



Key lessons from an ITX can feed into exercises by the U.S. military's combatant commands. Participation in an ITX by officers from the U.S. Army's Africa Command, for example, prompted the military to invite civilians—including USIP—to join an exercise in Cameroon for the Multinational Joint Task Force pursuing the Boko Haram terrorist group in the Lake Chad Basin, contributing a civilian perspective to the scenarios.

STATE OF THE FIELD

U.S. military and civilian agencies frequently deploy on complex missions that require them to operate in the same environment, whether in humanitarian disasters, fragile states or violent conflicts. The success of these operations depends in part on each agency's understanding of the objectives, resources and authorities of the others. While coordination has improved in recent years, enhanced cooperation is still needed to accomplish the primary goals of these critical missions: saving lives and stabilizing areas in turmoil.

USIP'S WORK

The U.S. Institute of Peace advances thinking and practice on key national security challenges. A critical element of our effort is to foster civilian-military cooperation to curb violent conflict around the world. Through education, engagement and exercises, USIP contributes to a more effective, comprehensive approach to assistance in fragile and conflict-affected states. The Interorganizational Tabletop Exercise (ITX) represents one such effort.

What is an ITX?

- ▶ In a three-day exercise, civilian and military personnel jointly work through real-world challenges of communication, coordination and developing a shared operating framework—the kind of problems that arise in complex environments. Participants include the State Department, the Department of Defense (DoD), the U.S. Agency for International Development, the military's combatant commands, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), international organizations (IOs) and multinational organizations.
- ▶ Lessons from the exercise improve preparation and future field work of each participating agency.

Why an ITX?

- ▶ An ITX promotes and develops relationships, mutual understanding, knowledge-sharing and cooperation among civilian and military personnel to increase their effectiveness as they work—and cross paths—in the same crisis situation.
- ▶ The exercise allows senior leaders to discuss shared and potentially conflicting objectives and operating requirements that might arise.

What Makes an ITX Unique?

- ▶ The ITX format involves civilian and military organizations in all phases of the exercise—from identifying the theme and geographic location, exercise goals and implementation to distilling key findings and recommendations for senior leaders. The objectives of each participating organization are given equal weight, demanding a maximum degree of cooperation.
- ▶ The exercises include facilitated dialogue and work by small groups on scenarios, all of which helps build civilian-military relationships.
- ▶ The ITX provides a critical interorganizational venue to explore implementation of current policies and frameworks, such as the Stabilization Assistance Review.

What Results Does ITX Achieve?

The ITX seeks to achieve impact on a variety of levels, from informing organizations' policy and planning efforts to increasing the awareness of individual practitioners of other organizations' efforts and forging relationships among the various stakeholders. To this end:

- ▶ Actionable recommendations that emerge from the ITX are briefed to senior leaders of participating civilian and military organizations for their consideration and implementation.
- ▶ The 2016 ITX serves as an example of relationship building at the practitioner level with the creation of an enduring interorganizational working group to examine policy, coordination and information-sharing challenges. This effort brings the critical perspectives of NGOs and IOs into policy and programming conversations.

"The ITX offers a valuable forum for participants to work together in an attempt to understand a particular challenge and then identify ways to address it. USIP provides a critical service to both practitioners and policymakers in bringing together the widest range of stakeholders—from human rights and development organizations to academia to the military to civilian policymakers—to share their unique experience—whether in the Sahel or Mindanao—while also clarifying the D.C.-based policy priorities and challenges that shape our work."

Doug Padgett, Senior Policy Advisor, State Department

"The strength of the ITX lies in the combined intellect and sincerity of the DoD, interagency, and nongovernmental civilian mission partners who together explore realistic solutions to complex problems. This coalition exemplifies workable, respectful and productive civilian-military relationships."

Monica Shephard, Vice Director for Joint Force Development, J7

USIP has hosted four Interorganizational Tabletop Exercises:

2014: MULTIPLE CRISES IN SOUTH SUDAN AND ETHIOPIA

Deteriorating security in South Sudan, including the overrun of a UN compound by rebels. Response capability is tested by a simultaneous earthquake in Ethiopia to explore gaps in information-sharing, clarify lines of authority, and institutionalize relationships to most effectively respond to multiple crises.

2017: TRANSITIONING FROM FRAGILITY TOWARD STABILIZATION AND SUSTAINABLE HUMAN SECURITY IN SOMALIA AND THE REGION

Exploring the impact of an African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) withdrawal on Somalia's security. Proactive interorganizational planning sessions considered the processes and capabilities that could be utilized to fill the vacuum created by the drawdown

2016: VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN THE LAKE CHAD BASIN

Increase effectiveness of governmental and non-governmental organizations operate in Africa's Lake Chad Basin (Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, and Niger) to reduce and prevent violent extremism through comparing analysis and best practices and examining the impact of programs on each other and the conflict environment.

2018: PREVENTING AND COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN THE SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES

The siege of Marawi by ISIS-affiliated extremists in 2017 highlighted the long-standing tensions between the Muslim population and the Philippine government. The reconstruction of Marawi and implementation of the Bangsamoro Organic Law will inform peacebuilding.