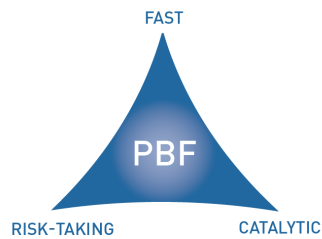




United Nations Peacebuilding Fund (PBF)

Guidelines on application and use of funds

April 2014



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1. Introduction

These guidelines are an update of the original Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) Application Guidelines, approved by the General Assembly in June 2009 and first published in October 2009 following a revision of the Terms of Reference of the Peacebuilding Fund (A/63/818).

Much experience has been gained since the original guidelines were published and this version seeks to incorporate those lessons. In addition, the first PBF global workshop was held in July 2013 in Cape Town, resulting in an exchange of lessons and comments on the previous version of the Guidelines from colleagues and partners in the field. Furthermore, helpful comments were received from the UNDP's Multi Partner Trust Fund Office (MPTF-O), the PBF's Administrative Agent, and other key partners in the UN system via consultations at headquarters (PCG).

These guidelines are intended to provide users with basic information on the PBF, especially on applying for, using and reporting on the funds. The primary users are intended to be the potential Fund users (UN agencies in the field) and Fund oversight agencies (members of the Joint Steering Committees etc).

The guidelines are web-based and accessible directly through the PBF website (www.unpbf.org). They are accompanied by various templates that are to be used for eligibility and budget requests related to the Immediate Response and *Peacebuilding* Recovery Facilities, as well as for monitoring and reporting.

Below is a chapter by chapter summary of the key changes to this version of the Guidelines from the March 2013 version:

Chapter 2: What is Peacebuilding

- Addition of a couple of new resources and their links.

Chapter 3: The Peacebuilding Fund

- Further clarification of the PBF intended added value to peacebuilding;
- An expanded explanation of the scope and focus of the Four Priority Areas supported by PBF;
- A strengthened section on gender responsiveness and the use of gender marker by PBF;
- A new section on conflict sensitive programming;
- A new section on risk-taking, innovation and catalytic-effects with PBF support;
- A few clarifications on who can receive funding and the role of various actors, including the addition of bilateral donors and international financing instruments.

Chapter 4: Country Eligibility for Accessing PBF Funds

- Further clarification of the timing of eligibility requests;
- Further clarification of the step-by-step process for eligibility requests;
- Further clarification of eligibility criteria.

Chapter 5: Immediate Response Facility

- Clarification of maximum IRF funding amounts;
- Further explanation of PBSO review criteria for IRFs;
- Further clarification on project amendments, extensions and closure.

Chapter 6: Peacebuilding and Recovery Facility

- Further clarification of potential PBSO 'surge support' for countries applying for PRF support;
- Explanation of a phased approach to Priority Plans;
- Simplification of the Priority Plan outline;
- Further detail on the role of the Joint Steering Committee, Technical Committee and the PBF Secretariat, including the requirement of PBSO approval for PBF Secretariat projects;
- Further elaboration of criteria for JSC approval of projects;

- Explanation of ‘quick start’ project approvals by Joint Steering Committees;
- Clarification of requirements for project amendments and closure.

Chapter 7: Monitoring and Evaluation

- Detailed explanation of results frameworks for PBF support, including a two-phase approach to Priority Plan results frameworks;
- Detailed explanation of M&E Plans for PBF support, including at Priority Plan and project level;
- Further information on reporting requirements, including the new annual report by Joint Steering Committees against the Priority Plan;
- Clarification of requirements for PBF evaluations, including new criteria for project-level evaluations and management of all programme evaluations by PBSO, rather than at country level.

2. What is Peacebuilding?

2.1 Definitions and Policy Development

In his 1992 report, “An Agenda for Peace,” former UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali introduced the concept of peacebuilding to the UN as “action to identify and support structures, which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict.”¹ Over the years, various efforts have been made to elaborate on this definition. The Brahimi Report from 2000 defined peacebuilding as “activities undertaken on the far side of conflict to reassemble the foundations of peace and provide the tools for building on those foundations something that is more than just the absence of war.”² In 2007, the Secretary-General’s Policy Committee has described peacebuilding as:

“A range of measures targeted to reduce the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict by strengthening national capacities at all levels for conflict management, and to lay the foundation for sustainable peace and development. Peacebuilding strategies must be coherent and tailored to the specific needs of the country concerned, based on national ownership, and should comprise a carefully prioritized, sequenced, and relatively narrow set of activities aimed at achieving the above objectives.”³

The Secretary-General has set out his vision for peacebuilding in three reports on post-conflict peacebuilding,⁴ and one on women’s participation in peacebuilding.⁵ The 2009 report identified five recurring priority areas for international assistance:

1. Support to basic safety and security;
2. Political processes;
3. Provision of basic services;
4. Restoration of core government functions; and
5. Economic revitalization.

The report also laid out an accompanying agenda for action for the UN. The 2010 report on women’s participation in peacebuilding details the Secretary-General’s Seven-Point Action Plan on Gender-Responsive Peacebuilding, including specific targets for each of the seven points (conflict resolution, post-conflict planning, post-conflict financing, gender-responsive civilian capacity, women’s representation in post-conflict governance, rule of law and economic recovery).

Despite such increased attention on peacebuilding policy and practice since Boutros Boutros-Ghali’s initial observations, the 2012 report states that the UN and its partners must do more to ensure that countries emerging from conflict are able to contain and manage conflict themselves and transform it into sustainable peace. The report identifies inclusivity, institution building and sustained international support, as critical actions in preventing relapse into violence and producing more resilient societies. The report also notes that successful peacebuilding processes must be transformative, creating space for a wider set of actors – including women, youth, marginalized groups, civil society, and the private sector – to participate in national post-conflict decision-making. With respect to institution building, the report observes that public administration and social services delivered equitably and accountably can help in addressing grievances and rebuilding a country’s legitimacy.

The 2012 report reflects not only lessons learned from the UN’s experience in peacebuilding, but also wider policy discussions that have taken place amongst peacebuilding stakeholders. Countries emerging from conflict together with development partners, the UN and other international organizations, have articulated a shared vision of peacebuilding through the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and State-building. The New Deal

¹ A/47/277 - S/24111, para. 21.

² A/55/305-S/2000/809, para. 13.

³ Decision of the Secretary-General, May 2007.

⁴ A/63/881-S/2009/304, A/64/866-S/2010/386 and A/67/499-S/2012/746.

⁵ A/65/354-S/2010/466

for Engagement in Fragile States,⁶ a policy framework emanating from the Dialogue, identifies five overarching peacebuilding and state-building goals:

1. Legitimate (inclusive) politics;
2. People's security;
3. Access to justice;
4. Employment generation and livelihoods support; and
5. Accountable revenue management and service delivery.

The **New Deal** emphasizes the need to anchor support activities in a nationally owned peacebuilding plan (One Vision/One Plan) and endorses the use of compacts⁷ as a means to implement those plans. The PBF contributes to the achievement of these peacebuilding and state-building goals, and looks for opportunities within its current Priority Areas to support the New Deal principles.

Various policies have stated clearly the “why” and the “what” of peacebuilding. Both the Secretary-General's 2009 report and the New Deal clearly establish the scope of peacebuilding – i.e. it encompasses activities, ranging from politics and security to social services and livelihoods. The broadening of the scope has been an important development in recent years. Yet, what the various reports and definitions have been less successful at is the “how” and what makes an intervention peacebuilding and how it contributes to a reduction in the risk of relapse. Any intervention, whether a DDR programme or the construction of a school, can easily lead to more conflict. A clear theory of change, based on a conflict analysis, is needed to ensure that interventions reduce the risk of relapse.

At an aggregate level, one could distinguish four broad theories of change:

1. Address drivers and root causes (e.g. horizontal inequalities)
2. Build institutions and capacities of individuals, communities and authorities to manage conflict and deliver services (e.g. political, security, justice and government institutions that deliver social services)
3. Enhance social cohesion and build trust among social groups (society-society relations) (e.g. reconciliation processes)
4. Build trust in and legitimacy of governments (state-society relations) (e.g. political dialogue)

Within this general framework, peacebuilding programmes are strategic, prioritized interventions driven by the analysis of peace and conflict that address underlying causes or drivers and consequences of conflict. These programmes build confidence in peace agreements and transitional processes, and contribute to restoring social contracts between the state and the people, including through the building of institutions and the delivery of services, and strengthening inter- and intra-communal social cohesion. They may include activities that facilitate inclusive participation in political processes, dialogue and reconciliation, or strengthen access to justice and human security. They may also include peace dividends: tangible results of peace that are delivered ideally by the state, or are at least attributable to it, and are accessible to communities in a manner that is perceived as addressing inequalities, marginalization or grievances. They also create incentives for non-violent behavior, reduce fear amongst the general population and begin the process of instilling trust in institutions and the larger peace process. Public administration and social services, delivered in an effective and equitable manner, can address grievances that underlie or trigger violent conflict and offer a means for the state to reach out to society and rebuild its legitimacy and systems of accountability.

2.2 Resources for Peacebuilding Programming

Developing a programmatic response to peacebuilding priorities is a multi-step process that requires conflict analysis⁸, including a consideration of the specific ways in which conflict impacts genders differently; a theory of change⁹; an informed risk assessment, and a robust monitoring and evaluation framework. The UN system

⁶ <http://www.newdeal4peace.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/New-Deal-for-engagement-in-fragile-states.pdf>.

⁷ A compact is a formal agreement between the recipient government and Fund providers

⁸ See PBF Guidance Note 5.9 on conflict analysis.

⁹ The Theory of change describes the assumed or hoped causal relationship between an intervention and its (intended) peacebuilding result or impact.

has developed a variety of resources that can be of assistance in developing effective peacebuilding programmes. While such resources are constantly being improved and developed, as of March 2014, the UN's main resources include:

UN Peacebuilding: An Orientation (UN PBSO, 2010)

Prepared by PBSO in conjunction with other UN system entities, this handbook explains fundamental concepts associated with peacebuilding and introduces UN structures and mechanisms for peacebuilding, policy coordination and support. The handbook also provides examples and lessons from practice.¹⁰

Conflict Analysis for Prioritization Tool (UN System Staff College, 2009)

Developed by the UN systems Staff College, the Conflict Analysis for Prioritization Tool is a set of online resources, visual examples and templates designed to help users consider and reflect upon all aspects of post-conflict and -crisis situations. The tool draws on conflict analysis to identify those issues and sectors that have the greatest potential to promote peace and prevent relapses into violence.¹¹

Thematic Reviews of DDR, SSR, Peace Dividends and Gender in relation to Peacebuilding (PBSO, 2012 and 2014)

This series of multi-partner studies examines four different thematic areas of peacebuilding, focusing on sector engagements supported by the PBF as well as the cross-cutting question of gender responsiveness. The studies draw on lessons learned across country contexts to identify good practices in each area and factors that contribute towards making a particular intervention successful and sustainable.¹²

Technical Note on Conflict Sensitivity and Peacebuilding in UNICEF (UNICEF, 2013)

This forthcoming note, while intended to inform UNICEF's programmes, will also be of value to a wider set of peacebuilding actors as it clarifies key concepts, distinguishes between conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding, provides best practices and a list of additional resources.¹³

UNDP Conflict-related Development Analysis – CDA (2003 and currently being revised)

Developed by UNDP, the CDA framework and guidance supports evidence-based decision-making on the basis of conflict sensitivity and responsiveness. The CDA serves to identify the causes of conflict, stakeholders, and the issues and dynamics in the conflict. The tool offers further guidance on analysis application for the development of clear and realistic peacebuilding programming and policy objectives as well as indicators for measuring results. The tool is currently being revised. The PBF Conflict Analysis Guidance will be integrated as one chapter of the revised tool.¹⁴

Rule of Law Indicators: Implementation Guide and Project Tools (UN, 2011)

Developed by DPKO and OHCHR, and endorsed through the UN Rule of Law Coordination and Resource Group, this document provides a comprehensive list of indicators in the areas of police, judiciary and corrections, as well as detailed guidance on planning, measurement, analysis and presentation of results.¹⁵ While some indicators for other areas of peacebuilding support have been developed, these are considered as the most advanced.

¹⁰ http://www.un.org/en/peacebuilding/pbso/pdf/peacebuilding_orientation.pdf

¹¹ <http://www.unssc.org/home/themes/peace-and-security/e-learning-0>

¹² http://www.un.org/en/peacebuilding/pbso/pdf/DDR_PBF_Thematic_Review.pdf, http://www.un.org/en/peacebuilding/pbso/pdf/SSR2_web.pdf, http://www.un.org/en/peacebuilding/pbso/pdf/peace_dividends.pdf. At the time of publication, the Gender Thematic Review was still being finalized but will be available on the PBSO website in April 2014.

¹³ http://www.unicefemergencies.com/downloads/eresource/Conflict_Sensitivity_and_Peacebuilding.html.

¹⁴ http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/documents/cpr/documents/prevention/CDA_complete.pdf

¹⁵ http://www.un.org/en/events/peacekeepersday/2011/publications/un_rule_of_law_indicators.pdf.

Defining Theory of Change, Peacebuilding with Impact (CARE International, Jan 2012)

Focusing on theories of change can improve the effectiveness of peacebuilding interventions. A review of 19 peacebuilding projects in three conflict-affected countries found that the process of articulating and reviewing theories of change adds rigour and transparency, clarifies project logic, highlights assumptions that need to be tested, and helps identify appropriate participants and partners.¹⁶

World Development Report 2011: Conflict, Security and Development (The World Bank, 2011)

This landmark work looks across at experiences from a wide range of country contexts to offer ideas on how countries can be supported in moving beyond conflict and fragility to secure development. The Report pays special attention to the challenges and risks associated with protracted and cyclical patterns of violence, including their potential impacts across national borders and the tools available to measure progress.¹⁷

UN Women Sourcebook on Women, Peace and Security (2012)

The Sourcebook 'Women, Peace and Security' is a comprehensive set of analytical and practical guidance material on the main thematic and operational elements of the Women, Peace and Security agenda. It includes guidance notes on gender and conflict analysis; planning and financing for gender-responsive peacebuilding; women and economic recovery; women and access to justice, etc.¹⁸

Weblinks for additional reading material:

Reflective Peacebuilding Toolkits

http://www.crsprogramquality.org/storage/pubs/peacebuilding/reflective_peacebldg.pdf

Designing for Results: Integrating Monitoring and Evaluation in Conflict Transformation Programs

<http://www.sfcg.org/Documents/manualpart1.pdf>; <http://www.sfcg.org/Documents/manualpart2.pdf>

Platforms / portals for exchanges among the leading peacebuilding institutions and professionals (US):

<http://www.allianceforpeacebuilding.org/>;

Training programmes

- Improving Strategic Impact, Quality and Effectiveness in Peacebuilding & Peace Support Operations (ISI), International Peace and Development Training Center (IPDTC), www.patrir.ro/training;
- Designing & Implementing Effective M&E for Peacebuilding and Conflict Transformation Programmes, International Peace and Development Training Center (IPDTC), www.patrir.ro/training;
- Reflecting on Peace Practice Program, Tools and Approaches for Strategic Peacebuilding (CDA), <http://www.cdacollaborative.org/#&panel1-1>

¹⁶ <http://www.careinternational.org>.

¹⁷ http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTWDRS/Resources/WDR2011_Full_Text.pdf.

¹⁸ <http://www.unwomen.org/publications/un-women-sourcebook-on-women-peace-and-security>

3. The Peacebuilding Fund (PBF)

3.1 What is the PBF?

The Peacebuilding Fund was established in 2005 through General Assembly resolution 60/180 and Security Council resolution 1645 to stand alongside the Peacebuilding Commission and Peacebuilding Support Office and ensure the early availability of resources for launching critical peacebuilding activities. These resolutions requested the Secretary-General to “establish a multi-year standing peacebuilding fund for post-conflict peacebuilding,” to be managed by the Secretary-General on behalf of Member States.

The Fund’s purpose is to respond to country-identified peacebuilding priorities via UN sponsored programming. The Fund’s Terms of Reference (A/63/818), revised and approved in mid-2009, determine current operations and state that PBF:

- Is a global fund designed to support several countries simultaneously and which combines the scope of a global fund with the country-specific focus of a multi-donor trust fund.
- Will support interventions of direct and immediate relevance to the peacebuilding process and contribute towards addressing critical gaps in that process, in particular areas where no other funding mechanism is available.
- Shall provide immediate response, recovery needs and peacebuilding assistance to countries on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission, and those not included under the PBC’s agenda. In all cases, the Secretary-General will inform the Commission on the activation of funding facilities and provide justification for the selection of countries and allocations made.

PBF’s expected *added value* is outlined below. In requesting PBF support, UN agencies and their partners should consider how their vision for PBF support is utilizing and building on this added value.

- Empowering UN leadership to be more strategic and coherent in responding quickly to peacebuilding needs within a specific country context and addressing conflict dynamics at a broader scale
- Explicit consideration of the political lens and encouraging innovative approaches, including well thought-out risks that may be too high for traditional donors
- The ability to engage a variety of actors at country level as a starting point for peacebuilding processes
- The potential to achieve programmatic results going beyond the scope of individual UN agency achievements and taking advantage of their specific expertise and capacity
- The potential for catalytic effects¹⁹ by providing early support in areas crucial to starting, unblocking or accelerating specific components of the peacebuilding processes or that are financially gap-filling at a critical moment in time.

3.2 What are the PBF Funding Mechanisms?

In accordance with its Terms of Reference, the PBF was created to support *countries recovering from conflict or considered to be at risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict, while also supporting efforts to address immediate needs in countries emerging from conflict at a time when sufficient resources are not available from other funding mechanisms that could provide support to peacebuilding activities*. As per its Business Plan, the Fund has the capacity to support approximately 20 countries at any given time.

PBF provides this support through two financing tracks:

¹⁹ For further details on the meaning of catalytic, please refer to PeaceNexus and PBF, “Programming for Catalytic Effects in Peacebuilding: A Guide”, 2012

- The **Immediate Response Facility (IRF)** is the project-based financing mechanism of the PBF that was created to address critical peacebuilding needs in the immediate aftermath of conflict or as a result of a dramatic change in the country situation. It provides rapid funding to address *urgent* peacebuilding needs to support critical transition moments. With small, catalytic resources, the Fund demonstrates to governments and citizens that new paths to sustainable peace are possible.
- The **Peacebuilding and Recovery Facility (PRF)** is the programme-based financing mechanism of the PBF, typically aimed at countries within several years following the end of a conflict. The PRF requires the elaboration of a strategic plan for peacebuilding, called the Peacebuilding Priority Plan, which supports national efforts at peacebuilding. While PBSO has final approval of the Priority Plan, project-level approval is delegated to a Joint Steering Committee (JSC) that is established at country level and co-led by the United Nations and the partner government. In this way, PRF provides conflict-affected countries that have made clear commitments to addressing post-conflict fragility with longer-term support for initiatives that consolidate peace. It also creates mechanisms for effective partnerships between national authorities, the UN, donors, and civil society organizations (CSOs) at the country level to support governments with strong commitments to peacebuilding.

For both IRF and PRF, the PBSO aims to render a decision within 3 weeks of a formal submission from the field, that is, a submission addressed to the ASG for Peacebuilding Support and is co-signed by the senior-most resident UN representative and the Government. The amount of work and time needed to prepare the two processes varies, however. Obtaining IRF support speaks to the PBF’s mandate to be fast. Approval can be swift, but largely depends on how quickly the UN team in country can design the project document and obtain Government approval. Part and parcel of developing a strong proposal is whether there is an existing, robust analysis to justify the proposal’s scale, scope and priorities. In PBF’s experience, this generally takes two to three months in total.

Given its programmatic focus and the need to secure strong national commitment to the broad strategic objectives of the Priority Plan, the PRF requires an admittedly longer process. The PRF’s Priority Plan must align to existing strategic transition plans where they exist, and ensure complementarity. Countries that are new to the PBF will need to obtain a declaration of eligibility from the Secretary-General to enable them to receive funds above the \$3 million threshold. Other elements that contribute to a longer approval process for the PRF include: the need for a current, gender-sensitive conflict analysis to inform priority setting; the setup of a Joint Steering Committee and capacity building to enable all members to contribute meaningfully to the process; the design and approval of a Priority Plan; and the design and approval of project documents that operationalize the broad strategic priorities identified in the Priority Plan. In PBF’s experience, this process takes 9 to 12 months from the start to the release of funds. Nonetheless, the timing is very much in the hands of the UN Team in the country, and heavily depends on UNCT leadership as well as how quickly a JSC Secretariat support structure can be put in place. PBSO can provide support at all stages of the process, the level of which will depend on the capacity constraints on the ground.

| | Short-term support: IRF | Medium to longer-term support: PRF |
|---------------------------|--|---|
| WHEN? | Wherever peacebuilding opportunities arise in the immediate aftermath of political crisis or conflict. | Typically applied within several years following the end of a conflict to support national efforts and consolidate peacebuilding. |
| WHAT²⁰? | Scope for intervention (as per four PBF priority areas): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the implementation of peace agreements and political dialogue. • Promote coexistence and peaceful resolution of conflict. • Revitalize the economy and generate immediate peace dividends. • (Re)-establish essential administrative services. | |

²⁰ As determined in the Terms of Reference (2009).

| | | |
|-------------|--|---|
| WHO? | Potential Fund users are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UN agencies, Funds and Programs (direct fund recipients). • UN Secretariat departments, including DPA and DPKO (direct fund recipients). Indirectly (as implementation partners to the UN agencies) governments, NGOs and CSOs can also be Fund users. | |
| HOW? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project based funding mechanism. • Funding ceiling: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) PBSO Assistant Secretary General can approve up to \$3 million for Immediate Response without formal eligibility (known as 'provisional eligibility'). 2) If a country is declared formally eligible for PBF funding by the UN Secretary General, it can receive up to \$10 million for the IRF project portfolio (counting active project portfolio, not projects which are operationally closed). • Duration: 6 to 18 months. • One-step approval process by PBSO. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme based funding mechanism • Funding ceiling: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) No formal limit: based on Priority Plan needs and capacity 2) Approved on a case-by-case basis by the PBSO. • Duration: 18 to 36 months. • Two-step approval process: Priority Plan approved by PBSO; selection and approval of project proposals by Joint Steering Committee (JSC). |

3.3 What Does the PBF Support?

PBF funding is not earmarked for thematic areas, rather it responds to country-specific needs within the limits set by the PBF Terms of Reference. In fact, one of the hallmarks of the PBF is its recognition that peacebuilding looks different in each country and, thus, it can encompass a broad range of interventions. Nevertheless, the PBF has four broad Priority Areas that it supports (as per its TORS), and has further identified eleven Focus Areas under each Priority Area, following guidelines in the 2009 SG report and the PBF Terms of Reference.

PBSO encourages countries to develop specific outcomes in accordance with the context and needs in the country. However, in order to be able to aggregate and analyze PBF support, it is important that each project (whether for PRF or IRF) is clearly attributable to one of the below 12 PBF Focus Areas. While not all country-based projects may map easily onto the below list, PBSO recommends countries to determine which Focus Area provides the best fit for the project's intended outcomes. If a project cannot be classified under any of the below Focus Areas, please contact the appropriate PBF programme officer to discuss further. With respect to PRFs, while a Priority Plan typically supports more than one Focus Area, individual projects should be assigned to only one Priority Plan Outcome and to only one PBF Focus Area (see also Results Frameworks).

Priority Area 1: Support the implementation of peace agreements and political dialogue

- 1.1 Security Sector Reform (SSR)
- 1.2 Rule of Law
- 1.3 Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR)
- 1.4 Political dialogue

Priority Area 2: Promote coexistence and peaceful resolution of conflict

- 2.1 National reconciliation
- 2.2 Democratic governance
- 2.3 Conflict prevention/management

Priority Area 3: Revitalize the economy and generate immediate peace dividends

3.1 Employment

3.2 Equitable access to social services

Priority Area 4: Re-establish essential administrative services

4.1 Strengthening of essential national state capacity

4.2 Extension of state authority/local administration

4.3 Governance of peacebuilding resources (including JSC/PBF Secretariats).

Under Priority Area 1, the PBF engages in four main areas to support the implementation of peace agreements in post conflict states: Security Sector Reform (SSR); Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR); the Rule of Law and Political Dialogue. In post conflict countries the security sector is often left decimated. The PBF provides assistance to update equipment, train security forces/ police and improve essential infrastructure. To galvanize a functioning judicial system the PBF strengthens national justice systems at both the national and local levels facilitating decentralization. The rehabilitation and reintegration of ex-combatants has been a major focus of the PBF's involvement with DDR projects. Political dialogue is often crucial to strengthening social cohesion and bringing various previously warring factions together towards a common peacebuilding vision. All this support has often come at a time when other funding has not been readily available.

Under Priority Area 2, in promoting coexistence and supporting the peaceful resolution of conflict, the PBF supports national reconciliation, good governance and conflict prevention/management, including disputes concerning land and infrastructure for peace. Such projects can span a wide range of peacebuilding initiatives including community level social cohesion, women's empowerment, mediation and peaceful resolution of community disputes and strengthening independent institutions and non-state actors.

Under Priority Area 3, the PBF is concerned with stimulating the post-conflict economy and generating some immediate peace dividends through the creation of targeted short-term employment opportunities and through assisting with equitable access to social services especially for those affected by, previously involved in or at risk of conflict. Activities include strengthening economic governance through the promotion of private sector partnerships, development of viable micro-enterprises and livelihoods diversification, as well as the use of employment schemes and public works, often focused on youth and women and always with the peacebuilding focus.

Under Priority Area 4, the PBF supports projects that are designed to rebuild the key state administrative services and capacity, at both the national and local administration levels. With governments primarily focused on security and political processes in post-conflict settings, resorting basic administrative services becomes a key priority as a way to restore state legitimacy and rebuild the confidence of conflict weary populations. The PBF also supports peacebuilding governance, including through set-up of PBF Secretariats and Joint Steering Committees.

3.4 Gender responsiveness as a cross-cutting approach

Gender responsiveness is a cross-cutting priority for all PBF supported projects, either through targeted projects or through mainstreaming of gender equality and women's empowerment in all programming. Women, men, girls and boys have different experiences of conflict and will require tailored programming approaches to meet their needs during post-conflict interventions. Also, women's potential contribution to peacebuilding is often not adequately harnessed or supported. Therefore, priority plans and project proposals must include a gender analysis to assess the impact of the proposed initiative on women and girls, whether they are the direct targets or not. Additionally, at the project level, PBSO uses a gender marker system, ranging from 0 to 3, a rating that indicates the extent to which gender equality and women's empowerment are being addressed in the project proposals.

Projects receive gender marker scores based on the following criteria:

Score 3 for projects that have gender equality as a principal objective (targeted actions).

Score 2 for projects that have gender equality as a significant objective (gender mainstreaming).

Score 1 for projects expected to contribute in some way, but not significantly, to gender equality.
Score 0 for projects not expected to contribute noticeably to gender equality.

The responsibility to score the project lies with the submitting UN organization. In doing so, the UN organization needs to thoroughly assess whether their project is based on a solid gender analysis and whether gender has been integrated in the outcomes, outputs, target population groups, activities, indicators and budget. The gender marker score will be reviewed by the Joint Steering Committee (for PRF) or the Project Appraisal Committee (for IRF). The gender marker score will also be re-visited through independent evaluations at critical moments in the programme/project cycle (in light of the actual activities, budget allocations, approaches and results) and revised where needed.

PBSO is committed to supporting the implementation of the Secretary-General's *Seven Point Action Plan on Gender-Responsive Peacebuilding*. As such, PBF is working towards achieving the global target of allocating at least 15% of peacebuilding funds for projects whose principal objective is to address women's specific needs, advance gender equality or promote women's empowerment. Under the Seven Point Action Plan, UN Country Teams are required to include a gender analysis in their assessment and planning processes and are urged to allocate at least 15% of programme budgets to projects that have gender equality as the main objective and to otherwise mainstream gender equality in all projects. PBF encourages all countries teams to strive to have peacebuilding portfolios composed of projects scored as gender marker 2 and 3.

3.5 Conflict sensitivity as a cross-cutting approach

PBF operates in fragile and post-conflict environments where the population is still recovering from the devastating effects of the conflict. In such situations, every intervention affects the relationships and perceptions between different individuals and groups and can have effects that go far beyond those expected by the project, even destabilizing or disgruntling certain groups. For example, provision of supplies can be used by armed groups to sustain their warfare. Project benefits can be co-opted by local players to a political end. Targeting of certain beneficiaries can be seen as discrimination by others, especially if they were on differing sides of the conflict. As such, the details of the assistance provided – including its intended and unintended consequences – can dramatically affect a project's success.

It is crucial, therefore, that all programmes and projects funded by PBF are conflict sensitive. That is, those designing and implementing PBF-funded projects must gain a sound understanding of the two-way interaction between project activities and context, and must act to minimize negative impacts and maximize positive impacts of intervention on the conflict. The Do No Harm approach²¹ focuses on ensuring that interventions that take place in conflict or post-conflict environments do not lead to unintentional harm due to the way they are designed or implemented. In designing the projects and programs, the UN Country Team and RUNO, in collaboration with the government and other partners, need to carefully consider all the implications from the intended support in line with Do No Harm principles. A thorough and inclusive conflict analysis is recommended for all projects and is a pre-requisite for all funding under the PRF track.²²

Furthermore, as part of conflict sensitivity, all programmes and projects must take into account the Human Rights Due Diligence policy. This means that they must identify and assess any human rights risks from their project and also prevent and mitigate any potential adverse human rights impacts. This is particularly important in the area of security sector reform and DDR where projects are most likely to work with ex-combatants.

²¹ See more on the Do No Harm framework here: <http://www.conflictsensitivity.org/node/103>

²² See PBF Guidance Note 5.9

3.6 Risk taking, innovation and catalytic effects

As previously mentioned, an important component of PBF added value is providing quick support to areas that are innovative and potentially risky, but also likely to have significant peacebuilding effects if successful. This is particularly important given that PBF financial support typically is modest in terms of size and that PBF support is meant to be relatively short term and quick-impact even though both peacebuilding and development are long and complex processes.

Risky projects most often imply one of four considerations: i) the general context/setting in which the project is implemented is volatile (although peacebuilding initiatives should try to reduce precisely this risk), ii) the sensitivity of the issue the project addresses is rife with tension or seeks to dismantle existing exclusionary forms of power, iii) the innovative and political nature of the approach raises the risk that the project may be side lined by spoilers, or iv) the low capacity on the ground, including possible delays and fiduciary risks which may come from it. While PBF encourages innovative thinking towards risk and is not averse to taking programmatic risks with a view to achieving peacebuilding outcomes. However, all risks need to be well thought-out, with significant analysis to support them, and with a strong risk mitigation and early warning mechanism, which will help ensure that the project reacts quickly to both positive and negative results. Moreover, these risks need to be properly balanced with the foreseen peacebuilding benefits in taking them.

Most PBF projects are expected to have the potential to be catalytic, although not all projects will realize that potential. Catalytic nature can be process-based or financial. On the one hand, the project can catalyse a broader peacebuilding effect through starting a new or re-launching a blocked peacebuilding initiative. On the other hand, the project can catalyse additional finances by filling in the crucial initial funding gap and then catalysing other donors and the Government to provide longer-term support.²³

3.7 Who Can Receive Funding?

Any country emerging from conflict that demonstrates a commitment to peace consolidation may be eligible for funding through the PBF. Countries access PBF funding, however, through resident UN partners, who must also demonstrate the value added their role brings to the peacebuilding process. The following sections of these guidelines outline the application process for countries seeking support for peacebuilding efforts.

As noted above, while funding is provided to support a country's peacebuilding priorities, the actual funds are delivered through the UN Secretariat departments (including DPA and DPKO), UN agencies, funds, and programmes, and intergovernmental organizations such as IOM, which have a similar status and immunities as the UN. Government agencies and ministries, non-government organizations (NGOs) and Community Based Organizations/Civil Society Organizations (CBOs/CSOs) cannot access the Fund directly; however, they may implement projects through partnership arrangements with eligible UN agencies and organizations. In these cases, the Recipient UN Organization (RUNO) acts as a managing agent, receiving the funds from the MPTF-O and then passing the funds to the NGO/CSO. The RUNO, however, retains overall accountability for the funds and must ensure that funds are utilized for the agreed purpose and that outputs and outcomes are reported on, using PBF templates.

It is important to highlight that the PBF is not a Fund to enhance the UN's capacity to undertake peacebuilding. PBF funding is generally not to be used for hiring UN personnel, although it can be used for the necessary project staff. As previously mentioned, the Fund's purpose is to respond to country identified peacebuilding priorities and to deliver assistance via UN sponsored programming. The logic of priorities chosen must rely on a country-based analysis (as opposed to focusing on UN funding gaps). The logic of RUNO selection must rely on the mandate, expertise, experience and capacity to implement the identified peacebuilding priorities. Moreover, in selecting the RUNOs for the projects, UN policies for coordination, integration and transparency should be applied, and the whole UN team should work closely together.

²³ For more information, see PeaceNexus and PBF, "Programming for Catalytic Effects in Peacebuilding: A Guide", 2012

Projects can be led by a single UN agency or by several agencies jointly. Again, where UN agencies are applying for a project jointly, it is important that they do so in a complementary and coherent manner and are guided by their capacity and expertise in achieving the objectives of the project and, in cases of PRF, the Priority Plan.

3.8 How to Apply for PBF Funding at the Country-Level?

While requirements differ according to the two facilities (IRF/PRF), the key actors to engage with the PBSO are the same: national authorities, UN leadership, national and international CSOs/CBOs, international development partners, and UN agencies. In the event of a PRF grant, these actors form a Joint Steering Committee, which oversees the PBF funds in the country and approves individual projects to implement the Priority Plan.

Ideas for PBF-financed activities can be generated by any of the key stakeholder groups and brought to the attention of the most senior Resident UN official (SRSG, ERSG, or UN Resident Coordinator). Depending on the level of engagement with the PBF, UN leadership can either pursue discussions locally and/or contact PBSO.

Individual actors are welcome to contact PBSO directly for informal advice, but all proposals will have to be discussed locally within the whole Country Team (and the UN Mission, if there is one in place) and submitted formally by the Senior Resident UN official, who is accountable for the information flow and for ensuring a transparent environment for decision-making. Proposals should be submitted using the specific, relevant templates provided on the PBSO/PBF website. For project proposals, each proposal needs to clearly identify at least one UN agency that will be responsible for the implementation of the project, financial management and reporting.

More information about the specific responsibilities of actors in relation to the IRF and the PRF, including Joint Steering Committees, are listed below.

3.9 Key Actors Involved

The key actors involved in the design, implementation and monitoring of projects funded by PBF include the following:

- **National Authorities**

As stated above, PBF provides support to countries whose government and leaders show commitment towards peacebuilding and towards a joint vision for peace. As such, national authorities must play an active role in providing leadership and ownership for peacebuilding projects supported by PBF funds. For IRF activities, this leadership is provided through the mandatory co-signing of project proposals. For PRF programmes, this leadership is channeled via co-chairing the JSC and co-signing the Priority Plan and related PRF project proposals.

Moreover, in designing and implementing projects, RUNOs are urged to work closely with the relevant government ministries and agencies, to align their support to any existing government plans in the area of peacebuilding and, to the extent possible, work to strengthen the government's capacity. This is particularly important for projects that aim at strengthening public administration and provision of public services, given that work in these areas is essentially about extending the reach of the State into areas where government's presence has been impeded as a result of the conflict.

- **Senior Resident UN Representative**

The Senior Resident UN Representative (e.g. SRSG, ERSG, or UN Resident Coordinator) is the main interlocutor between the UN Family, the government and PBSO/PBF. Every request to PBF must be co-

signed by the senior UN representative in country and a representative of the government. In addition, the senior resident UN representative is responsible for the official submission of the project proposals (IRF) and Priority Plan (PRF) to PBSO, and, with respect to IRFs, is accountable for the results – at both outcome and output levels – that justified budget approval in the first place.

The Senior Resident UN Representative serves a critical function in fulfilling a communication link with the UN Country Team, ensuring the whole Country Team’s understanding of the PBF’s purpose and operation and guaranteeing that PBF support is used by the UN Family in a way that best addresses the identified peacebuilding priorities and gaps in the country. The Senior Resident UN Representative will promote UN policies for coordination and integration and will ensure transparency and information sharing within the UN Country Team on all key decision-points relating to PBF support.

- **UN Country Team (UNCT)**

In delivering assistance, the PBF benefits from the broad skills and presence of the broader UN system. The UNCT should be fully aware of discussions undertaken by the senior resident UN Representative on how to access the PBF. UNCT members should have the opportunity to review and comment on any proposed submissions. UNCT discussions concerning the PBF should center on developing a common understanding of peacebuilding needs, priorities, concrete programmatic responses and the best use of the Fund as inter-agency support.

- **The Joint Steering Committee and Supporting Structures (applicable to PRF only)**

Co-chaired by the Senior Resident UN Representative and a senior government representative, the JSC oversees the elaboration and implementation of the Priority Plan, including reviewing and approving project proposals, monitoring and reporting, including assessing programme-wide achievements before the end of each calendar year.

The JSC is a management body, accountable to both the Government and PBSO for the allocation and utilization of resources, including for results achievement as formulated in the Priority Plan. If appropriate mechanisms already exist (such as a Multi-Donor Fund Board) for maintaining oversight on results of peacebuilding activities, no parallel structures should be established. In designing the JSC membership and functioning, it is important to strike a balance between transparent and collaborative processes and the need to limit additional transaction costs. Importantly, the effectiveness of the JSC oversight rests to a large degree on the in-country leadership and collaboration, both within the UN Country Team and/or Mission and with the Government. PBF experience suggests that where this is absent, the PBF processes can become a lot more cumbersome.

- **Recipient UN Organizations (RUNOs)**

RUNOs receive the physical funds from PBF and are responsible for project design and implementation. Projects financed by PBF can be implemented individually or jointly by the RUNOs, and joint programming is encouraged where it can bring best results. Each RUNO operates under its own financial rules and regulations and assumes full financial and programmatic responsibility for funds disbursed by the Administrative Agent (e.g. MPTF Office). Each RUNO is responsible for:

- project implementation and achievement of expected results within the agreed duration of the project, including those components implemented by their partners (e.g. CSOs);
- timely project monitoring and evaluation with full cost coverage, and financial and narrative reporting;
- complementarity and coordination with other Agency specific sources of peacebuilding funding, with other implementing UN agencies and partners to ensure that the projects achieve results that go beyond their immediate outputs and which contribute to higher peacebuilding outcomes in a coherent, complementary and inclusive manner.

- **NGOs and CSOs**

Thanks to their closer direct links with populations affected by conflict and their ability to access such hard-to-reach places, national and international NGOs/CSOs can play a critical role for PBF supported projects. While NGOs and CSOs are not able to access funds directly, they may still participate in PBF funded initiatives in various ways. They should be involved in the planning stage, including the conflict analysis and the identification of key gaps and priorities for PBF support. In the most pro-active scenario, an NGO or CSO may approach the JSC (PRF) or the Senior Resident UN Representative (IRF) with a proposal they would like to be considered. If it is determined that the proposal addresses a clear peacebuilding need that falls within the terms of the PBF priority areas as well as the country's own priorities, the JSC or Senior Resident UN Representative may commit an eligible UN Agency, Fund or Programme to partner with the NGO or CSO and act as a Managing Agent for the project.

Recipient UN Organizations are strongly encouraged to partner with NGOs in the implementation of PBF supported projects, or at the very least, to consult them and ensure complementarity of support. If NGOs/CSOs are contracted as implementing agents, RUNOs act as the Managing Agent. As such, RUNOs remain accountable for the quality of service provided by NGOs throughout the implementation cycle as well as the overall financial management and progress reporting. Additionally, if not directly involved in implementation, they may be engaged as third-party monitors to monitor and report on peacebuilding projects. In the case of PRF, Joint Steering Committees are expected to ensure NGO/CSO representation.

- **Bilateral donors**

PBF support aims to catalyze a broader effect on peacebuilding, going beyond the scope of an individual project. It often relies on other donors providing additional or longer term support to areas initially supported by PBF. As such, it is paramount to ensure that PBF support is complementary to what other donors' strategies and that key donors are involved at the various stages of the process, including – in PRF – through participating in the Joint Steering Committees.

- **Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO)**

As the home of the Peacebuilding Fund, PBSO plays a critical role in the review and approval of proposals for both IRF (at the project level) and PRF (at the Priority Plan level) facilities. In addition to its formal role in decision-making, PBSO also makes available technical support for project and programme design, development of in-country Fund management structures, monitoring, reporting, and evaluation. In some cases, this can include a package of 'surge support' that may include PBSO personnel or PBSO partners or peacebuilding consultants deploying to the country to prepare key documents for PBF submission. In other cases, such support may include feedback on drafts and assistance with specific parts of documents (such as M&E Frameworks), which can be provided through regular online and phone contact between PBSO personnel and country personnel.

- **Peacebuilding Commission (PBC)**

If the country requesting PBF funding is on the agenda of the PBC, the Commission will have the opportunity to comment on the proposal. In many cases, apart from their formal comments, the PBC Chair and his/her team will also have a more direct involvement in the elaboration of or quality assurance of the Priority Plan and/or the design of the projects.

PBSO also strongly encourages UN Country Teams to ensure that the PBF support and the PBC priorities in the country are well aligned, and work to support and complement each other. The Priority Plan needs to be aligned with the statement of mutual commitment.²⁴ The PBC configuration will also remain involved

²⁴ The PBC and the countries on its agenda define the engagement through a statement of mutual commitment that identifies the overarching peacebuilding political framework under which the PBC and country will operate.

throughout implementation, including through reviewing reports and providing political support in specific areas, as needed.

Regardless of whether or not the country is on the agenda of the PBC, PBSO informs the PBC Chair of any new IRF and PRF grants.

- **Multi Partner Trust Fund Office (MPTF-O)**

The UNDP MPTF Office serves as the Administrative Agent of the PBF and is responsible for the receipt of donor contributions, transfer of funds to Recipient UN Organizations, as well as the receiving and uploading of RUNO reports on the Gateway website and their sharing with PBF and donors. As the Administrative Agent of the PBF, MPTF Office transfers funds to RUNO Headquarters, in accordance with the approved project budget, upon submission of signed project documents and fund transfer requests and based on signed MOUs between each RUNO and the MPTF Office.

- **International Financing Institutions (IFIs)**

PBF seeks to increase its collaboration with the International Financing Institutions (especially the World Bank and the African and Asian Development Banks) operating in the countries supported by PBF. This collaboration can be done during analysis or during the design and the implementation of a project (e.g. where PBF provides the initial funds that IFIs can then continue or where PBF provides the peacebuilding component of a broader programme implemented with IFI support). In particular, the World Bank's State and Peacebuilding Facility operates in similar priority areas as PBF and there are many potential areas for collaboration. Collaboration can also happen at the M&E level through joint monitoring and evaluation exercises during the implementation of the Priority Plan. The UN Senior Resident Official and the RUNOs are encouraged to explore the areas of potential collaboration with IFIs in the field. In case of country presence, a representative from IFIs should be encouraged to be a member of the Joint Steering Committee.

4. Country Eligibility for Accessing PBF funding

Typically, a country's first encounter with the PBF will be in the form of one or more IRF projects, up to a total of \$3 million, to address an immediate peacebuilding need. In these early stages, countries usually will not have been declared eligible for additional PBF funds. In order to receive funding above the \$3 million threshold, a country must be declared formally eligible for the PBF by the UN Secretary-General.

Obtaining eligibility opens the door for countries to receive PBF funding through the PRF or to expand their IRF portfolio up to \$10 million. Granting eligibility, however, does not influence the amount of funding that may be allocated to a specific country; this consideration is made according to peacebuilding needs and capacities in the country. It should be noted that it is possible to submit the request for eligibility at any time, including before submitting an IRF project, at the same time as requesting or implementing an IRF project or independently of any IRF.

4.1 Eligibility Consultation Process

The question of eligibility should be discussed and agreed to among the UNCT, non-resident UN officials and advisers,²⁵ the Government and the other development partners. These stakeholders will need to consider whether the Peacebuilding Fund is an appropriate source of support for the country's peacebuilding priorities. In determining whether to apply for eligibility, PBSO also encourages early consultation with the PBF.

4.2 Country Eligibility Application Process

Depending on a country's engagement with the PBC as well as the amount of funding requested, there are different ways for a country to obtain eligibility. In all cases, the eligibility request (using Template 1) is initiated at country level – either by the government or the UN - and submitted by the Senior Resident UN Representative to PBSO, following endorsement by the Government. **PBC Countries** are automatically eligible for PBF funding and no formal request for eligibility is necessary. **Non-PBC Countries** must seek eligibility by: (i) either submitting a formal request for eligibility to PBSO; or (ii) submitting an emergency project proposal for IRF funding of no more than \$3 million and requesting “provisional eligibility” from the ASG for Peacebuilding.

Formal requests for eligibility are submitted by the Senior Resident UN official and must include evidence of the government's commitment to peacebuilding. Once an eligibility request is received, PBSO consults the Peacebuilding Commission (where relevant), the Permanent Representative of the country's mission to the UN, the senior resident UN representative in the country under consideration and the Senior Peacebuilding Group at the Headquarters. PBSO will then recommend a decision to the Secretary-General. PBSO aims to complete the eligibility process, including submission for the Secretary-General's decision, within 21 days. The Secretary-General's approval usually takes another 21 days. Once approved by the Secretary-General, the Administrative Agent (MPTF-Office), the UN Country Team and the Permanent Representative to the UN of the country in question are then informed of the country's eligibility.

In case of an emergency project proposal, the ASG for Peacebuilding can declare ‘provisional eligibility’ for IRF support only on a project-by-project basis, as long as the request does not exceed \$3 million in total. For project or portfolio requests of over \$3 million, a formal eligibility request is compulsory.

4.3 Eligibility criteria

PBSO reviews the eligibility request based on the following factors:

- Critical peacebuilding needs (country at risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict, as indicated by a current conflict analysis; country is recently post-conflict, and peacebuilding gaps have been identified);

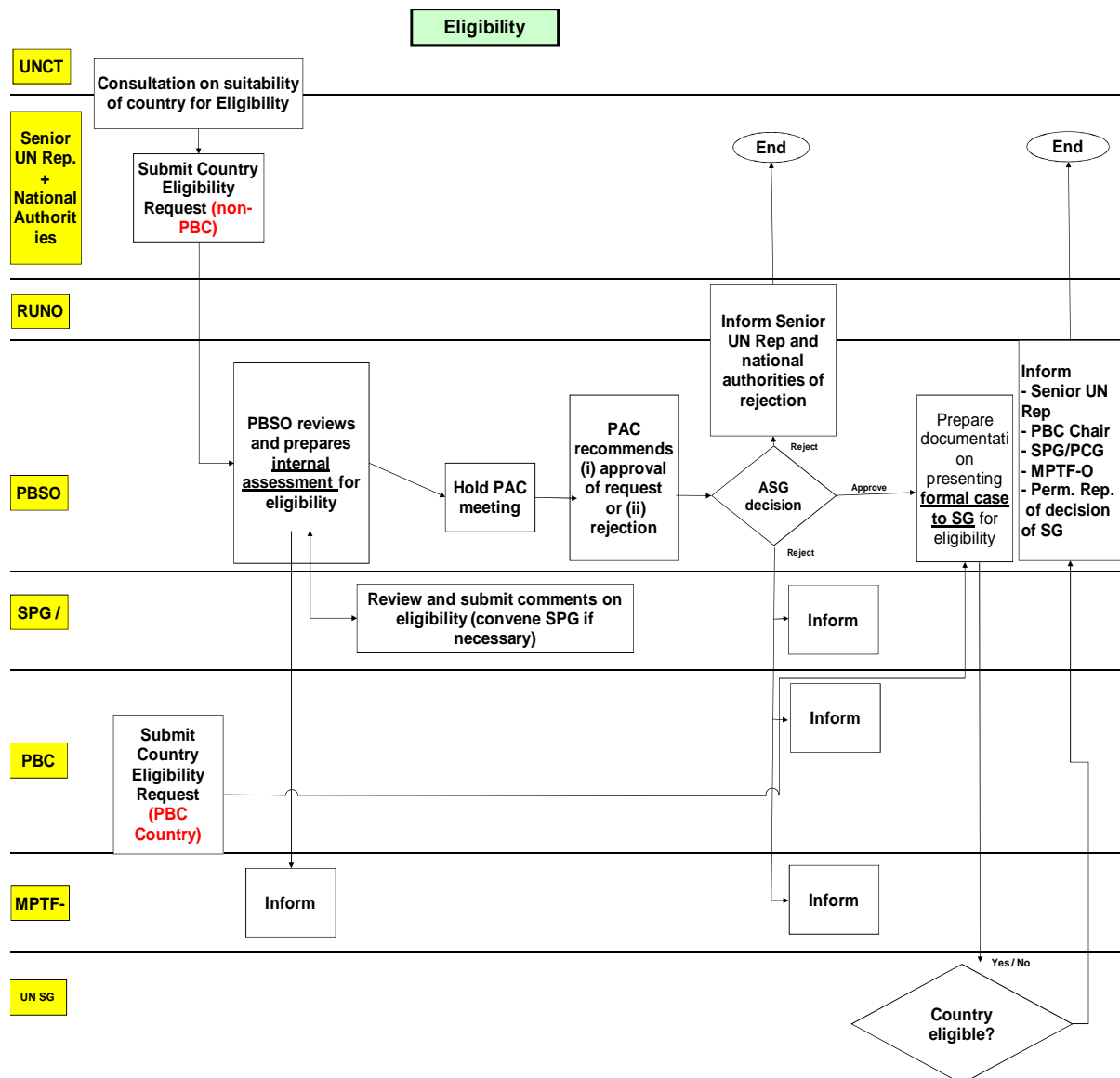
²⁵ Regional Special Representatives of the Secretary-General or Special Advisers of the Secretary-General.

- Critical peacebuilding opportunities (a peace agreement is in place; a window of opportunity is currently opened to make a difference; the country is at a crucial cross-roads for peace);
- Commitment of national authorities and stakeholders to the peace process and to addressing the identified conflict factors and triggers;
- Availability of external funds to the country and potential for strategic leverage of PBF resources (the catalytic impact of the PBF);
- The positive role that the UN can play in the country to address the peacebuilding issues (considering its mandate, capacity, perception in country, partnerships and networks).

4.4. PBSO Support following eligibility

Countries that have received eligibility approval are qualified for PBSO financial assistance and technical support for putting in place the necessary logistics to design a program. This eligibility package will be provided upon request, based on need and available resources, and will not count against an eventual Priority Plan allocation. Such support can be used for the financing of the set-up of the PBF Secretariat, for support with the conflict analysis, or for the preparation of a Peacebuilding Priority Plan.

Diagram 1 - Eligibility



5. The Immediate Response Facility (IRF)

The IRF is the **project-based** financing mechanism of the PBF that is typically used in situations where swift action is required for immediate peacebuilding and recovery needs.

Requests of up to \$3 million for the IRF portfolio of projects can be approved by the ASG for Peacebuilding without the need to declare the country formally eligible by the UN Secretary-General (see Section 4 on Eligibility). If a country is declared formally eligible for PBF funding by the UN Secretary General, it can receive up to \$10 million for the IRF project portfolio (counting active project portfolio in the given country, not including those projects which had operationally closed). Funding above the \$10 million ceiling can only be provided through the PRF track. There is no limit to the number of IRF projects that a country may apply for.

Maximum duration of IRF funded projects is 18 months, although extensions may be considered in certain cases (see below).

5.1 IRF Project Proposal Preparation and Submission

Informal discussions may be initiated between UNCTs and PBSO to gauge the possible level of support for any new proposals. The aim of these discussions is to ensure that efforts in the field are not wasted on proposals that have little chance of being approved, and also to ensure that submitted proposals are in the best possible shape prior to being reviewed by the PBSO Proposal Appraisal Committee.

The application process is formally activated when a senior UN representative/official submits an IRF project proposal, using Template 2.1, to the ASG for Peacebuilding. These templates provide the context for the request (including justification for provisional country eligibility in cases when a country has not already been declared eligible), as well as details of the project. Project documents are prepared by Recipient UN Organizations in collaboration with implementing partners, government and non-government (see Guidance Note 5.5.1: *How to establish and to report on IRF projects*). Every project proposal needs to be formally endorsed by the Government.

Proposals for funding under the IRF may take the form of a stand-alone project or a portfolio of projects that may be submitted either simultaneously or one after another. Where more than one IRF project proposal is submitted, UNCT should ensure that there is coherence and cohesion between the various proposals and a focus on programmatic results. In outlining the proposed outcome of the individual project, the proposing agency must link it to one of the 12 PBF Focus Areas of support (see Section 3.3). Each project should be assigned to one PBF Focus Area only. If a proposing agency has questions or difficulty in assigning their planned work to a given outcome, PBSO recommends contacting the appropriate PBF programme officer assigned to the country.

Prior to submission to PBSO, the project proposal must be discussed within the UN Country Team to ensure that all stakeholders understand the *interagency nature* of the Fund and the chain of accountability. Moreover, the Government needs to be consulted and endorse the project proposal through an appropriate representative.

Ideally, any project proposal should be based on an up to date conflict analysis, especially, if the intention of the UN team and the partner government is to subsequently apply for PBF eligibility. However, given the immediate and urgent nature of the IRF track, it is understood that a conflict analysis may not be as thorough or as inclusive as for the support provided under the PRF track.

5.2 IRF Approval Process

The approval process begins with the receipt of the formal proposal by the ASG for Peacebuilding. Once received, PBSO commits to render a decision within 21 days. During that 21-day span, PBSO circulates the proposal, together with its initial assessment, to the Peacebuilding Contact Group (PCG) for review and comments before submitting documentation to PBSO's Proposal Appraisal Committee (PAC).

The PAC is responsible for reviewing both the project proposal and comments from the PCG. Based on this documentation, the PAC recommends project approval, rejection, or identifies a set of revisions that may lead to final approval by the ASG for Peacebuilding (see Section 5.4 below). Following the PAC recommendation, the ASG makes a final decision on the proposal. This decision is then communicated to the MPTF-O, the Senior Resident UN Representative in the country, and PBC Chair (where relevant).

PBSO Review Criteria

PBSO reviews project submissions against the following criteria:

- **PBF strategic positioning/ capacity:** If the country has not previously been declared eligible for the PBF and has not received PBF funding, how would the addition of a new country affect PBF overall strategic positioning (country specific and globally) and the PBF's capacity to oversee its entire portfolio? Is PBF already active in the region and are there any regional implications?
- **Partner Government commitment:** Does the partner government show commitment to peacebuilding and to the proposed project?
- **UN senior leadership commitment:** Does the UN senior leadership in the country show commitment to the proposed project and to using PBF's added value towards peacebuilding support?
- **Post-crisis urgency:** Has the urgency of the funding been sufficiently demonstrated?
- **Financial gaps and catalytic potential:** Has the financial environment been adequately described? Are the gaps/catalytic potential outlined? Is there a critical financial gap?
- **Link to conflict analysis and peacebuilding needs:** Is the justification of the proposal well argued based on a conflict analysis and on demonstrated peacebuilding needs?
- **Clarity of results:** Are the expected results clear and achievable? Are the expected '*theories of change*' fully reflected in the logic of the results framework?
- **Consultation:** Has the submission (proposal) been fully debated by all relevant partners, including the UNCT?
- **RUNO and implementing partner capacity:** Is the UN well placed to provide this support? Do the RUNOs and the implementing partners have a capacity to implement the projects?
- **Value for money:** What steps have been, or will be taken, to ensure that the UN obtains 'value for money' through the project?
- **M&E:** Does the project have a sound M&E system, including a Results Framework with measurable and peace relevant outcomes, indicators and targets, and an M&E Plan, if required?
- **Risk:** Does the project have a sound risk matrix, inclusive of conflict sensitivity and incorporating the Do No Harm principle?
- **Gender responsiveness:** Is the project based on gender analysis and does it mainstream gender through its outcomes, outputs, indicators and budget? Note that every proposal should be scored by the submitting agency, using the gender marker, and must outline how to monitor and report on gender specific results, including through the collection of sex and age disaggregated data.
- **Conflict sensitivity:** is the project written in a conflict sensitive manner, taking into account the context and the way the project may affect it and ensure that Do No Harm principles are respected? Also, does the project take into account the Human Rights Diligence Policy considerations, especially for projects dealing with SSR²⁶.

²⁶In July 2011, the United Nations adopted the Human Rights Due Diligence Policy. The HRDDP sets out principles and measures to mainstream human rights with support provided by United Nations entities to non-UN security forces. The HRDDP is a global policy to ensure that such support is consistent with UN principles as outlined in the Charter and in international law with regards to promoting respect for international humanitarian, human rights and refugee laws. The HRDDP is a tool that encourages UN entities providing support to national or regional security forces to influence the behaviour of

- **Value for money:** Does the project demonstrate that it will be using resources efficiently and ensuring value for money. Please refer to the Value for Money checklist (Guidance Note 5.9).

Following the decision by the ASG for Peacebuilding Support, this is communicated to the UN senior country representative. If the proposal receives a conditional approval from the ASG for Peacebuilding, PBSO expects to receive the revised project document within 4 weeks of the response. MPTF disburses funds to the RUNO within 5 days following the receipt of the approval documentation.

5.3 IRF Project Implementation, Amendment and Closure

Once approved and signed by PBSO, project documents are submitted by PBSO to the MPTF Office (the Administrative Agent for the Fund) which ensures compliance with the MoU between MPTF-O and the Recipient UN Organization (RUNO). Once confirmed, MPTF-O transfers the total IRF grant to the RUNO. The RUNO is expected to proceed immediately with the implementation of the proposal. The date of funding disbursement from MPTF-O is the official start date of the project and the end date will be moved accordingly, taking into account the number of months for which the project was approved. The maximum duration of an IRF project is 18 months.

The RUNO can either implement the project directly or work with a locally-based partner, government or non-government, to implement approved projects.²⁷ Project implementation is guided by the rules, regulations and policies of each RUNO. Each project will have its own factsheet page on the MPTF Office GATEWAY (www.mptf.undp.org) where the project document, progress reports and financial data will be reflected. It is recommended that RUNOs prepare an annual workplan to assist with effective and efficient project management.

The RUNO must provide two project reports per year detailing the implementation of the project using PBF templates: the six monthly report, which is due on 15 July of every year for which the project is operationally open, and the annual report, which is due on 31 March, for the previous calendar year. For more detail on project monitoring, reporting and evaluation requirements related to project implementation, please refer to Chapter 7.

Guidance Note 5.5.2 provides a useful summary for RUNOs on how to establish and report on PBF PRF projects.

Proposed project changes (scope or budget)

Any proposed change to the scope of a project or to its overall budget, must be submitted as Revised IRF project document to PBSO for approval (Templates 2.2). If a change is proposed within the approved budget, which has no effect on the scope of the project or its objectives or on the total budget, but only re-allocates between budget categories, PBSO needs to approve the change only if it affects more than 15% of any of the budget categories (Template 2.3). All requests for revision should contain reasons for the change and what they mean for the project. PBSO will consider the request and respond within two weeks with a decision. If the change affects less than 15% of any budget category and the change has no effect on the scope of the project or its objectives or on the total budget, there is no need to seek PBSO approval.

Project extensions

If it is anticipated that the project cannot be operationally completed within its allotted time span (18 months), a request for an extension should be submitted to PBSO three months prior to the expected closure date. This request should include details of why the project is running behind schedule and propose a new

these beneficiaries by engaging them further on human rights issues and in the context of their support. It also is expected; however, that the HRDDP will further enhance non-UN entity compliance with international humanitarian, human rights or refugee law, with the aim of compliance becoming the norm.
²⁷ The Senior UN Representative and RUNOs are encouraged to partner with national and international NGOs/CSOs with demonstrated field presence and technical capacities to implement projects or project components, particularly for those activities where the UN does not have the necessary field presence or technical capacity.

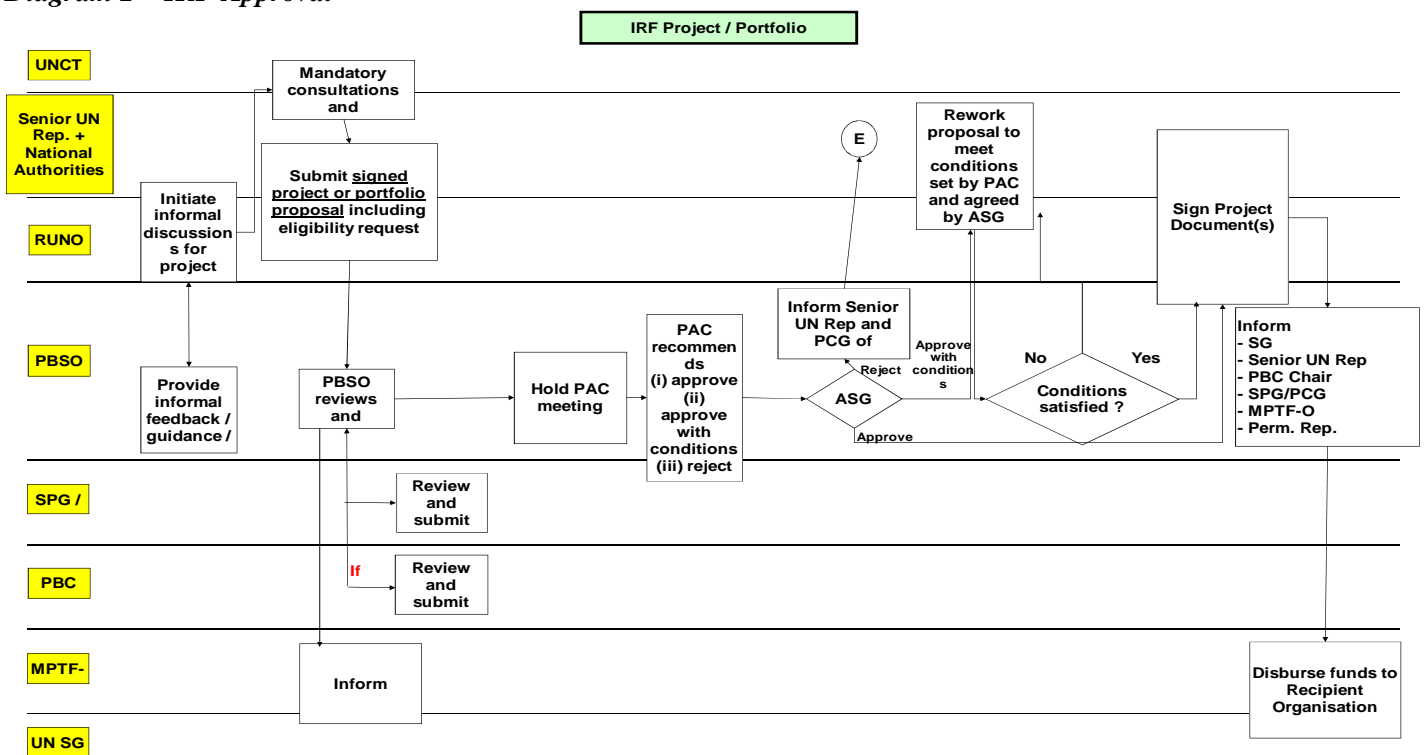
date for project completion. The request should also clarify if the extension will have any budget implications. PBSO will consider the request and respond with a decision on the request for extension within three weeks (Guidance Note 5.6.1 *How to make a cost/ non-cost extension request for IRF projects*). If there are no cost/scope implications, Template 2.3 should be used. If there are scope or budget implications, Template 2.2 should be used. The duration of any extension will be determined on a case-by-case basis, depending on the context and the justification for the extension.

Project final closure

Projects should be fully implemented and operationally closed within 18 months of the initial receipt of funds. Projects then move into a period of financial closure and any unspent balances are to be returned to the MPTF Office when financial closure is complete. This process should take no longer than six months from operational closure. Once a project is financially closed, no further transactions can take place (see project closure guidelines on the MPTF Office website).

According to the MoU, RUNOs must inform the MPTF Office once a project has completed its operational activities (See Guidance Note 5.7 *How to close PBF projects*). RUNOs must also submit an end of project report within three months of the project’s operational closure. For financial closure, *certified* final financial statements must be submitted to the MPTF Office. Unspent balances return to PBSO budget account and will not remain available to the country for other projects.

Diagram 2 – IRF Approval



6. The Peacebuilding and Recovery Facility (PRF)

The PRF is the **programme-based** financing mechanism of the PBF, providing up to three years of support to countries towards consolidation of peace. PRF support can only be provided to those countries that have been declared as ‘eligible’ for PBF support by the UN Secretary-General.

While all PBF interventions are made in consultation with national stakeholders, the PRF is driven by the principles of national ownership and country-level decision-making through the Joint Steering Committee, chaired by the partner government and a senior UN representative. It is also driven by a strategic peacebuilding vision of the PBF’s contribution, rather than by individual projects. PBSO allocates a PRF grant against *the Peacebuilding Priority Plan* (PPP), which is elaborated and approved by the Joint Steering Committee and PBSO. It is only then that the country considers which projects are best suited to implement the Priority Plan. This decision-making authority takes place at the country level: it is the Joint Steering Committee which approves all projects against the Priority Plan.

6.1 Peacebuilding Priority Plan

The Peacebuilding Priority Plan (PPP) is the standard PBF funding instrument for a PRF grant. It serves as the contract between the PBF and the Joint Steering Committee, with a maximum duration of 36 months (3 years). The Peacebuilding Priority Plan:

- Identifies immediate priorities for peacebuilding that stem from an inclusive conflict analysis exercise (including a strong gender analysis), which is led by the UN jointly with or in close consultation with national governments and their partners (CSOs, UN, WB, EU, bilateral donors, etc.).
- Outlines priority areas of intervention and intended outcomes, including an indicative financial allocation for each priority area, hence providing the basis for determining the country allocation from PBF against expected results. At the level of the Priority Plan, strategic outcomes should be drafted to reflect the context and the needs, and so will be unique across all PBF funded-countries. Subsequently, projects must be assigned to one of the strategic outcomes of the Priority Plan, as well as coded to one of the 12 PBF Focus Areas (see Section 3.3).
- Provides the strategic framework for programmes and projects that are developed, approved, implemented and monitored under the direct supervision of the JSC.

When designing a Peacebuilding Priority Plan, two options are available. In the first option, the entire estimated budget of the Plan is submitted to PBF. In the second option, a broader Peacebuilding Priority Plan is submitted (“expanded PPP”), to which PBF will contribute only a part. While the concept of the expanded Priority Plan can be applied to any situation where additional resources will be needed, this has been particularly useful for PBC countries for maximizing linkages between PBF support and objectives of PBC engagement. This approach can also be useful where the national Government does not have a strategic peacebuilding plan and the PPP may serve that purpose.

Wherever there are existing national or UN strategic and planning frameworks such as a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, National Peacebuilding Policy, UNDAF, Stabilization Plan, or a New Deal compact, the Peacebuilding Priority Plan should align with these as much as possible to avoid fragmentation of support. Nonetheless, the exact nature and extent of alignment will be determined on a case by case basis and will depend on how much peacebuilding has been incorporated into these documents, as well as the level of national ownership of these documents. Where possible, PBSO would be interested in being involved in the elaboration of these frameworks.

Priority Plan Preparation and possibility of PBSO “surge” support

The Priority Plan is prepared by the Joint Steering Committee through its Technical Committee and with the support of the PBF Secretariat and the UN Country Team. It is drafted through a process of wide consultation, approved by the Joint Steering Committee and then submitted by the senior resident UN official to the ASG for Peacebuilding Support. While the process must be highly consultative and with strategic support from the UN leadership, it is recommended that one person be given the overall role of drafting and consolidating the Priority Plan. Where possible, the PBF Secretariat or a Peace and Development Advisor are well positioned to play this role. Moreover, although not a formal requirement, UN and national entities are strongly encouraged to informally consult with PBSO during the preparation process.

The in-country peacebuilding capacity and staff are the first point of call for the drafting of the Priority Plans or projects. Nonetheless, upon request from the UNCT and depending on the in-country capacity gaps, PBSO can also provide “surge” support during the preparation of the PPP. Based on the need in the country and available resources at PBSO, a pre-PPP surge support project can be approved using the IRF process, providing some initial funds to the UNCT to help set up the PRF processes. This may include funding or technical support towards the preparation of a conflict analysis or the consultation for and elaboration of a PPP. Surge support can be provided through PBSO officers or through partner organizations, working closely with PBSO. Where surge support is provided by external partners, they will act in line with PBSO guidance and requirements, providing critical support to the field. They will be working closely with the Joint Steering Committee and the UN Country Team, but will be ultimately accountable to PBSO. Surge support can also include some funds for the initial set-up of the PBF Secretariat and the Joint Steering Committee.

Priority Plan “phased approach”

PBSO is increasingly recommending to countries to start with a smaller allocation and then consider an additional allocation in a second phase, following the projectization of the first phase and demonstration of good progress on these initial results. In such a case, there is no need to wait for the full three years of the Priority Plan to be finished before the second phase can commence. The second phase can commence after the first year or two, based on the performance, continuing needs and availability of funds. This approach can be made explicit in the Priority Plan request. PBF experience has been that this approach leads to stronger management of the Funds and ensures that there is adequate UN and partner government capacity to implement.

Statement of Mutual Commitment for PBC countries

For countries on the agenda of the PBC, the Priority Plan is aligned with the **Statement of Mutual Commitment**²⁸. The SMC sets the political framework for achieving peacebuilding goals. The elaboration of the SMC can precede the development of the Priority Plan or may occur simultaneously. However, the coherence amongst the two instruments (one being political, the other programmatic) is imperative.

Priority Plan Content

The Priority Plan has three major components (for drafting purposes, use Template 3.1):

COMPONENT 1: Context and Rationale for PBF support

Peacebuilding context: This section summarizes the key findings of the conflict analysis, including the major conflict drivers, triggers, stakeholders and capacities for peace, as well as the critical current needs. It includes an analysis of how women, men, boys and girls have been impacted by and involved in the

²⁸SMC: agreement between the Government and the Peacebuilding Commission

conflict. It also highlights why the moment is right for PBF to provide support now – i.e. have there been any recent developments or are there any upcoming crossroads for peace which warrant urgent support.

Strategic peacebuilding plans: This section presents any existing national and UN peacebuilding plans/frameworks for peace, including their vision and areas of focus.

Partner Government commitments for the success of the Priority Plan: This section outlines the key commitments by the partner government, which are essential to making this Priority Plan a success.

Mapping of relevant peacebuilding interventions: This section assesses the existing peacebuilding interventions by different actors (government, International Organizations, including the UN system, NGOs, civil society organizations, bilateral donors, etc.) and financial and programmatic ‘gaps’.

COMPONENT 2: Objectives of PBF Support and Proposed Priority Plan implementation

Purpose of the Priority Plan: This section identifies overall vision of the Priority Plan. It summarizes the Priority Plan Outcome Areas (areas of support) and explains their overall coherence, including how they fit together, how they are sequenced and how they add value to or reinforce each other. Objectives need to have a clear peacebuilding impact. As much as possible, gender responsiveness and women’s empowerment should be considered in defining the objectives.

Priority Plan Outcome Areas: For each of the Outcome Areas identified above, this section provides an overview, including: a clear Outcome Statement, a ‘Theory of Change’ explaining the underpinning logic of the type of change this outcome is seeking, a narrative about the rationale, scope and scale of the Outcome Area, including its target groups, geographical scope, focus of support, envisaged modalities of support. In preparing this section, teams should refer back to Section 3.3 of these Guidelines on gender equality.

Catalytic effect and sustainability: This section outlines the expected catalytic effects of the proposed interventions and notes how the effects will be sustained in the longer term (See Guidance Note 5.2: *How to programme for catalytic effects?*).

UN capacity: This section should provide a brief overview of the UN Team in the Country, including the overall annual budget and the staff. It should include the peacebuilding expertise of the UN, if any, and an outline of the UN strengths/ value-added, which will be put to use in the Priority Plan implementation.

Budget: This section sets out the budget of the Priority Plan by Outcome Area. The size of the budget should be justified on the basis of the previous sections. This section should provide additional narrative that helps to explain the proposed size of the budget, including how value-for-money will be ensured.

COMPONENT 3: Priority Plan Management and Coordination

Management and coordination arrangements: This section identifies the key actors who will take part in the implementation of the Priority Plan, including the Joint Steering Committee, the technical committee, the PBF Secretariat, the UNCT, RUNOs, the national and/or local government structures. It should clearly explain their roles and responsibilities and also illustrate how different interventions will be coordinated.

Risk analysis: This section sets out the main risks identified in the Priority Plan, their likelihood, severity, and risk management, including responsibility for risk management/ mitigation.

Results framework (Template 3.1): This section sets out a Results Framework for the Priority Plan. For additional information on Results Frameworks, see Section 7 of these Guidelines.

Priority Plan Approval Process

Once the Priority Plan is officially submitted, PBSO initiates a consultative process with the Headquarters' Peacebuilding Contact Group (PCG)²⁹, and in an informal fashion with the Senior Management of the PBC. Once the comments are received, the Plan is assessed by a PBSO Proposal Assessment Committee (PAC).

The PBF programme officer is responsible for preparing a technical assessment for the PAC, taking into account the following criteria:

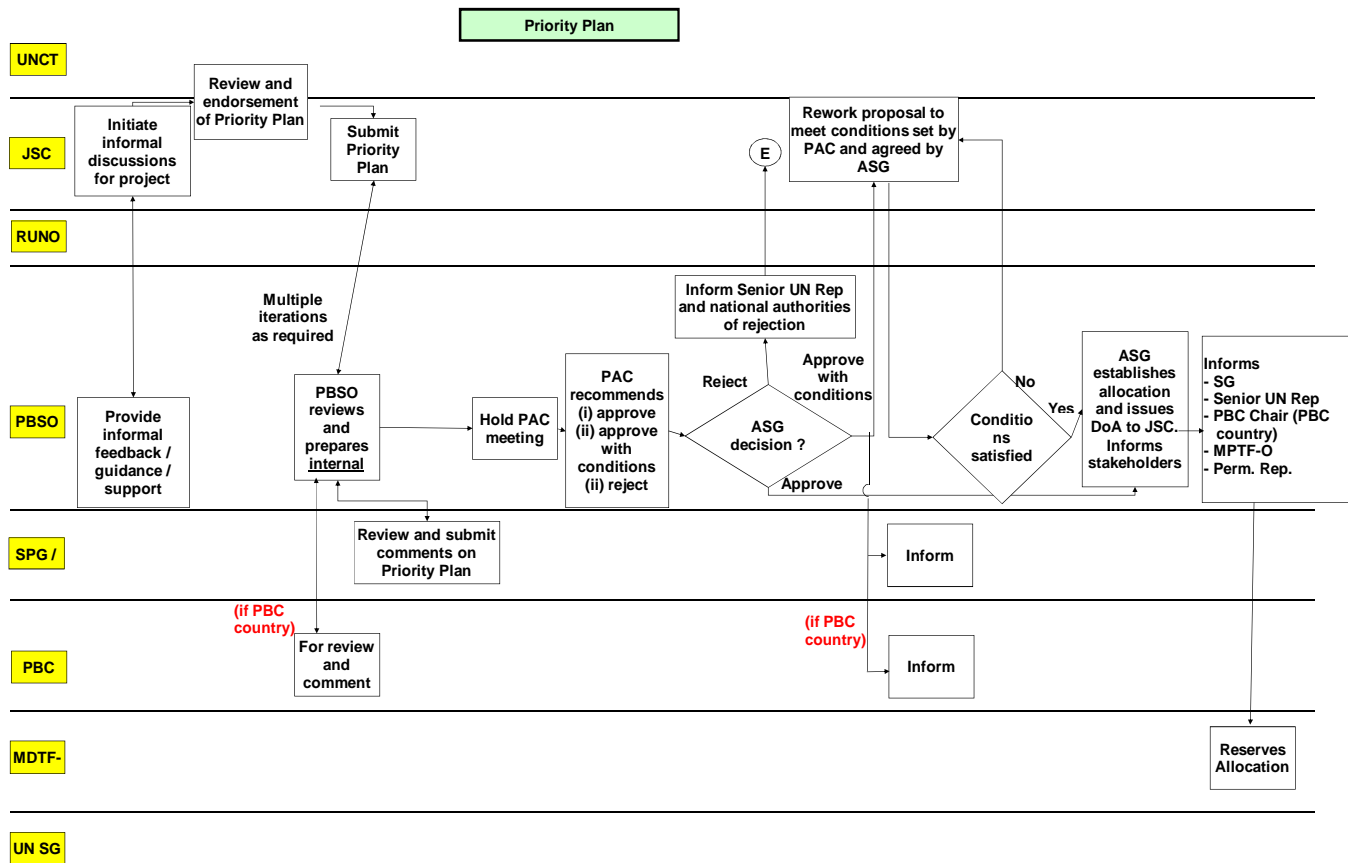
- What are the needs and opportunities for peacebuilding?
- What are the resource gaps for peacebuilding?
- What level of international attention does the country/situation have? What opportunities are there to mobilize resources beyond the PBF?
- What is the level of UN leadership in the country on peacebuilding and commitment to the Priority Plan?
- What capacity challenges may impinge on the ability of the country and United Nations to absorb the proposed allocation?
- What is the quality of the submission, including that of the conflict analysis, the proposed outcomes, implementation approach and the monitoring and evaluation framework?
- Have gender equality and women's empowerment been integrated into the analysis and priority setting?
- How realistic is the proposed budget and how does it promote value for money?

The PAC recommends a decision (to approve, not approve or to approve conditionally) to the ASG for Peacebuilding. The ASG for Peacebuilding then renders a decision, which is communicated by PBSO to the Joint Steering Committee through the Senior UN Representative in the country. Once established, the approved budget amount is reserved for the country, divided per Outcome Area. However, the funds are not transferred until individual projects are approved by the Joint Steering Committee, in line with the Priority Plan, and this approval is passed to the Administrative Agent (UNDP/MPTF Office). If an allocation has been approved *with conditions*, the deadline for submitting amendments in writing to PBSO is **four weeks**.

The start date of the Priority Plan is the date of the approval letter by the PBSO to the country. Its duration is up to three years from the start date.

²⁹ PCG: Interagency working group has representatives (technical level) of: UNDP/BCPR, UNICEF, UNWOMEN, UNIFEM, DPA, DPKO and WFP.

Diagram 3 – PRF Priority Plan Approval



Amendments to Priority Plans

Any amendments to the Priority Plan must be approved by the Joint Steering Committee first and then submitted to PBSO for approval. They need to be well justified. An updated/ re-validated conflict analysis may serve as the justification. Types of possible change include:

- changes to the Priority Plan Outcome Areas;
- re-allocation of funds between the Outcome Areas;
- budget changes to the Plan (based on evidence of under-performance, or – if requesting an increase, following good performance and delivery and a demonstrated need of additional funds for critical needs);
- extension of Priority Plan duration with or without cost increases.

These will be considered and approved on an individual basis and will depend on the justification provided. The UN Resident Representative and the PBF focal point are encouraged to contact PBSO before submitting any changes for formal approval. Template 3.6 should be used if there is no additional budget being requested; and Template 3.7 should be used if additional budget is being requested.

Renewal of PRF allocations

In some cases, following the end of a Priority Plan, countries may be eligible for a **renewal of a PRF allocation**, to consolidate peacebuilding gains made during the first allocation. In considering whether or not an allocation renewal is appropriate, PBSO will consider:

- Delivery performance of Recipient UN Organizations during the first allocation.

- Complementarities of proposed activities and potential for ‘cumulative impacts’ based on achievement of results during the first allocation.
- Effectiveness of in-country PBF mechanisms (PBF Secretariat and Steering Committee).
- Quality of monitoring and reporting in compliance with PBF requirements.

If a country is interested in requesting a renewal grant, the senior UN official should first contact PBSO.

6.2 The Joint Steering Committee (JSC)

The JSC has delegated responsibility from the ASG for Peacebuilding to manage PBF allocations at the country level. Co-chaired by the Senior Resident UN Representative and a senior government representative, the JSC is an inclusive platform for engaging national and international stakeholders in peacebuilding, including key government, UN, civil society and development partner representatives (including the EU, WB, and bilateral donors). PBSO strongly encourages the UN leadership to facilitate the establishment of Joint Steering Committees early so that they can lead the conflict analysis and drafting of the Priority Plan, rather than merely approving the projects within the Priority Plan.

While JSC composition should be tailored to fit the country context, ideally, the JSC should generally be composed of up to 10 - 12 members. Gender balance and also gender expertise should be taken into account as much as possible. JSC members should see themselves as representing a broader peacebuilding constituency and not just their specific Ministry/Agency. **If appropriate peacebuilding coordination/oversight mechanisms already exist and have sufficient capacity, they can and should be encouraged to take on the role of the Joint Steering Committee for the PBF.** JSCs can also adopt flexible working mechanisms to adapt to the country contexts, including considering some virtual meetings where necessary. This is particularly important in crowded donor environments. The TORs of the JSC (*Guidance Note 5.4*) can be amended if needed but must be submitted to PBSO for final approval.

Technical Committee: Typically, JSC decision-making is informed by technical expertise at the country level (thematic, sectoral and/or Monitoring & Evaluation working groups, etc.). If no such mechanism exists, JSC’s are supported by a technical committee or other technical working group including representatives (technical level) from the government, UN, civil society, and international partners. This committee should broadly mirror the composition of the JSC and its purpose is to undertake the technical work that supports and facilitates the oversight and decision-making by the JSC. They work with the PBF Secretariat to assess every new or revised project (using Transmittal form template 3.3) before it is submitted to the JSC for approval.

PBF Secretariat: To facilitate its work, the JSC and technical committees are supported by a *PBF Secretariat* that is funded by PBF through the Priority Plan (the early establishment of a Secretariat can also be funded through initial ‘surge support’ by PBSO, if requested – see section 6.1). A strong Secretariat is essential for enabling the JSC to play its managerial oversight functions effectively. It serves as the interface between the strategic decision-making level bodies (JSC, technical committee) and RUNOs. It provides the coordination and secretarial support to the JSC and technical committee, and between these bodies and the RUNOs. It also undertakes/ facilitates monitoring of and reporting against the Priority Plan. The PBF Secretariat reports to the Co-Chairs of the Joint Steering Committee.³⁰ It is generally situated with

The Joint Steering Committee is responsible for:

- Strategic guidance and validation of a conflict analysis underpinning the Priority Plan.
- Elaboration of the core strategy and Peacebuilding Priority Plan.
- Selecting Fund recipients and projects that contribute to PPP results.
- Keeping oversight on the performance of Fund users.
- Annual strategic review of the status of results and performance to address conflict drivers and submission of an annual report of PPP progress to PBSO on 1 December.

³⁰ While the Secretariat reports directly to the JSC, to ensure that the appropriate structure and level of resources are in place for a well-functioning coordination office, Secretariat project proposals must be approved by the PBF in New York, as well as by the JSC.

the UN, usually at the Resident Coordinator Office, and reports to the Resident Coordinator on a day to day basis.

The specific duties and composition of the Secretariat should be determined based on the individual country context, needs and capacities, though must include a designated PBF coordinator/ programme officer, as well as an M&E officer. One of these usually also serves as the PBF focal point in the communication with PBSO. The M&E officer would normally become the M&E focal point for the Priority Plan. It should be noted that the actual project document for the PBF Secretariat is approved by PBSO following the sign-off by the JSC (while all the substantive projects are approved through JSCs only and then go directly to MPTF-O for funds transfer). PBSO may also request to participate in the recruitment of the PBF Secretariat staff.

In countries where Secretariats of other pooled funding mechanisms or national aid coordination offices, PBSO should be contacted in order to jointly determine the best arrangements so as to enable the PBF in-country support but so as to also avoid duplication.

6.3 Project Development and Selection at the Country Level

Once the Priority Plan and allocation have been approved, the JSC is responsible for determining and implementing a process that identifies – in the most transparent manner possible – the projects that reflect the ‘best value-for-money’ for achieving the Priority Plan outcomes. The Priority Plan allocation must be converted into active projects within 6 months of the approval of the Priority Plan. If the JSC is unable to meet this deadline, members must send a written request for an extension to the ASG of Peacebuilding Support, together with a justification that explains the reasons for the delay. If the delay is not well justified, funds may be forfeited.

In some cases, project elaboration is done in a consensual manner in a collaborative approach between those UN agencies that are best placed to contribute to a specific Priority Plan outcome (based on their mandate, experience and capacity on the ground) and between their government and non-government partners. In other cases, a competitive call for project proposals or concept notes is undertaken.³¹ Experience shows that the competitive process works best for countries with some prior PRF experience, rather than those who are engaging the PRF process for the first time. In all cases, project documents must adhere to Template 3.2 and identify which UN agency or agencies will be the designated implementer(s) (RUNOs) of the project, the Priority Plan outcome to which the project is contributing and the PBF Focus Area against which the project will be coded. This information will be used by MPTF-O to determine from which Priority Plan outcome funds should be drawn for the transfer to the designated RUNO(s). Projects within the same Priority Plan outcome need to be complementary and coherent and must not exceed the overall budget allocated to that outcome within the PPP.

As previously mentioned, to make a decision on which projects to approve, the JSC relies on quality assessments of project proposals by the technical committee, taking into account their strategic leverage for peacebuilding, using Template 3.3 and the Value-for-Money checklist (Guidance Note 5.9). The criteria for the review will be country specific, but must comply with the principles below:

- *Partner Government commitment:* The partner government needs to show commitment to the proposed project.
- *UN senior leadership commitment:* The UN senior leadership in the country must also show commitment to the proposed project.
- *Peace relevance and link to conflict analysis:* The project must be of direct and immediate relevance to peacebuilding and clearly link up with the conflict analysis/ gender analysis and one of the approved Priority Outcomes of the Priority Plan.
- *Critical gap:* The proposal must identify the urgency of funding gaps and strategic leverage.

³¹ See best practice in Nepal www.unpbf.org/Nepal/bidding procedures

- *Catalytic effect*: The project must demonstrate its catalytic effect in the peacebuilding process and identify how achievements will be sustained or built upon once the project is completed³².
- *Clarity of results*: The expected results need to be clear and achievable, with the expected ‘*theories of change*’ fully reflected in the logic of the results framework.
- *Implementation capacity*: the Recipient UN Organization and implementing partners (government and non-government) must have a demonstrated capacity to implement the project in the timeframe proposed and be able to demonstrate their experience and comparative advantage in working in the project sector. If there is a gap, the proposal must describe the measures that will be taken to redress this gap.
- *Monitoring and evaluation*: The project must have a robust M&E Framework that feeds into the Priority Plan M&E Framework and has measurable indicators, baselines and targets. The project’s M&E framework should include a clear plan for when data related to the indicators will be collected and analyzed, and to which review or planning processes this analysis will contribute. The Recipient UN Organization also needs to have a track record of developing, tracking and reporting on key indicators for measuring the quality of peacebuilding outcomes and project performance.
- *Value for money*: The project needs to demonstrate how it will ensure value for money and that the most cost-effective inputs are used for the best outcomes. Please refer to the value-for-money check-list (Guidance Note 5.9).
- *Risk*: The proposal must include an analysis of risks and assumptions that can impinge on the ability of the Fund Recipient to achieve the planned outcomes. *Do No Harm Principles* must be included in the risk assessment.
- *Gender responsiveness*: Country Teams are encouraged to allocate at least 15% of overall Priority Plan budgets to projects that have gender equality and women’s empowerment as a main objective, while ensuring that a gender responsive approach is mainstreamed throughout all projects. In all cases, JSCs’ review of project proposals should include consideration of whether the project design was based on a solid gender analysis of the conflict, and whether gender has been mainstreamed through the outcomes, outputs, target population, indicators and budget. Every proposal should be scored by the submitting agency, using the gender marker, and must outline how to monitor and report on gender specific results, including by collecting sex and age disaggregated data.
- *Conflict sensitivity*: Conflict-sensitive programming is a requirement of all projects. Projects should take into account the context, with particular attention to how conflict dynamics may affect implementation (process) and outcomes (results), and, conversely, how the project may impact conflict. All projects must ensure that *Do No Harm* principles are respected. Also, the project needs to take into account the Human Rights Diligence Policy considerations, especially for projects dealing with SSR³³.

Template 3.3 needs to be filled out by the PBF Secretariat, the Technical Committee (assessing the project against the criteria) and the RUNOs before being submitted to JSC for sign off and then to MPTF-O for release of funding.

The date of funding disbursement from MPTF-O is the official start date of the project and the end date will be moved accordingly, taking into account the number of months for which the project was approved. However, the duration of the project must be contained within the duration of the Priority Plan, so a maximum of 36 months (though in nearly all cases the duration will be less than the duration of the Priority Plan, as it takes time to projectize and disburse the funds after the approval of the Priority Plan; one exception to this may be in cases of a “quick start” package).

³² Reference document 2: How to anticipate catalytic effects at the programming stage?

³³In July 2011, the United Nations adopted the Human Rights Due Diligence Policy. The HRDDP sets out principles and measures to mainstream human rights with support provided by United Nations entities to non-UN security forces. The HRDDP is a global policy to ensure that such support is consistent with UN principles as outlined in the Charter and in international law with regards to promoting respect for international humanitarian, human rights and refugee laws. The HRDDP is a tool that encourages UN entities providing support to national or regional security forces to influence the behaviour of these beneficiaries by engaging them further on human rights issues and in the context of their support. It also is expected; however, that the HRDDP will further enhance non-UN entity compliance with international humanitarian, human rights or refugee law, with the aim of compliance becoming the norm.

Please note that: if a project needs to be extended beyond the duration of the Priority Plan, the JSC first needs to request an extension of the Priority Plan from the PBSO before a project can be extended.

Within 30 days of the JSC approving the projects against the Priority Plan, the M&E focal point for the Priority Plan (with the support of the technical committee, the PBF Secretariat and the UN Country Team) needs to submit to PBSO an updated Phase Two results framework, which includes project-level indicators per Outcome, and the M&E Plan (see section 7 for further details on finalizing the PPP results framework and M&E Plan). Where only a part of the Priority Plan has been projectized at one time, the update of the Priority Plan Results Framework and the M&E Plan will be a rolling task.

Guidance Note 5.5.2 provides a useful summary for RUNOs on how to establish and report on PBF PRF projects.

Fast track project approval

In circumstances where there is an urgent and closing window of opportunity for making a peace-relevant difference to a critical peacebuilding need, JSCs may opt to identify projects that address this time-sensitive need for fast track project approval. This is done by simultaneously approving the Priority Plan (for submission to PBSO) and pre-approving a small set of projects within the Priority Plan, which will then be ready for implementation as soon as the Priority Plan is approved by PBSO. If this is done, it is important to ensure that attention to project-level elaboration at such an early stage of development does not detract from the PRF's focus on strategic results. If the Fast Track approach is taken, it is recommended that the JSC meeting takes a two-step approach: first approving the Priority Plan and then considering whether the proposed projects are best suited to further the most significant needs/priorities of the Plan. Analysis of the appropriateness and strength of projects should follow the process for project selection outlined above.

6.4 PRF Project Implementation, Amendment and Closure

Once a project has been approved, the finalized project document must be signed by the co-chairs of the JSC, the RUNO and government partners. The signed project document and the signed Transmittal Form must be submitted to the MPTF Office. MPTF-O ensures the project is in compliance with the signed MoU (between the RUNO and MPTF-O) and is within the Priority Plan allocation. If everything is in order, the MPTF-O then disburses the approved amount to the Recipient (RUNO).

RUNOs are responsible for ensuring that project expenditures are in line with project document activities and approved budget, and that funds disbursement respects their policies, rules and regulations. A financial agreement between the RUNO and the MPTF-O is made via a global MoU that all RUNOs must sign. The MoU is unequivocal in stating that the RUNO is accountable for the use of funds, results achievements as targeted and should work with national or locally-based implementing partners to implement approved PBF projects. The Fund recipient is responsible for putting a monitoring and reporting system in place that meets PBF standards as outlined in Section 7. It is recommended that RUNOs prepare an annual workplan to assist with effective and efficient project management.

During project implementation, RUNOs are responsible for submitting to MPTF and PBSO two project reports per year, using PBSO reporting templates. The six-monthly project report is due on 15 July every year and the annual report is due on 31 March every year, for the previous calendar year. Before submitting the project reports to MPTF-O/PBSO, these should be shared with the technical committee, the PBF Secretariat and programme officer at PBF HQ for quality assurance. They should also be endorsed by the JSC (although, if necessary due to time pressure, the latter can happen after the draft project reports were submitted to MPTF-O/PBSO).

Project Amendment (scope, budget or duration)

Any substantive change to the scope/results of a project, or to its overall budget, must be submitted to the JSC for approval (Templates 3.4). This includes requests for cancellation of a project and re-programming of funds due to under-performance and low rates of expenditure. If a project is cancelled, the funds are to be

returned to MPTF-O and will be added to the Priority Plan Outcome Area budget to be reprogrammed by the Joint Steering Committee.

As per the template requirements, the request should contain full details of why the change is being requested and outline the implications of the change for the project. The JSC will consider the request and respond as soon as possible with a decision (three months maximum are recommended). Any approved changes must be shared – via the PBF Secretariat - with PBSO and the MPTF Office in New York for their records. The Annual Report of the Priority Plan should also be used to flag any changes within the projects and, especially, any under-performance and suggested rectifying actions. As previously stated, if the requested extension goes beyond the Priority Plan period or requires an increase to the Priority Plan allocation, the JSC needs to firstly approve and request the amendment of the Priority Plan from PBSO.

If a change is proposed within the approved budget and has no substantive effect on the scope of the project or its objectives, but only re-allocates between budget categories, the process will depend on the size of the re-allocation requested. If the re-allocation concerns more than 15% of any project budget category, then Template 3.5 must be filled out and signed off by the RUNO and the Government counter-part. The transmittal form with the JSC signature is not required. However, the proposed change will need to be mentioned at the next JSC meeting and the JSC must show no objection, which needs to be recorded in the JSC minutes. The Template 3.5 and the JSC minutes must then be forwarded to MPTF-O and PBSO for their records.

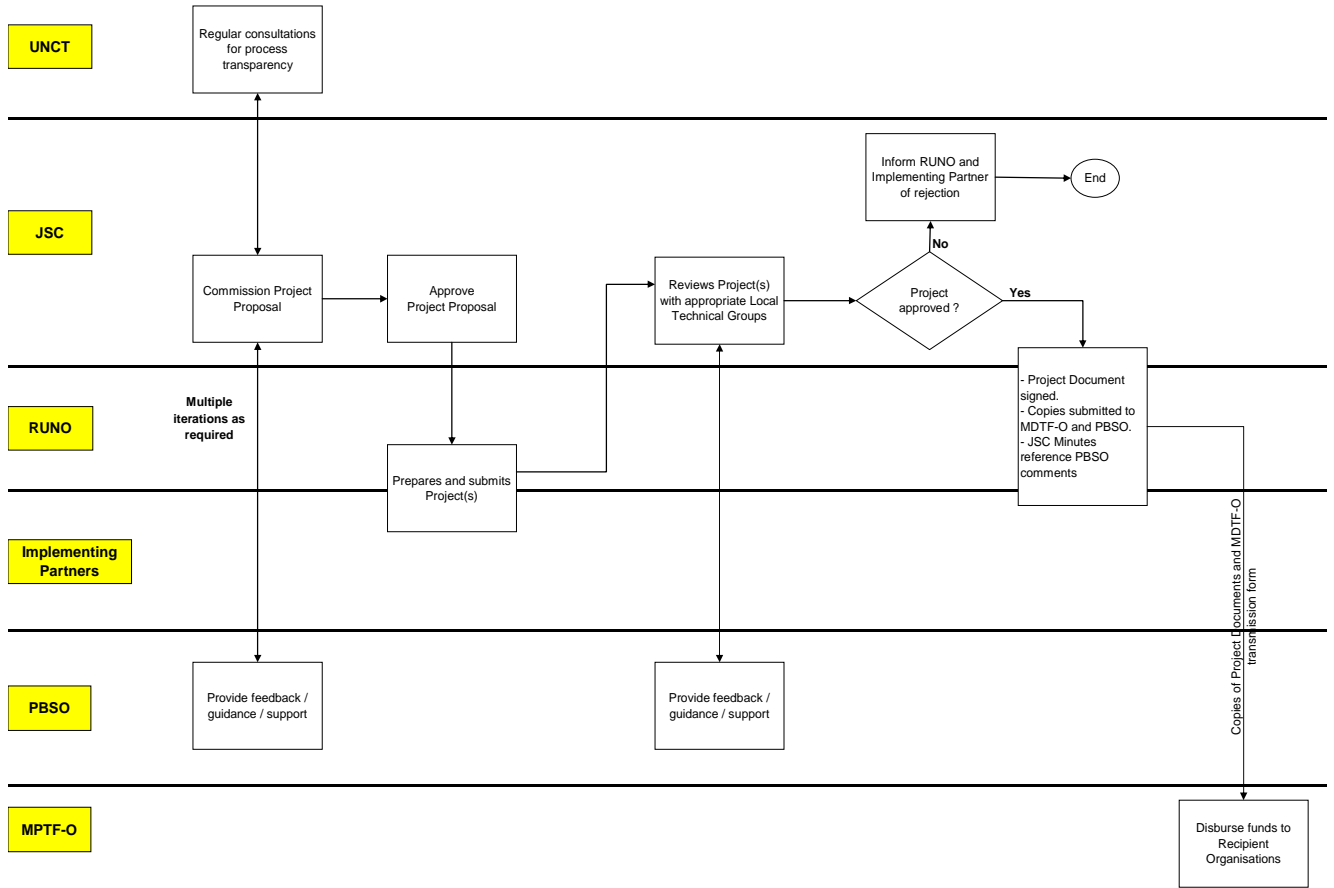
If the change affects less than 15% of any budget category and the change has no effect on the scope of the project or its objectives or on the total budget, the RUNO can re-allocate it internally without formal approval processes.

Guidance Note 5.6.2 provides a useful summary on how to proceed with amending PRF projects.

Project Final Closure

Based on the MoU between the MPTF-O and Recipient UN Organizations, projects need to be completed and operationally closed within their allocated period, and a final project report reflecting the total, cumulative outcomes of the project submitted within three months of the operational closure. A project then moves into a financial closing phase. Any unspent balances at the end of the project need to be returned to MPTF-O before financial closure is complete. The exact amount to be refunded should be agreed between the RUNOs and the MPTF-P. The project closure process should take no longer than six months from the operational closure of the project (Guidance Note 5.7 *How to close PBF projects*). Any unspent and returned funds from PRF projects go back to the PBF pool held by the MPTF-O, and are not returned to the Priority Plan to re-allocate.

PRF Project Approval



7. Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) of PBF programmes

Given the frequently unstable nature of post-conflict settings, where conditions may change rapidly for better or worse, rigorous monitoring and evaluation of peacebuilding interventions, together with ongoing conflict analysis updates, is critical for effective programme management and achievement of results. One of the long-standing challenges to successful peacebuilding, however, has been the difficulty of measuring results and generating evidence to identify what types of interventions work best. Often, peacebuilding interventions seek change that is more abstract than concrete: to positively affect citizens' confidence in governing institutions, transform behavior of security sector personnel, or build social cohesion through national dialogue – none of which is easily measurable. The conditions that contributed to the conflict, moreover, also frequently result in weaker state institutions, and absent or unreliable administrative data. Also, peacebuilding interventions may take a long time to show clear peace-relevant results.

These challenges highlight the importance of robust and regular assessment. In addition, the changeable nature of post-conflict societies means that planning assumptions must be regularly reviewed during the implementation cycle, and intervention strategies evaluated to determine if they remain valid, or require reassessment. As such, PBSO requires a clear, well-structured and appropriately costed Monitoring and Evaluation plan, including Results Framework(s), to plan for and capture the results of all of its investments.

The following chapter provides guidance to project designers, implementers and M&E experts on how to establish M&E systems that will enable them, their senior managers and PBSO management to make informed decisions about the effectiveness of their planned interventions, and to generate knowledge for the broader international community about what works and does not work to support peacebuilding in post-conflict settings.

7.1 PBF Performance Management Plan

At the stage of conceiving and drafting the Priority Plan/projects, the drafting team should refer to the PBF's Performance Management Plan (PMP), which is PBF's Global Results Framework. The PMP can act as a guide to RUNOs on the kind of strategic results that PBF intends to support and how to measure PBF's added value to country portfolios.

The PMP is organized around the PBF's four priority areas, which are given by the Fund's 2009 Terms of Reference. The four priority areas include: i) support for the implementation of peace agreements and political dialogue, ii) promotion of the coexistence and peaceful resolution of conflict, iii) revitalization of the economy and generation of immediate peace dividends, and iv) re-establishment of essential administrative services. Within these four given priority areas, as noted in section 3.3 of these Guidelines, the PBF has identified nine Focus Areas that further define PBF's strategic focus. RUNOs are required to situate their project within one of these Focus Areas at the time of submission.

Starting in June 2014, the PMP will provide a menu of standard indicators for each of the nine Focus Areas. RUNOs will be required to select at least one of the standard indicators that pertain to the Focus Area of their project and include this indicator in the project's Results Framework. PBF recognizes, however, that some projects may have outcomes that can be attributed to more than one Focus Area. For example, a DDR effort may be identified as an (Outcome 1) Focus Area 3 project. Through this project, however, ex-combatants may be provided with livelihoods support, which would fall under (Outcome 3) Focus Area 8. In cases such as this, the implementing UN Agency would be strongly encouraged to include a standard indicator from both Focus Area 3 and Focus Area 6 in the project's Results Framework.

7.2 Developing a Results Framework

Whether submitting a Peacebuilding Priority Plan for PRF funding, or an IRF project proposal, all submissions need to be accompanied by a results framework that helps applicants and PBF to ensure the coherence, logic and complementarity of their interventions and to measure the results that will contribute to peacebuilding. The results framework establishes the basis for the M&E plan, which – during the

implementation phase – will measure fund users’ performance in contributing to peacebuilding results. The Results Framework contains Outcomes, Outputs, Indicators, Baselines, Targets and Milestones.

Developing indicators for peacebuilding interventions is not an easy task. As noted above, peacebuilding interventions often are not easily quantifiable, and so qualitative measures must also be employed. PBSO encourages an appropriate mix of both qualitative and quantitative indicators to best capture the range of likely interventions, although in certain settings a heavier emphasis on qualitative indicators and process level indicators will be most realistic/ useful in order to capture behavior change. In many cases, indicators based on surveys of the population’s perceptions of peace, security, justice and government services will be useful.

Measuring Outcomes: Change of behavior (individual or institutional) or changed perceptions (e.g. increased confidence in government capacity to maintain public order during the election process) that impact conflict factors (e.g. distrust of the population towards government authorities).

Measuring Outputs: Short-term deliverables that fall within the direct responsibility of the Fund user (e.g. skills of police officers in crowd control and de-escalation tactics improved).

Regardless of whether using qualitative or quantitative indicators, when formulating indicators for PBF results frameworks, bear in mind the SMART criteria: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound. Within this framework, applicants should ensure that their indicators measure the specific peacebuilding outcomes of their work, as opposed to more traditional sector-focused development indicators. They should also ensure that they measure both the effectiveness of the project/programme (i.e. achievement of intended results) and its efficiency (i.e. value for money). Finally, the results framework and the indicators should be aligned with the theory of change/ logic of the project/ programme and measure what the project/ programme intended to achieve.

In order for the identified indicators to serve their function, baselines and appropriate targets need to be established. Without baselines, project managers and JSCs will be unable to determine whether their interventions have actually contributed to the desired change. To establish baselines, RUNOs need to consider what data is already being collected by the Government, the civil society and the UN to see if this could be used as a baseline. If baseline data needs to be collected from scratch, this will come at a cost and so provisions for this will need to be included in the M&E budget.

Without appropriate targets, RUNOs will not be able to articulate the scale and scope of the change they are expecting to make, and PBSO will be unable to determine if this scale and scope is appropriate for the context and level of likely funding. Targets, then, are essential to help all stakeholders understand what specific change is expected. Targets, however, apply to the entire life of a given intervention. As such, RUNOs and JSCs may find it useful to establish incremental milestones to determine if the given intervention is progressing at an expected pace, or if adjustments are required. For example, a project may hope to achieve a 50% increase in the level of confidence in local governing institutions of a given population over the course of a 2 year project. Within that two year span, project managers will be required to report on the project’s progress three times. By breaking the project’s target into achievable milestones that are connected to the reporting cycles, project managers and PBF will be better able to assess if the project is on track to meet its 50% goal. For example, in the first 6 months of implementation the project may be expected to achieve only a 5% increase because the project has just begun and not all project activities have been launched. By the first year, however, the project manager may expect that she will see a 20% increase, as the project begins to mature, and a further increase to 35% by the 18 month reporting period. By setting project milestones such as this, period progress assessments can more meaningfully determine if implementation is on track or if various barriers need to be addressed and rectified.

In addition to ensuring the specific peacebuilding focus on results, indicators should also be examined for how they capture differences in gender vis-à-vis the outcomes. As noted in Section 3.4, gender responsiveness may enter into programming in one of two typical ways: either as an explicit aim of an outcome area (for example, to increase women’s empowerment within the socioeconomic and political arenas in support of a peace process), or as an indirect measure through sex and age disaggregated data of an outcome that is not explicitly addressing gender inequality. Without disaggregation, PRF-funded

initiatives will be unable to state with certainty what impact they have had on gender equality and women's empowerment within peacebuilding processes.

A final, general consideration when devising results frameworks is to account for differences in timing implied by certain outcomes and the projects that fit under them. For the case of PRFs, in many Priority Plans, the achievement of key results from one strategic outcome may be critically important for the launch of another outcome. For example, an outcome on social cohesion through improved ethnic minority rights at the community level may depend on the prior achievement of an outcome on revision of key national legal and policy frameworks ensuring minority protection. These kinds of sequencing considerations should be accounted for within the results framework.

While PRF Priority Plans and projects (both projects approved within the Priority Plans as well as IRFs) require results frameworks, the requirements for each are slightly different, given the different length of time, level of funding and complexity of the two. The below sections first outline the results framework components for the Priority Plan before shifting to results framework components for individual projects.

Priority Plan Results Framework

The Priority Plan's results framework consists of two phases: phase one to accompany the submission of the Priority Plan for approval by PBSO, and phase two to be submitted to PBSO within 30 days of the Joint Steering Committee's approval of projects against the Priority Plan.

Phase One (in blue shade within the PPP results framework template).

Given the strategic nature of PBF interventions, the results framework that accompanies the submission of the Priority Plan to PBSO should focus exclusively on identifying appropriate indicators for each Priority Plan outcome, together with baselines, appropriate targets, and means of verification. When formulating indicators, success or failure at measuring peacebuilding achievements will depend on how high or low you pitch the indicators. Indicators (and targets) pitched at too high a level – for example, achieving peace within a country – are not appropriate, given that PBF funding is relatively modest in comparison with the overall needs and that implementation timeframes last no more than 36 months, making deeply systemic, longer-term change an unrealistic goal. Conversely, pitching the outcome indicator at too low a level – for example, training demobilized former-combatants in life skills – is more appropriate for a project-level indicator. The Priority Plan outcome indicators should seek a middle ground, and measure results at a level above likely project-level results.

Phase Two (in yellow shade within the PPP results framework template).

Once the Priority Plan has been approved by PBSO, and the Joint Steering Committee has approved projects against the PPP outcomes, the M&E focal point for the Secretariat should work with RUNOs on elaborating the second phase of the PPP results framework. The second phase expands the results framework from the higher-level PPP strategic outcomes to include a focused selection of key project-level outcomes and their indicators, arrayed across the Priority Plan strategic outcomes. All project-level indicators should meaningfully relate to and flow into the higher-level PPP strategic outcome indicators. This second phase results framework should be completed within 30 days of the JSC project approval date. The second phase PPP results framework includes indicators, targets, baselines and means of verification for each outcome. It also includes shading boxes for Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3 to allow project managers to think when each outcome will be achieved and to visualize if some outcomes will depend on and flow from others. It also has a column to list any key milestones and dates which will allow the project managers to track the achievement of the targets over time. The second phase of the PPP results framework needs to be accompanied by an M&E Plan (Template 4.1). Where only a part of the Priority Plan has been projectized at one time by the Joint Steering Committee, the update of the Priority Plan Results Framework and the M&E Plan will be a rolling task.

Project-level Results Framework

As noted above, every project – whether a stand-alone IRF or a project within the Priority Plan – requires a results framework to provide evidence of how the individual project is achieving its intended peacebuilding results (Template 3.2 and 3.3). The project results framework makes clear the linkages between the immediate results (outputs) of a project and their intended contribution to the peacebuilding objectives and outcomes.

For projects associated with a Priority Plan, individual project outcome statements and indicators should be reflected in the yellow-shaded boxes in the Phase Two results framework. For IRF projects, the Results Framework should be included in the project document (the template for the Framework is included in the project document template). It includes outcomes as well as outputs and their indicators, baselines, targets, means of verification. For each outcome and output, there should be a shading of quarters and years to indicate when they are expected to be achieved and whether certain outputs or outcomes lead to others or are dependent on them.

7.3 Developing an M&E Plan

High quality results frameworks are the starting point for measuring progress on desired outcomes. However, a results framework - even with SMART³⁴ indicators – only provides an answer to the question “what do we measure”, it does not address the question of how or when to measure, nor does it set aside time to reflect on what has been achieved. For that, PBSO requires a sound and adequately budgeted Monitoring and Evaluation Plan.

An M&E Plan is a tool used to coordinate the collection and analysis of data for informed decision-making and substantive reporting and for evaluating achievements. It also helps to ensure the consistent and timely flow of information from data collection to reporting, using different data sources. The M&E Plan builds on the Results Framework by determining how the indicators will be tracked and stating clearly who is responsible for what and when, and what budget is allocated for this purpose. Similar to results frameworks, PBSO requires separate M&E Plans for Priority Plans as well as for individual projects.

Priority Plan Level

Given that project selection usually occurs after the submission and approval of the Priority Plan, the M&E Plan that is elaborated for Priority Plan submission will be an indicative one. Elements of an adequate indicative M&E Plan should include: 1) surveys or other data collection needed to obtain baseline data, 2) the scheduling of annual and mid-term reviews at the PPP level, 3) any required data collection activity a mid-term review may require, and 3) data collection toward the end of the project to enable both project staff and evaluators to assess the project’s outcomes. M&E Plans may also include any evaluative exercises the Secretariat or individual RUNOs may wish to undertake in the programme cycle.

While an indicative M&E Plan will need to be included in the Priority Plan proposal, finalization of the PPP M&E Plan will occur upon finalization of the second phase results framework. Upon acceptance of the Priority Plan by PBSO and project selection against the Plan by the JSC, the PBF M&E focal point should convene a working group of all project managers receiving PBF funding. Drawing upon phase two of the results framework, the working group should list all of the means of verification for all indicators within the results framework, including those at the strategic outcome level as well as project outcome level. Once the list is drawn up, the working group should identify which means of verification are routinely collected at no additional cost, and which require special data collection efforts (for example, the implementation of a perception survey). For those requiring special efforts, a budget should also be provided.

Regardless of whether data collection is routine or via a special, dedicated mechanism, the working group should indicate the relative frequency of data collection. Considerations for setting the frequency should

³⁴ SMART: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-bound.

include: what is the implementation timeframe and, if quite short, how many opportunities will project managers have to adjust their approach; how much time is likely needed in order to see meaningful change in the indicator; and what are programme management's opportunities for analyzing and adjusting programme implementation through mid-year or mid-term reviews and evaluative exercises.

Once a list of means of verification and their frequency and budget implications are clear, all information should be included in template 4.1, and submitted at the same time as the Phase Two results framework submission to PBSO.

Priority Plan evaluations do not need to be included in the M&E Plan of the Priority Plan because they will be planned and managed by PBSO/PBF in New York. Funding for these evaluations will be drawn from the Priority Plan allocation, under the Secretariat support project, and retained by MPTF-O for use by the PBF M&E Unit at the close of the Priority Plan. Individual project-level evaluations for projects funded through the Priority Plan are not required by PBF but could serve as additional data sources for reporting should the country teams decide to undertake them.

Project Level

All projects must have an M&E Framework, however not all projects require an individual M&E Plan. For PRF projects, it is sufficient that there is an M&E Plan at the Priority Plan level, which takes into account all the projects contributing to the implementation of the Priority Plan.

IRF projects will require an M&E Plan only if they require an independent evaluation. PBSO requires evaluations for IRF projects when: funding amount is \$1.5 million or more, or if they last for more than 12 months, or if they are implemented in new PBF country contexts or using interventions that are particularly risky or innovative. Project managers should contact PBF M&E staff when drafting their proposals to discuss whether their projects fall within any of these criteria. If an evaluation/M&E Plan is required, it needs to be part of the project proposal, with funding set aside to conduct the evaluation, which will be managed at the country level.

7.4 Reporting requirements and responsibilities

The main purpose of reporting is to offer evidence – based on the sound analysis of M&E data – of which PBF interventions performed well and achieved expected results, what challenges were encountered, what were the lessons learned, and which of these could be used to build knowledge of how PBF interventions have successfully addressed conflict drivers. Such reports are a crucial means for programme managers to reflect on implementation and make adjustments where necessary, as well as for PBSO to enhance accountability on results and sharing of knowledge on successes, as well as failures. For PBSO, such accountability extends to the UN General Assembly and Secretary General through the Security General's Annual Report on the Peacebuilding Fund, as well as to Fund donors and PBF recipient member states

Reports are required at the level of the Priority Plan as well as for each project, regardless of whether the project is an IRF or funded under the PRF. Reports are required if the project or the Priority Plan commenced at least 6 months before the due date of the report. All RUNOs and Secretariats are required to utilize the PBF reporting templates for reporting on PBF-funded initiatives. Narrative descriptions of project or PPP implementation should be based on evidence and be grounded in the achievement of the results framework milestones and targets.

Reporting on programmatic results of the Priority Plan (Template 4.2)

As the Joint Steering Committee is responsible for ensuring the achievement of the Priority Plan outcomes, it is responsible for submitting an annual report summarizing progress against the milestones and targets established in the Priority Plan's results framework. The main purpose of this report is to assess PBF's overall added value in contributing significantly to peacebuilding processes at the national and local level, to review the quality of programmatic results, and to monitor carefully risks and changes within conflict

dynamics. The deadline for submission of this report is the first week of December, as it is used as input into PBSO’s Annual Report to the Secretary General, Security Council, General Assembly, donors and UN. The report will be reviewed by PBSO according to established criteria elaborated in guidance available to JSCs to assist with the preparation of the report.

The JSC, the Office of the Senior Resident UN Representative and the PBF Secretariat are also responsible for quality control of the half year, annual and end of project narrative reports submitted by the RUNOs (see below).

Reporting on project specific results (Templates 4.3 – 4.5)

PBF’s reporting procedures are governed by the standard MoU signed between the MPTF Office and RUNOs. RUNOs are responsible for reporting on progress against anticipated outcomes twice a year: a six-month report due on 15 July and an end-of-year annual report due on 31 March.³⁵ Quarterly reporting to the MPTF Office is no longer mandatory. In addition, RUNOs are required to submit annual financial reports by 30 April to the MPTF Office. Please note that financial reports are submitted by the RUNO’s headquarters. Joint projects should submit a single consolidated project report.

For projects that have concluded operational activities, End of Project reports must be submitted (Template 4.5) within three months of operational closure.

The MPTF Office is responsible for the consolidation of all project reports into the *PBF Annual Consolidated Report* by 31 May.

Summary of reporting responsibilities

| PBF / MPTF-Office Reporting Cycle | | | |
|--|--------------------------------|---|---|
| Who reports? | To whom? | When? | What and How? |
| - Joint Steering Committee (PRF) | PBSO | - Once a year (deadline 1 December) | Reporting on the status of <i>programmatic results</i> against the Priority Plan (Template 4.2) |
| - RUNOs | JSC / RCO; PBSO/MPTF-Office | - Half year (deadline 15 July); - Annual report (deadline: 31 March) - End of Project Report (3 months after operational closure) | Reporting on the status of <i>project results</i> (Templates .3 – 4.5); financial statements (end year) |
| - Implementation Partners (project manager and team) | RUNOs | - Quarterly or more frequent, depending on context | RBM / early warning systems at project level: Review of target |

7.5 Independent Programme Evaluations

Independent evaluations provide an impartial assessment of the project/ programme. They also help determine the strategic positioning of PBF based on its success, added value, and lessons learned on how to achieve strategic impact on addressing conflict factors. As noted above, PBSO requires a portfolio-wide, independent evaluation for all PRF allocations. These evaluations are designed and managed by the PBF M&E Unit in New York, in close cooperation with the JSC and PBF Secretariat. Final external project evaluations are mandatory for certain IRF projects (those that are above \$1.5 million, those that last more than 12 months and those that are particularly innovative/risky) – PBSO should be consulted when the project is being developed to determine whether a given project will need to conduct an evaluation. End of programme/ project evaluations and should take place 6 months prior to the financial closure of the programme, and at or around operational closure. Mid-term evaluations or other evaluative exercises remain optional. An independent evaluation is required prior to any consideration for a renewal allocation.

³⁵PBSO and MPTFO will be reviewing in mid-2014 the timing of the reports with an eye toward better alignment with annual report writing and mid-term review scheduling. Any changes to the reporting deadlines will be reflected in the MOU between the various RUNOs and MPTFO.

PBSO has developed standard ToRs for evaluations (*Guidance Note 5.3*) that follow the OECD/DAC (and UNEG) quality norms and standards for evaluating programmes in fragile countries.³⁶ In most cases, the evaluations are jointly conducted by an international and a national consultant. The final decision on the Team Leader is the responsibility of a PBSO selection panel (comprised of three members) in compliance with PBF rules and regulations. National consultants will be selected by the UNCT according to their procurement procedures and in consultation with PBSO. The M&E Advisor at PBSO is in charge of oversight during the whole evaluation process and is accountable for quality assurance of the final evaluation report. The cost for external evaluations of IRF projects is fully covered by project funds and should be included in the budget for every project proposal.

Evaluation findings are shared with JSC, PBSO and UN interagency working groups and their comments on the evaluation findings are included in the final report as an Annex. A management response is due into PBSO within 30 days of receipt of the final report. For PRF evaluations, PBF M&E Unit will coordinate the drafting of the response in close coordination with the JSC. For IRF project evaluations, RUNOs are responsible for finalizing the management response and submitting it to PBF M&E Unit. Once finalized, all evaluations will be posted on the PBF website, together with the management responses.

³⁶ Guidance on Evaluating Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Activities, OECD/DAC, June 2012.