needs to be sufficiently small to allow for socialisation between the participants and to conduct the event in an orderly fashion – too many participants will put a strain on moderation and facilitation of the event. On the other hand, the number needs to be sufficiently high to maximise the possibility that results and outputs from the event can transfer to decision makers, and further, to allow for the presence of diverse trains of thought on the issues at hand. The number of influential individuals at a single event should not be below 10 and not above 30.

Another consideration regarding the number of participants is the balance between the respective groups of influential individuals. When selecting participants, it is important to strive after a quantitative balance, as a lack of balance may hurt the event: Underrepresentation of one party can lead to a feeling of marginalisation, and the underrepresented side may assume a defensive and non-receptive posture. Furthermore, participating individuals should not be constrained by official positions and mandates. The individual level dialogues do not involve decision-making and negotiations. Instead, the aim is to allow for out-of-the-box thinking, which is not possible if instructions or mandates restrict the participants. This does not mean that participants may not be officially elected or have some official capacity, but the meeting is not an expression of official policy.

The second group includes **organisers of the project**, which are RDDC and any partner organisation. The role of RDDC is similar to its role at the institutional level, but with some significant differences. First, RDDC is not a participant at the individual level. Naturally, RDDC personnel can interact with the other participants, and substantial contributions to the discussions are welcome, but the essential function of RDDC is to facilitate the discussion between parties. This role also implies that RDDC does not take sides in the conflict and should avoid all appearances of favouring one side over the other. Another difference is the involvement of partner organisations in planning and executing the project.

An example of this is the involvement of the Regional Peace Institute during the *Bilateral Reconciliation* project in 2017. Involving a partner can have multiple benefits such as access to networks of influential people, knowledge about the topics, and coordination of practical matters. However, it also involves risks such as diverging interests vis-à-vis RDDC. If the partner organisation is based in or affiliated with one of the states or non-state groups involved in the project, an appearance of imbalance can have adverse effects on the project, as it may favour certain participants, viewpoints, or elements - not necessarily in line with RDDC's intent. These opportunities and risk must be considered when launching a project.

The third group consists of (international) **subject matter experts** whose knowledge and expertise constitute substantial input into the discussions. Again, their role is not to act in favour of one party or point of view, but rather to contribute with substantial knowledge or ideas to the discussions. The experts must remain nonpartisan in the sense that they do not directly favour or is perceived to favour one party over the other. Experts from RDDC

belong to this category when they have no role in organising the event or the project. Subject matter experts can also function as moderators of discussions.

Fourth, **personnel from the relevant Royal Danish Embassies** also play an essential role in the individual level dialogues for two reasons. First, they actively assist in planning the project. By being Denmark's eyes and ears in a relevant country, they can contribute in practical matters (obtaining visa, organising venue) and substantial matters (what to discuss, whom to invite). Second, representatives from the relevant embassy may use the events as an opportunity to create and engage in networks, gain knowledge about substantial matters, and conduct public diplomacy on behalf of Denmark. The active involvement of Danish representatives is one of the key areas in which the Facilitated Dialogue is different from classic Track II projects.

Lastly, **outside observers** may be invited. These are not expected to have any part in the official programme, but may observe the event if they have a legitimate interest in the process and if their presence will not disturb or interfere with the project.

Venue

The venue is also an essential consideration for dialogues at the individual level, although the reasons differ from the institutional level. The venue can be understood as the country in which a project takes place, but also as the facilities used. No matter the perspective, dialogues at the individual level require neutrality: No party must be favoured by the venue. Even a perception of imbalance can have adverse effects.

If e.g. Islamabad in Pakistan is chosen as a venue, it may be hard to obtain sufficient representation from Afghanistan. It is therefore easy to argue that a third country without any ties to the problem at hand whatsoever should be chosen as the venue for dialogues, but this approach, too, has limitations. Besides the risk of 'track tourism' (that participants agree to participate because of luxurious conditions at the venue), another possible problem is to remove the participants from the context in which they are embedded (Jones 2015, 128). Organising events in all involved countries in a balanced way may increase the ownership of both sides over the dialogue and give participants more insight into the perceptions of the counterpart. Also, visiting the counterpart can be good for the bilateral relations themselves. When you remove participants from the conflict context, you do not have this added benefit, but it may still be preferable if organising events in the respective countries are deemed too inconvenient. Determining the location can be hard,

and the best choice may only reveal itself in hindsight. Project implementers should consider the pros and cons of venue carefully, but also recognise that determining the right geography may be subject to trial-and-error.

If the event is organised in a country related to the issue at hand, the project must avoid utilising facilities that give one side more ownership, e.g. the facilities of official or semi-official (state) institutions. Places that are of great significance to one party must also be avoided. Furthermore, the chosen venue requires some level of comfort and informality that may be conducive to the activities at the event. Of course, *comfort* needs not be *extravagant,* as mentioned by Peter Jones (Jones 2015, 128).

4.2.2. At the Event

As seen at the institutional level and section 2.5, meaningful social interaction forms the central activity of the events. The outputs from the individual level resemble those of the institutional level, although there are some variations, such as trust building, changing perceptions, building relationships and networks, idea generation, and knowledge exchange. All these activities can lead to desired outputs. Moderation is an enabler of the other activities and not an output in itself.

The above activities (can) take place at the event itself. They are not to be understood as prerequisites for a successful project, but rather as desirable elements. The activities may not happen or be successful at all events. However, if *none* of the desired outputs materialises, the event is likely a failure in terms of promoting cooperation.

Moderation

Contrary to the other elements, moderation is not an output of the event. When done well, moderation allows the other activities to function as intended. A moderator is a person who leads a session at the event. This also means that a single event involves several moderators. A person who has played a role in organising the event may also function as moderator, but otherwise, international subject matter experts often assume this role.

Moderation is an activity, which takes place during the formal parts of the programme when the moderator will steer the session at the event in an orderly, balanced, and timely fashion. As explained in section 3.2.2, effective moderation entails two things: First, the skills and attributes of the moderator (knowledge about the subject at hand, language skills, cultural sensitivity, and so on). Second, the perception of the moderator and moderator performance.

Essential for both aspects is the neutrality of the moderator. The moderator should not be or be perceived as being partial or promoting his or her own opinion and viewpoints.

Trust Building
Trust building plays a central role at the individual level as it is crucial for positive experiences to emerge from the interaction. Knowledge and identification-based trust building, as described in section 3.2.2 also applies to trust building at the individual level. If the participants mistrust the other participants, it will serve as a caveat to all positive experiences: Even if good ideas materialise, the ideas themselves may not be credible if the counterpart was perceived as being disingenuous. On the other hand, if the opposing side is seen as genuine, the outputs may more likely be perceived as credible.

Trust building is the accumulation of positive social interaction between participants at the event. Trust building happens both in and between the planned parts of the event.

If participants engage in meaningful social interaction **and** have positive experiences with each other, **then** they will trust each other more. The **output** is increased trust among participants.

Changing Perceptions
Related to trust building and as was the case on the institutional level, Facilitated Dialogue events serve as an opportunity to change perceptions among individuals. Through social interaction with the opposing side, the participants are exposed to other views on the issues at hand which might lead to a change in perception on the issues discussed and on the counterpart. Activities that promote such perceptual changes are not distinguishable from trust-building or relationship-building.

If participants engage in meaningful social interaction, **then** their understanding of the issues and the counterpart's position will be more nuanced, and their perceptions on the issues and the counterpart will change. The **output** here is a change of perception on the issue and the counterpart.

Building Relationships and Networks
As was the case at the institutional level, events at the individual level serve as an opportunity to get to know people from the opposing side and build relationships with them. This is also closely linked with meaningful social interaction.

If participants engage in meaningful social interaction, **then** they will form relations with other participants and enter professional networks with them. The **output** here is the formation or strengthening of relations between influential individuals.

Idea Generation
Here, idea generation functions differently than at the institutional level. As the participants are connected to, but not bound by the opinions of decision makers and other stakeholders, they can discuss the issues at hand without hewing to official positions. At the same time, knowledge about the positions of decision makers means that the participants know which ideas may be passable. In that way, new and innovative ideas are created while taking the positions of their 'home' state or non-state group into account. Naturally, this assumes a level of confidence at the meeting as the participants should feel free to brainstorm. If the event was public, they might feel the pressure from decision makers (or public opinion) not to engage with the other side or brainstorm. As in the institutional level, the Chatham House Rules may be applied to ensure such a level of confidence.

If participants engage in meaningful social interaction, **and if** the participants feel comfortable about the confidentiality of the setting which allows them to brainstorm without hewing to their sides' official position, **then** they can generate new perspectives and ideas on the issues at hand. The **output** here is the generation of new ideas on how to approach the issue(s) discussed at the event.

Knowledge Exchange
Meaningful social interaction creates the possibility of knowledge exchange as a confidence building measure which may help reduce uncertainty between involved sides. By exchanging viewpoints, opinions, and ideas, the participants are better able to understand, sympathise with, and predict the future behaviour of their counterparts, thus reducing the risk of misinterpretation.

If participants engage in meaningful social interaction, **then** they will gain knowledge about the other side's viewpoints and perceptions, enabling all involved parties to understand and predict future actions and events. The **output** here is an exchange of viewpoints.

4.2.3. After the Event
The outputs described in the previous section are the result of the event itself and refers to both material (specific ideas generated) and immaterial

(relations built, increased understanding of the other side) things. What happens after the event is beyond the direct reach of the project as it is the participants at the event(s) that now disseminate or *transfer* the outputs of the event to stakeholders and decision makers. Transfer is neither guaranteed nor controllable. The measures taken before and at the event significantly influence the degree of transfer and the significance of participant selection is especially crucial. If the participants have some form of access – directly or indirectly - to decision makers or the decision-making process, then the project can strengthen cooperation between states and/or non-state groups. Otherwise, the project cannot achieve its goal. This section lists possible ways of transfer. The list is not exhaustive, but includes the most likely ways of transfer.

However, transfer is a means to an end, not an end-state. Therefore, change in decision maker behaviour or official policy is considered an intermediate outcome as policy changes are a prerequisite for increased cooperation.

Decision Makers as Participants
If decision makers participate in the event and in generating outputs, transfer takes place instantly, i.e. it is an immediate outcome of the project (Allen and Sharp 2017, 112). Based on such transfer, the decision makers may change their policy and behaviour which is an intermediate outcome and a necessary step if the desired impact of the project (increased cooperation) is to be realised.

Participants with Direct Access to Decision Makers
If participants are *influential*, they will have access to decision makers from their state or group. If participants have a relationship with decision makers, they can transfer the conference outputs to them verbally or through written means. As above, this constitutes the immediate outcome. Any change in decision maker policy or behaviour is an intermediate outcome of the project.

Participants with Access to Stakeholders
If the participants do not have personal access to decision makers, they may be able to access them through key stakeholders, such as business interests, think tanks, policy groups, party members, and advisors. The way of transfer is more indirect and uncertain, but transfer to the decision makers can still take place. Again, if the transfer leads to a change in the decision makers' policy and behaviour, it is the intermediate outcome of the project.

Non-Personal Means of Communication
The last way of transfer is through non-personal means of communication, including a conference report, policy brief, news articles, press conferences, and so on. As seen in section 3.2.3, non-personal communication can be both narrow and broad in focus. **Narrow** focus implies that decision makers or their proxies are explicitly targeted, e.g. through a policy brief addressed to them directly. **Broad** focus implies that the non-personal communication targets a vast audience, e.g. the public in the relevant countries. The outputs can be transmitted to decision makers this way, but it can also lead to public pressure on the decision makers which ideally can lead to a policy change. Also, public pressure can have political consequences. Broad forms of communication likewise contribute to Danish public diplomacy if RDDC participation in and organisation of the event are made public.

Such means of communication cannot convey all forms of output and is generally a less effective way of transfer. Things like network building, trust building, perception change cannot be adequately conveyed through written formats. Non-personal communication also creates the risk of disclosing too much information, thereby overstepping the boundaries of the Chatham House Rules. Therefore, alternative means of communication should be considered carefully. Lastly, it should be mentioned that compared to the other ways of transfer, this last category is the hardest to map and predict as it can be hard to see the effects of non-personal means of communication.

4.2.4. Impact
The impact of an individual level facilitated dialogue is increased cooperation between the involved states or non-state groups that is manifested in the same way as described in section 3.2.4. Policy changes in the affected states or groups alone is *not* an impact because policy changes alone do not necessarily reflect realities on the ground. Instead, such policy change is a late intermediate outcome as policy change is a prerequisite for cooperation. Impact is when the relevant parties (agree to) cooperate. It may be limited to a specific policy area or certain aspects of the problem discussed, and it may take time to implement. Formal agreements may indicate such cooperation.

5. Conclusions

This report has sought to illustrate how RDDC can promote cooperation between states and non-state groups through the concept of Facilitated Dialogue on two distinct levels. The logic for attempting to create cooperation relies on the assumption that issues such as piracy, insurgency, trafficking, and terrorism constitute cross-border problems that can only be addressed adequately if states (and non-state groups) cooperate. Thus, cooperation is not an end in itself, but a means to combat adverse conditions, whether they are symptoms of underlying problems or the root causes generating such symptoms.

The Facilitated Dialogue consists of four stages, the first being the pre-event considerations, i.e. whom to invite, where to organise the event(s) of the project, and which format to utilise. These considerations are the foundation of the project and incidentally also the phase where organisers (in this case, RDDC) have the most influence. Therefore, proper regard with respect to planning is essential. At the events themselves, social interaction between the participants is the most critical element without which the project cannot contribute to increased cooperation. If social interaction does occur, it can lead to increased trust among the participants and sustain a nuanced perception of the issues and the positions of the other party. If successful, the process will also generate constructive ideas on the issues at hand.

Not all these outputs need to happen simultaneously to reach a designated outcome, as they are not mutually exclusive. However, to transform into outcomes, outputs must somehow reach the relevant decision makers (through *transfer*) whose approval is necessary for increased cooperation between institutions or, indeed, between states and non-state groups. When these outputs reach decision makers, it may lead to a policy change at the individual, institutional, or state level, which may then lead to increased cooperation between states and/or non-state groups.

By proposing and formalising Facilitated Dialogue as a concept for the Danish Peace and Stabilisation Fund, a potentially valuable and cost-effective tool is being added to the overall stabilisation toolbox. Compared to other projects, the Facilitated Dialogue is a relatively cheap and safe tool to use in zones of conflict. It ensures Danish ownership and control over projects and the ability to monitor and adjust implementation in a changing environment. It ensures the intended utilisation of the financial investment. It generates knowledge about conflicts and various stakeholders and is a way of conducting whole-of-government stabilisation projects on the implementing levels of the Peace

and Stabilisation Fund. Finally, it provides an evaluation framework that acknowledges that not everything can be measured, but that the concept can suggest indicators that may be used to track developments. For the RDDC, it strengthens the institutions' international profile through the creation of international networks and contact to researchers and experts across the globe. For the RDEs, it helps promote Denmark and Danish public diplomacy through engagement with influential individuals and provides opportunities for expansion of the embassies network.

The concept of Facilitated Dialogue is not always applicable, and the appearance that the concept is a hammer and all stabilisation problems are nails must be avoided. Utilising the concept must make sense within the contextual framework of the problem at hand: Cooperation between multiple actors must be desirable and feasible for Facilitated Dialogue to be useful. An analysis of the problem, the involved stakeholders, and the context in which they are embedded is critical in determining whether cooperation can serve as a meaningful vehicle for positive change.

Simultaneously, this report is the first proposition of the concept, and to remain useful, it cannot stand alone. Continuous updates and refinements are necessary to maintain and increase the usefulness of the programme theories proposed here. As the conflicts change, so must the tools. Consequently, the programme theories put forth here must be revised and expanded continuously as more knowledge and experiences are gained from ongoing projects based on the concept of Facilitated Dialogue.

5.1. Future Projects and Envisioned Usage

Initially, this report aspires to serve as an inspiration and guide for future projects in the Danish Peace and Stabilisation Fund. Indeed, the Fund encompasses programmes for several conflict zones where the concept can serve as a tool to achieve various stabilisation objectives. Examples of such programmes include the maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea, Ukraine, and potentially other Danish stabilisation programmes along with continued engagement in the Afghanistan-Pakistan programme. The Facilitated Dialogue activities in these programs will – more or less – resemble the previous activities on which the programme theories are based. With changes to the programme theories, the concept could be applied in other contexts and by other entities as well. Other Danish ministries and especially the Ministry of Foreign Affairs could repurpose the concept and apply it in non-security related contexts as well, focusing instead on human security or development.

The programme theories themselves are archetypes without considerable contextual embeddedness. By changing some of the more specific elements (e.g. the presence of Danish embassy officials), the concept can also be applied by non-Danish actors. In this perspective, these programme theories function as an operationalised template for a form of Track 2/Track 1.5 hybrid. Practitioners of activities similar to the Facilitated Dialogue may find the programme theories useful. Likewise, practitioners involved in similar programmes or projects will likely have comments or suggestions related to this concept, and hopefully this will aspire to further development of the stabilisation field. The authors will be very interested in engaging in future projects with such practitioners. After all, the ultimate goal is to update and change the concept dynamically in order to render it more useful and to create the fundament of efficiency for future stabilisation.

6. Bibliography

Allen, Nathaniel, and Travis Sharp. 2017. "Process Peace: A New Evaluation Framework for Track II Diplomacy." *International Negotiation* 22(1): 92–122.

Axt, Heinz-Jürgen, Antonio Milososki, and Oliver Schwarz. 2006. *Conflict - a Literature Review*. Duisburg.

Bercovitch, Jacob, and Richard Jackson. 2009. *Conflict Resolution in the Twenty-First Century*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

Buzan, Barry, and Ole Wæver. 2003. *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*. Cambridge University Press.

Dahler-Larsen, Peter. 2013. *Evaluering Af Projekter - Og Andre Ting, Som Ikke Er Ting*. Odense: Syddansk Universitetsforlag.

Davidson, William D., and Joseph V. Montville. 1981. "Foreign Policy According to Freud." *Foreign Policy* (45): 145.

Danish Ministry of Defence. 2018. *Peace and Stabilisation Programme for the Afghanistan Region 2018-2020*.

Funnell, Sue C., and Patricia J. Rogers. 2011. *Purposeful Program Theory: Effective Use of Theories of Change and Logic Models*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass Ltd.

Jacobsen, Katja Lindskov, and Torben Toftgaard Engen. 2017. "Stabilisering - Fra intention til indsats."

Jones, Peter. 2015. *Track Two Diplomacy in Theory and Practice*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press.

Kadushin, Charles. 2012. *Understanding Social Networks: Theories, Concepts, and Findings*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Kaye, Dalia Dassa. 2007. "Talking to the Enemy." RAND.

Kilduff, Martin, and Wenpin Tsai. 2003. "Is There Social Network Theory? A Critical Examination of Theoretical Foundations." In *Social Networks and Organizations*, Sage Publications Ltd, 36–65.

Kleiboer, Marieke. 1998. "Four Realities of International Mediation." In *The Multiple Realities of International Mediation*, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc.

Leng, Russell. 2000. *Bargaining and Learning in Recurring Crises*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

Long, William J., and Peter Brecke. 2003. *War and Reconciliation: Reason and Emotion in Conflict Resolution*. Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

McDonald, John W. Jr. 1987. "Introduction." In *Conflict Resolution: Track Two Diplomacy*, eds. John W. McDonald Jr. and Diane B. Bendahmane. Foreign Service Institute, U.S. Department of State, 1–3.

Montville, Joseph V. 1987. "The Arow and the Olive Branch: A Case for Track Two Diplomacy." In *Conflict Resolution: Track Two Diplomacy*, eds. John W. McDonald Jr. and Diane B. Bendahmane., 5–20.

Wasserman, Stanley, and Katherine Faust. 1994. *Social Network Analysis: Methods and Applications*. Cambridge University Press.

This report defines the concept of *Facilitated Dialogue* that aims at contributing to stabilisation by promoting cooperation between states (and non-state groups). The report formulates programme theories for two distinct levels within the concept. The institutional level focuses on creating institutional cooperation, whereas the individual level emphasises social interaction between influential individuals as ways in which cooperation between states (and non-state groups) can be encouraged. The programme theories, based on experience and inspired by the concepts of Track II and Track 1.5 diplomacy, are meant as a template for future projects as well as a benchmark for evaluation of current and past projects.