

# SECRETARY-GENERAL'S PEACEBUILDING FUND

## Synthesis Review of UN Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) 2021–2022 Evaluations and Evaluative Exercises

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PEACEBUILDING  
FUND ▶ ▶ ▶ ▶

Final Report  
17 November 2023

# Synthesis Review of UN Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) 2021–2022 Evaluations and Evaluative Exercises

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*Final Report*  
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## ABBREVIATIONS USED

ABG	Autonomous Bougainville Government
BINUB	United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi (BINUB)
CCA	UN Common Country Analysis
CoP	Community of Practice
CSO	Civil society organization
DDR	Demobilization, disarmament, and reintegration
DFD	Dialogue for the Future (regional program in the Western Balkans)
DMEL	Design, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
DNH	Do No Harm
DPPA	UN Department for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs
INGO	International non-governmental organization
IRF	Immediate Response Facility
JSC	Joint Steering Committee
GBV	Gender-based violence
GYPI	Gender and Youth Promotion Initiative (PBF)
HDP Nexus	Humanitarian – Development – Peacebuilding Nexus
MHPSS	Mental health and psychosocial support
MTR	Mid-term review (of PBF’s 2020–2024 Strategic Plan)
MPTFO	Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office MPTFO
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NUNO	Recipient non-UN organization (of PBF funding)
OECD - DAC	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development – Development Assistance Committee
PBF	UN Secretary-General’s Peacebuilding Fund
PBSO	UN Peacebuilding Support Office
PPP	Peacebuilding Priority Plan
PDA	Peace and Development Adviser
PRF	Peacebuilding and Reconstruction Facility
RC/RCO	UN Resident Coordinator/Resident Coordinator’s Office
RUNOs	Recipient UN organization (of PBF funding)
RYCO	Regional Youth Cooperation Office (Western Balkans)
SG	UN Secretary-General
SRFs	Strategic Frameworks
SSR	Security sector reform
ToR	Terms of reference
UN	United Nations
UNCT	UN Country Team
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This synthesis review analyzes the body of 2021/2022 evaluations of projects funded by PBF during this timeframe. It distils programmatic and process highlights (including emerging areas) across PBF's priority areas and windows, summarizes recurring lessons and insights on design, monitoring, evaluation and learning (DMEL), and also reviews progress achieved against recommendations from the 2017–2019 and 2020 synthesis reviews. The review includes a total of 120 evaluations: 117 project-level evaluations (63 in 2021; 54 in 2022), as well as three portfolio evaluations and reviews (Burundi, Madagascar, the Republic of Guinea). Given the large number of project evaluations, the evidence base of the 2021–2022 synthesis review is stronger on project-level insights and weaker at higher strategic levels.

PBF has remained an important resource for conflict prevention and peacebuilding during a time when there is less attention and often limited political appetite for peace initiatives as opposed to increasing funding for humanitarian emergencies.

Most projects evaluated during the period of review were implemented during the Covid-19 pandemic or its aftermath. Many of the evaluations document the fact that projects generally responded well and flexibly to the demands and implications of the Covid-19 pandemic, and PBFs flexibility was generally highly appreciated in relation to how it adapted its funding and ways of working to the new realities.

PBF utilizes the decentralized evaluations implemented by in-country projects to identify key areas of work and suggestions for improvement. In this regard, it has taken important steps to respond to the findings and recommendations from the 2017–2019 and 2020 synthesis reviews in several areas; in other areas, progress – as it emerges from the evaluations – is limited (Section C of the report offers a comparative review of past recommendations and current findings).

During the 2021/2022 review period, PBF initiated several investments in the areas of **strategic PBF portfolio management** and **design, monitoring, evaluation and learning**. These included (but were not limited to) the development and roll-out of Strategic Results Frameworks (SRFs) at country level; the adoption of a new PBF evaluation policy including the decision to invest in cohort evaluations for projects smaller than USD 1.5 million (with a specific thematic focus); thematic reviews on gender-responsive peacebuilding and local peacebuilding; an increased focus on facilitating learning and engaging PBF's Community of Practice; various guidance notes and tip sheets; and efforts to begin to crack the 'impact nut' through the PeaceField initiative.

Despite the diversity in quality of the large number of project evaluations, the evaluations put forward several **promising and/or emerging programmatic practices**, with important **points of learning for further peacebuilding practice** going forward.

Promising programmatic areas highlighted in this report include the following:<sup>1</sup>

- The role of PBF investments to **sustain dialogue in difficult political climates**, and during **political crisis** and **electoral processes**: The evaluations reveal several cases in which PBF-funded initiatives played important roles in sustaining dialogue in the midst of challenging political circumstances, such as acute political crises (for example in Bolivia); in supporting social cohesion and peace consolidation around elections and the referendum process in Papua New Guinea, and in sustaining a level of dialogue between the UN and the Government

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<sup>1</sup> These findings are based on the available evidence in the evaluations; they do not represent primary research or the opinion of the author.

of Burundi during a difficult time characterized by shrinking political space for peacebuilding and civil society in the country.

- **Community-based reintegration** emerged as a possible interesting area for PBF attention going forward: Projects in this area are focused on supporting the implementation of new policy approaches to Demobilization, Disarmament, and Reintegration (DDR) (such as the [IDDRS standards](#)) and particularly to complement formal DDR processes with a longer-term community-based focus to address structural conflict drivers in the communities where reintegration takes place. There is only limited evidence in the 2021/2022 evaluations (e.g., DRC/Rwanda project evaluation), but combined with insights from key informant interviews as well as growing demands for PBF funding in this area, it seems to be a programmatic area for PBF to keep an eye on regarding future funding as well as future reviews to stimulate the gathering of lessons and insights in this area.
- PBF investments in **regional and cross-border initiatives** remain a priority area. Based on the findings from the 2021/2022 evaluations (e.g., from regional initiatives in the Western Balkans, and cross-border projects in Chad-Niger and Chad/Central African Republic), as well as the more in-depth review of this thematic window as part of PBF's recent Mid-Term Review (MTR), it may be relevant for PBF to further expand its insights in this area of work. This could specifically include a **clearer articulation of the added value of cross-border and borderlands engagements as opposed to national approaches**, including specific theories of change that highlight more clearly the specific benefits of a cross-border approach. It also seems that there is limited guidance available to implementing agencies of PBF funding (RUNOs – recipient UN organizations, and NUNOs- recipient non-UN organizations) demonstrating how to embark successfully on a regional and cross-border project.
- PBF funding for **mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS)** as an emerging area of focus. This area of work is promising for PBF funding and is attracting increasing attention in the wider peacebuilding sector. While the 2021/2022 evaluations provide limited – albeit insightful - insights from a few contexts only (The Gambia, Sri Lanka), the upcoming cohort evaluation on MHPSS under the GYPI window is expected to provide valuable new insights into this area of work.
- Finally, the evaluations provide important findings into **the ways in which RUNOs and NUNOs** (directly or in collaboration and/or through national counterparts) **engage with national and local partners to impact the effectiveness of peacebuilding work** within countries, and on the UN's positioning as a trusted and honest broker. These findings have implications for the effectiveness of partnerships between international, national and local actors more broadly – key insights for PBF's ambition to expand its footprint in working effectively and in real partnership with local partners and on local peacebuilding. 13 project evaluations across various geographic areas (including cross-border project evaluations) pinpoint (i) the need for a better understanding of local traditions and local framings and narratives; (ii) the need for a deeper understanding of and curiosity about local cultures and dynamics within the community; (iii) the importance of leveraging existing local structures and mechanisms for dialogue and peacebuilding, both formal and informal; and (iv) the need to learn from and with national and local partners to sustain engagement and change social norms. If PBF funded initiatives continue to work in closer partnerships with local, national and international partners, it will be equally important to insist on and strengthen the necessary facilitation, process design, and multi-stakeholder participation skills of RUNOs and NUNOs ('peacebuilding as an approach' – not just as a sector, as highlighted in the 2017-2019 synthesis review).

**Process related** insights resulting from the 2021/2022 evaluations include lessons relating to the following areas:

- **Catalytic effects**, reconfirming the findings from the MTR of PBF’s 2020–2024 strategy encouraging PBF to articulate and monitor catalytic effects more clearly; PBF is in the process of developing new guidance and orientation on how to understand and monitor catalytic effects at the writing of this report.
- **Synergies, linkages, and coherence.** The evaluations reveal that, broadly speaking, **coordination and coherence seem to be more easily achievable at the programmatic and technical levels rather than the strategic level.** There also seems to be a need to establish a clearer understanding of **effective methods for increasing linkages between different areas of work, sectors, and partners** mean in peacebuilding;
- Relevant insights into **national ownership and the sustainability** of PBF-funded interventions as well as the importance of assessing national buy-in and ownership more thoroughly as one of the essential criteria for decision-making relating to funding decisions and during implementation, particularly in light of the limited functionality of the Joint Steering Committees in many contexts;
- A recurring finding about how crucial **staff capacities** are to deliver **high-quality and strategic peacebuilding programming** and related **design, monitoring, evaluation and learning**, and that those capacities cannot be taken for granted. Capacities amongst RUNOs remain mixed in this regard and different agencies, funds, and programs prioritize the strengthening of sustainable staff and partner capacities to different degrees. The findings in this synthesis review encourage PBF to revisit the 2017–2019 synthesis review recommendation to consider using a certain percentage of country-based funding for capacity development, specifically for those organizations who demonstrate a clear commitment to long-term capacity development and related organizational change;
- A recurring finding that the systematic application of **conflict-sensitivity** in practice remains patchy across PBF-funded portfolios, combined with evidence from the evaluations that **risk management** is an important area for consideration – both in terms of PBF portfolios and projects not taking enough risks in certain contexts (e.g., when working with new partners beyond ‘the usual suspects’, such as private sector entities). The evaluations also confirm the importance of managing risk for civil society partners pro-actively and sustainably, especially where there is a shrinking space for peacebuilding and civil society work in many contexts.

Findings related to **design, monitoring and evaluation from the 2021/2022 evaluations** highlight the positive development of increased reflection on **adaptive management** and learning in various contexts. This mirrors PBF’s own increasing efforts to act as a convener and facilitator of **learning** – and to ensure that PBF is highly flexible as a funder. It is important to maintain momentum in this regard. The insights related to adaptive management are also highly relevant in combination with the above-mentioned insights on risk management and conflict sensitivity - as the feedback loop between analyzing and recognizing risk (for PBF, implementing agencies, and partners) and making decisions around possible programmatic course correction can only be fully closed using an adaptive management approach. In relation to learning, it may be promising to start facilitating broader exchanges across PBF-funded initiatives across countries and contexts, including learning from and with national governments, as suggested by some of the evaluations.

This synthesis review focuses on the following **recommendations**:

**Recommendation 1 – Continue to learn lessons from these synthesis reviews and act upon the resulting findings and recommendations.**

PBF invests significantly in conducting regular synthesis reviews and also other types of reviews that provide excellent foundations for learning, specifically the MTR of the PBF 2020–2024 strategic plan and the thematic reviews. The trajectory of the synthesis reviews in recent years has indicated that many of the findings are ‘repeat lessons’, and some of the project evaluations also provide repeat

insights and recommendations within country-specific portfolios (the Burundi portfolio evaluation speaks about ‘lessons not learnt’). PBF has acted upon several of the recommendations from the 2017–2019 and 2020 synthesis reviews, and the recommendation in this report is that areas that have received less attention (see Section C of this report) should continue to be revisited, including, for example, the issues of clearer PBF criteria for funding approvals particularly in relation to national ownership, enhanced capacity strengthening of RUNOs and NUNOs, prioritizing conflict sensitivity, or prioritizing the necessary process facilitation and participatory skills for effective peacebuilding partnerships with national and local partners.

### **Recommendation 2 - Systematic focus on peacebuilding capacity building.**

The findings in this synthesis review re-confirm that the relevance and effectiveness of peacebuilding initiatives hinges directly upon the **strategic and programmatic capacities of RUNOs and NUNOs** in peacebuilding, **sound DMEL capacities**, as well as strategic and often **political steering capacities amongst PBF Secretariats** and those who provide oversight to PBF funds. The evaluations reveal that RUNOs prioritize skills and capacities for peacebuilding strategy, programming and DMEL to different degrees, which in turn also influences their ability to either strengthen or learn and benefit from capacities of national and local partners. This is a repeat finding from the 2017–2019 synthesis review and it is an ongoing process. At the same time, PBSO/PBF management and its donors have a shared commitment towards demonstrating impact in peacebuilding.

PBF is in charge of staffing PBF Secretariats appropriately (who in turn support RUNOs and NUNOs), but does not control staffing and skill development decisions of RUNOs and NUNOs. However, it might be able to provide relevant **incentives** for capacity development. It is recommended for PBF to review the recommendation in the 2017–2019 synthesis review related to considering (jointly with and in dialogue with interested donors), the allocation of parts of PBF’s country-based funding to strengthen the capacity of RUNOs, NUNOs and national partners in peacebuilding programming, steering peacebuilding portfolios strategically, and in related DMEL capacities. Specifically, for those RUNOs and NUNOs who can demonstrate a real commitment to long-term capacity development and organizational uptake of enhanced peacebuilding and conflict sensitivity practice, supported by an articulated capacity development plan (beyond e.g., one-off trainings)<sup>2</sup>. It is important to note that these skills and capacities need to include not only strong sector or technical skills in peacebuilding and DMEL, but also strong **process design** and **facilitation** skills for meaningful, inclusive, participatory and trustworthy multi-stakeholder engagement of local and national partners. This is demonstrated again in the evaluations reviewed in this report, in terms of the importance of the **WHAT** and the **HOW** of peacebuilding initiatives.

### **Recommendation 3 – Boost PBF’s approach to conflict sensitivity and risk management.**

**Limited progress** in the evaluations related to the systematic application as well as the systematic evaluation of a **conflict-sensitive approach** is another repeat finding from past synthesis reviews. Evidence from the 2021/2022 evaluations complements this with the need for a strong **risk management** approach and related **adaptive practice** for programmatic course correction. During a time when polarization and misinformation are flourishing globally, when there is little space for human rights or peacebuilding work in many settings, or when civil society actors are actively threatened in their work, a delicate and specific approach is needed by those who fund peacebuilding and expect national and local partners to engage with highly complex and sensitive peacebuilding work. This could be taken forward on a number of different levels:

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<sup>2</sup> Other peacebuilding funders, such as PeaceNexus, provide deliberate organizational development grants for their partners related to the systematic organizational uptake of conflict sensitivity and increased peacebuilding effectiveness. See a lessons learnt document on organisational development in peacebuilding: [https://peacenexus.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/PEN\\_PracticePaper\\_DOC\\_EN\\_WEB\\_page.pdf](https://peacenexus.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/PEN_PracticePaper_DOC_EN_WEB_page.pdf)



- The requirement for each PBF-funded project to have a conflict-sensitive strategy and implementation plan in place – beyond a general commitment by projects to the Do No Harm (DNH) principle- should be followed through more deliberately. This should include integration of conflict sensitivity across the full project cycle, including systematic monitoring of unintended impacts as part of monitoring systems, and related strategies to mitigate unintended negative impacts (adaptive programming), and clear assessment of such a conflict-sensitive approach in practice through the evaluations. It could be effective to leverage the 2022 [UN Sustainable Development Group guidance on conflict sensitivity](#) for this purpose, as well as the 2020 [UN community engagement guidelines](#), many of which are highly relevant from a conflict sensitivity perspective.
- It is evident from the evaluations that understanding of and practical skills to implement conflict sensitivity in programmatic and operational terms might be a weak spot, which is an area that could be pick-up upon as part of recommendation 3 / capacity development.
- It could be very interesting, under PBSO’s ‘impact hub’ initiative, to kick-start a wider discussion on the UN’s role in safeguarding and managing risk for national and local partners in highly volatile political settings in relation to peacebuilding initiatives.

**Recommendation 4 – Adapt evaluation design and enhance evaluation capacity.**

For this synthesis review, PBF expressed clear expectations around distilling programmatic highlights. However, the way in which the current project evaluations are designed and implemented is not conducive to supporting this learning ambition, as the evaluations are often of average quality and not necessarily designed and written in such a way that they could be used as the foundations for distilling higher level results and change stories, or for facilitating learning around them at the country level. Moving away from project evaluations for all projects towards cohort evaluations (with a thematic focus) for projects smaller than USD 1.5 million as part of PBF’s new evaluation policy is important progress and an important step to establish a clearer relationship between project evaluations and thematic learning.

To make individual evaluations even more conducive for PBF’s learning ambition at both global and country levels, the below includes suggestions on **how to possibly adapt evaluation design and process management:**

- Re-design the evaluation focus and structure. Instead of insisting on strict adherence to the evaluation criteria of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development’s Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC), the design of evaluations could be restructured to allow for more inclusion of more open-ended learning questions more open-ended gathering of key impacts achieved. This should also include a focus on key positive changes in context, and how projects/programs have contributed to those, as well as distilling key process learnings across the projects. Such an approach could include elements of outcome harvesting, most significant change or other more complexity-aware evaluation methodologies. This would require RUNOs and NUNOs to prioritize relevant skills and capacities for more qualitative and flexible evaluation approaches within their evaluation management as well as the selection of evaluators with such profiles. While it might not be realistic to alter the way project evaluations are done wholesale, it should be possible to integrate and combine a lighter touch application of the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria with other, more open-ended methodologies conducive for learning. This would support two important elements of PBF’s work: (i) it would provide PBF with more of the lessons and impact stories it needs, and (ii) make it easier for the evaluations to actually be picked up for learning at the project/program/country level and beyond. Implementation of this recommendation has implications for the qualities and qualifications to be prioritized among evaluators and within evaluation teams.

- During project design, develop a clearer strategy for how project evaluations will be used for learning, at the country level and within PBF more widely. Articulating this expectation and process from the outset (during the project approval phase – e.g., by including a few key evaluation lines of inquiry during the design stage) will help to ensure that evaluations become a more integral part of the DMEL cycle (instead of an ‘add-on’ at the end with no follow-up action or connection to learning).
- Establish a network of qualified peacebuilding evaluation consultants available at the regional/country level. To address the issue of weak project evaluations, in order to support the above recommendations to introduce more flexible and complexity-aware ways of conducting evaluations (beyond the OEC/DAC criteria), and also in order to build on a recommendation from the 2017–2019 synthesis review, a clearer network of strong consultants with peacebuilding and evaluation expertise should be established at the country/regional and international levels – who can support more qualitative and complexity-aware evaluation approaches.

**Recommendation 5: Maintain a focus on PBF as a facilitator of learning.**

PBF has taken important and promising steps to increase its role as a facilitator and convener of **learning**. This currently happens through a variety of processes and products, such as thematic reviews, guidance and tip sheets, as well as community of practice meetings. In this regard, PBF is an important thought partner for good peacebuilding practice, and it will be important to leverage this role on two levels going forward:

- 1) at **global level**, to continue going deeper on specific areas of peacebuilding practice, as well as feeding into PBSO’s new impact hub, including by leveraging insights from thematic reviews and synthesis reviews;
- 2) creating a more in-depth ‘**learning feed-back loop**’ with RUNOS and NUNOs to take back findings from global reviews (e.g., MTR, synthesis reviews, thematic reviews, portfolio evaluations) to stimulate reflecting and learning at the country level – and vice versa, to use evaluations at country level and under the new evaluation policy (cohort evaluations) to inform global knowledge products and learning processes.

## A. Focus, Methodology, Quality and Context of the Reviewed Evaluations

### I. Focus of the 2021/2022 synthesis review of evaluations

The objective of the 2021/2022 synthesis review is to analyze the body of evaluations and evaluative products available during this timeframe. It distils programmatic and process highlights across PBF's priority areas and windows, summarize recurring lessons and insights on DMEL as reflected in the evaluations, and also reviews progress achieved against recommendations from the 2017–2019 and 2020 synthesis reviews.

At the end of the 2017–2019 Strategic Plan and in 2020, PBF commissioned synthesis reviews of evaluative exercises conducted at both the country portfolio as well as project levels. The resulting [2017–2019 synthesis review](#) and [2020 synthesis review](#) analyzed PBF's performance through project and portfolio evaluations and assessed higher-level peacebuilding results across PBF country portfolios. The 2020 synthesis review confirmed many of the findings and recommendations of the 2017–2019 synthesis review. Both reviews focused strongly on recurring findings from the evaluations in key evaluation domains such as conflict analysis, program relevance and effectiveness, conflict sensitivity, UN coherence, and insights in relation to PBF's specific niche in peacebuilding funding (including during the Covid-19 global pandemic for the 2020 synthesis review).

For the 2021/2022 synthesis review, PBF decided to highlight the distillation of programmatic highlights and pockets of innovation across PBF's priority areas and windows, while also pinpointing select process and managerial insights in specific areas that are of particular interest to PBSO/PBF going forward, including working with national and local partners, catalytic effects, synergies and coherence, sustainability and national ownership, or findings related to DMEL. These considerations are reflected in the scope and focus of this review.

### II. Brief methodology overview

This review consists primarily of a desk review of 2021/2022 project-level and portfolio-level evaluative exercises of PBF-funded projects. Select additional project information (such as project proposals and other documents) was reviewed in case where it was useful to complement information available in the evaluations. An overview of documents reviewed is listed in the annex. The review also included select interviews with key stakeholders, particularly PBSO staff in New York.

The synthesis review applies a qualitative analysis approach to distill patterns that emerge across the evaluations reviewed, in line with the focus areas identified during the inception process (see above). These patterns include the following:

- Statements and findings that occur more than once or twice in relation to the focus areas of this synthesis review;
- A qualitative analysis of those statements and their meaning in relation to the focus areas of the review;
- Conflicting accounts of events or processes and an analysis of their relevance; and
- Gaps emerging from the document review (e.g., regarding the overall availability of evidence).

Single issues or insights that might emerge as particularly relevant for one project or country portfolio are only mentioned in this synthesis review if they have (or might have in the future) broader relevance for other PBF initiatives. Wherever possible, the synthesis review points out approximately how many evaluations are the foundations for drawing certain broader conclusions. However, it should be noted that a quantitative perspective alone will be misleading, as only a fraction of the overall number of evaluations reviewed provide relevant insights in the areas identified as priority for

this review. Hence, it is a smaller number of evaluations out of the overall body of analysis that provides the evidence based for this review.

### **III. Nature and quality of the reviewed evaluations**

A total of 117 project-level evaluations were conducted in 2021 and 2022 (63 in 2021; 54 in 2022). Given the large number of project evaluations, the evidence base of the 2021–2022 synthesis review is stronger on project-level insights and weaker at higher strategic levels. Alongside the majority of project evaluations (which form the focus of this review), the review also examines three portfolio evaluations or reviews (Burundi, Madagascar, Guinea – Strategic Review), and other relevant PBF documents as necessary. The evaluations include project focus areas that cut across PBF’s priority areas and priority windows, with the exception of ‘facilitating transitions between different UN configurations’ (one of PBF’s priority fundings windows) as none of the evaluations address insights into transition management as an explicit evaluation focus.

The quality of the reviewed 2021/2022 evaluations and evaluative exercises varies greatly; hence, some evaluations provide a rich foundation for the findings and evidence underpinning this synthesis review, while others do not - or do so only on select issues. In 2022, PBF introduced a quality assessment system to analyze the quality of evaluations, supported by an external consulting firm (DeftEdge). So far, DeftEdge has reviewed all project-level evaluations conducted in 2022 according to the evaluation quality standards that PBF has developed. The synthesis review also found that there is not always a linear correlation between a technically sound evaluation and the most relevant findings from a substantive or programmatic perspective. Sometimes, evaluations that were determined to be weaker from a technical evaluation perspective still provide select relevant insights based on the focus areas of this review – and vice versa.

By design, project evaluations yield insights at the activity or output level and do not provide higher-level insights, e.g., related to longer-term socio-political changes that PBF-funded initiatives might have contributed to, or more macro-level strategic-level insights. It is usually the portfolio evaluations that provide higher-level strategic insights. Of the portfolio evaluations, the Burundi evaluation is very strong and provides relevant insights from a higher and more strategic perspective. The Madagascar and Guinea portfolio evaluations are less strategic in their orientation (more focused on individual project results within the PBF portfolios) and provide relevant insights into some aspects relevant for this synthesis review, but not at the same level as the Burundi evaluation.

Some of the evaluations also document how the extent to which support was provided to the evaluation design and implementation process by the respective RUNOs and NUNOs positively or negatively impacted the quality of the evaluation. Bureaucratic delays or insufficient backstopping and management by RUNOs sometimes minimized how conducive the environment was for effective and efficient evaluation management, which ultimately influences the quality of evaluations.

### **IV. Project implementation and evaluation during and in the aftermath of the global Covid-19 pandemic**

The implementation of several of the projects themselves, as well as the evaluations in 2021 and 2022, were impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic.

At the level of evaluation design and implementation, implications included the fact that travel to the country was often difficult or impossible from the outside. Several of the evaluations followed a hybrid model, involving mixed teams between national consultants in country and – in cases where international consultants were involved – work from outside the country.

At the project implementation level, many of the evaluations document the fact that projects generally responded well and flexibly to the demands and implications of the Covid-19 pandemic, and PBF's flexibility was generally highly appreciated in relation to how it adapted its funding and ways of working to the new realities. However, and as is to be expected, some project results were impacted negatively, or, in certain cases, project implementation was slowed down. Several of the evaluations document a certain level of creativity among project staff who experimented with online and hybrid delivery models. Many projects, in locations where access to online ways of working is available, experimented with hybrid delivery and a combination of in-person and online engagements. Some of the evaluations reflect emerging insights from these processes (which are summarized below); however, this was not a strong focus in the evaluations.

While the online engagements were generally appreciated and helped to keep projects going, they also involved significant limitations. For example, the evaluation of the regional youth project in the Western Balkans (PBF/IRF-296) states that the joint project remained generally relevant during its implementation, in spite of the significant challenges relating to the Covid-19 pandemic. However, the project rationale and ethos were significantly affected by the pandemic, as the project's envisaged pathways to impact relied heavily on bringing together people from different parts of the Western Balkans in person. Interviews with project participants consistently showed that the project overall remained relevant: participants still felt that their participation had been worthwhile, although the circumstances were constrained. The evaluation of the regional Western Balkans 'Dialogue for the Future' project (PBF/IRF-296) reconfirmed similar findings: while online platforms were considered to be highly effective for organizing meetings or learning events and workshops, replacing direct communication and interactions with online options especially among young people had the potential to negatively affect their level of interest and willingness to participate in planned activities.

Some projects also provided capacity development activities online. The evaluation of a project which focused on empowering women and girls affected by migration in Kyrgyzstan (PBF/IRF-308) found that online capacity development events for women involved challenges, but also surfaced important advantages if implemented appropriately. Although the online trainings were not evaluated as such, the post-training discussions and the evaluation findings demonstrate that the online mode meant that capacity development actions were more accessible, because women could participate in the events without having to spend the time and effort to travel. However, participants need to be prepared properly to be able to benefit from such online training, e.g., through prior digital literacy training, and the events need to be tailored in duration and intensity to make it feasible for people to participate and 'meet them where they are'.

## **B. Analysis of 2021/2022 Evaluations and Evaluative Exercises**

Lessons and highlights that emerged from the 2021/2022 evaluations are given below. They are organized around three key areas:

- Promising as well as emerging programmatic approaches;
- Process-related insights; and
- Lessons from a DMEL perspective.

The programmatic findings were selected based on their overall relevance from a peacebuilding perspective based on the evidence available in the evaluations; they do not cover all PFB priority areas and windows equally, but reflect available evidence in the evaluations. Evaluation findings are reviewed from a meta perspective and rely on the findings provided in the evaluations. It should be noted that it is certainly possible that some of the projects might provide much richer insights or stories of peacebuilding change and impact than are reflected in the evaluations, and thus, reflected here. Hence, the reflected evidence is **illustrative in nature**, based on the available findings.

The information given below does not reflect the opinion of the author of this synthesis review, in particular with regard to certain value judgments about the relevance or effectiveness of specific peacebuilding approaches. Those are taken and based on the assessment done by the individual project evaluation teams, and summarized and analyzed here.

The findings below are organized within the categories of PBF's focus areas and priority windows (again, on a selective basis, drawn from the available evidence).

PBF focus areas according to the PBF's Terms of Reference

- a. Support for the implementation of peace agreements and political dialogue;
- b. Support for strengthening national capacities to promote coexistence and peaceful resolution of conflict;
- c. Support for efforts to revitalize the economy and generate immediate peace dividends for the population at large;
- d. Establishment or re-establishment of essential administrative services and related human and technical capacities.

Focus area (d) is not strongly reflected in this report as there was insufficient aggregate findings across project evaluations in this period.

In addition to these focus areas, the PBF Strategy 2020–2024 extends the three 'priority windows' identified in the previous strategy for 2017–2019 to further leverage PBF's unique added value:

- (i) Cross-border and regional investments to help tackle transnational drivers of conflict;
- (ii) Facilitating transitions between different UN configurations; and
- (iii) Youth and women's empowerment to foster inclusion and gender equality.

Each section below (I-III) ends with **concluding remarks ('So what? Concluding Observations')**.

## **I. Promising programmatic approaches across PBF focus areas and priority windows**

The following promising programmatic approaches have been extracted from the various evaluations reviewed during the 2021/2022 period. They represent summarized insights from across PBF's focus areas and priority windows based on available evidence.

### **1. Implementation of peace agreements and political dialogue**

#### ***1.1 The role of PBF-funded initiatives to sustain dialogue in difficult political climates, and during political crisis and electoral processes***

The evaluations revealed several cases in which PBF-funded initiatives played important roles to sustain dialogue in the midst of challenging political circumstances. The most important findings in this area, which are highlighted in this section, are from the Burundi portfolio evaluation (2021), the evaluation of a peacebuilding process support project in Papua New Guinea (PBF/PNG-A2, 2022) and the evaluation of a project in Bolivia focused on the promotion of dialogue and human rights in the midst of political crisis (PBF/IRF-366, 2022).

In **Burundi**, PBF funding as well as the UN peacebuilding architecture served to **sustain dialogue between the UN and the government of Burundi** during a very difficult time characterized by shrinking political space. The Joint Steering Committee (JSC) provided a forum for continuous dialogue and engagement in an environment where dialogue between the Burundian government and its traditional European development partners was increasingly constrained.

*“While it is impossible to assess the specific effect of the sustained dialogue facilitated by the UN Peacebuilding Architecture’s engagement with Burundi, many interviewees argued that this was the most important effect of the PBF support to Burundi.”*

(Burundi portfolio evaluation, 2021, p. 40)

The PBF-funded project enabled some dialogue and discussion about inclusive politics, political violence, civil society, and media in a context where the democratic space was narrowing, particularly in the 2015 pre-electoral period.

In **Bolivia**, PBF funding played an important role in **preventing further violence during a time of acute political crisis**, and in mitigating further polarization related to the **electoral process** (2019/2020). The

evaluation recognized that the UN Country Team (UNCT) was able to leverage PBF funding to make a contribution to high-level questions of governance and the political system more widely than are often not within reach of the UN more broadly. The close cooperation of UNCT members and the co-leadership involving the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General and the Resident Coordinator (RC) and RC Office was essential in achieving a meaningful contribution during a time of crisis. PBF’s very timely and prioritized support from New York was critical in making this happen, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic, which required the initiative to adapt its operating procedures (in person/virtual) flexibly. The initiative established a few innovative and important mechanisms and structures which contributed to the success of the initiative; this included – amongst others – the following:

- The establishment of a strategic analysis unit which was essential for ongoing information sharing amongst UN agencies;
- The development of multiple participation and consultation mechanisms, such as multi-party roundtables; the facilitation of ongoing multi-stakeholder conversations; webinars; colloquia; and electoral forums. This also included roundtables with young female candidates and representatives of indigenous populations;
- The establishment of the ‘platform of journalists for peace and conflict-sensitive action’, a network including journalists and the media;
- The development of strategic alliances with donors, NGOs, universities and foundations.

In **Papua New Guinea**, the evaluation documents that PBF-funded initiatives played an important role in supporting **social cohesion, conflict resolution and peace consolidation around elections and the referendum processes**. UN support for the Bougainville Referendum Commission enabled training and capacity building on electoral processes, including security around the referendum. There was effective work with communities, the government, youth, and women to register voters and enable them to act as polling officials and observers.<sup>3</sup> Subsequent elections have seen increased turnout compared to previous electoral cycles (though not at referendum levels). The evaluation also states that facilitation and training in conflict resolution skills and dialogue as well as the cross-constituency networks of support put in place, helped to build social cohesion and broader engagement in addressing tensions at local levels, and across constituency divides, and between different communities. Accounts from peace actor coordinators indicate greater awareness of what is happening in other regions and increased trust between North, Central and South Bougainville. Autonomous Bougainville Government (ABG) representatives and civil society actors testified to the impact of peacebuilding trainings at community level, in particular. The evaluation also reveals consensus that the work of the UN assisted in helping Bougainvilleans resolve conflicts without violence within communities.

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<sup>3</sup> In 2020, an independent election observation report by the Bougainville Women’s Federation noted the increased engagement of women in delivering the referendum compared to prior electoral processes – women constituted 17.3% of presiding officers and 20% of scrutineers, and there were at least two female officials at the majority of 127 polling stations observed, which was an increase from previous election observations (PBF/PNG-A2, 2022).

In all of the described evaluations, it emerges that both **formal** as well as **informal channels for maintaining dialogue with the national government and key non-governmental stakeholders are essential**, particularly during politically challenging periods. In Papua New Guinea, the work related to sustaining peace in the post-referendum peacebuilding process was dependent on informal engagement alongside formal high-level political dialogue with the government, in order to maintain positive relationships and targeted exchanges to support the generation of solutions at a technical level.

### > **So What? Concluding Observations**

PBF funding in politically challenging contexts raises a number of strategic questions for PBF, particularly around engagement with national governments, and in relation to monitoring and evaluation.

**Engagement with national governments:** PBF initiatives are based on the premise of strong government ownership and involvement, and funding is usually contingent upon strong government buy-in. In contexts with authoritarian regimes, where governments close the space for peacebuilding and civil society engagement, or during political crises, this is a challenge to be handled by RUNOs and NUNOs. It requires delicate and skilled political manoeuvring to leverage the political space that is available in a creative way and to operate in an environment where the government is not in a position to collaborate on the design, oversight, and implementation of PBF projects. The Burundi portfolio evaluation (conducted between January and August 2021, assessing PBF support to Burundi from 2014 to 2020) found that the central government had little direct engagement in the design and implementation of the latest phase of PBF funding, although it did follow their implementation through regular reports to the JSC. *“The dysfunction of the JSC during this period meant that, for most projects, the central government did not closely follow the implementation of the majority of the projects or directly participate in the activities. The local administrators, however, were highly involved in many of the community-level projects, particularly those focused on women’s mediation networks and social cohesion among youth. Furthermore, the national NGO implementing partners were highly connected to Burundian politicians and a broad group of Burundian stakeholders, enabling a degree of national ownership in the initial conceptualization and implementation of their PBF-funded activities that was not apparent in the other PBF-supported projects.”* (Burundi portfolio evaluation, 2021, p. 52).

The UN and international donors did not prioritize peacebuilding and, instead, focused on supporting the Burundian government’s development policy (for example, supporting initiatives with direct livelihood benefits to the population in line with the government’s National Development Plan, rather than e.g., PBF’s contributions to community-level reconciliation or resilience). The Burundi portfolio evaluation recommends that if the PBF wants to continue to engage in contexts of narrowing democratic space, then it needs to re-examine whether its leadership and oversight mechanisms support peacebuilding in these contexts; otherwise, it is likely to support projects that may purport to build peace but lack the political and civic space to do so. Beyond this evaluation finding, this point is clearly a broader point of decisions related to UN engagement on conflict prevention and peacebuilding in such contexts, beyond the question of specific PBF support.



### **The ongoing challenges for the UN in attempting to promote a conflict prevention agenda in politically challenging settings**

*“This may have been the period in which conflict prevention activities could have been most appropriate, but the UN lacked the necessary government consent for these initiatives. Furthermore, the UN did not have country-level leadership that was willing and able to engage in this type of highly-political conflict prevention work, in spite of several attempts by the UN at high-level dialogue. Conflict prevention that seeks to influence the behavior of the government (rather than just non-state actors) requires challenging the existing policies and approaches of the government, which the UN was unable or unwilling to do during this period. The effectiveness of the PBF in different political contexts is, of course, shaped by the incentive structure of the UNCT and RC. The RC and UNCT are incentivized to maintain strong relationships with the host government, which is responsible not only for approving PBF projects, if there are any, but also for approving their country programs and collaborating on the majority of their activities within the country. Furthermore, if it wishes to do so, the host government can request that the RC or any member of the UNCT stop working on its territory. From this perspective, there are few incentives for the UNCT or RC to directly challenge the policies of the host government. [...] This is in contrast, of course, to the OHCHR or a political or peacekeeping mission, which are mandated explicitly to advance political, security, and human rights priorities within the host country, in line with the human rights treaties signed by the host government and mandates of the UN Security Council. The implication is that the UNCT and RC are unlikely to have the incentive to support or implement potentially controversial peacebuilding activities in contexts with closing democratic space, such as during the second and third phases of PBF support to Burundi.”*

(Burundi portfolio evaluation, 2021, p. 12).

The Burundi evaluation also observes that in contexts of closing democratic space and increasing human rights violations, the PBF’s current short-term project focus that requires high-levels of host-government involvement might not be fit for purpose. These contexts of closing democratic space are likely to require longer-term engagement with more flexible funding arrangements (the Burundi portfolio evaluation offers a typology of country contexts and ideal PBF support for different contexts).

***The monitoring and definition of ‘success’*** in quickly evolving political crisis situations also poses different challenges for PBF’s monitoring and evaluation requirements and expectations. It is usually not possible in peacebuilding to assess and evaluate ‘attribution’ (a linear causal connection between a specific project and an achieved result or change) more widely, and even less so in very complex political settings. Assessing ‘contributions’ of a specific PBF-funded initiative is more realistic, even though it is also challenging in such contexts. At the same time, such contributions are critical in volatile and highly political contexts. This issue requires a sense of realism and a strong commitment to the larger cause (e.g., preventing further electoral violence, or making a contribution to strengthening civil society in politically challenging contexts) without necessarily being able to ‘attribute’ direct results to PBF’s investments, as e.g., improved human rights in a given situation will, in most cases, not be measurable.

### **1.2 Community-based reintegration**

PBF has been supporting an increasing number of community-based reintegration initiatives in recent years, with the ambition to help translate into practice new policy approaches to disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR), specifically the IDDRS standards<sup>4</sup> (integrated DDR standards). In a nutshell, IDDRS promotes a shift in DDR approaches to complement short-term, formal DDR processes with longer-term community-oriented processes.

There is some emerging evidence in the 2021/2022 body of evaluations on the relevance and effectiveness of this approach.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.unddr.org/the-iddrs/>

For example, the evaluation of a project focused on reintegration of ex-combatants and dependents from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) into Rwanda (PBF/IRF – 341, 2022) documents the

*“In all the districts covered by the evaluation, ex-combatants, dependents, community members and local leaders affirmed in a convergent way the positive impact of this support, particularly the reintegration grant. The support did not empower women and vulnerable groups only, but also prevented conflicts via active participation in and contribution of men and women, boys and girls to the wellbeing of the family. The approach, that other demobilization phase members envy, is seen as innovative in that it led to quick wins among the project beneficiaries, including marketable skills, or a startup capital that enabled some to engage in small business and other income-generating activities. By providing support to both ex-combatants and their dependents, the project significantly reduced vulnerability among 65 RDRP phase members. In line with this approach, the assessment of needs, but also the vulnerability assessment and various monitoring activities have taken into account the needs of men and women, boys and girls. It was on the basis of this that the choices for reintegration activities were operated.”*

(Rwanda, PBF/IRF – 341, 2022, p. 32)

benefit of taking a broader, community-oriented approach to reintegration and inclusive work with both reintegrated and host community members. It states that social cohesion among the project beneficiaries and host communities was strengthened, and that the project contributed to improved livelihoods by providing project partners with skills that facilitated their integration on the labor market. It also documents the positive impact of direct support for dependents of ex-combatants, both spouses and children, on the reintegration process.

Interviews conducted for this synthesis review confirm that there

is increasing demand for community-based reintegration support from PBF, which appears to be a growing area of interest.

### **> So What? Concluding Observations**

**Community-based reintegration will be an interesting area for PBF to monitor going forward**, even though for this synthesis review there is only limited evaluation evidence available. It provides a promising area in terms of complementing more formal and ‘traditional’ DDR approaches with peacebuilding-oriented interventions focused on whole communities. In Central African Republic, a recently approved project on community-based reintegration is underway. It is also aimed at taking a community-based approach to support ex-combatants and their communities. It aims to fill a gap in the formal DDR process by taking on ex-combatants who should have been reintegrated through the government’s reintegration approach, but were not because of limited funding, along with narrow approaches and capacities of the government.

An evaluation of a large community-based reintegration project in the Democratic Republic of Congo, which was considered a pilot for testing such approaches in various provinces, is underway while this report is being written, and should provide additional relevant insights.

## **2. Coexistence and peaceful resolution of conflict**

### ***Supporting national and local capacities for peace and working meaningfully with in-country partners***

One focus of PBF has been to advance its work in relation to meaningful engagement with local partners, as highlighted above. The 2021/2022 evaluations provide relevant insights in relation to different types of engagement with local and national partners by RUNOs and NUNOs.

The 2022 thematic review on local peacebuilding provides an important overview of the ways in which and at what levels PBF-funded initiatives support local peacebuilding. It provides important recommendations for PBF, such as to directly support local peacebuilding organizations or networks and nurture their sustainability beyond the timeline of a PBF-funded project, to enhance partnerships between local governments and local civil society, and to increase transparency, diversity and inclusivity in partner selection, project design and implementation.<sup>5</sup> The findings from the 2021/2022 evaluations in this synthesis review support these recommendations.

PBF internal data provided for this synthesis review shows that in 2022, recipients of PBF funding (RUNOs and NUNOs) at the country level allocated approximately USD 42 million to civil society organizations (CSOs) at the national and local levels, mainly through sub-grants. This represents approximately 25% of the total expenditure. While the overall direct PBF funding still goes predominantly to international organizations and not directly to local organizations, it is an important signal that PBF and PBF recipients are expanding partnerships with CSOs, especially during times when space for civil society and peacebuilding is shrinking rather than expanding in many places<sup>6</sup>.

PBF started funding civil society organizations directly in 2016 through the [Gender and Youth Promotion Initiatives](#) (GPI and YPI) funding window, with most of these organizations being international non-governmental organizations. There are some cases in which funding goes directly to national civil society organizations, but those are in the minority.<sup>7</sup>

Since 2016, PBF has provided incentives for the inclusion of CSOs both as direct fund recipients (Non-UN Organizations – NUNOs) and as implementing partners through its regular programming and GPI and YPI. According to the 2022 [PBF Guidelines](#), civil society at large is encouraged to participate as a key stakeholder throughout project lifecycles. With this inclusion, the Fund expects to provide more opportunities for peacebuilding interventions to foster national and local ownership. Additionally, according to the PBF guidelines, all fund recipients should “*foster inclusivity and partnerships for peace [in order to] trigger inclusive peacebuilding processes and encourage broad-based partnerships amongst various actors and stakeholders through a consideration of all vulnerabilities, on the basis of conflict/ context analysis.*” Civil society organizations are viewed both as potential partners, as well as actors critical to the achievement of sustainable and long-term impacts in peacebuilding. The [PBF’s 2020–2024 Strategy](#) renewed a commitment to closely working with civil society. Since 2022, the PBF reporting templates have required projects to report on the amounts allocated to implementing partners, including CSOs, while providing information on the type of engagement with them.

### **Insights from the 2021/2022 evaluations include findings related to engaging local and national actors:**

Broadly speaking, the involvement and types of engagement with national and local partners varies significantly according to the reviewed evaluations. It ranges from limited consultation, to real participation and co-creation to more horizontal, eye-to-eye partnerships between RUNOs and NUNOs and national and local partners. These engagements frequently seem to happen through

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<sup>5</sup> See the full report and recommendations [here](#).

<sup>6</sup> Funding local organizations directly is an important discussion and development as part of the wider ‘localization’ debates in the aid sector. There is limited reliable data available how much direct funding international organizations provide to local organizations, and it is not available by sector. As a reference from the humanitarian sector, ODI research from 2021 shows that in 2020, 4.7% of global humanitarian funding was allocated to local and national responders (government and non-government). See ODI (2021), *The Grand Bargain at five years: An Independent Review* <https://odi.org/en/publications/the-grand-bargain-at-five-years-an-independent-review/>

<sup>77</sup> The 2023 MTR of PBF’s strategy states that currently only seven local CSOs are direct recipients of PBF support.

intermediaries at the national level. For example, RUNOs or NUNOs might sub-contract a national civil society organization (CSO), which in turn sustains important relationships at the local level.

Peace Direct disseminated the following spectrum to understand degrees of local ownership:<sup>8</sup>

Locally led	Locally managed	Locally implemented
Local people, groups and civil society organizations design their own approaches and set priorities, whilst outsiders may assist with resources.	The approach and strategic direction come from the outside but is ‘transplanted’ to local management.	Primarily an outside approach, including external priorities that local people or organizations are supposed to implement.

Given the nature of PBF-funded initiatives, most initiatives would fall on the right-hand side of the spectrum – either locally implemented (in most cases) with a few select cases that might have elements of being ‘locally managed’ – and locally led in the minority of cases in which PBF funding goes directly to local CSOs (see above).

There is a strong **repeat message across the evaluations**, providing reflections in this area that **facilitating meaningful participation, inclusion and working towards ownership of PBF-funded initiatives cannot be overstated** as a key criterion for **project success** and **sustainability**. Many also speak about the need for a clear strategy, from the outset, to involve national and local partners in decision-making and taking responsibility for the initiative, with an ambition to progressively reduce the need for external support.

The evidence this section is based is based mainly on 13 evaluations all referenced or quoted in this chapter: Papua New Guinea (peace process support project PBF/PNG/A-2, 2022 and women and youth promotion PBF/IRF-255), Yemen (protection in prisons project, PBF, IRF-236, 2021), Solomon Islands (youth promotion project PBF/SLB/H-1, 2021), The Gambia (women and youth participation project PBF/GMB/D-1, 2021), Sierra Leone (natural resource and land project PBF/IRF -253, 2021), the Burundi portfolio evaluation (2021), the evaluation of a cross-border project in Central African Republic-Chad (transhumance/conflict resolution project PBF/IRF 269, 2022), the Western Balkans (Dialogue for the Future PBF/IRF-296, 2021 and Regional Youth Cooperation project PBF/IRF-250, 2021), between Côte d’Ivoire and Liberia (social cohesion and border security project, PBF / IRF – 346, 2022) and in Liberia (human rights defenders project PBF/IRF 411, 2022 and women’s leadership project, PBF/IRF – 412, 2022).

The evaluations document a strong correlation between strong buy-in and extensive engagement and consultation with national and local partners, and the ultimate success and sustainability of a project. In order to facilitate meaningful engagement at any level (from more basic ‘participation’ to co-creation and local ownership), significant **process design, facilitation, and collaboration skills** are required. The evaluations reveal that not every RUNO or NUNO possesses or prioritizes those to the same degree amongst their staff – next to e.g., sectoral skills in a specific programming area. This refers back to the notion of **‘peacebuilding as a sector’** and **‘peacebuilding as an approach’**, concepts that have already been reflected upon in the 2017–2019 synthesis review (see quote).

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<sup>8</sup> Peace Direct: Towards locally-led peacebuilding: defining ‘local’. <https://www.peacedirect.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/PD-Policy-Position-Defining-local.pdf>

*“Across PBF’s priority areas, the evaluations highlight the overarching insight that how PBF-funded peacebuilding programs are implemented is as important as what is done. In other words, peacebuilding as an approach is as important as peacebuilding as a sector. While this is not a new lesson in peacebuilding practice, it comes out strongly across the different evaluations. This includes the importance of a continued focus on government ownership (as challenging as that might be in some post-conflict settings); real community inclusion and participation beyond formalistic ways of engagement; close accompaniment of national and local partners; critical process support to the implementation of peace agreements and political dialogue; support to national infrastructures for conflict prevention; and putting peacebuilding on the public policy agenda.”*  
(Synthesis Review 2017-2019, p. 7)

The Western Balkans ‘Dialogue for the Future’ (DFF) project (PBF/IRF-296, 2021) revealed that investing in **relationships** and **partnerships** proved to be highly valuable for the effective implementation of the project. The ability to engage in policy dialogue and facilitate the implementation of recommendations in distinct areas of social cohesion (and peacebuilding), together with a high level of trust and willingness of national partners to work with UN agencies was attributed to the investment made in developing and maintaining relationships. At the same time, the evaluation also points out that relying on personal relationships and the commitments of individuals rather than on institutional and systemic partnerships may result in short-term gains, but also poses risks if changes in personnel or rotation of staff occur.

Working very closely with and through local partners is also particularly important when **working for change in highly sensitive policy areas**. The evaluation of a PBF-funded prison support project in Yemen (‘Responding to Protection Needs and Supporting Resilience in Places of Detentions in Yemen’, PBF, IRF-236, 2021) identifies that there is added value in working with local CSOs and other national partners whose capacity is strong in the subject area and who are accepted in the local political sphere. The local CSOs were able to reach and work in sensitive areas which the involved UN agencies would not have been able to reach due to security restrictions. Likewise, for very sensitive **social norm change ambitions**, very strong alignment with local partners is critical in addition to working with and through them.

The evaluation of a Gender and Youth Promotion Initiative in the Highlands of Papua New Guinea (PBF/IRF-255, 2021) demonstrates the **direct difference in project results between a properly implemented participatory approach and the lack thereof**. A highly participatory approach by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) involving consultation with the community to design and then implement activities was identified both by beneficiaries and government partners as very good practice. IOM’s partner and beneficiary consultations ensured that they were fully aware of the shared joint effort between the IOM and the community. The community members were able to mobilize themselves which triggered community contributions and ownership of the process and the products as an outcome. In direct contrast, there was little consultation with the provincial government or responsible government agencies like the division of community development by other RUNOs, which led to a lack of ownership and engagement by the government.

### ***The importance of the HOW***

Beyond the factors discussed above, a few other areas were highlighted by the evaluations that demonstrate that the ways in and the processes through which national and local partners are engaged are equally critical as WHAT is being done.

### ***Better understanding of local traditions and local framings***

Several of the evaluations stressed that a profound understanding of **local norms, values, customs**, and **traditions** is required, which wasn’t always in place amongst RUNOs and NUNOs or sub-granted

implementing agencies. This became particularly clear in relation to understanding local norms and traditions around the involvement of women and youth, and limited the effectiveness of engagement.

Some evaluations state that a **more culturally sensitive approach to working on gender and with youth** on conflict management is required, including a more profound understanding of **local cultures and norms** – also in particular, to protect women from a possible backlash and violence against societal changes that are promoted through the initiatives. *“There is a need for greater gender awareness and wide community gender sensitization to change the status of Women to being subjects of change and not just objects. In geography also in the Highlands exposes Women to many risks when travelling outside their homes. Particularly in Hela, communities are always tense and volatile which raises the risks of women engagement in community volunteer work. Women who participate as community mobiliser volunteers face domestic abuse and violence by their partners when they are seen to neglect their wife and mother duties to travel outside their homes for awareness and advocacy.”* (Papua New Guinea, PBF/IRF-255, 2021, 2021, p. 41).

The evaluation of a cross-border initiative between Central African Republic and Chad (PBF/IRF 269, 2022) reveals that although the project's approach seems to have succeeded in reducing conflicts, its objective to strengthen the role of women required better preparation and more **in-depth consultations**, including practical considerations such as the need to financially compensate women for the time they gave to the project as they are often key economic players in their families and communities. *“The project does not seem to have invested enough in dialogue and consultation with local communities in order to identify ways and means of transforming local dynamics to enable women and young people to play a more direct role in conflict management and social cohesion. In Chad, the experience seems more positive and many respondents affirmed that women serve as mediators with their husbands or sons to support them in the search for peaceful and negotiated solutions”* (Cross-border project evaluation, Central African Republic-Chad, PBF/IRF 269, 2022, p. 27).

Other evaluations stress that better understanding of **local cultures and dynamics** within the community makes it possible to address sensitive societal issues, including an approach that integrates traditional authorities and men, and empowers women economically (Madagascar 2022, PBF-IRF 320). Some of the evaluations reveal that PBF-funded initiatives have the potential to really shift the needle on very sensitive issues with regard to **changing social norms**, if they are in alignment with local priorities and take into account local sensitivities, such as e.g., revealed by an evaluation of a women's rights and LGBTQI rights project in Liberia (Liberia, PBF/IRF 411, 2022). This also means it is necessary to review critically any **language and terminology** used, in order not to use Western or donor-oriented language and development lingo, but to take into account the specifics and sensitivities of respective contexts.

### **Leveraging existing local structures and mechanisms for dialogue and peacebuilding**

Engagement with and leveraging local government and civil society structures was stressed by a number of the evaluations as a key factor for peacebuilding effectiveness and relevance.

Local dialogue mechanisms: In Papua New Guinea (PBF/PNG/A-2, 2022), one of the key lessons identified was that the engagement of existing social and political structures linked to the church, government representatives, as well as civil society networks was important for the sustainability of information flow between the government and the community. The importance of disseminating information to the community and channeling community dialogue back to responsible stakeholders is well established within Bougainville and promoted by the highest leadership. However, doing this sustainably is logistically difficult and expensive. Utilizing existing structures to enable this feedback loop to continue was an efficient way to ensure that the ABG (Autonomous Bougainville Government) and Bougainville people were engaged in dialogue and these structures remain in place.

Inter-governmental local structures as key implementing structures - if appropriate: In the Western Balkans regional youth promotion initiative (evaluation PBF/IRF-250, 2021), local branch offices of the Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO, an inter-governmental body) played an important role in the implementation of the project. In the case of Montenegro, where there is no office of the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), the RYCO local branch office directly implemented the UNFPA component. Local branch offices worked closely with the UN Development Program (UNDP) and UNFPA country offices on their respective areas of responsibility. Collaboration at the national level was positive and so was the relationship with the RYCO Headquarters.

Localized responses to conflict and early warning: The evaluation of a cross-border initiative on social cohesion between Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia PBF / IRF – 346, 2022) assessed the positive role of peace committees and the engagement of civil-military units. *“The highly representative (in terms of age groups, gender, geography etc.), trusted and inclusive committees embedded in their communities provided early warning in terms of potential conflicts in communities before they turned violent. Evidence from the field demonstrates that the project was hugely successful in providing localised responses to violence, hindering reprisal attacks, reinforcing the rule of law, and reducing criminality. The bottom-up approach used and working with trusted peers in a context characterised [by] history of pain, hatred and mistrust provided the opportunity for peace committees and their communities to work together to understand the sources of conflict and to work collaboratively to address them.”* (PBF / IRF – 346, 2022, p. 46).

Need to support formal and informal local mechanisms, networks and structures: The Western Balkans Dialogue for the Future (DFF) evaluation (PBF/IRF 296, 2021) stresses that the DFF has been effective in strengthening regional interactions (primarily, through the activities of participating CSOs) and informal networks. These results have been ensured through ad-hoc and objective-based interactions among the beneficiaries. Still, there is a documented need to continue to support the strengthening of these informal networks, putting in place mechanisms to allow these initiated partnerships and interactions to continue and expand. A strong sense of its relative importance and the advantages of participating in regional networks has been developed among the partners and stakeholders, with the DFF playing an important role in facilitating cooperation and collaboration among them. Additionally, the evaluation documents positive interaction across and among countries (formal and informal networks) as effective for codifying knowledge and the exchange of experience among the partners, creating a pool of experienced organizations and individuals in distinct areas of social cohesion (e.g., network of young defenders of human rights for education, labor and accommodation, or the network of youth with digital and media literacy capacities). These capacities contributed powerfully to national policy and consultation processes.

Involvement of traditional and religious authorities: In many places, the inclusion of traditional and religious authorities was also demonstrated to be critical for success. The evaluation of a youth promotion initiative in the Solomon Islands (PBF/SLB/H-1, 2021) states that the involvement of **tribal leaders, church and traditional groups** in project consultations, capacity building activities and social entrepreneurship projects was critical for strengthening their confidence in the project and the youth caucuses that the project established – rather than perceiving them as competing power- and resource-sharing structures. The evaluation of a women’s and youth participation project in The Gambia (PBF/GMB/D-1, 2021) observes that **religious and traditional leaders were essential agents** in their communities, particularly for the dissemination of information and for securing buy-in. At the same time, traditional structures and authorities can frequently represent blockages to fundamental social change, for example in relation to gender or LGBTQ rights, or in relation to trans-generational power-sharing questions. Hence, a careful, conflict-sensitive approach is required to balance the need for engaging traditional and/or religious authorities, while also taking a balanced multi-stakeholder approach and reflecting different perspectives and needs.

## Learning from and with local partners to sustain engagement and change social norms

Finally, the evaluations also raised the critical point that RUNOs need to learn more systematically from and jointly with national/local partners.

The Burundi portfolio evaluation posits that the capacity of the NUNOs, and of Burundian NGO implementing partners, to design and implement high-quality peacebuilding projects seemed to be far greater than that of the RUNOs. The evaluation suggests that this should not be surprising given that the NUNOs and their Burundian NGO partners had been working successfully on peacebuilding in Burundi over a long period of time. These organizations were adept at navigating Burundi's political dynamics and had managed to sustain wide and deep networks within government and civil society in order to create the necessary widespread consent for their peacebuilding activities. The evaluation further states that the most successful projects were those that were designed and implemented by Burundian government officials, national NGOs, and/or UN staff with significant peacebuilding capacity and strong networks across Burundian society. In other words, the PBF's most successful projects worked largely because they supported Burundian actors who had done the hard work of building peacebuilding networks and the capacity necessary to implement successful peacebuilding projects, all of which they did prior to receiving PBF's short-term funding. The Burundi portfolio evaluation recommends that rather than funding one-off projects, the PBF should consider providing consistent core and project funding to domestic actors who are likely to implement high-quality peacebuilding activities, particularly in contexts where the political and civic space for these actors to operate is closing (Burundi portfolio evaluation, p. 59).

A gender, natural resource and land project evaluation in Sierra Leone (PBF/IRF -253, 2021) observes that the engagement of nationals to train local community actors is cheaper and more effective than bringing in people from outside the country. The project's use of community mobilizers seemed to be beneficial for implementing the project, including in terms of ensuring an understanding of ethnic differences and cultural diversities.

Other evaluations document the application of innovative approaches, spearheaded by local partners. The evaluation of a women's leadership and participation project in Liberia (PBF/IRF – 412, 2022) documents the application of an **appreciative inquiry approach** used by the participating CSOs. There was close collaboration between the PBF implementing agency ZOA<sup>9</sup> and these local NGOs in developing a tailored working model around this for the project.<sup>10</sup>

*“Similarly, participants of the AI [Appreciative Inquiry] sessions hailed the innovative methods to foment fearlessness and togetherness, as well as teaching women and youth to communicate better to breach traditional societal norms. The persistence of the project intervention was recognized as another important success factor. Especially in the Appreciative Inquiry sessions, it is important to continually engage with women and male counterparts to change their perspective on gender issues. [...] As one stakeholder put it in the KI interview: ‘persistence kills resistance’.”* (Liberia PBF/IRF – 412, 2022, p. 35)

### > So What? Concluding Observations

PBF has been gradually exploring an increased engagement with local and national CSOs since it started funding civil society organizations directly through the GYPI in 2016. In order to continue on this journey to finding new and enhanced ways to work with local and national partners more closely, the local peacebuilding thematic review recommends the further encouragement of **partnerships**

<sup>9</sup> ZOA is a Dutch relief and recovery agency. The three letters ZOA are the abbreviation of the Dutch translation of South East Asia, the area where the organisation started its initial activities.

<sup>10</sup> This included the five appreciative inquiry principles: (i) constructivism; (2) simultaneity; (3) poetry; (4) anticipation, and (5) positivity.



**between local governments and local civil society.** “PBF-funded projects should aim to facilitate the partnerships between local governments and volunteer associations and networks, as volunteers appear to be key to sustainability of project results and can be a driving force behind early warning networks, local peace committees, or advocacy efforts beyond the project’s scope and duration. The PBF should offer greater funding opportunities to projects that demonstrate more intense engagement of local actors, in favor of sustained support for local partners – including volunteer-involving organizations – throughout the duration of the project” ([Thematic Review on Local Peacebuilding](#), p. 35).

At the same time, if PBF encourages more partnerships with local partners, those should be based on a **shared understanding of and joint principles for engagement for RUNOs and NUNOs in order to enable them to work with local partners in a respectful, ethical and transparent way allowing them to make the most of such strategic partnerships.** Beyond funding considerations, and as documented in this report, evidence from the 2021/2022 synthesis review highlights the need for a more consistent approach by RUNOs and NUNOs in terms of how local and national partners are engaged.

The UN community engagement guidelines on peacebuilding and sustaining peace issued in mid-2020<sup>11</sup> cover 7 recommendations in this direction:

- 1) Deeper understanding of local context through respectful, coherent and flexible engagement
- 2) Operational and strategic coherence and effective coordination in community engagement across the UN at the country-level
- 3) Safety and protection in restricted environments through conflict-sensitive and risk-informed approaches
- 4) Inclusive and meaningful participation of local civil society actors
- 5) Community-based capacity-building, including flexible financing for peacebuilding
- 6) Meaningful participation of local women and women civil society actors in peacebuilding and sustaining peace
- 7) Meaningful youth engagement in peacebuilding and sustaining peace at the local level

PBF’s updated guidelines (October 2023) recommend the use of the UN community engagement guidelines. It would be useful for PBF to follow-up on this recommendation during project design (*‘How is a given project intending to go about implementation using the UN community engagement guidelines?’*) as well as include a related section in the evaluations (*‘How and to what extent were the UN’s community engagement guidelines followed in project implementation?’*). A certain level of detail should be required to avoid a ‘tick the box’ exercise.

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<sup>11</sup> [https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/un\\_community-engagement\\_guidelines.august\\_2020.pdf](https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/un_community-engagement_guidelines.august_2020.pdf)

### 3. Support for efforts to revitalize the economy and generate peace dividends

#### ***MHPSS in PBF-funded initiatives***

Mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) is increasingly recognized within the peacebuilding community as well as within the UN system as a key element to building peace in communities around the world that are suffering the effects of past and current conflict.<sup>12</sup>

Within the body of evaluations analyzed for this synthesis review, there were a few projects that included MHPSS components. Given the growing recognition and importance of MHPSS in the peacebuilding field, it is positive to see this being more commonly reflected in PBF-funded initiatives.

It is too early to provide a more comprehensive review of this line of work as the evidence base was limited to two evaluations (The Gambia PBF/GMB/A-1, 2022; Sri Lanka PBF/LKA/A-2, 2021). However, a few insights emerging from the limited number of evaluations are highlighted here.

The types of MHPSS activities found in the available project evaluations include work at the individual-personal level as well as broader community level activities. From the evaluations reviewed, the following MHPSS related **activities** can be extracted from the evaluations:

- Supporting the drafting of national mental health policies;
- Mapping of mental health and psychosocial service providers and available access to mental health services and related service gaps;
- Provision of psychosocial support, e.g., to returnees/internally displaced persons;
- Establishment of a suicide registry and surveillance system;
- Teacher training in psychosocial first aid (Sri Lanka, related to Easter Sunday attack 2019);
- Engagement of community mental health professionals to address post-conflict mental health issues;
- Public awareness-raising campaigns.

Beyond specific activities, it seems that one of the major benefits of MHPSS approaches has been to **change societal perceptions and the narrative around MHPSS in a given context.**

*“The intervention radically improved the way MHPSS is treated in the country, and it supported the creation of the National MHPSS framework (2020–2025), together with the World Health Organization (WHO), which developed the Training Curriculum on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Service for Migrants. IOM provided administrative support while WHO provided technical and strategic guidance through initiating and guiding the development of a national MHPSS strategic framework and MHPSS Curriculum in line with WHO guidelines, facilitating printing and distribution of WHO guidelines on the management of stress and promotion of mental health during COVID-19, facilitating review and adaptation of WHO Mental Health Gap Treatment Guidelines, and training of health care workers on the use of the guidelines.” (See [further information here](#)).*

The Gambia reintegration of returnees, evaluation PBF/GMB/A-1, 2022, p. 36

For returnees in The Gambia, psychosocial support was provided alongside political, social and economic reintegration services. This was achieved using a community-based approach, which helped to increase acceptance for psychosocial support amongst community members, reduce stigmatization, and create greater tolerance of mental health issues regardless of the political

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<sup>12</sup> In October 2023, WHO and OHCHR published new guidance that takes a human rights-based approach to MHPSS: [Mental health, human rights, and legislation. Guidance and Practice](#). It emphasizes the need to address social determinants such as oppression, poverty, abuse, violence, and other contextual factors that contribute to human trauma and distress.

orientation, social status or education of the participants: *“At the society level, dialogue sessions, moonlight storytelling, social media awareness creation and community town hall meetings between community leaders and migrant returnees, created avenues for returnees within the communities to share their stories with their peers and community members on the perils of the irregular migration, reintegration and how they can participate in decision making processes in their communities strengthened the community linkages and facilitated the social inclusion and reintegration of returnees. As a result of this, the perception of community members changed, stigmatization of returnees reduced and their engagement in the community decision making processes improved, fostering social cohesion and peaceful coexistence.”* (PBF/GMB/A-1, p. 38).

The Sri Lanka evaluation re-affirmed that mental health, psychosocial support and peacebuilding are inherently interlinked and inseparable and that sustainable peacebuilding cannot happen without integrating the full range of psychosocial factors into the peacebuilding process. The activities have shown that the use of neutral and appropriate language free from racist and exclusionary language around MHPSS create a positive and conducive environment. In Sri Lanka, engagement of community mental health professionals to address lingering post-conflict mental health issues, particularly affecting women (female-headed families), young people and children, has shown promise. The success shown has enabled similar approaches (e.g., training teachers) to be taken in the aftermath of the Easter Sunday attack to help affected communities.

### **> So What? Concluding Observations**

MHPSS is receiving increasing attention from PBSO/PBF. A GYPI call for proposals with a sub-theme on MHPSS issued in 2021 was the first, more systematic exercise by PBF to fund work in this area, and to articulate the links between existing conflict factors and conflict risks and mental health more clearly, including the importance of articulating theories of change that are clear on the connections between individual-level mental health to collective mental health and how that can help accelerate progress towards sustainable peace. This includes moving from ‘trauma-healing’ as a humanitarian-type response to trauma healing and mental health as an entry point for dialogue, reconciliation, social cohesion.

For example, a recently signed youth and mental health project in Central African Republic, which complements a larger community reintegration project in the country, has included, as one of its first activities, a study on the correlation between repeated cycles of violence and mental health issues, as well as the various possible approaches to break these vicious cycles. This is based on the realization that mental health issues are becoming a major public health problem in the country, and a cause of loss of productivity, given the multiple political and military crises that the country has experienced over the last two decades. The real extent of these conditions remains hard to quantify because of the limited attention that national authorities and partners have paid to mental health problems in the past, and because of the lack of reliable information on mental illnesses in the context of the political-military crisis that Central African Republic has experienced for more than two decades. Simultaneously, societal perceptions of mental illnesses (with beliefs that such problems are linked to witchcraft, bewitchment, bad luck, punishment of ancestors, etc.) also need to be addressed and changed.<sup>13</sup>

The future (cohort) evaluation of these MHPSS projects under the GYPI window should provide further additional insights in this area of work, and there is no doubt that this should remain a priority of PBF

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<sup>13</sup> See project document, Central African Republic, PBF/IRF submission ‘*Appui à la Cohésion sociale par les jeunes, pour les jeunes en République Centrafricaine*’, made available by PBF.

funding, provided it is accompanied by adequate skill capacities at the level of RUNOs and NUNOs for this delicate work.

#### **4. Regional and cross-border initiatives**

One area of great interest for PBF, PBSO more widely and also PBF's donor is PBF's ability to support cross-border and regional peacebuilding approaches. The MTR of PBF's 2020–2024 strategy reconfirmed that PBF continues to position itself as a UN convenor and driving force in this area. It also highlights the importance of dedicating more attention and resources to regional strategic reflections and the operationalization of genuinely transnational projects. The MTR also provides a detailed analysis of cross-border approaches, related transaction costs, the added value of regional versus national programming, particular implementation challenges, national and regional ownership, and requirements for joint project coordination and management.

Regional and cross-border approaches are very critical in the peacebuilding field, especially in certain regions such as sub-Saharan Africa and the Sahel where conflict dynamics cut across national border. At the same time, there are huge challenges to working across borders due to the involvement of multiple governments and various RUNOs and NUNOs in different countries, and the fact that transaction costs are significantly higher due to the complexity of managing regional and cross-border approaches. However, as also confirmed by the PBF MTR, additional avenues for ensuring greater value for money could be explored (see MTR for further suggestions in this area). In any case, cross-border and regional approaches will remain an area of strategic importance for the PBF, and an important area of ongoing learning.

The 2021/2022 evaluations reveal some interesting programmatic insights in these areas, which are highlighted below. The evidence base of this section is mainly based on two regional programs in the Western Balkans (regional youth cooperation PBF/IRF-250, 2021 and Dialogue for the Future, PBF/IRF 296, 2012) and select cross-border evaluations (Chad-Niger PBF/IRF, 286, 2022; Central African Republic – Chad PBF/IRF 269; Mali-Niger PBF/IRF-299; These don't speak to all of the issues highlighted in the MTR of PBF's 2020–2024 strategy, but are aligned in terms of the select points that emerged and that are highlighted here.

##### ***Regional initiatives***

A promising regional approach is the PBF-funded regional initiative in support of the RYCO. RYCO is an intergovernmental institution to promote youth mobility, intercultural learning, peacebuilding and reconciliation among Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia. The Albanian evaluation (PBF/IRF-250, 2021) describes it as a 'ground-breaking intervention' as it brought together the expertise of three UN agencies (UNICEF – the UN Children's Fund, UNDP and UNFPA) in support of RYCO, a regional institution with a unique mandate to engage the youth of the Western Balkans in peacebuilding and reconciliation. It was one of the first UN initiatives to look at the Western Balkans as a whole, and began at a time when the UN did not have a strategic framework for the sub-region. The regional project (*UN Joint Project Supporting the Western Balkans' Collective Leadership on Reconciliation: building capacity and momentum for the Regional Youth Cooperation Office, RYCO*) was established in 2017.

Experiences from the evaluation of another regional Western Balkans project are also reflected here – in the 'Fostering dialogue and social cohesion in and between Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia: Dialogue for the Future (DFF)' initiative (PBF/IRF 296, 2021).

The evaluations distil various **key factors for the success of these regional initiatives**. Some are specific to the project and the specific context; the more broadly relevant ones are summarized below and may provide interesting pointers for other PBF-funded regional initiatives:

- Implementing agencies didn't shy away from the **complexity** of designing and implementing a joint project across various agencies and a regional project at the same time. While the level of engagement of the different UN agencies wasn't homogenous, equal or consistent, the initiative showcases that it is possible to design and implement a regional initiative like this;
- By supporting RYCO, the project directly contributed to advancing **regional cooperation**, which is a stated priority of all Western Balkans governments and closely linked to the process of EU accession.
- A contextualized and tailored framing and **articulation** of 'peacebuilding' is critical, particularly in regional initiatives, as every country has their own approaches and sensitivities around language and terminology, for example:
  - RYCO: The project was based on a broad conceptualization of 'peace' – in line with the notion of Johan Galtung's 'positive peace' – and as such it was relevant to all national contexts, especially in a region that has a complex relationship with 'peace' and 'conflict' terms and approaches. It directly addressed the dynamics of polarization, lack of contact and prejudice towards 'the other', which are present across the Western Balkans, albeit with different manifestations.
  - The Western Balkans Dialogue for the Future evaluation revealed that 'peacebuilding and stability' are generally perceived narrowly in the region. Therefore, to maximize the effects and impact of social cohesion initiatives, there is a need to adopt a holistic approach that balances investments in human rights, the rule of law and accountable institutions, requiring stronger policy coordination and integrative policy-making processes.
- The RYCO initiative project had a **positive rationale** for engaging youth (rather than approaching youth as 'the problem'), recognizing the important and positive contribution that young people make as actors of peace, justice and reconciliation, in line with UNSCR 2250. The project also recognized, and sought to address, the challenge of reaching out to young people from all walks of life – including both young women and young men, young people from disadvantaged backgrounds and marginalized groups.

These regional initiatives also reveal important **lessons and challenges**:

- **A delicate and context-specific balance between 'the regional' and 'the national' is required:** The two regional initiatives highlighted here (RYCO and DFF) provide a mixed picture on national- versus regional-level work: while the RYCO evaluation recommends that the regional approach should ideally be accompanied by national-level peacebuilding strategies, the DFF project posits that too many structures at national level might make it challenging to preserve a regional focus. The DFF established a national coordination body as an additional country-level coordination steering mechanism (in addition to regional mechanisms). This national body brought together representatives of the relevant governmental ministries and agencies, and DFF-participating UN agencies. Although not planned for in the original project document, the national coordination body met regularly, and played an important role in endorsing plans and activities at the country-level. The national coordination body emphasized the importance of the DFF's national-level activities. The evaluation found that this has affected the regional perspective; analysis of the progress reports and primary data shows that the main results have been at the country level; although important, regional-level results have been less evident. *"Having steering and cooperation structures at distinct regional and national- levels increases difficulties to make decisions for the overall project and implement coordinate activities, while preserving regional focus."* (Western Balkans Dialogue for the Future evaluation, PBF/IRF 296, p. 70).

- **Clarity of role and mandate of regional partner:** It seems important to think through the different roles of the regional partner. RYCO was both the project's implementing partner and the main recipient of institutional support. The project had not sufficiently considered the organizational capacity issues which might be faced by a young organization. On a similar note, the intergovernmental nature of RYCO ensured the relevance of the project: RYCO is a unique institution precisely because it is intergovernmental (and one of the rare forums of regional cooperation between the governments of Belgrade and Pristina) – yet the fact that it is intergovernmental in nature also made RYCO an unusual implementing partner, and at times slowed down its decision-making processes.

### ***Cross-border initiatives***

Like regional initiatives, cross-border initiatives are complex, and thus it is difficult to find examples in the evaluations that are purely positive. In spite of this, such initiatives are important and strategic and few donors fund cross-border work given this complexity, reconfirming PBF's niche in this area.

An interesting insight from the 2021/2022 evaluations is that the **particular added value of cross-border approaches** is not necessarily very clear in the evaluations. Many of them read like country-level evaluations, and often describe the various activities that are taking place side by side at different sides of a country border without making it clear what the particular **added value of a holistic cross-border approach** really is. The particular **theories of change relevant to cross-border approaches** are often not very evident.

Many of the 2021/2022 evaluations of cross-border projects in sub-Saharan Africa have a focus on strengthening inter-communal conflict prevention or social cohesion, frequently around pastoralist conflicts or transhumance, or linking food security and small-scale agricultural trade with peacebuilding.

There are several promising project-level examples at this level. For example, the evaluation of a cross-border inter-communal conflict prevention initiative between Chad and Niger (PBF/IRF, 286, 2022) reveals that bringing populations and communities located on both sides of the border closer together, and easing cross-border conflicts, particularly linked to cross-border transhumance, are seen by all stakeholders as important objectives which require sustained support.

The most significant change indicated by those interviewed concerns the involvement of women in conflict management. They feel freer to express themselves and are now more involved and considered. The second significant change relates to the spaces for dialogue made possible thanks to the Dimitra clubs. Dimitra clubs are 'listening' clubs (facilitated by FAO – Food and Agriculture Organization by the United Nations) and provide a forum for women and men of all ages to organize themselves on a voluntary basis to discuss issues of common concern and exchange their thoughts on the transformations that their communities are experiencing and enduring. The empowerment of young people and women has been recognized as a strategy that has made it possible to occupy these social groups and contributed to the reduction of conflicts. In addition, the quality of relations between ethnic groups and between host and displaced communities has seen significant progress.

At the same time, all the **pitfalls related to the management and coordination of cross-border initiatives** that are highlighted in the MTR of the 2020–2024 strategy also emerge in the 2021/2022 evaluations: The Chad-Niger evaluation (PBF/IRF, 286, 2022) highlighted above, despite revealing positive programmatic insights, also refers to **coordination and management challenges**. Evaluation respondents stressed the lack of effectiveness of the cross-border consultations, representing a serious handicap in terms of the aim to live up to the potential of the cross-border scope of the project;

it reduced the potential for added value of a cross-border dimension and limited the possible learning for each of the two countries.

Cross-border initiatives are also frequently more **politically complex** than other initiatives and require negotiations with governments from more than one country. For example, UNDP, IOM and WFP (World Food Program) developed a complex cross-border project between Mozambique and Tanzania, responding to an urgent need as the crisis in Northern Mozambique was accelerating, and trying to find entry points for engagement on peacebuilding in a highly sensitive cross-border context.<sup>14</sup> However, the two governments did not sign in the end, political buy-in could not be secured, and PBF did not release the funds.

### > **So What? Concluding Observations**

PBF investments in regional and cross-border initiatives remain an important area of funding. Based on findings from the 2021/2022 evaluations, as well as the more in-depth review of this thematic window as part of PBF's recent MTR, it could be relevant for PBF to further expand its insights in this area of work. Potentially, this could include a **clearer articulation of the particular added value of cross-border engagements** as opposed to national approaches, including specific theories of change that pinpoint the potential positives more clearly. It also seems that there is **limited guidance for RUNOs and NUNOs** in terms of how to embark successfully on a regional and cross-border project. It may be valuable to provide something of a practical road map laying out what it takes to do this successfully, under what conditions it is worthwhile to explore cross-border initiatives, what it takes at the level of two (or more) governments, what it takes from an internal management perspective across different agencies across two or more countries, and what type of 'regional' or 'cross-border approaches' are most appropriate in a given setting.

## II. Process-related insights

### 1. Catalytic effects

#### **Background: PBF's trajectory in terms of the catalytic effects of peacebuilding**

Being a catalyst for peacebuilding, programmatically, strategically as well as financially, has been one of PBF's ambitions since its inception.

[The Terms of Reference \(ToR\) of the Fund](#) describe PBF's role in serving as a catalyst for the sustained support and engagement of other key stakeholders: *"The use of Fund resources is intended to have a catalytic effect in helping to create other, more sustained support mechanisms, such as longer-term engagements by development organizations and bilateral donors, and the mobilization of national stakeholders in support of peacebuilding."* The updated [2022 PBF Application Guidelines](#) define the Fund's catalytic effect as filling *"strategic financing gaps where other resources are not readily available"* and catalyzing *"vital peacebuilding processes and/or financial resources by supporting new initiatives or testing innovative or high-risk approaches that other partners cannot yet support."* The

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<sup>14</sup> The prodoc (made available by PBF) for this project summarizes the approach as follows: *"Given the asymmetrical consequences of armed violence in Mozambique and Tanzania, the aim of the project is two-fold. Firstly, under the leadership of the two Governments, it [the project] seeks to support the capacity of stakeholders to analyze and understand the specificities of the border region through a protection-based approach that takes into consideration the symbiotic relationship between Cabo Delgado and Mtwara as well as its vulnerabilities and entry-points for development and stabilization. Secondly, the project tailors the approach to prevention to address the current state of violence on each side of the border."*

catalytic nature of the Fund is also noted in the [PBF's 2020–2024 strategy](#). Being catalytic is defined in the strategy as *“facilitating partnership and financing strategies with larger donors and national authorities to ensure the PBF can generate catalytic effects, such as piloting new systems or jump-starting critical capacity provision that can be taken to scale through larger financing instruments.”* Being catalytic is mentioned as one of the five PBF core principles, along with timeliness, risk-tolerance, inclusiveness and national ownership, providing integrated support, and driving cohesive UN strategies.

PBF has invested in achieving a more nuanced understanding of catalytic effects in peacebuilding over the years. In 2010, the PBF engaged the Peace Nexus Foundation to develop the [Catalytic Programming and the Peacebuilding Fund](#) paper offering a primary conceptualization of the Fund's Catalytic Score. The document involves an in-depth exploration of the term's various definitions and how it has been used in different fields, including the peacebuilding sector. The paper focuses particular attention on the conceptualization of the catalytic effect for PBF and the multiple theoretical and operational challenges the Fund has faced in monitoring, calculating, and reporting on its own catalytic function.

The 2022 MTR of the PBF 2020–2024 Strategic Plan found that while the Fund had made progress in important ways in the calculation and analysis of its catalytic function, the PBF's catalytic effects, whether financial or non-financial, do not emerge automatically but require a proactive approach and resource mobilization strategy grounded in demonstrable or anticipated results. The MTR states that the expressed goal in PBF's 2020–2024 strategy to mobilize USD10 for every USD1 invested might be not realistic in itself, but –independent of that – it notes that the Fund is far from reaching its target. Also, while PBF's reporting format has evolved to include both financial and non-financial catalytic reporting, the way this information is tracked by PBF's management information system remains unsystematic and calls for a more rigorous methodology and guidelines. The MTR also noted that there is an evident misunderstanding or lack of capacity pertaining to what a catalytic effect entails and the way it should be tracked: out of the 30 catalytic impacts reported by direct recipients whose projects had started since 2020, only a few can reasonably be called catalytic. The others relate to intended results or project impacts or list effects that have not yet occurred. Only a few projects were able to report a catalytic effect on the engagement of other stakeholders in the peacebuilding process or to demonstrate how their achievements will be sustained or built upon once the project is completed. Finally, the MTR states that while, as of today, PBF's catalytic impact has been nearly exclusively considered from a project angle, there might be additional value in linking it to the SRF development process. This way not only would the meaning of catalytic effect be defined based on national contexts, but it would also be explicitly articulated as an objective to be reached alongside its own set of indicators and assessed as part of the SRF evaluation processes.

Against this background, it seems that it is very timely for PBF to be taking a fresh look at its role in relation to catalytic effects and the way those are framed. At the timing of writing of this synthesis review, PBF had embarked on a process of more clearly defining catalytic effects in peacebuilding and how to assess those.

### **Findings from the 2021/2022 evaluations in relation to catalytic effects**

As is to be expected in light of the above, the evaluations show a mixed picture in terms of whether, how, and to what extent PBF initiatives were indeed catalytic, both programmatically as well as financially, and how that is measured and reported. Confirming the finding from the MTR as highlighted above, **the evaluations do not apply a consistent framework for analyzing catalytic effects**. Some evaluations go about it in a systemic way based on the understanding of the evaluator/evaluation team from a programmatic and technical perspective. Other evaluations tackle this question in a vague or even speculative manner, hinting at the 'possibility' that the project might



inspire other similar work in these areas, without providing further evidence or details of how this might happen.

Findings below cut across a variety of different evaluations; the most clearly articulated evidence is based on the following evaluations: Central African Republic (PBF-IRF 186, 2021); Cameroon (PBF/IRF 247, 2021); Sierra Leone (PBF/SLE/D-2, 2022); Somalia (PBF/IRF-330, 2022); Solomon Islands (PBF/SLB/E-1, 2022); and the Burundi portfolio evaluation.

### ***Catalytic effects from a financial perspective***

The evidence in the evaluations about how PBF-funded initiatives were catalytic in nature is blurry with few concrete details. In some ways, financial catalytic impacts are, in principle, easier to assess and document in the evaluations as compared to programmatic and substantive catalytic effects. For example, the evaluation of a security sector reform project in Central African Republic states that it generated political interest among other donors, which provided significant additional funding to allow certain activities to be continued and sustained, while at the same time expanding the scope of work and supporting the implementation of, for example, an additional community policing component (Central African Republic, PBF-IRF 186, 2021).

At the same time, there is no clear understanding of how to understand and assess the financial catalytic character of an initiative. Some evaluations reveal an understanding of the term catalytic as meaning catalyzing other projects in other geographic areas and how this might possibly contribute to ‘sustainability’ (e.g., Cameroon, PBF/IRF 247, 2021). Beyond that, it may also be useful to reflect on the question of how such additional projects might have increased synergies of results in a particular area of envisaged change, or how various projects might add up to something larger, while recognizing this may not be so clearly visible at the end stage of a project.

### ***Catalytic effects from a programmatic perspective: Catalytic versus long-term impacts?***

A dominant question raised across many of the evaluations relates to how to make sense of the ambition of PBF-funded initiatives to be **catalytic and innovative on the one hand**, and also make a **meaningful contribution to sustaining long-term positive change for peacebuilding on the other**. This was already a key issue highlighted and documented in both the 2017–2019 as well as the 2020 synthesis reviews.

For example, the Sierra Leone evaluation of a project aimed at mitigating localized resource-based conflict (PBF/SLE/D-2, 2022) observed that the project was very helpful in strengthening the capacity and organizational structure of dispute resolution mechanisms to help mitigate company-community conflict. At the same time, the project duration and scope were not sufficient to further enhance these structures, to work with companies to improve their responsiveness to local community needs, and to address the deeper underlying power imbalances.

Other evaluations reveal that the specific timeframes of PBF-funded initiatives, especially of IRF contributions, remain a challenge, often exacerbated by internal delays due to inefficient project management, delays with partners, heavy and long-winded procurement processes etc. Those ‘technical’ challenges can be addressed on their own, including with possible further revisions to PBF timeframes etc.,<sup>15</sup> but could also be further mitigated by a clearer strategy and plan on how to leverage the catalytic nature of PBF funding.

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<sup>15</sup> This synthesis review does not provide a review of the experiences related to Strategic Frameworks. However, in the interviews it became apparent that it is important to understand that the five-year timeframes for SRFs

The evaluations reveal that a clearer plan to leverage shorter-term peacebuilding results from the beginning would perhaps allow for certain changes that were achieved at the individual/personal level (e.g., changes at the level of individual attitudes and behaviors, or emerging changes within communities) to be widened out to broader macro-level changes at the socio-political level (e.g., more sustainable changes in structures and institutions, public norms or policy changes etc.).

*“Changing relationships between social actors and improving trust between them is a lengthy undertaking and needs a programming model [that] allows for a significant investment in time and energy to develop community structures, conduct capacity building, and effectively allow institutions to work to influence company activities. A two-year project, especially with delays caused as a result of funding issues and a global pandemic, will be very hard-pressed to enact the type of transformative social change required to resolve deeply embedded mistrust between communities and institutions that had not always worked in their best interest.”*

Sierra Leone 2022, PBF/SLE/D-2, p. 20

Some of the evaluations also comment on the fact that ‘catalytic’ might mean that some of the underlying structural (‘root’) causes of conflict might be missed and that it might lead to focusing on manifestations of conflict (symptoms) rather than the deeper structural issues. As one recommendation from the mentioned local-level resource-based conflict project in Sierra Leone states: *“Develop more robust conceptualization of ‘catalytic peacebuilding’.* Though the project set out some ambitious aims in its theory of change in terms of peacebuilding, recent flare-ups of conflict in project chiefdoms indicate that the underlying dynamics that fuel a conflict – especially in Malen and Lower Banta – have not been meaningfully transformed” (PBF/SLE/D-2, 2022, p. iv).

Another relevant example is provided in the evaluation of a youth promotion initiative in Somalia (PBF/IRf-330, 2022). It states that it would have been beneficial to scale up the initial gains that the project contributed to deepen its embeddedness in the justice sector. The project contributed to skill building, e.g., improved conflict resolution skills, which were evidenced in how a rape case was handled and how the perpetrator was held accountable. However, the evaluation states that a future phase of the project would have allowed deeper and more transformational work on (transitional) justice mechanisms to address such issues from a more systemic perspective, and to connect individual skill building to structural, socio-political/ institutional changes.

The evaluation of a natural resource governance-oriented initiative in the Solomon Islands (PBF/SLB/E-1, 2022) reconfirms that the initiative was designed to have a catalytic impact by addressing inherent constraints, such as the low participation of women, youth and local communities in policy-making, limited legislative and institutional reforms or weak coordination among government ministries and institutions. The evaluation reveals that the underlying assumption was that addressing these constraints will bring about the intended change (toward inclusive governance of natural resources for social cohesion in the Solomon Islands); however, in reality, the evaluation confirms that a lot more work is required to realize the actual change. Overall, during the 25 months that the project ran, it set the direction toward the intended change; however, there are many critical steps that are still needed to realize the ultimate objective of inclusive governance of land and natural resources for peace and social cohesion in the Solomon Islands.

**Catalytic effects – innovation – long-term impacts:**

The above-mentioned tensions related to the catalytic nature of PBF-funded initiatives also play out in relation to PBF’s ambition to fund ‘innovative’ peacebuilding work. This aim requires conscious and creative decision-making related to catalytic and innovative peacebuilding results versus long-term change. The

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are, in practice, often not five years but significantly shorter given the related start-up and design phase investments which require time. Hence, a realistic view of the types of change that can actually be achieved within SRF timeframes is required for the related DMEL frameworks.

Burundi portfolio evaluation states: *“The major lesson learned is that the PBSO should focus on supporting innovative peacebuilding projects that reinforce existing capacity and have the support of key stakeholders within the host government. But this lesson learned has a downside: the pressure for RUNOs and NUNOs to always generate new, innovative projects seemed to prevent them from reinforcing and sustaining the results from existing innovative PBF projects.”* (Burundi portfolio evaluation 2021, pp. 8/9)

### > So What? Concluding Observations

Based on these longstanding deliberations around PBF’s ambitions to be catalytic in peacebuilding, it is indeed timely for PBF to zero in on a clearer articulation of expectations around the reporting, management, and monitoring of catalytic effects, as PBF is currently in the process of doing.

A few considerations of how PBF can support its journey towards more concrete catalytic impacts are discussed below. These are posited by the author of the synthesis review, and only indirectly result from the reviewed evaluations:

- Clarity should be provided around the relationship between **‘catalytic’ and ‘long-term impact’** and what expectations there are around how PBF-funded initiatives can provide the foundation for longer-term results. Re-framing this ambition more around providing a foundation that can be **‘scaled up’** might be helpful, in order to express the ambition to build a foundation for a more comprehensive approach to peacebuilding, lay the foundation for shifting mindsets towards a truly transformative approach, without pressurizing initiatives excessively to be both catalytic AND demonstrate long-term ‘impact’ from the very outset.
- The notion of being catalytic could be expanded from a pure focus on the **project level** so that it also captures the **strategic level**. As the MTR also notes, there might be value in linking expectations around the catalytic nature of PBF contributions to the SRF development process. This way, not only would the meaning of catalytic effect be defined based on national contexts, but it would also be explicitly articulated as an objective to be reached with its own set of indicators and assessed as part of the SRF evaluation processes.
- The notion of being catalytic could be understood more widely to encompass its potential to **unleash wider learning in the peacebuilding sector** (across countries and the sector more widely). For example, PBF might be used to help document an interesting process of learning related to a specific country initiative with broader relevance for other contexts.
- Expectations could be clarified around how **strategic partnerships can and should be leveraged towards catalytic effects**.
  - It is clear that RUNOs and NUNOs will not be able to achieve and expand catalytic effects (both programmatic and financial) on their own or in isolation on a project basis alone. Strategic and horizontal partnerships, particularly with national and local CSOs, are critical in this regard, as also documented in earlier parts of the report (see Section (C1)).
  - Some of the evaluations identify promising avenues for collaboration with national governments on how to approach this. The Solomon Islands, PBF/SLB/E-1, 2022 evaluation states: *“The Government of the Solomon Islands may explore the possibility of regional and international partnerships for land and natural resource management reforms. One way of securing new partnerships is to organize land summits and work towards the prospects of a regional treaty organization of Melanesian countries on land rights of indigenous people with proposed initiatives of land banks, protecting women’s right to land, climate action and climate justice for customary landholding groups etc. It is highly likely that several such initiatives may find development partners and financiers from across the region and the world. This recommendation is particularly for the Government of SI to mobilize additional technical and financial assistance to continue the process of strengthening the traditional governance of land and natural resources.”* (p. 10)

- Finally, providing **clearer guidance to UNCTs, RUNOs and NUNOs around the expectations of creating catalytic effects** will help to achieve better and more measurable results. PBF's current efforts in this regard (ongoing at the time of writing of this report) will hopefully serve this purpose.

## 2. Peacebuilding synergies and coherence

The 2021/2022 evaluations present a mixed picture in terms of coherence and synergies at both programmatic and strategic levels.

According to the [OECD/DAC evaluation criteria](#), coherence reviews the compatibility of an intervention with other interventions in a country, sector or institution. *Internal coherence* addresses the synergies and interlinkages between the intervention and other interventions carried out by the same institution or the government, as well as the consistency of the intervention with the relevant international norms and standards to which that institution/government adheres. *External coherence* considers the consistency of the intervention with other actors' interventions in the same context. This includes complementarity, harmonization and co-ordination with national and other actors, and the extent to which the intervention is adding value while avoiding duplication of effort.

The highlights from the evidence presented here draws on a broad range of evaluations, particular insights highlighted here are based on the following evaluations: Central African Republic (PBF/IRF, 186, 2021); Somalia (PBF/IRF-330, 2022); Bolivia (PBF/IRF-366, 2022); Sri Lanka (PBF/LKA – A-3, 2022); the Western Balkans (PBF-IRF 296, 2021); the Burundi and Madagascar portfolio evaluations (both 2021), and South Sudan (PBF/SSD/A-1, 2021).

Some projects took a very systematic approach to analyzing their **specific niche and added value** of a particular PBF-funded initiative in relation to other activities in similar sectors, areas, and funded and implemented by other partners and donors. For example, the evaluation of a security sector reform (SSR) initiative in Central African Republic (PBF/IRF, 186, 2021) reveals that an inventory was established when the PBF-funded project was first implemented to distil the specific gap that this SSR initiative would play in relation to other initiatives funded by, for example, the European Union, UNDP and UNPOL (United Nations Police). This made it possible to extract the specific role that PBF's contribution could play, e.g., in relation to politically unblocking a situation which had caused demonstrations and a shutdown of state functions; as part of this, PBF funded state salaries on a temporary basis, which no other donor could do – hence, PBF's contribution was highly catalytic. Close coordination with other donors who pursued other entry points (e.g., US Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement) focused on complementary approaches, such as community policing, and the very close coordination was perceived as critical for overall project success.

### **When coordination works, real synergies can be created for stronger project results and sustainability**

Some evaluations provide relevant insights into the relationship between strong and meaningful coordination and better project results.

An example at the **project level** is given in the evaluation of a youth promotion initiative in Somalia (PBF/IRF-330, 2022). The evaluation reflects on meaningful coordination within the project, with national and local partners, as well as with the donor. This proved to be critical not only for better project results, but also in increased ownership of the initiative. The local government representatives who were involved embraced the initiative and drew young people into peace initiatives implemented by clans and the community. A knock-on effect was that the relationship between youth, the local

administration and community elders improved. Furthermore, strong coordination with the donor allowed for project flexibility and responsiveness to the volatile context of Somalia.

At a more **strategic level**, a political dialogue initiative in Bolivia was implemented to mitigate the political crisis related to the elections in 2019 (PBF/IRF-366, 2022). The evaluation of this project reveals the importance of higher-level strategic coordination at the level of the UNCT at programmatic levels, as well as through strong co-leadership between the RC and the UN Special Envoy at a more political level. While the different UN funds and programs focused on specific areas of expertise (UNDP on conflict-sensitive elections, UNHCR on monitoring human rights, UN Women on political dialogue involving women), there was a high degree of coordination, mutual support in respective activities, and sharing of information and resources. This also enabled a high level of flexibility and adaptability in a time of acute crisis. This high level of coordination at both programmatic and strategic levels positioned the UN system as an important, unified actor during the crisis.

However, there is a mixed picture across the evaluations of how well coordination and coherence were achieved. Generally speaking, **coordination and coherence seem to be more easily achievable at the programmatic and technical versus the more strategic levels**. The role of JSCs in this regard varies. In many cases, coordination at the technical level worked better, and Steering Committees which are consistently active seem to be more the exception than the norm (see Section C/II/3 below for more insights on JSCs).

**At technical and programmatic levels**, several of the evaluations articulate the need for clearer project coordinator roles to facilitate coordination and collaboration, and to smooth out the differences in administrative rules and regulations between the varying RUNOs and NUNOs, poor communication, to support incentives to collaborate, manage turnover of staff etc. The fact that there is often no common understanding of project goals or theories of change across different teams and implementing RUNOs and NUNOs contributes to a lack of coherence. Furthermore, several evaluations note that implementing partners commented on the limited efforts by the PBF Secretariats, RUNOs, or NUNOs to encourage them to strategize amongst themselves in order to facilitate an aggregate impact. Other evaluations point out the lack of coordination and strategic partnerships as a gap; had these issues been addressed then project implementation could have been stronger. *“Even though a mapping was conducted at the initial stage of the project to understand the experiences of women in governance and their engagement with peacebuilding by the IP, it is not visible whether this project intentionally made an effort to work with other peacebuilding interventions”* (Sri Lanka, PBF/LKA – A-3, 2022, p. 37).

**Higher-level, strategic coordination amongst the UN agencies more widely and with outside partners is complex and requires dedicated attention and sustained momentum**. The evaluations note that often there is some level of coordination at the project levels, but often not at higher or more strategic levels, or with funders and donors; if such coordination were achieved, it would increase the relevance and effectiveness of the peacebuilding work (see Madagascar portfolio evaluation).

Positive examples of pro-active and conscious development of linkages at the strategic level include the Western Balkans Dialogue for the Future (DFF, PBF/IRF-296) **cooperation with academic partners**. These efforts have seen collaboration with the faculties of political sciences in Sarajevo, Belgrade and Podgorica. Taking an interdisciplinary approach, the DFF contributed to the development of a strategic framework for the integration of media and information literacy competencies in formal and non-formal education and introduced core competences of this model into a training curriculum for primary and secondary school teachers and librarians. For internal management, DFF set up a **Joint Program Board**, which was critical to ensuring commitment, and generating high-level political

support for sensitive issues under the DFF – particularly also during the Covid-19 pandemic, when travel across the region was difficult. DFF also counted on additional, complementary coordination mechanisms, such as the Strategic Advisory Board, composed of Resident Coordinators of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia, as well as Heads of participating UN agencies from each participating country. Its role has been to ensure coherence of implementation and in approach among participating country teams, and to support the work of the Joint Program Board. However, despite this structure, the higher-level strategic coherence between the DFF's activities and implementing UN agencies in participating countries varied. *“For example, UNICEF and UNESCO have generally ensured complementarity and coherence, using DFF as a vehicle to additionally support their core activities (e.g., UNESCO’s training to media, or UNICEF’s UPSHIFT initiative). However, UNDP has been challenged to ensure complementarity and coherence with other initiatives, resulting that DFF has been implemented more as a stand-alone initiative”* (DFF evaluation PBF-IRF 296, p.35).

Higher-level strategic coordination is also particularly challenging in contexts which are very politically sensitive, where peacebuilding is not supported by the government. For example, the Burundi portfolio evaluation reveals that there was no overarching strategy or analysis guiding the PBF projects at strategic level. *“There was often an implicit strategy deployed by the PBC and the RC, in collaboration with the PBSO, but this strategy focused more on maintaining relationships and dialogue with the Burundian Government rather than ensuring that the PBF attained its desired programmatic outcomes. Furthermore, the relationship between the political and programmatic components of the UN presence in Burundi was inhibited by the fact that the Office of the Special Advisor of the Secretary-General for Prevention, and subsequently the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Burundi, was unable to maintain strong diplomatic relations with the Burundian Government or, often, coordinate effectively with the RC or the broader UNCT. As a result, in spite of the complex political situation in Burundi, the UN did not have a clear political voice or strategy around which to cohere its peacebuilding efforts”* (Burundi portfolio eval, p. 50).

### **> So What? Concluding Observations**

Applied research in the peacebuilding field has demonstrated that creating conscious linkages between different peacebuilding efforts are critical for programmatic synergies and cumulative and collective impacts in peacebuilding across programs or organizations (a “linkage” is a factor or relationship that connects one thing to another).

These connections can be:

- Relationships among people (e.g., coalitions, collaborations among peacebuilders, dialogue across conflict lines, decision makers and the broader population etc.);
- Connections or alignment among different types of peacebuilding work or interventions (across different levels of engagement and different sectors – e.g., between mediation and community peacebuilding), or
- Ties between various issues or types of change (e.g., individual-personal change such as attitudes and behaviors or socio-political change such as new laws and policies).

Evidence and various case studies across geographies also shows that while coordination can help bring about greater programmatic alignment, coordination has failed to lead to linkage at least as often as it has facilitated it. At the same time, linkages cannot be forced, but are more effective when they are “voluntary and incidental,” that is, they grow out of the situation.<sup>16</sup> It also cannot be assumed

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<sup>16</sup> For further insights on the above, see: Chigas, Diana and Peter Woodrow. 2018., [Adding Up to Peace: The Cumulative Impacts of Peace Programming](#), Cambridge, MA: CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, chapter 3 - the role of linkages in adding up to peace. For a shorter introduction to the question of linkages and cumulative effects in peacebuilding, please see Ernstorfer, Anita, Diana Chigas, and Hannah Vaughan-Lee. 2015. ‘From Little to Large: When does Peacebuilding Add up’. *Journal for Peacebuilding and Development* 10 (1): 72–77

that well-coordinated peacebuilding initiatives are necessarily more strategic, effective or automatically lead to better results. A careful approach and assessment are required.<sup>17</sup>

Broadly speaking, assessing programmatic synergies and programmatic linkages is not a strong focus in the evaluations. Few of the evaluations probe the question of coordination and coherence with other actors active in similar thematic or geographic areas – outside of RUNOs and NUNOs. It is also not clearly articulated how ‘coordination’ is different from ‘coherence’, what real strategic or programmatic linkages actually look like, how strategic linkages are defined or should be understood, or how to go about achieving them.

Some evaluations provide interesting pointers on this issue, for example the evaluation of a gender-based violence (GBV) initiative in South Sudan (PBF/SSD/A-1, 2021). The evaluation suggests that it would be helpful to articulate roles clearly beyond the question of agency mandates only. This evidence suggests that for future joint programming, at the project design stage, the outputs from specific UN agencies should be delinked but with each participating UN agency having a more defined or distinct role to play across outputs, to ensure a coordinated implementation effort rather than a situation where each agency is trying to achieve its own goals in a siloed approach.

The Strategic Results Frameworks provide a natural hook to focus on the question of PBF portfolio synergies, if it is a dedicated focus during design and followed-up consciously and pro-actively by RUNOs and NUNO during monitoring – with strategic oversight from PBF Secretariats. Furthermore, if the evaluations are to provide relevant insights in this area, a clearer articulation of expectations and how to ‘measure’ synergies and coherence in this regard in the evaluations would be required.

### **3. Sustainability and national ownership**

Sustainability and real national ownership remain challenging ambitions for PBF-funded interventions. Many of the evaluations include vague and tentative statements about the ‘possibility’ or ‘likelihood’ that an initiative might be sustainable, be fully taken on board by national and local partners, etc. but lack evidence of what has actually happened or how this should be conceived or measured. The below highlights a few aspects that emerged from across various evaluations, related to alignment with international and national standards and policies, the role of JSCs, and the question of assessing national ownership. This includes specific insights from Kyrgyzstan (PBF/IRF 344, 2022); Papua New Guinea (PBF/PNG-A 2, 2022); Central African Republic (PBF/IRF 304, 2021); Central African Republic (PBF/IRF – 186, 2021); Côte d’Ivoire PBF / IRF 326, 2021; Guinea, PBF / IRF – 289, 2021.

#### ***Alignment with international and national standards and policy processes***

**Alignment of PBF-funded initiatives with national priorities and national ownership** are key conditions for the sustainability of a project or program.

Several of the 2021/2022 evaluations make reference to the evaluated project being relevant in the broader context of other international and national policy processes, such as the SDGs, the HDP Nexus, national strategies, other UN policy agendas (such as Youth Peace and Security, UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women peace and security) or regional policies (e.g., from the African Union). However, there is no further articulation of what that relevance looks like in practice. If PBF wished to

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<sup>17</sup> OECD (2012), Evaluating Peacebuilding Activities in Settings of Conflict and Fragility: Improving Learning for Results, DAC Guidelines and References Series, OECD Publishing. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264106802-en> p. 71

acquire more insights on this question, clearer questions would need to be asked in the evaluation ToR.

A lack of alignment with national priorities can undermine the effectiveness and sustainability of an initiative. For example, the Papua New Guinea evaluation of a project supporting the peace and referendum process (PBF/PNG-A-2,2022) observes that “[...] *UNDP should support ABG (Autonomous Bougainville Government) efforts at coordination across the peacebuilding and development sector, until ABG has sufficient capacity. Greater information sharing and coordination would help support high-level decision making by ABG on key economic, social, and financial aspects will support long-term stability to build a viable Bougainville. Keeping in mind the importance of tangible peace dividends to accompany the political process. Any future peacebuilding project should develop a strategic framework to maintain visibility with key constituencies (particularly in South and Central Bougainville where outlier factions are located) whilst also demonstrating how UN agency activities align with ABG priorities when engaging with these outlier factions*” (Recommendation 5).

### **The role of JSCs**

In principle, JSCs for PBF-funded initiatives serve an important function for strategic guidance as well as national ownership of projects and programs. However, the evaluations that included a review of the workings of JSCs, generally speaking and with a few exceptions, provide a rather negative picture of the practical functionality and the level of ongoing active engagement of JSCs.

The recent MTR of PBF’s 2020–2024 strategy reconfirms that, in principle, JSCs remain the principal means to ensure oversight of PBF’s portfolio but it also acknowledges that they are not functional in all contexts. It highlights that alternative ways of ensuring national ownership and leadership need to be explored in countries where governments’ commitment to peacebuilding is fragile or where governments are insufficiently democratically legitimized, e.g., following a coup. The MTR also recommends a process of JSC ‘revitalization’ to ensure that a functioning and active oversight mechanism is in place, especially in countries with considerable PBF investments.

### **Evidence from the 2021/2022 evaluations reconfirm these overall findings**

Firstly, evaluators seem to have difficulty assessing the effectiveness of JSCs, as several of the evaluations state that there was **no access to documentation related to JSCs**, such as basic meeting notes or documentation of decisions taken. Several of the evaluations state inactive JSCs and poor interactions with other initiatives from the same thematic area across different organizations. “[...] *The PBF JSC was inactive during 2020–2021 and this affected the external coherence of the project, but the project partners had no barriers in interaction directly (beyond the JSC) with other relevant (PBF) projects. Therefore, the future similar projects should use different approaches to share good practices and lessons learnt and create synergies with other projects, i.e., to improve coherence*” (Kyrgyzstan PBF/IRF 344 evaluation, 2022, p. 6).

Secondly, some of the evaluations also comment on the fact that **inactive or dysfunctional JSCs limit the commitment and ownership of national partners**. Additionally, the absence of a functioning JSC can limit the closer involvement of other governmental and civil society actors. Some evaluations comment on the fact that in such cases, project work remains limited to the main government counterpart of an initiative, but other institutions and stakeholders are not very involved or their involvement is difficult to assess in an evaluation as there are no records or meeting minutes of JSC meetings (for example, evaluation of a gender and climate-oriented reintegration project in Central African Republic, PBF/IRF 304, 2021).



### ***Stimulating and assessing national ownership***

Few of the evaluations took a specific look at the question of national ownership and how to assess it, supported by a dedicated methodology, beyond making rather general statements about national ownership.

A noteworthy positive exception in this regard is the evaluation of an SSR initiative in Central African Republic (PBF/IRF – 186, 2012), which used a systemic review of ownership based on the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and related principles.<sup>18</sup> While the evaluation draws the conclusion that national ownership needs to be strengthened in this particular case, at least the evaluation provides a measurable analysis of how the project tried to strengthen national ownership – and thus, provides a good foundation for the evaluator to assess this. The evaluation finds that the project was, in principle, aligned with Paris principles. For example, the project had an exit strategy from the start, and it was designed in such a way that it, at least, began to contribute to the transformation of state institutions (a much longer-term process ultimately). At the same time, the evaluation also states that a real transformation of SSR requires a transformation of state security authorities and legal frameworks and therefore a long-term contribution beyond the PBF-funded contribution.

Other evaluations document dedicated project efforts to increase national ownership, with mixed success. For example, the evaluation of a youth leadership initiative in Côte d'Ivoire documents a significant lack of real interest and effective and active political commitment on behalf of state authorities. It notes that the project developed a political engagement strategy during the later stages of the project but that the involvement of the authorities during the implementation of the project was limited, partly because it was not sought more actively by the project, but also and above all because there was no obvious response or interest from the authorities themselves. The evaluation states that this did not stand in the way of the implementation of activities as such, but that it certainly limited the possibilities for longer-term impacts and sustainability. It provides a clear recommendation regarding the development of a solid political engagement strategy when project implementation begins, including active and regular participation from local authorities (Côte d'Ivoire PBF / IRF 326, 2021). Other evaluations recommend the development of 'exit strategies' from the outset of a project, including the definition of milestones and responsibilities along the way (evaluation of a police reform project in Guinea, PBF / IRF – 289, 2021).

#### **> So What? Concluding Observations**

National ownership and the sustainability of PBF-funded interventions remain intimately connected. It is an important time for PBF to revisit its approach to securing and maintaining national ownership from a few different perspectives:

- A thorough assessment of national ownership should be a key criterion for decisions around PBF engagement (or not) in specific contexts. This also refers back to a recommendation in the 2017–2019 synthesis review for PBF to become a role model for only funding strategic and relevant peacebuilding work, i.e., for when PBF funding should be approved – or not.
- A clearer approach for how to assess national ownership will then also support project implementation and monitoring.
- At a time when there is a growing number of contexts with shrinking space for peacebuilding and civil society work, the focus of national government ownership poses unique questions

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<sup>18</sup> The five principles for aid effectiveness from the Paris Declaration are (i) **Ownership**: Developing countries set their own strategies for poverty reduction, improve their institutions and tackle corruption; (ii) **Alignment**: Donor countries align behind these objectives and use local systems; (iii) **Harmonisation**: Donor countries coordinate, simplify procedures and share information to avoid duplication; (iv) **Results**: Developing countries and donors shift the focus to development results and results get measured; (v) **Mutual accountability**: Donors and partners are accountable for development results. See [link here](#).

for PBF in terms of what it means to fund peacebuilding in such contexts and ownership of civil society organizations becomes more of a focus of attention

- The limited functionality of JSCs in many contexts calls for a process of reassessment of this PBF steering mechanism (see also MTR recommendations).

#### 4. Recurring lessons on the capacity of PBF implementing agencies and PBF Secretariats

##### Capacities of RUNOs, NUNOs and PBF Secretariats

As documented in other PBF reviews, including the 2017–2019 and 2020 synthesis reviews, the 2021/2022 evaluations confirm that relevant capacities at country level (amongst RUNOs, NUNOs, and local partners) are decisive for the success or failure of PBF initiatives. **The relevance and effectiveness of peacebuilding work hinges directly upon the strategic and programmatic capacities of RUNOs, NUNOs and local partners in peacebuilding, sound DMEL capacities, as well as strategic and often political steering capacities amongst PBF Secretariats and those who provide oversight to PBF funds.**

Some of the 2021/2022 evaluations reconfirm the need for **capacities to think and work politically**, and for a clear approach to **integrating strategic and programmatic capacities** (e.g., Papua New Guinea evaluation PBF/PNG/A-2, 2022).

The Burundi portfolio evaluation stresses that PBF was instrumental in enabling the United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi (BINUB) to implement sensitive, high-risk activities that advanced Burundi's peace process. Because of the high-risk and political nature of these PBF projects, they require the buy-in and, often, the continuous support of the head of the UN in the country, whether the RC, Special Representative of the Secretary-General or, in the case of BINUB, the Executive Representative of the Secretary-General. This type of high-level in-country support is necessary because peacebuilding requires the integration of political strategy with programmatic capacity. Without a political strategy, PBF projects are likely to be designed and implemented as if they were normal RUNO projects with a peacebuilding 'band-aid'. Without sufficient programmatic capacity, the UN's political strategy cannot be translated into concrete reforms or activities that lead to peacebuilding outcomes. At the same time, evaluation states that the level of and investment in RUNO capacities does not live up to the need and the potential in such contexts. The Burundi evaluation further stresses that the capacity of NUNOs and Burundian NGO implementing partners is, on average, greater than that of RUNOs.

##### ***Repeat lessons around RUNO capacities in peacebuilding***

"RUNOs often lack the capacity to design and implement peacebuilding projects. The UNCT is composed of UN entities whose mandate prioritizes development or humanitarian outcomes, not peacebuilding outcomes. With the exception of UNICEF, UN agencies, funds, departments, and programs have not invested in building significant staff capacity to design and implement peacebuilding projects. Furthermore, UN actors do not train their implementing partners, and instead rely on their partners' existing capacity. As a result, even if a RUNO has the capacity to design a peacebuilding project, there is no guarantee that its implementing partner will have the capacity to implement this project in a conflict-sensitive way. The generally poor peacebuilding programming capacity of RUNOs was raised in the two prior portfolio evaluations and again, in this portfolio review, by a wide range of interviewees as a significant factor impeding the effectiveness of PBF-supported projects." (Burundi portfolio evaluation, p. 58)

## **Equally important are the skills and capacities within PBF Secretariats**

Some of the evaluations point to a direct link between the effectiveness of peacebuilding projects and strong capacities within PBF Secretariats, both substantive and technical skills as well as strong coordination, management and strategic steering skills (see for example, Madagascar portfolio evaluation). PBF Secretariats play a critical role in support and supplementing (when necessary) the programmatic and monitoring capacities of RUNOs. When PBF Secretariats only play the role of an administrative agent (e.g., to ensure project implementation follows PBF guidelines), there is a missed opportunity to **leverage the strategic impact of PBF-funded projects and portfolios**. These are not new insights and they have been documented before (including in the 2017–2019 and 2020 synthesis reviews). This concern encompasses the importance of adequate funding for PBF Secretariats and staffing with the right level of skills (programmatic, substantive, strategic, steering and coordination capacity).

Having more consistent capacities within RUNOs, NUNOs and PBF Secretariats will also help to establish a clearer **capacity development plan with national partners** in line with an overarching sustainability perspective, as documented by some of the evaluations. The Papua New Guinea (PBF/PNG/A-2, 2022) evaluation recommends: *“The UN agencies should consider their roles in enhancing capabilities and sustainability of key institutions within Bougainville, to ensure that civil society networks, local government and ABG departments are empowered to play long-term roles in the future development and stability of Bougainville and its relations with PNG.”* (cross-cutting recommendation #10).

### **> So What? Concluding Observations**

The findings in this synthesis review reconfirm findings from past reviews related to the critical nature of strong peacebuilding and DMEL skills and capacities amongst RUNOs, NUNOs, and PBF Secretariats for effective programming. PBF’s responsibility is to ensure strong PBF Secretariat capacity both programmatically as well as for strategic steering of PBF portfolios. PBF cannot directly influence how RUNOs and NUNOs resource and staff their PBF funded peacebuilding projects, but it can provide clear guidance and incentives for agencies, funds and programs to do better.

This review recommends for PBF to revisit the following recommendation from the 2017–2019 synthesis review: *“PBF could engage in a strategic dialogue with PBF donors to use a certain percentage of country-based funding to develop a capacity development plan for RUNOs, NUNOs, and national partners. This should benefit only those RUNOs, NUNOs and national partners that credibly demonstrate a long-term commitment to embracing peacebuilding and conflict sensitivity as an institutional priority. Those who make such a commitment must show that they are willing to take relevant steps to develop their internal capacity by allocating core resources for staff and process development, and changing internal systems as needed.”*

## **5. Risks for partners and conflict sensitivity**

Some of the 2021/2022 evaluations provide interesting insights in relation to risk management and conflict sensitivity. In a climate in which many of the PBF-funded initiatives take place in complex settings with significant levels of polarization, misinformation, shrinking space for civil society, or with a variety of non-state armed groups, conflict sensitivity and risk management are of great concern.

The below includes observations as to how conflict sensitivity is assessed in the evaluations across the board, as well as more specific insights from Sierra Leone PBF – SLE/D-2, 2022); Solomon Islands (PBF/SLB/E-1, 2022); Mali and Niger cross-border evaluations (PBF-IRF 299, 2022); and Central African Republic, PBF/IRF –304, 2021).

### **Risk taking**

Risk taking is a key principle for PBF-funded work, and has been applauded in previous reviews and enabled the Fund to support initiatives that are considered too 'risky' by other funders (see each the 2017–2019 synthesis review). There are two perspectives that emerge from the 2021/2022 evaluations that it is relevant to highlight here:

- 1) some evaluations state that PBF-funded initiatives **did not take enough risk**;
- 2) others are concerned about PBF-funded initiatives **not preventing or managing the risks for partners carefully enough**.

Regarding the criticism of insufficient risk taking, the evaluation of a natural resource conflict management initiative in Sierra Leone (Sierra Leone, PBF – SLE/D-2, 2022) offers interesting insight. It states that it was new for the project not only to work with communities but also with companies in the context of company-community conflicts in resource-rich areas, which led to limited engagement with the private sector actors involved even though they have a direct stake in the conflict. The evaluation indicate that the project often emphasized peacebuilding by focusing on the actions of communities, insisting that decreases in protest action would yield greatest development benefits. However, these promises were largely unrealized due to continued inaction from private sector actors. Greater emphasis on securing buy-in and meaningful participation from companies in concession areas, including e.g., through grievance redress mechanisms, would have been needed to address this issue. The wider implication is that corporate participation and accountability need to be emphasized proactively as a component which is complementary to efforts made towards non-violent reconciliation by communities.

In some ways, the point discussed above links back to a finding of the 2017–2019 synthesis review about peacebuilding initiatives needing not only to **'do good' but also stop 'the bad'** and engage the **'hard to reach'**. In the example given, private sector companies were unusual types of stakeholders and the project did not have a clear idea of how to engage with them; hence, the project fell short of its potential by not engaging more closely and meaningfully (and in a balanced way) with the private sector.

Other evaluations point to an approach that was too cautious when it came to **sensitive work around changing norms and related governance structures**. The evaluation of a natural resource governance project in the Solomon Islands (PBF/SLB/E-1, 2022) states that the project took a highly cautious approach towards customary laws and policies governing land and natural resources, which led to a delay in concluding some of the critical milestones. The quality of input provided by the project was assessed as good, and reflecting the aspirations of the groups consulted; however, not being forceful enough (through tools such as policy advocacy and influencing) meant that the agenda of inclusive governance of natural resources for social cohesion may have been limited. Too little work around policy development and advocacy has limited the reach and influence of the project, especially around the policy shift towards inclusive governance of land and natural resources for social cohesion in the Solomon Islands.

On the second broader point that emerges from the evaluations, **managing risks for and protecting partners**, the evaluations state that, in some cases, this perspective was not sufficiently front and center for PBF recipients. The evaluation of a cross-border project between Mali and Niger (PBF-IRF 299, 2022) reveals that the dialogue that the project initiated between the populations and the defense and security forces may have exposed these actors to the risk of reprisals from terrorist movements, despite the project's efforts to minimize this risk. The portfolio evaluation in Burundi highlights that while the protection of partners is key in the light of the sensitive political environment in the country, it was not sufficiently implemented. This raises larger questions about the ethical nature of PBF (or any other type of peacebuilding) funding in highly sensitive contexts.

The discussion above also refers back to the intimate relationship between risk management on the one hand (which is usually concerned with risks for RUNOs and NUNOs), and conflict sensitivity on the other (which is concerned with conflict sensitivity risks for the context, partners, and beneficiaries).

### **Conflict sensitivity**

Past evaluations and synthesis review have commented on the fact that many PBF-funded initiatives are not sufficiently systematic in implementing a conflict sensitive approach.<sup>19</sup>

The 2021/2022 evaluations reconfirm this as an ongoing gap. A small number of evaluations provide a systematic analysis of how conflict-sensitive a project has been, and also point to possible areas in which a project might cause unintended harm by how it is implemented (for example, see the evaluation for a gender and climate-oriented reintegration project in Central African Republic, PBF/IRF –304, 2021).

However, many evaluations don't review conflict sensitivity at all; others state that the evaluation did consider conflict sensitivity and came to the conclusion that the approach was followed but they don't present any details of the project approach or information on how this was done. Others state that the project followed the Do No Harm (DNH) principle without providing specific details of what that meant in practice (often it may only involve asking key informants: 'Did you respect the DNH principle?' – without probing what that meant in programming practice). Others demonstrate that a confused understanding of what conflict sensitivity is remains – both on the side of the evaluators as well as on behalf of RUNOs and NUNOs.

Most project monitoring systems are not set up to **monitor changes in context** systematically, and how a specific initiative might have contributed to such changes (positively or negatively – unintended impacts). In most cases there are no context indicators nor is there an understanding of how monitoring the broader relationship between an initiative and its context is key from a conflict-sensitivity perspective. Some of the evaluations pick up on this point, and it speaks to weak monitoring systems in general and/or confusion around: (i) how to monitor for project results; (ii) how to understand and monitor for higher level impacts; and (iii) how to analyze and monitor for unintended impacts that are key from a DNH/conflict-sensitivity perspective.

This also relates back to the need for ongoing conflict analysis to accompany the design and implementation of any PBF-funded intervention. While there has been some progress on this issue and more projects are now engaging in conflict analysis, and know how to design their projects based on its findings, it still is not systematic and consistent across PBF-funded initiatives.

Some of the evaluations document the lack of key peacebuilding practices and processes across projects, such as careful and conscious participatory processes, or transparent communication and awareness building with communities (this matches some of the findings on how RUNOs and NUNOs engage local partners, see Section C/1/2). Such processes are key for conflict-sensitivity. As the evaluation of a natural resource governance project states: *“Greater efforts are needed to sensitize all groups about how and why project funds are going to be distributed as they are, so as not to associate the project with the inequality and corruption that drive the political economies of the settings in which it is being undertaken. [...] Interactions with stakeholders from non-project communities suggested that they often did not possess a clear overall understanding of how project communities for livelihood activities were chosen. On a number of occasions local leaders, farmers, or other representatives from*

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<sup>19</sup> The 2020 synthesis review recommended the development of PBF guidance and requirements in relation to conflict sensitivity.

*non-project communities expressed frustration that their own areas were excluded from the project, even though they too fell within the concession area. [...] Frustration with lack of development outcomes is fueled by the perception that the distribution of resources is biased. Development projects such as this one must understand this, and better integrate it into their programming model – in particular when it comes to sensitizing local populations about project activities and their rationale”* Sierra Leone (PBF/SLE/D-2, 2022, p. 16).

### > So What? Concluding Observations

In light of limited progress in the evaluations on taking a systematic approach to conflict sensitivity, combined with the insights from several evaluations around initiatives either not being sufficiently courageous/risk taking enough, or not being sufficiently concerned with managing risks for civil society partners in politically-sensitive contexts, it seems like a good moment for PBF to put this issue high on its agenda. Experience from other peacebuilding practice demonstrates that it may be beneficial to initiate conversations about risks and conflict-sensitivity risks with both implementing agencies as well as partners at the same time – and consider how to jointly and collaboratively manage and mitigate both.

The issuance of the [2022 UN Sustainable Development Group guidance on conflict sensitivity](#) could provide an entry point for a renewed focus on this question and a catalyst for PBF to prioritize it going forward. Likewise, the [UN community engagement guidelines on peacebuilding and sustaining peace](#) (referenced as recommended in the updated – October 2023 – PBF guidelines) provide an important additional supporting framework as many of the principles in those guidelines are highly relevant for a conflict-sensitive approach.

## III. Insights from a Design, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (DMEL) perspective

### 1. General observations on DMEL across the reviewed evaluations

Broadly speaking, the 2021/2022 evaluations provide a mixed picture on DMEL on two levels:

- 1) The evaluated projects reveal various levels of strength in terms of their design, monitoring, evaluation and learning approaches;
- 2) The evaluations themselves are of varying quality – some strong, but many also very limited in their understanding of either effective peacebuilding practice and/or good evaluation design and implementation.

The limited quality of many of these evaluations also raises the question of how well they were supervised in terms of quality control at the project level. From what is obvious from the evaluations, FAO seems to be the only UN agency to more consistently involve their HQ or regional office evaluation teams in country-level project evaluations, which manifests positively in the quality of evaluations.

The overwhelming majority of the evaluations strictly follow the **OECD/DAC criteria** and are not very user friendly. Few evaluations provide good ‘change stories’ at a higher level. Some have lessons learnt sections, but those are often short, and are, in most cases, focused on smaller-scale project lessons. Only a few evaluations have lessons learnt sections that distil higher-level and more strategic-level insights. Some evaluations, albeit very few, adopted slightly different methodologies that are more geared toward complexity-aware monitoring and evaluation approaches. They provide additional information and provide more interesting insights in this regard.

For example, the evaluation of a women’s rights and LGBTQI rights initiative in Liberia (PBF/IRF 411, 2022) applied an **outcome harvesting approach**, which makes the evaluation more interesting to read regarding higher-level insights. One upside to this approach was also that positive project results could be documented that were not part of the initial project design and results framework. At the same time, applying an outcome harvesting methodology is also challenging when projects are focused exclusively on the progress of project activities and not on results and change resulting from those activities. *“This challenge was the result of several factors. Firstly, there was a strong focus on project implementation and the execution of activities in the progress reports, rather than a focus on results. Secondly, there were limited or insufficient procedures for data collection about results and joint reflections between Kvinna till Kvinna staff and partners [...]. Finally, the project officers and partners shared a limited understanding about what an ‘outcome’ was and how to formulate outcomes. Consequently, the evaluation team had to identify, and substantiate, outcomes at the same time, during their field visits and interviews with direct participants and targets. They were also forced to rely on the triangulation of information provided by several field sources in order to substantiate any outcomes”* (PBF/IRF 411, 2022, p. 11).

Another evaluation applied the **most significant change technique** in an evaluation of a cross-border initiative in Chad-Niger (PBF/IRF – 286, 2022). This methodology is based on observation and participatory evaluation. It involves the collection and selection of testimonies on transformations that have occurred during a project implementation period. The MSC approach involves generating and analyzing personal accounts of change and deciding which of these accounts is the most significant – and why. Just like outcome harvesting, his technique can be used particularly for projects where it is difficult to predict in advance and with precision the desired changes and therefore difficult to establish indicators for measuring the predefined changes.

**The 2021/2022 evaluations reconfirm the need for and utility of SRFs at country level** to assess higher-level or aggregate peacebuilding results. Evaluations state that it was difficult to measure more holistic contributions to peace because of the absence of a strategic peacebuilding framework at the portfolio/country level. *“This made it difficult to measure higher-level results of impact, such as a sense of belonging in the community, at country level beyond specific projects. The PPP log frame is a collection of the 3 log frames, not an integrated log frame for higher-level results”* (Kyrgyzstan, PBF/KGZ/A-7, 2022, pp. 65 & 66). A Papua New Guinea evaluation recommends the following: *“UNDP should take time to situate future PBF-funded work within a wider programming framework so that its contribution to longer term change for sustainable peace can be clearly identified and so that related social and economic programs across the range of UN agencies can be better leveraged for peace impact”* Papua New Guinea (2022, PBF/PNG/A-2: Recommendation 4).

The MTR of PBF’s 2020–2024 strategic plan states that the **SRFs** constitute the most important innovation under the current PBF strategy to increase portfolio coherence at the country level. SRFs were first developed in 2021, in response to the recommendations of the 2017–2019 synthesis review to strengthen strategic planning and oversight of PBF portfolios. Key stakeholders have supported their introduction based on the widespread realization that a projectized approach to peacebuilding will only yield limited results and SRFs represent one – if not the only– way to strengthen a programmatic approach at country portfolio level. The MTR further states that while significant efforts have been made in the development of SRFs, more attention and resources should be dedicated to their operationalization through guiding future investments, a clear articulation of their role in

monitoring, evaluation and learning, reporting and resource mobilization efforts (the MTR also provides more detailed recommendations on SRFs more widely).<sup>20</sup>

### > ***So What? Concluding Observations***

The fact that the large body of 2021/2022 project evaluations is of varying quality raises a bigger question about the overall added value of such a large number of project evaluations, with varying degrees of utility at both the country level as well as in terms of PBF teams. As highlighted above, most of these evaluations strictly follow the OECD/DAC evaluations guidelines, and provide little in the way of ‘change stories’, higher-level substantive lessons, or the distillation of key results. They are not set up in such a way that they can be easily picked up to facilitate a learning conversation, starting with the fact that they are long, and hard to read and to digest.

However, it was the express intention of the PBF team to use this body of evaluations to distill programmatic highlights and substantive change stories from these evaluations as part of this synthesis review. Yet, most of these evaluations are not designed or implemented in a way that is conducive to supporting this ambition. Additionally, they also do not support PBF’s learning ambition in the best possible way.

This raises a question about whether the criteria and requirements for the design and implementation (and also strategic management) of PBF project evaluations should be adapted. The decision to stop requiring all projects to conduct a project evaluation, and rather to conduct cohort evaluations of projects of up to USD 1.5 million is a step in the right direction.

Furthermore, the 2021/2022 evidence might suggest that PBF should consider moving away from strictly and exclusively following the OECD/DAC criteria for structuring project evaluations. Evaluations organized this way usually do not lend themselves to the capture of higher-level results and changes in fast-moving complex contexts. More complexity-aware methodologies (such as outcome harvesting or MSC techniques, or story telling) are a better fit for such a purpose. A combination of a lighter touch application of the OECD/DAC criteria combined with more open-ended, qualitative, and complexity-aware methodologies could be developed to make project evaluations more user friendly, better geared towards distilling ‘results’ and ‘impacts’ more clearly, and more conducive to practical application and learning. This clearly has implications for the types of evaluators who should be recruited. From amongst the 2021/2022 project evaluations, it is clearly evident that it is possible to conduct strong project evaluations if strong teams are chosen with a solid combination of peacebuilding, DMEL and complexity-aware evaluation skills. But this would require strong steering from PBF and a roster of regional and/or country-based consultants would need to be made available in addition to investment in a process of capacity development.

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<sup>20</sup> Before SRFs, PBF had worked with Peacebuilding Priority Plans (PPPs). These three-year strategic plans typically took 6–9 months to develop and projects were only designed after PPP-endorsement by the JSC and the PBSO. They consisted of a fairly long and complex document (conflict analysis, vision, theory of change, outcome statements, targeting, risks, fund recipient capacity review, results framework). PBF provided upfront support for the simultaneous start of PPP projects. Due to several challenges, the practice of PPPs was abandoned with the 2018 revision of the PBF guidelines. During a brief interlude, the PBF experimented with so-called IRF packages to address shortcomings in portfolio coherence. To date, PBF has supported the development of 11 SRFs, namely in Guatemala, Kyrgyzstan, South Sudan, Liberia, Honduras, DRC, Niger, Sudan, Mauritania, Somalia, and Haiti.



## 2. Relevance, theories of change, and monitoring

### **Relevance**

The interpretation of ‘relevance’ from a peacebuilding perspective continues to be mixed across the evaluations (matching findings from the 2020 and 2017–2019 synthesis reviews).

According to the 2021 OECD DAC evaluation guidelines for evaluating peacebuilding activities in settings of conflict and fragility, relevance from a peacebuilding perspective is defined as follows:

*“The relevance criterion is used to assess the extent to which the objectives and activities of the intervention(s) respond to the needs of beneficiaries and the peacebuilding process – i.e., whether they address the key driving factors of conflict revealed through a conflict analysis. Relevance links the outcomes of the conflict analysis with the intervention’s objectives, although the relevance of the intervention might change over time as circumstances change. [...] Assessing an intervention in relation to the conflict is key to evaluating its relevance.*

*[...]*

*Questions on relevance might include the following:*

- *Is the intervention based on a valid analysis of the situation of conflict and fragility? Has the intervention been flexibly adapted to updated analyses over time?*
- *In the light of the conflict analysis, is the intervention working on the right issues in this context at this time? Does the intervention appear to address relevant key causes and drivers of conflict and fragility? Or does it address the behaviour of key driving constituencies of the conflict?*
- *What is the relevance of the intervention as perceived by the local population, beneficiaries and external observers? Are there any gender differences with regard to the perception of relevance?*
- *Are the stated goals and objectives relevant to issues that are central to the situation of conflict and fragility? Do activities and strategies fit objectives, i.e., is there internal coherence between what the programme is doing and what it is trying to achieve? Has the intervention responded flexibly to changing circumstances over time? Has the conflict analysis been revisited or updated to guide action in changing circumstance?”<sup>21</sup>*

The evaluations document that, in several projects, there are now more systematic assessments and conflict analysis being used as the foundation for program design and intervention, including participatory conflict analysis (for example Chad evaluation, PBF/ TCD/A-1). However, there are also cases where overall relevance of a PBF-funded initiative could not be established from a peace and conflict perspective (addressing relevant conflict drivers) as relevance, in the evaluations, was described as ‘generally relevant in the context’ or ‘relevant for the partners or beneficiaries’, ‘relevant as in aligned with national policies’, or ‘relevant to the needs of the beneficiaries’. Such descriptors do not provide an indicator of how relevant an initiative was from a peacebuilding perspective.

As noted in previous synthesis reviews, there remains ongoing tension and uncertainty about the relevance of development approaches for peacebuilding – and/or if, how and when a certain development approach can provide an entry point for conflict prevention or peacebuilding work. This is manifested again in the pool of evaluations reviewed for this synthesis review. For example, in Madagascar, PBF investment in a stabilization and demarginalization project was used to initiate a peacebuilding project in Madagascar’s Southern region, which is hard to access (lacks basic services, water etc.). PBF investment was used to fund, amongst other things, alphabetization and micro-business management. Examples like this continue to raise questions about the actual peacebuilding

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<sup>21</sup> OECD (2012), Evaluating Peacebuilding Activities in Settings of Conflict and Fragility: Improving Learning for Results, DAC Guidelines and References Series, OECD Publishing. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264106802-en> p. 65,66

potential of such initiatives and require further probing with a clearly articulated peacebuilding lens (Madagascar portfolio evaluation, 2021).

Project evaluations can serve as important ‘checks and balances’. In Guatemala, the evaluation of a social cohesion/youth returnee project (Guatemala, PBF/IRF 306) revealed that the assumption on which the assessment of relevance of the chosen approach was based was fundamentally wrong. The project was based on the hypothesis that conflict is generated by returning migrants, which was not validated during the implementation of the project, and this discrepancy was revealed by the evaluation. The greatest cause of conflict was in fact anxiety resulting from a lack of economic opportunities. There was no evidence about conflicts generated by returned migrants; on the contrary, the results demonstrated harmonious coexistence and social cohesion among young people.

### ***Theories of change***

Likewise, how **theories of change** are understood and assessed, varies greatly across the evaluations. Many evaluations assess theories of change as linear logic framework models. Few actually assess them for their strength vis-à-vis actual and relevant changes in context from a peacebuilding perspective – against conflict analysis. There is little critical engagement with the assumptions that lie behind explicit or implicit theories of change of projects in the evaluations – which is likely also a reflection that such critical reflection about assumptions about change is not part of the project document and overall logic and implementation in the first place.

Some evaluations document promising emerging approaches (and seemingly implicit theories of change), while then not having sufficient evidence through articulated theories of change to back up such impressions of positive impact. For example, the Guinea Strategic Review (published in early 2023) document promising emerging experiences of PBF funding for **environmental peacebuilding** and address natural resource conflict issues. However, the underlying documentation also lacks proper conflict analysis and theories of change to really dive deeper and to explain how change in this domain was being achieved. The review evidences how related projects have promoted relevant approaches in reducing the societal risks associated with environmental degradation in the targeted areas, where environmental degradation can be a contributing factor in radicalization. It states that targeted training and awareness-raising on the need for combined actions to avoid environmental degradation carried out by projects in Upper Guinea generated good results. The initiative aimed to reduce the vulnerability of young people at risk of radicalization by offering them socio-economic opportunities. It also states that the conflict analysis underpinning the Guinea portfolio did not highlight these dimensions specifically, nor does it provide the assumptions behind this approach – which could make the project (and the evaluation) stronger.

### ***Monitoring***

[The PBF Guidelines](#) establish that every single project approved by the PBF must have a robust monitoring and evaluation system, requiring every project to allocate 5–7% of its total to a monitoring and evaluation budget; this must include a clearly indicated independent evaluation allocation. Direct recipient organizations are responsible for monitoring project progress. For joint projects, convening agencies are responsible for coordinating all recipient organizations in order to monitor the project jointly. PBF Secretariats, where they exist, help to coordinate monitoring approaches between projects and monitor progress against the country’s context.

The picture emerging from the 2021/2022 evaluations related to monitoring is extremely mixed. Broadly speaking, monitoring seems to be a weak spot in PBF implementation. Some evaluations identify some monitoring practices as ‘best practices’ or as ‘innovative’, even though they simply seem to be regular monitoring practices. This is probably indicative of the average state of affairs.

Some project evaluations document the usefulness of certain practices, such as baseline or endline assessments (Kyrgyzstan, PBF/IRF – 308, p. 44), or disaggregated data (Rwanda, 2022, PBF/IRF 341). Many other evaluations document the lack of monitoring data, the absence of indicators, the lack of reliable quality data, or monitoring strategies and plans. This in turn severely limits how insightful an evaluation can be as often there are no foundations to build on. The evaluations also document the low staff capacities for monitoring specifically amongst RUNOs, which limits their ability to support capacity building among in-country partners. This is also particularly important in relation to supporting contextualized and locally led monitoring systems.

### > **So What? Concluding Observations**

Strengthening the capacities of RUNOs and NUNOs and national partners in conflict analysis, the development of theories of change, and monitoring capabilities should remain a priority for PBF and should constitute an ongoing work in progress. On average, the evaluations reveal that NUNOs and sometimes national partners display stronger capacities at this level than RUNOs. This should be recognized and could be combined with more conscious learning from each as a part of project implementation.

### **3. Adaptive management and learning**

In line with PBF's ambition to be highly flexible, the synthesis reviewed flexibility, adaptive management and learning as particularly important categories during the review period, given that many projects were implemented during the Covid-19 restrictions. This category is also particularly important in light of an increasing number of highly volatile political contexts in which PBF funding is spent.

The 2021/2022 evaluations document some examples where flexibility, adaptability and learning were truly practiced; in these cases, those elements are powerful for the overall relevance and effectiveness of an initiative. At the same time, the ambition to be highly flexible, adaptable, and learning oriented wasn't always matched in practice – RUNOs and NUNOs did not always have the required skills available.

**Adaptability is particularly key in sensitive political environments.** The evaluation of a project in Papua New Guinea that supported the peacebuilding process and related referendum observes: *“The PBF project design reflected strong understanding of the changing Bougainville peacebuilding context and appropriate continuity with the previous PBF-funded project, the Peacebuilding Priority Plan (PPP). It incorporated lessons from the 2018 PPP evaluation into its design. It also adapted based on learning and analysis from post-referendum. It was widely stated by the Government of Papua New Guinea, ABG (Autonomous Bougainville Government) and external stakeholders that the UN had remained uniquely placed to play the role of convening and facilitating political dialogue to progress BPA (Bougainville Peace Agreement) implementation during the pre-referendum period. The continuation of this role under Sustaining Peace in Bougainville was seen as essential to enable the political process. A key adaptation from the previous PBF-funded work was the removal of work on trauma, following a recommendation in the PPP Final Evaluation and reflecting the increasing focus of other donors on trauma and psychosocial approaches to peacebuilding in Bougainville”* (2022, PBF/PNG/A-2, Finding 3.13).

**The existence of appropriate (formal and informal) project management mechanisms, conducive for adaptation,** help to ensure flexibility. The evaluation of the Western Balkans DFF project (PBF / IRF 296) highlights the importance of the pro-active role of the DFF Joint (Regional) Program Coordinator

and DFF Joint (National) Country Coordinators together with the teams, in responding to changes, challenges and emerging priorities in the areas of intervention; these were identified as the main factor that contributed to DFF’s flexible and agile response during project implementation. This required an active and ongoing dialogue with the main stakeholders.

**Close partnerships with donors are key for adaptive practice.** Close communication with funders and donors can enable a thorough approach to adaptive management. The evaluation of a livelihood project in Somalia (PBF/SOM/A-3, 2021) documents that strong communication and coordination with the donor allowed for project flexibility and responsiveness to Somalia’s volatile context. This allowed for the donor to be informed of challenges encountered in a timely manner, allowing for adjustments to the project to respond to conditions on the ground such as the floods and Covid-19 pandemic.

## Learning

Mirroring PBF’s own efforts to increase learning), there are noteworthy examples at the country level of how learning from past project implementation has influenced ongoing programming. For example, the Guatemala PBF Secretariat put together lessons from past GYPI projects and facilitated a conversation around that with the UNCT before designing the GYPI 2.0 pilot in Guatemala. These lessons drew on the Portfolio Evaluation of the second phase of PBF support to Guatemala (2016–2019), the PBF Thematic Review of Gender (2021), three GPI project-level evaluations, and one YPI evaluation. They were presented in an initial workshop with UN agencies in June 2022 prior to carrying out the consultation process with women’s organizations and designing the new project.

In other cases, even when learning is documented, it is not clear how learning has been taken up by the project or how a project/program strategy might have been adapted based on these learnings. The evaluation of a natural resource governance project in the Solomon Islands (PBF/SLB/E-1, 2022) documents that the project documented the learnings quite regularly as part of its bi-annual and annual reporting; however, there is little or no evidence or mention of how the project responded to these learnings and how they might have helped to better manage the risk associated with the project.

*“The project is brimming with best practices and results which are hidden in narrative reports. It is important that additional resources are mobilized to document these best practices in different formats including video. Additionally, explore the opportunity to share these results in different national, regional and international forums which could inform policy, practice and theory in this area of work. Stronger engagement with the research and academic community could further shed light on the project and inform curriculum nationally and beyond.”*

(Côte d’Ivoire, Liberia cross-border program on social cohesion, PBF/IRF 346, 2022, p. 56)

Several evaluations ask for an increased focus on documenting best practices and facilitating the sharing of lessons and learning around them.

This sharing could happen on different levels:

- **Sharing amongst UNCTs across countries**

It was suggested by several evaluations (e.g., Tajikistan PBF/IRf-343, 2022, Youth empowerment project) that PBSO/PBF should consider ways to share positive project experiences (in this case related to strong cooperation and coordination amongst RUNOS) with other country offices. Other evaluations suggested that PBF should consider setting up an online community of practice on peacebuilding projects accessible to its recipients.

- **Sharing with national governments**

Some of the evaluations pointed out that national governments were interested in learning from comparative experiences. The evaluation of a peace process support project in Papua New Guinea - PNG (PBF/PNG/A-2, key lessons 6.6.) states: *“There is very low awareness across ABG [Autonomous Bougainville Government] of comparative situations but there is high interest in learning from other contexts to inform debate and collective vision on options for the future of Bougainville.”* It could be

an interesting feature of PBF-funded initiatives not only to facilitate learning at the project level but also to facilitate cross-country learning with governments.

### > **So What? Concluding Observations**

It is positive and encouraging to see an increased reflection about **adaptive management and learning** in the 2021/2022 evaluations. This mirrors PBF's own increased effort to be a convener and facilitator of learning. It is important to maintain momentum in this regard. The insights related to adaptive management are also highly relevant in relation to the insights on risk management and conflict sensitivity (see Section B/II/5) as the feed-back loop between analyzing and recognizing risk (for self and partners) and making decisions around course correction can only be fully closed through an adaptive management approach. In the area of learning, it could be a promising practice to start facilitating broader exchanges across PBF-funded initiatives across countries and contexts, including learning from and with national governments.

## **C. Synthesis Review Findings in Light of Previous Synthesis Review Recommendations**

PBF and PBF funded initiatives have taken important steps to respond to previous synthesis review findings, including the development of the **Strategic Results Frameworks** at portfolio level already mentioned above.

In 2023, PBF issued a **new evaluation policy** that clarifies PBF's evaluation engagement at the global, country and project levels. It helpfully proposes an approach for conducting **cohort evaluations** of projects under or equal to USD 1.5 million, which will be helpful to distill learnings (under a specific thematic focus area) as compared to a larger number of stand-alone project evaluations (as reviewed for this synthesis review).

Furthermore, in the area of **learning**, PBF has increased its activities significantly since 2021. Next to an increased number of **thematic reviews, guidance notes and tip sheets**, PBF organizes regular brown bag discussions within PBSO, for example around the findings of portfolio evaluations. The PBF **Community of Practice (CoP)** exchanges include PBF Secretariats, PBF focal points, Peace and Development advisers, Human Rights advisers and others involved in PBF portfolios at the country level. Since 2022, PBF has facilitated virtual CoPs on a quarterly basis.

PBF's **PeaceField** initiative aims at getting closer to assessing **impact** of PBF funded initiatives: the UN Peacebuilding Fund impact evaluation, learning and dissemination project (PeaceField) is an initiative implemented in partnership with 3ie (International Initiative for Impact Evaluation), the International Security and Development Center (ISDC), and funded by the German government. The goal of the initiative is to conduct multi-year impact evaluations following PBF projects in varying countries. The scope of this work includes impact case studies, capacity development for UN partners along the way, and lesson sharing.

Key questions going forward seem to be how to further incentivize learning at the country level and establish an ongoing learning feed-back loop between PBF and country level efforts - and how PBF can leverage its learning facilitation role within the wider DPPA-PBSO system, also in relation to the PBSO's new impact hub.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> <https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/content/our-cross-cutting-work>

The discussion below summarizes the key recommendations from both the 2017–2019 and 2020 synthesis reviews and provides reflections on developments and progress made based on insights from the 2021/2022 synthesis review. It should be noted that many of the findings in the 2020 synthesis review reconfirmed findings from the 2017–2019 review, including its recommendations – the body of review of the 2020 synthesis review was significantly smaller as compared to the 2017–2019 evidence.

2017–2019 synthesis review	Recommendation	Progress and insights from the 2021/2022 synthesis review
	Provide clearer criteria for when PBF funding will be approved – and when it will not. PBF to be a ‘role model’ in applying a degree of rigor regarding what constitutes a strong peacebuilding programming.	This question was not a specific focus of the 2021/2022 review. However, the body of evidence available indicates several cases where it seemed impossible for the evaluation to ‘find’ anything meaningful from the perspective of relevant peacebuilding engagement, both in programmatic terms (development interventions versus relevance from a peacebuilding perspective, as highlighted in this report); or in terms of political space/entry points for peacebuilding (e.g., support to political transition in Zimbabwe, value added unclear). Some evaluations directly comment on the fact that there was neither political will by national governments and counterparts to engage on peacebuilding nor a serious level of national ownership. How can this be assessed and followed-up on more fully before a funding allocation is made?
	Consider a review of the duration of PBF funding windows and related DM&E requirements to resolve the tension between ‘catalytic’ and ‘long-term impacts’	As per 2022 PBF guidelines, for non-eligible countries, maximum duration of access to PBF funding was increased from 18 to 24 months’ project timespan; maximum funding amount was increased from USD 3 to 5 million for active projects.
	Strengthen strategic planning and oversight of PBF portfolios	Introduction of the Strategic Results Frameworks (SRFs) constitutes a big step forward in this regard. SRF implementation was not a focus of this review (see the MTR of PBF’s 2020–2024 strategy for further information).
	Make capacity strengthening of UN agencies and national partners a priority.	2021/2022 evidence reconfirms that peacebuilding and peacebuilding DMEL capacity amongst RUNOs need to remain an important area of focus as different agencies, funds and programs prioritize peacebuilding capacity development differently. It is recommended to revisit the 2017–2019 recommendation to allocate parts of PBF’s country-based funding to strengthen the capacity of RUNOs, NUNOs and national partners in peacebuilding, strategic steering of peacebuilding portfolios, and related DMEL – specifically those who can demonstrate a real commitment for long-term capacity development and organizational uptake of enhanced peacebuilding and conflict sensitivity practice.
	Continue exploration of funding national and local civil society actors directly.	PBF has been actively exploring and expanding its work in this area within the limitations of a UN multi-donor fund. See more insights in Section B.I.2 of this report. Continue the journey.
	Articulate PBF’s engagement principles more clearly – peacebuilding as an ‘approach’ and not only as a ‘sector’. HOW	2021/2022 evidence reconfirms that HOW RUNOs and NUNOs implement peacebuilding projects (process facilitation, multi-stakeholder engagement, participatory and inclusive processes etc.) is as important as the WHAT (see Section B.I.2 of the report). Evaluations continue to provide a mixed picture on how different PBF-funded initiatives are doing in this regard – skills of agencies

	peacebuilding projects are implemented is as important as the WHAT (process design, facilitation, multi-stakeholder engagement, inclusive, fair and transparent engagement etc.).	are vastly different in this area (facilitation/process design skills versus technical/sector specific skills). This remains an important recommendation to be seriously picked up on by PBF.
	Strengthen the DM&E (design, monitoring, evaluation) and Learning capacities of RUNOs, NUNOs (and possibly local NGOs in the future), PBF Secretariats, and within PBF.	PBF has been providing more clarity and guidance around the different DM&E practices, processes, and requirements. However, capacities amongst RUNOs and NUNOs needs to remain a priority to actually follow-through in practice.
	Develop and experiment with new DM&E and learning approaches at portfolio levels. Get serious about results and impact at the portfolio/collective impact level.	Ongoing area of exploration into how SRFs will be implemented, monitored and evaluated. The MTR of PBF's 2020–2024 Strategic Plan provides relevant pointers on how to strengthen SRF monitoring.
	Connect the “D” with the “M&E” and prioritize learning across portfolios.	SRFs constitute an important element of strategic design at the PBF portfolio level. At project level, this is a work in progress, also due to limited capacity at PBF to support country-level design processes systematically (see recommendation above on capacity development). PBF has taken various steps to enhance the learning function; further ideas are provided in this report on how to enhance learning across portfolios and countries.
	Strengthen the focus on conflict sensitivity, ongoing conflict and context monitoring, and adaptive management across PBF portfolios.	Promising examples of adaptive management and practice from 2021/2022 evaluations, and a reconfirmation that flexibility and adaptability is key in politically difficult settings. Limited progress on a systematic approach to conflict sensitivity across projects. See 2021/2022 recommendations.
	Introduce more flexibility into existing DM&E tools and be open to adaptation and experimentation with new evaluative approaches	Decision to conduct cohort evaluations for projects smaller than USD 1.5 million is a step in the right direction, specifically as it allows thematic review of particular thematic areas. Strategic added value of the large number of 2021/2022 project evaluations is unclear; recommendation is provided on how to possibly re-design the evaluations to make them more useful for PBF and for country programs.
	Select evaluators and facilitators of other evaluative exercises that have a strong peacebuilding and DM&E background.	This remains a challenge and the 2021/2022 evaluations are ‘hit or miss’ and of varying degrees of strength and utility. This could prompt PBF to develop a central/regional system of qualified evaluators for PBF projects. See 2021/2022 recommendations.

2020 synthesis review	Recommendation	Progress and insights from the 2021/2022 synthesis review
	Facilitate a more proactive process of learning between PBF, RUNOS, and NUNOs.	PBF has taken various steps to enhance its learning function; further ideas are provided in this report on how to enhance learning across portfolios and countries, including with national governments.
	Formalize the new five-year eligibility process and strategic framework processes, while allowing necessary flexibility based on specific country conditions.	SRF implementation is ongoing. SRF implementation was not a focus of this review (see the MTR of PBF's 2020–2024 strategy for further information).
	Conduct additional Thematic Reviews, as important vehicles for learning in specific sectors/areas.	Significant PBF investment in this area with two thematic reviews conducted during the 2021/2022 period (gender-responsive peacebuilding, local peacebuilding) and two more completed/underway in 2023 (climate security and human rights). This synthesis review does not provide a review of the quality of these thematic reviews.
	Leverage PBF's impact initiative.	PeaceField initiative is ongoing. Not a focus of the 2021/2022 synthesis review.
	Conduct synthesis review of evaluations and evaluative exercises only every two years.	This decision was taken by PBF management.
	Develop clear DM&E processes in support of strategic frameworks and five-year eligibility.	SRF implementation ongoing. SRF implementation was not a focus of this review, see the MTR of PBF's 2020–2024 strategy for further information.
	Prioritize the 'D' in DM&E	Repeat recommendation from the 2017–2019 synthesis review. SRFs constitute an important element of strategic design at the PBF portfolio level. At project level, this is a work in progress, also due to limited capacity at PBF to support country-level design processes systematically.
	Develop PBF guidance and requirements in relation to conflict-sensitivity.	No major progress on enhancing conflict sensitivity in PBF-funded initiatives visible in the 2021/2022 evaluations. Is there an opportunity to leverage the 2022 <a href="#">UN Sustainable Development Group guidance on conflict sensitivity</a> for PBF portfolios?

## D. Conclusions and Recommendations

PBF has remained an important resource for conflict prevention and peacebuilding during a time when there is less attention and often limited political appetite for peace initiatives as opposed to increasing funding for humanitarian emergencies.

Most projects evaluated during the period of review were implemented during the Covid-19 pandemic or its aftermath. Many of the evaluations document the fact that projects generally responded well and flexibly to the demands and implications of the Covid-19 pandemic, and PBFs flexibility was generally highly appreciated in relation to how it adapted its funding and ways of working to the new realities.

PBF utilizes the decentralized evaluations implemented by in-country projects to identify key areas of work and suggestions for improvement. In this regard, it has taken important steps to respond to the



findings and recommendations from the 2017–2019 and 2020 synthesis reviews in several areas; in other areas, progress – as it emerges from the evaluations – is limited (see section C above).

During the 2021/2022 review period, PBF has initiated several investments in the area of strategic PBF portfolio management and design, monitoring, evaluation and learning. These include (but are not limited to) the development and roll-out of the SRFs (at country level); a new PBF evaluation policy including the decision to invest in cohort evaluations for projects smaller than USD 1.5 million (with a specific thematic focus) rather than individual project evaluations; thematic reviews on gender-responsive peacebuilding and local peacebuilding; an increased focus on facilitating learning and engaging PBF's community of practice; various guidance notes and tip sheets; and efforts towards cracking the 'impact nut' through the PeaceField initiative.

In general, the evaluations document a significant number of 'repeat findings' as compared to previous evaluations and synthesis reviews. The quality of the large number of project evaluations varies significantly, as analyzed in this review.

Regardless, the evaluations put forward a number of promising and/or emerging programmatic practices, with important points of learning for further practice going forward. Areas highlighted in this report include the role of PBF investments to sustain dialogue in difficult political climates, and during political crisis and electoral processes; PBF investments to support community-based reintegration as an emerging area of focus; PBF investments in regional and cross-border initiatives; and PBF funding for MHPSS. The evaluations also provide important findings on how the ways in which RUNOs and NUNOs engage with national and local partners impact the effectiveness of peacebuilding work in-country, and the UN's reputation as a trusted and honest broker.

Process-related insights resulting from the 2021/2022 evaluations include lessons in relation to the following areas: catalytic effects; synergies, linkages and coherence; national ownership and sustainability; capacities of RUNOs and NUNOs, and conflict sensitivity and risk taking.

Findings related to design, monitoring and evaluation from the 2021/2022 evaluations highlight the positive development of increased reflection on adaptive management and learning in the 2021/2022 evaluations. This mirrors PBF's own increased effort to be a convener and facilitator of learning – and for PBF to be highly flexible as a funder. It is important to maintain momentum in this regard.

### **The following recommendations are provided for the consideration of PBSO/PBF:**

#### **Recommendation 1 – Continue to learn lessons from these synthesis reviews and act upon the resulting findings and recommendations.**

PBF invests significantly in conducting regular synthesis reviews and also other types of reviews that provide excellent foundations for learning, specifically the MTR of the PBF 2020–2024 strategic plan and the thematic reviews. The trajectory of the synthesis reviews in recent years has indicated that many of the findings are 'repeat lessons', and some of the project evaluations also provide repeat insights and recommendations within country-specific portfolios (the Burundi portfolio evaluation speaks about 'lessons not learnt'). PBF has acted upon several of the recommendations from the 2017–2019 and 2020 synthesis reviews, and the recommendation in this report is that areas that have received less attention (see Section C of this report) should continue to be revisited, including, for example, the issues of clearer PBF criteria for funding approvals particularly in relation to national ownership, enhanced capacity strengthening of RUNOs and NUNOs, prioritizing conflict sensitivity, or prioritizing the necessary process facilitation and participatory skills for effective peacebuilding partnerships with national and local partners.

## **Recommendation 2 - Systematic focus on peacebuilding capacity building.**

The findings in this synthesis review re-confirm that the relevance and effectiveness of peacebuilding initiatives hinges directly upon the **strategic and programmatic capacities of RUNOs and NUNOs** in peacebuilding, **sound DMEL capacities**, as well as strategic and often **political steering capacities amongst PBF Secretariats** and those who provide oversight to PBF funds. The evaluations reveal that RUNOs prioritize skills and capacities for peacebuilding strategy, programming and DMEL to different degrees, which in turn also influences their ability to either strengthen or learn and benefit from capacities of national and local partners. This is a repeat finding from the 2017–2019 synthesis review and it is an ongoing process. At the same time, PBSO/PBF management and its donors have a shared commitment towards demonstrating impact in peacebuilding.

PBF is in charge of staffing PBF Secretariats appropriately (who in turn support RUNOs and NUNOs), but does not control staffing and skill development decisions of RUNOs and NUNOs. However, it might be able to provide relevant **incentives** for capacity development. It is recommended for PBF to review the recommendation in the 2017–2019 synthesis review related to considering (jointly with and in dialogue with interested donors), the allocation of parts of PBF’s country-based funding to strengthen the capacity of RUNOs, NUNOs and national partners in peacebuilding programming, steering peacebuilding portfolios strategically, and in related DMEL capacities. Specifically, for those RUNOs and NUNOs who can demonstrate a real commitment to long-term capacity development and organizational uptake of enhanced peacebuilding and conflict sensitivity practice, supported by an articulated capacity development plan (beyond e.g., one-off trainings)<sup>23</sup>. It is important to note that these skills and capacities need to include not only strong sector or technical skills in peacebuilding and DMEL, but also strong **process design** and **facilitation** skills for meaningful, inclusive, participatory and trustworthy multi-stakeholder engagement of local and national partners. This is demonstrated again in the evaluations reviewed in this report, in terms of the importance of the **WHAT** and the **HOW** of peacebuilding initiatives.

## **Recommendation 3 – Boost PBF’s approach to conflict sensitivity and risk management.**

**Limited progress** in the evaluations related to the systematic application as well as the systematic evaluation of a **conflict-sensitive approach** is another repeat finding from past synthesis reviews. Evidence from the 2021/2022 evaluations complements this with the need for a strong **risk management** approach and related **adaptive practice** for programmatic course correction. During a time when polarization and misinformation are flourishing globally, when there is little space for human rights or peacebuilding work in many settings, or when civil society actors are actively threatened in their work, a delicate and specific approach is needed by those who fund peacebuilding and expect national and local partners to engage with highly complex and sensitive peacebuilding work. This could be taken forward on a number of different levels:

- The requirement for each PBF-funded project to have a conflict-sensitive strategy and implementation plan in place – beyond a general commitment by projects to the Do No Harm (DNH) principle- should be followed through more deliberately. This should include integration of conflict sensitivity across the full project cycle, including systematic monitoring of unintended impacts as part of monitoring systems, and related strategies to mitigate unintended negative impacts (adaptive programming), and clear assessment of such a conflict-sensitive approach in practice through the evaluations. It could be effective to leverage the 2022 [UN Sustainable Development Group guidance on conflict sensitivity](#) for this

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<sup>23</sup> Other peacebuilding funders, such as PeaceNexus, provide deliberate organizational development grants for their partners related to the systematic organizational uptake of conflict sensitivity and increased peacebuilding effectiveness. See their lessons learnt document on organisational development in peacebuilding: [https://peacenexus.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/PEN\\_PracticePaper\\_DOC\\_EN\\_WEB\\_page.pdf](https://peacenexus.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/PEN_PracticePaper_DOC_EN_WEB_page.pdf)

purpose, as well as the 2020 [UN community engagement guidelines](#), many of which are highly relevant from a conflict sensitivity perspective.

- It is evident from the evaluations that understanding of and practical skills to implement conflict sensitivity in programmatic and operational terms might be a weak spot, which is an area that could be pick-up upon as part of recommendation 3 / capacity development.
- It could be very interesting, under PBSO's 'impact hub' initiative, to kick-start a wider discussion on the UN's role in safeguarding and managing risk for national and local partners in highly volatile political settings in relation to peacebuilding initiatives.

#### **Recommendation 4 – Adapt evaluation design and enhance evaluation capacity.**

For this synthesis review, PBF expressed clear expectations around distilling programmatic highlights. However, the way in which the current project evaluations are designed and implemented is not conducive to supporting this learning ambition, as the evaluations are often of average quality and not necessarily designed and written in such a way that they could be used as the foundations for distilling higher level results and change stories, or for facilitating learning around them at the country level. Moving away from project evaluations for all projects towards cohort evaluations (with a thematic focus) for projects smaller than USD 1.5 million as part of PBF's new evaluation policy is important progress and an important step to establish a clearer relationship between project evaluations and thematic learning.

To make individual evaluations even more conducive for PBF's learning ambition at both global and country levels, the below includes suggestions on **how to possibly adapt evaluation design and process management**:

- Re-design the evaluation focus and structure. Instead of insisting on strict adherence to the evaluation criteria of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC), the design of evaluations could be restructured to allow for more inclusion of more open-ended learning questions more open-ended gathering of key impacts achieved. This should also include a focus on key positive changes in context, and how projects/programs have contributed to those, as well as distilling key process learnings across the projects. Such an approach could include elements of outcome harvesting, most significant change or other more complexity-aware evaluation methodologies. This would require RUNOs and NUNOs to prioritize relevant skills and capacities for more qualitative and flexible evaluation approaches within their evaluation management as well as the selection of evaluators with such profiles. While it might not be realistic to alter the way project evaluations are done wholesale, it should be possible to integrate and combine a lighter touch application of the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria with other, more open-ended methodologies conducive for learning. This would support two important elements of PBF's work: (i) it would provide PBF with more of the lessons and impact stories it needs, and (ii) make it easier for the evaluations to actually be picked up for learning at the project/program/country level and beyond. Implementation of this recommendation has implications for the qualities and qualifications to be prioritized among evaluators and within evaluation teams.
- During project design, develop a clearer strategy for how project evaluations will be used for learning, at the country level and within PBF more widely. Articulating this expectation and process from the outset (during the project approval phase – e.g., by including a few key evaluation lines of inquiry during the design stage) will help to ensure that evaluations become a more integral part of the DMEL cycle (instead of an 'add-on' at the end with no follow-up action or connection to learning).
- Establish a network of qualified peacebuilding evaluation consultants available at the regional/country level. To address the issue of weak project evaluations, in order to support the above recommendations to introduce more flexible and complexity-aware ways of

conducting evaluations (beyond the OEC/DAC criteria), and also in order to build on a recommendation from the 2017–2019 synthesis review, a clearer network of strong consultants with peacebuilding and evaluation expertise should be established at the country/regional and international levels – who can support more qualitative and complexity-aware evaluation approaches.

**Recommendation 5: Maintain a focus on PBF as a facilitator of learning.**

PBF has taken important and promising steps to increase its role as a facilitator and convener of **learning**. This currently happens through a variety of processes and products, such as thematic reviews, guidance and tip sheets, as well as community of practice meetings. In this regard, PBF is an important thought partner for good peacebuilding practice, and it will be important to leverage this role on two levels going forward:

- 1) at **global level**, to continue going deeper on specific areas of peacebuilding practice, as well as feeding into PBSO's new impact hub, including by leveraging insights from thematic reviews and synthesis reviews;
- 2) creating a more in-depth '**learning feed-back loop**' with RUNOS and NUNOs to take back findings from global reviews (e.g., MTR, synthesis reviews, thematic reviews, portfolio evaluations) to stimulate reflecting and learning at the country level – and vice versa, to use evaluations at country level and under the new evaluation policy (cohort evaluations) to inform global knowledge products and learning processes.

## ANNEX: Reviewed Documents

Wider UN and PBF strategy documents, MTR, thematic reviews, SRF documents:

Name	Year	Link (accessed on August 21 <sup>st</sup> , 2023)
PBF Strategy 2020-2024	2020	<a href="https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/pbf_strategy_2020-2024_final.pdf">https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/pbf_strategy_2020-2024_final.pdf</a>
Mid-Term Review of PBF Strategy (MTR)	2022	<a href="https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/20230201_mtr_report_final_1.pdf">https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/20230201_mtr_report_final_1.pdf</a>
MTR Management Response	2022-2023	<a href="https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/mtr-management_response_version_1.2_-_final.pdf">https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/mtr-management_response_version_1.2_-_final.pdf</a>
PBF Evaluation Policy	2022	<a href="https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/pbf_evaluation_policy_2022-2024.pdf">https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/pbf_evaluation_policy_2022-2024.pdf</a>
PBF Guidelines (revised)	2022-2023	<a href="https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/content/peacebuilding-fund-pbf-guidelines-pbf-funds-application-and-programming-2018-english">https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/content/peacebuilding-fund-pbf-guidelines-pbf-funds-application-and-programming-2018-english</a>
PBF Thematic Review Guidelines	2022	Internal document
Local peacebuilding thematic review- After Action Report	2022	Internal document
PBF Aggregation Exercise	2022-2023	Internal document
PBF EQA- Evaluation Quality Assessment (EQA)	2023	Internal documents, EQA criteria, initial overview
Gender-Responsive Peacebuilding Thematic Review	2021	<a href="https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/content/gender-responsive-peacebuilding-2021">https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/content/gender-responsive-peacebuilding-2021</a>
Local Peacebuilding Thematic Review	2022	<a href="https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/content/local-peacebuilding-2022">https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/content/local-peacebuilding-2022</a>
Theory of Change Guidance Note	2021	<a href="https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/content/toc-english">https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/content/toc-english</a>
CBM&E Background Note	2022	<a href="https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/cbme_background_note_2022-03-22.pdf">https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/cbme_background_note_2022-03-22.pdf</a>
SRF (Strategic Result Frameworks) resources	2022-2023	Internal documents internal workshop PPT, SRF Overview PPT, draft SRF flowchart, draft SRF SOPs
PBF Community of Practice Meetings	2021-2023	Internal documents, PPTs
PeaceField – PBF Impact Initiative	2022-2023	Internal documents and documentation
PBSO Impact Hub Concept Note	2023	Internal document
Overview document of PBF's past efforts across catalytic effect, localization and monitoring and report	2022	Internal document
Guatemala SRF	2021	Internal document
Kyrgyzstan SRF	2021	Internal document
South Sudan SRF	2021	Internal document
DRC SRF	2022	Internal document
Honduras SRF	2022	Internal document
Liberia SRF	2022	Internal document
Niger SRF	2022	Internal document

2022 Report of the UN Secretary General on the PBF A/77/756	2023	<a href="https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N23/051/54/PDF/N2305154.pdf?OpenElement">https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N23/051/54/PDF/N2305154.pdf?OpenElement</a>
2021 Report of the UN Secretary General on the PBF A/76/687	2022	<a href="https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/n2225594.pdf">https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/n2225594.pdf</a>

### Portfolio Evaluations

Burundi Portfolio Evaluation	2021	<a href="https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/pbf_burundi_portfolio_eval_final_101521.pdf">https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/pbf_burundi_portfolio_eval_final_101521.pdf</a>
Madagascar Portfolio Evaluation	2021	<a href="https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/20211117_rapport_final_pbf_madagascar_comp.pdf">https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/20211117_rapport_final_pbf_madagascar_comp.pdf</a>
Guinea Strategic Review	2022-2023	<a href="https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/rapport_final_16022023_vf_0.pdf">https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/rapport_final_16022023_vf_0.pdf</a>

### Notes on the categorization of projects below:

- The below provides a categorization of projects according to substantive focus areas. It uses the SG Dashboard framings and codes.
- This is a simplified illustration to provide an overall 'heading' and a rough overview. Many of these projects cut across various of PBF's thematic areas/windows and cannot be aligned with one specific/single focus only. For example, an initiative might be focused on working with young people, while at the same time also addressing issues of political participation, natural resource conflicts, or cross-border dimensions.
- The below only lists the actual recipients of PBF funds. In most projects, there are a range of other national/local/regional/international implementing partners involved.
- The synthesis review provides different levels of depth of review across the various documents, and will provide a deeper analysis of the most relevant evaluations, in alignment with the priorities identified during the inception phase.
- A representative analysis across geographies and substantive areas will be ensured.

### Project Evaluations conducted in 2021

Country	Project/link to evaluation	Substantive Focus – SG Dashboard categories	SG Dashboard Codes	PBF fund recipients	Approved Budget	Project End Date
Albania	<a href="#">PBF/IRF-250</a> Supporting the Western Balkans' collective leadership on reconciliation: Building capacity and momentum for the regional youth cooperation office (RYCO)	Political Process Youth empowerment and participation	PB 1, 1.9	UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA	\$ 2,999,745.0	5/7/2021
Burkina Faso	<a href="#">PBF/BFA/B-1</a> Évaluation du projet d'appui à l'amélioration de la confiance entre l'administration, les forces de défense et de sécurité (FDS) et les populations dans le nord et le Sahel du Burkina Faso.	Political Process: State-society relationships	PB1, 1.7 / 1.7.2	UNDP, IOM	\$ 2,700,000.0	5/31/2021

Burkina Faso	<a href="#">PBF/BFA/D-1</a> Promotion de la culture de la paix et de la cohésion sociale dans les régions du Nord et du Sahel, Burkina Faso	Political Process: Inter-community relationships	PB 1, 1.7.1	UNICEF, UNFPA	\$ 3,100,465.0	6/30/2021
Burundi	<a href="#">PBF/BDI/A-16</a> Renforcement des mécanismes locaux de prévention et de résolution des conflits au Burundi.	Political Process: Conflict management capacities, mediation and dialogue capacities at national and sub-national level	PB 1, 1.4	UNDP, IOM, UNWOMEN	\$ 3,448,894.5	4/23/2021
Cameroon	<a href="#">PBF-IRF 247</a> Renforcement des capacités des acteurs et appui aux processus électoraux pacifiques et à la cohésion sociale au Cameroun	Political Process: Electoral processes	PB 1, 1.1	UNDP, UNESCO, UN WOMEN	\$ 1,498,000.0	4/30/2020
Central African Republic	<a href="#">PBF-IRF 186</a> Projet d'Appui au Renouveau des Forces de Sécurité Intérieure	Safety and Security: Security Sector Governance	PB 2, 2.7	UNDP	\$ 4,246,931.0	6/14/2020
Central African Republic	<a href="#">PBF/CAF/H-1</a> Communication et sensibilisation pour la cohésion sociale	State society relations	PB 1, 1.7.2	UNWOMEN, UNFPA, Search for Common Ground	\$ 3,557,390.0	6/12/2021
Central African Republic	<a href="#">PBF/IRF 304</a> Renforcement du relèvement et de réintégration des femmes et des filles grâce à une agriculture résiliente au changement climatique pour instaurer la paix et la réconciliation en RCA après conflit	Political process & Economy: Women empowerment and gender equality	PB 1, 1.8 PB 6, 6.1	UNWOMEN, FAO	\$ 1,500,000.0	8/22/2021
Chad	<a href="#">PBF/IRF-263</a> : Renforcement de la participation et de la représentation de la jeunesse dans les mécanismes de prévention et de gestion des conflits au niveau Communautaire	Political Process: Youth empowerment and participation	PB 1, 1.9	UNFPA, UNESCO	\$ 1,500,000.0	11/30/2020
Chad	<a href="#">PBF/TCD/A-1</a> : Consolidation de la paix à travers l'adaptation au changement climatique et la résilience des moyens d'existence des populations de la région du Lac Tchad	Economy: Management of natural resources (including land and extractives) and climate change	PB 6, 6.3	FAO, IOM, UNHCR	\$ 2,488,906.0	12/30/2020
Colombia	<a href="#">PBF/IRF-333</a> : Empoderar a las mujeres a través de la información local como herramienta para la consolidación de la paz de una manera inclusiva	Political Process: Women empowerment and gender equality	PB 1, 1.8	FLIP - Fundación Libertad de Prensa	\$ 300,000.0	10/21/2021
Congo (the Democratic Republic of the)	<a href="#">PBF/IRF-262</a> : Renforcer la participation des jeunes leaders Twa & Bantous aux comités locaux de paix 'BARAZA 1' pour la consolidation de la paix et la cohésion sociale dans la province du TANGANYIKA	Political Process: Youth empowerment and participation	PB 1, 1.9	FAO, UNESCO, UNFPA	\$ 1,396,343.0	11/30/2020

Congo (the Democratic Republic of the)	<a href="#">PBF/IRF-275</a> : Construisons un avenir meilleur: strengthening young people's participation in decision making in the high plateau of South Kivu, DRC (NUNO)	Political Process: Youth empowerment and participation	PB 1, 1.9	International Alert	\$ 1,500,000.0	12/18/2020
Congo (the Democratic Republic of the)	<a href="#">PBF/COD/A-4</a> : Ensemble pour Beni	Political Process: Conflict management capacities, mediation and dialogue capacities	PB 1, 1.4	IOM, World Vision, SFCG, Interpeace l'Université Chrétienne Bilingue du Congo (UCBC)	\$ 1,500,000.0	6/30/2021
Congo (the Democratic Republic of the)	<a href="#">PBF/COD/C-1</a> : Paix, Justice, Réconciliation et Reconstruction au Kasai Central	Rule of Law and Human Rights: Transitional Justice	PB 3, 3.5	OHCHR, UNDP, SFCG	\$ 3,500,000.0	5/20/2021
Congo (the Democratic Republic of the)	<a href="#">PBF/IRF-281</a> : "Vijana wenye nguvu kwa amani": Empowered Youth for Peace	Political Process: Youth empowerment and participation	PB 1, 1.9	Danish Refugee Council – Danish Demining Group (DRCDDG)	\$ 1,250,008.0	3/1/2021
Congo (the Democratic Republic of the)	<a href="#">PBF/IRF-332</a> : Le projet Jeunesse engagée pour la paix dans la Province du Sud-Kivu, RDC	Political Process: Youth empowerment and participation	PB 1, 1.9	Action pour la paix et la concorde (DRC)	\$ 471,886.1	6/17/2021
Côte d'Ivoire	<a href="#">PBF/IRF-274</a> : Mobilisation des Jeunes Engages pour la Consolidation de la Paix en Côte d'Ivoire « MOJEC »	Political Process: Youth empowerment and participation	PB 1, 1.9	CARE International	\$ 1,100,000.0	6/30/2020
Côte d'Ivoire	<a href="#">PBF/IRF-196</a> : Renforcement de la participation des jeunes à la consolidation de la paix dans le Sud, le Centre Ouest de la Cote d'Ivoire	Political Process: Youth empowerment and participation	PB 1, 1.9	UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNDP	\$ 3,750,000.0	4/14/2021
Côte d'Ivoire	<a href="#">PBF/IRF-200</a> : Appui à la consolidation du désarmement communautaire, de la réintégration des ex-combattants et de la RSS en Cote d'Ivoire	Safety and Security : DDR – Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration	PB 2, 2.5		\$ 2,650,000.0	6/30/2021
Côte d'Ivoire	<a href="#">PBF/CIV/A-4</a> : Appui à la consolidation du désarmement communautaire, de la réintégration des ex-combattants et de la RSS en Cote d'Ivoire	Safety and Security : DDR – Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration	PB 2, 2.5	UNDP	\$ 1,700,000.0	6/30/2021
Côte d'Ivoire	<a href="#">PBF/CIV/C-2</a> : Promouvoir l'Etat de droit et les droits humains pour consolider la paix en Côte d'Ivoire	Rule of Law and Human Rights: Human rights	PB 3, 3.7	UNDP, FAO	\$ 2,600,000.4	4/19/2021



Côte d'Ivoire	<a href="#">PBF/IRF-314</a> : Participation des jeunes à la prévention et à la gestion des conflits identitaires liés à la profanation et à l'exploitation des forêts sacrées dans le département de Biankouma en Côte d'Ivoire	Political Process: Youth empowerment and participation, Conflict management capacities, mediation and dialogue capacities	PB1, 1.9 / 1.4	UNESCO, UNDP	\$ 1,500,000.0	8/28/2021
Côte d'Ivoire	<a href="#">PBF/IRF-326</a> : YPS en pratique: Auto-analyse et renforcement du leadership des jeunes dans la prévention de la violence politique en Côte d'Ivoire	Political Process: Youth empowerment and participation	PB 1, 1.9	Interpeace	\$ 509,466.2	9/11/2021
El Salvador	<a href="#">PBF/SLV/A-1</a> : Programa Conjunto "Paz y reintegración de las personas migrantes en su regreso a casa"	Basic Services: Safe and sustainable return and (re-) integration of internally displaced persons, refugees and migrants	PB 5, 5.5	IOM, WFP, WHO, UNDP	\$ 3,941,837.0	12/31/2020
El Salvador	<a href="#">PBF/IRF-305</a> : Mujeres Libres de Violencia en el Transporte Publico	Safety and Security: Sexual and gender-based violence	PB 2, 2.3	UNWOMEN, UNDP	\$ 1,500,000.0	5/25/2021
Ethiopia	<a href="#">PBF/IRF-271</a> : Inclusive Governance and Conflict Management Support for Ethiopia	Political Process: Conflict management capacities, mediation and dialogue	PB 1, 1.4	IOM, UNWOMEN, UNDP	\$ 2,840,341.0	12/13/2020
Gambia (The)	<a href="#">PBF/IRF-172</a> : Support the capacity of the Government and national stakeholders to establish credible transitional justice processes and mechanism that promote reconciliation and sustainable peace in the Gambia	Rule of Law and Human Rights: Transitional justice	PB 3, 3.5	OHCHR, UNDP	\$ 4,699,999.0	6/30/2021
Gambia (The)	<a href="#">PBF/GMB/D-1</a> : Women and Youth participation in decision-making processes and as agents of community conflict prevention	Political Process: Women empowerment and gender equality, Youth empowerment and participation	PB1, 1.8 / 1.9	UNFPA, UNICEF	\$ 1,300,000.0	12/31/2020
Gambia (The)	<a href="#">PBF/GMB/B-1</a> : Addressing Conflict over Land and Natural Resources (LNR) in The Gambia	Economy: Management of natural resources (including land and extractives) and climate change	PB 6, 6.3	FAO, UNDP	\$ 1,300,000.0	12/31/2020
Guinea	<a href="#">PBF/IRF-201</a> : Appui au renforcement de la chaîne pénale et à la lutte contre l'impunité en Guinée	Rule of Law and Human Rights: Performance and independence of justice institutions	PB 3, 3.3	OHCHR, UNDP	\$ 1,700,000.0	2/17/2020
Guinea	<a href="#">PBF/IRF-289</a> : Le projet d'Appui à l'Amélioration de la Gouvernance des Services de Police	Safety and Security: Police	PB 3, 2.6	UNDP	\$ 1,200,000.0	10/31/2020
Guinea	<a href="#">PBF/IRF-290</a> : Appui à la gestion des risques liés à la dégradation	Economy: Environmental conflict resolution	PB 6, 6.3	FAO, UNIDO, UNDP	\$ 1,500,568.0	12/31/2020

	environnementale dans les zones à risque de radicalisation et de conflits potentiels					
Guinea	<a href="#">PBF/IRF-310</a> : Appui aux femmes leaders communautaires pour la prévention des éventuels conflits liés aux élections législatives et présidentielles de 2020	Political Process: Women empowerment and gender equality	PB 1, 1.1 / 1.8	UNICEF, UNDP	\$ 1,144,900.0	9/21/2021
Guinea Bissau	<a href="#">PBF/IRF-211</a> : Supporting Women's and Youth Political Participation for Peace and Development in Guinea-Bissau	Political Process: Women empowerment and gender quality, Youth empowerment and participation.	PB 1, 1.8/1.9	UNFPA, UNWOMEN, WFP	\$ 1,775,482.0	3/31/2020
Guinea Bissau	<a href="#">PBF/IRF-212</a> : Supporting political and institutional stabilization of the Justice sector for peace consolidation in Guinea-Bissau	Rule of Law and Human Rights: Capacity of justice institutions, including prisons	PB 3, 3.4	UNICEF, UNDP	\$ 1,406,900.0	4/30/2020
Kyrgyzstan	<a href="#">PBF/KGZ/B-6</a> : Support to the prevention of radicalization to violence in prisons and probation settings in the Kyrgyz Republic	Safety and Security: PVE	PB 2, 2.7.1	UNODC, UNDP	\$ 1,758,000.0	7/11/2021
Kyrgyzstan	<a href="#">PBF/IRF-258</a> : Kyrgyzstan's youth cohesion and interaction towards Uzbekistan	Political Process: Youth empowerment and participation.	PB 1, 1.9	UNFPA, UNICEF, UNDP	\$ 1,500,000.0	11/14/2020
Liberia	<a href="#">PBF/LBR/D-15</a> : Socio-Economic Empowerment of Disadvantaged (SEED) Youth in Liberia	Political Process: Youth empowerment and participation	PB 1, 1.9	UNFPA, UNDP	\$ 1,400,001.0	2/28/2021
Liberia	<a href="#">PBF/LBR/B-3</a> : Advancing Reconciliation through Legislative Reforms and Civic Engagement	Rule of Law and Human Rights: Performance and Independence of justice institutions	PB 3, 3.3	UNWOMEN, UNDP, OHCHR	\$ 2,080,000.0	12/5/2020
Madagascar	<a href="#">PBF/IRF-254: SIFAKA - Tracer la voie de la Paix à travers la voix des Jeunes</a>	Political Process: Youth empowerment and participation	PB 1, 1.9	OHCHR, UNICEF, UNDP	\$ 1,496,884.0	11/30/2020
Mali	<a href="#">PBF/IRF-158</a> : Femmes, Défense et Sécurité Participation des Femmes à la Réforme du Secteur de la sécurité et au renforcement de la confiance entre les populations et Forces de défense et de sécurité au Mali (NUNO)	Safety and Security: Security sector governance	PB 2, 2.7	Interpeace	\$ 1,319,337.0	8/31/2020
Mali	<a href="#">PBF/IRF-218</a> : Femmes, Défense et Sécurité Participation des Femmes à la Réforme du Secteur de la sécurité et au renforcement de la confiance entre les populations et Forces de	Safety and Security: Security sector governance	PB 2, 2.7	Interpeace	\$ 3,090,646.0	2/29/2020

	défense et de sécurité au Mali (NUNO)					
Mali	<a href="#">PBF/IRF-260</a> : Deuxième décennie pour la paix	Political Process: Youth empowerment and participation	PB 1, 1.9	FAO, UNICEF	\$ 1,500,000.0	11/15/2020
Niger	<a href="#">PBF/IRF-267</a> : Promotion de la cohésion sociale entre agriculteurs et éleveurs (hommes et femmes) dans les régions de Dosso et Maradi à travers une approche basée sur le genre et la diversité.	Economy: Management of natural resources/land, extractives/ climate change	PB 6, 6.3	FAO, UNWOMEN	\$ 1,500,001.0	11/30/2020
Papua New Guinea	<a href="#">PBF/IRF-255</a> : Strengthening the role of Women and Youth as Peace Builders to improve Development in the Highlands of Papua New Guinea	Political process: Women empowerment and gender equality, youth empowerment and participation	PB 1, 1.8/1.9	UN Women, IOM, UNFPA	\$ 1,500,000.0	10/31/2020
Sierra Leone	<a href="#">PBF/IRF-339</a> : Promoting the Safety and Security of Women for Sustainable Peace in Southern Sierra Leone 2020 - 2021	Safety and security: Sexual and gender-based violence	PB 2, 2.3	Caritas Bo	\$ 300,000.2	6/18/2021
Sierra Leone	<a href="#">PBF/IRF-253</a> : Creating Peaceful Societies through women's improved access to management of natural resources, land tenure rights and economic empowerment in Sierra Leone	Political process: Women empowerment and gender equality. Economy: Management of natural resources/land	PB 1, 1.8 PB 6, 6.3	FAO, ILO	\$ 1,500,000.0	8/31/2020
Solomon Islands	<a href="#">PBF/SLB/H-1</a> : Empowering Youth as Agents for Peace and Social Cohesion in the Solomon Islands	Political process: Youth empowerment and participation	PB 1, 1.9	ILO, UNDP	\$ 1,798,483.0	6/30/2021
Somalia	<a href="#">PBF/SOM/B-1</a> : Support to Stabilization Phase 2	Political process: State-society relations	PB 1, 1.7.2	UNDP, UNSOM	\$ 3,328,640.0	2/28/2021
Somalia	<a href="#">PBF/SOM/A-3</a> : Midnimo II (Unity) - Support for the Attainment Of Durable Solutions in Areas Impacted by Displacement and Returns in Galmudug and Hirshabelle States	Political process: State society relations. Economy: Employment generation and livelihoods	PB 1, 1.7.2 PB 6, 6.1	IOM, UNHABITAT, UNDP	\$ 2,700,000.0	1/11/2021
Somalia	<a href="#">PBF/SOM/A-4</a> : Dhulka Nabaada (The Land of Peace): Supporting Land Reform in Somalia Peacebuilding Fund	Economy: Management of natural resources – land	PB 6, 6.3.2	IOM, UNHABITAT, UNHCR, UNDP	\$ 3,344,116.3	1/31/2021
South Sudan	<a href="#">PBF/SSD/A-1</a> : Protecting women and girls in South Sudan: Addressing GBV as a catalyst for peace	Safety and Security: Sexual and gender-based violence	PB 2, 2.3	UNFPA, UNICEF, UNWOMEN, UNDP	\$ 3,000,000.0	8/22/2021
South Sudan	<a href="#">PBF/IRF-328</a> : Strengthening Young Women's Participation in Local and National Peace Processes in South Sudan	Political process: Women empowerment and gender equality, youth empowerment and participation	PB 1, 1.8/1.9	SFCG	\$ 1,398,463.0	9/12/2021

Sri Lanka	<a href="#">PBF/IRF-329</a> : Young Women as Drivers of Peace: Providing 360° Support to Emerging Women Leaders	Political process: Women empowerment and gender equality, youth empowerment and participation	PB 1, 1.8/1.9	SFCG	\$ 571,878.9	6/11/2021
Sri Lanka	<a href="#">PBF/LKA/A-2</a> : Promoting Reconciliation	Political process: Reconciliation	PB 1, 1.3	UNICEF, WHO, UNDP	\$ 1,600,000.0	9/30/2020
Sri Lanka	<a href="#">PBF/LKA/A-3</a> : Participation of Youth and Women in the Peacebuilding Process	Political process: Women empowerment and gender equality, youth empowerment and participation	PB 1, 1.8/1.9	UNDP(UNV), UNFPA, UNWOMEN	\$ 1,210,000.0	9/30/2020
Togo	<a href="#">PBF/IRF-248</a> : Renforcement des capacités nationales et communautaires de prévention des conflits et violences et la protection des droits de l'homme au Togo	Political process: Conflict management capacities. Rule of Law and Human Rights: Human Rights	PB 1, 1.4 PB 3, 3.7	UNICEF, UNDP	\$ 2,342,086.0	11/30/2020
Uganda	<a href="#">PBF/IRF-303</a> : Harnessing the potential of youth	Political process: youth empowerment and participation	PB 1, 1.9	UNFPA, OHCHR, UNDP	\$ 3,004,311.6	4/28/2021
Western Balkans	<a href="#">PBF/IRF-296</a> : Fostering Dialogue and social cohesion in and between Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia (Dialogue for the Future)	Political process : Conflict management capacities, mediation and dialogue	PB 1,1.4	UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP	\$ 4,183,992.5	4/30/2021
Yemen	<a href="#">PBF/IRF-236</a> : Responding to protection needs and supporting resilience in places of detention in Yemen	Rule of Law and Human Rights: Capacity of justice institutions, including prisons	PB 3, 3.4	UNICEF, UNWOMEN, UNDP	\$ 5,686,470.0	2/1/2021
Yemen	<a href="#">PBF/IRF-270</a> : Furthering the Youth, Peace, and Security Agenda in Yemen	Political process: youth empowerment and participation	PB 1, 1.9	UNFPA, UNWOMEN	\$ 1,500,000.0	12/30/2020
Zimbabwe	<a href="#">PBF/IRF-301</a> : Building trust and confidence in Zimbabwe's transition	Political process: Facilitation and promoting inclusive dialogue	PB 1, 1.2	UNICEF, UNWOMEN, UNDP	\$ 3,143,861.0	2/19/2021

#### Evaluations conducted in 2022:

Country	Project	Substantive Focus – SG Dashboard categories	SG Dashboard Codes	PBF fund recipients	Approved Budget (real-time)	Project End Date
Benin-Burkina Faso-Togo	<a href="#">PBF/IRF-357</a> : Programme d'appui à la prévention des conflits et de l'extrémisme violent dans les zones frontalières du Bénin, du Burkina et du Togo (Benin)	Safety and Security: PVE	PB 2, 2.7.1	IOM, UNDP	\$ 3,275,000.0	3/4/2022
Bolivia	<a href="#">PBF/IRF-366</a> : Apoyando el diálogo y los derechos humanos para la construcción de paz en Bolivia	Political process: Facilitating and promoting inclusive dialogue	PB 1, 1.2	OHCHR, UNWOMEN, UNDP	\$ 3,000,000.0	7/14/2022

Burundi	<a href="#">PBF/IRF-316</a> : Community based prevention of violence and social cohesion using innovation for young people in displaced and host communities	Political process: youth empowerment and participation	PB 1, 1.9	UNFPA, UNICEF	\$ 1,500,000.0	11/30/2021
Cameroon	<a href="#">PBF/CMR/A-2</a> : Appui à la participation des femmes et des jeunes aux initiatives de consolidation de la paix, de renforcement des mécanismes de cohésion sociale et du vivre ensemble	Political process: Women empowerment and gender equality, youth empowerment and participation	PB 1, 1.9/1.8	UNESCO, UNIFEM, UNWOMEN	\$ 1,999,933.4	4/15/2022
Cameroon	<a href="#">PBF/CMR/A-1</a> : Stabilisation et relèvement des communautés affectées par la crise sécuritaire à l'Extrême-Nord	Political process: State-society relations	PB 1, 1.7.2	FAO, IOM, UNFPA	\$ 2,200,326.6	10/16/2021
Cameroon	<a href="#">PBF/CMR/A-3</a> : Réduction des tensions/conflits liés à l'utilisation des ressources naturelles pour les activités agro-pastorales	Economy: Management of natural resources	PB 6, 6.3	FAO, IOM	\$ 2,495,734.3	10/31/2021
Central African Republic	<a href="#">PBF/IRF-335</a> : Plaidoyer des OSC féminines pour la sécurité communautaire et une Stratégie nationale centrafricaine de Réforme du Secteur de la Sécurité sensibles au genre	Safety and Security: Security Sector Governance	PB 2, 2.7	Oxfam	\$ 1,485,000.0	9/16/2021
Central African Republic	<a href="#">PBF/IRF-334</a> : Towards Youth Inclusive and Gendered Peace Processes in the Central African Republic	Political process: Women empowerment and gender equality, youth empowerment and participation	PB 1, 1.8/1.9	Accord	\$ 801,408.9	10/15/2021
Central African Republic-Chad	<a href="#">PBF/IRF-269</a> : Projet de restauration de la paix et du dialogue entre les communautés affectées par la transhumance transfrontalière (Cross-border CAR)	Economy: Management of natural resources, transhumance	PB 1, 6.1/6.1.3	FAO, IOM	\$ 3,000,000.0	12/30/2020
Chad	<a href="#">PBF/IRF-284</a> : Appui à la participation citoyenne des jeunes et des femmes à la gouvernance locale et à la consolidation de la paix au Tchad	Political process: Women empowerment and gender equality, youth empowerment and participation	PB 1, 1.8/1.9	OHCHR, UNICEF, WFP, UNDP	\$ 3,491,000.0	6/30/2022
Chad	<a href="#">PBF/TCD/A-2</a> : Habilitier les jeunes vulnérables du centre du Tchad à	Political process: youth empowerment and participation	PB 1, 1.8/1.9	IOM, WFP	\$ 3,434,699.0	8/7/2022

	devenir des agents de consolidation de la paix					
Chad-Niger	PBF/IRF-286: Prevenir des conflits intercommunautaires et contribuer à la consolidation de la paix à travers le développement d'un pastoralisme résilient dans la zone transfrontalière de Diffa et du Kanem (Chad)	Economy: Management of natural resources	PB 6, 6.3	FAO, WFP	\$ 3,000,000.0	12/30/2020
Colombia	PBF/IRF-340: ParticipAcción: Mujeres jóvenes construyendo paz en Urabá	Political process: Women empowerment and gender equality, youth empowerment and participation	PB 1, 1.8/1.9	Fundación Mi Sangre (FMS)	\$ 616,369.0	1/9/2022
Colombia	PBF/COL/H-1: Estrategia de reincorporación socioeconómica de excombatientes de las FARC con enfoque comunitario, de género, étnico y poblacional	Safety and Security: DDR – Disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration	PB 2, 2.5	UNICEF, UNWOMEN, UNDP	\$ 3,000,000.0	1/17/2021
Congo (the Democratic Republic of the)	PBF/IRF-317 : Le Droit des femmes à la Protection et à la Participation pour l'Egalité et la Paix autour des mines artisanales du Sud Kivu	Political process: Women empowerment and gender equality	PB 1, 1.8	IOM, UNESCO, OHCHR	\$ 1,500,000.0	11/28/2021
Congo (the Democratic Republic of the)	PBF/IRF-404: Promouvoir la participation des femmes à la consolidation de la paix grâce aux paillottes de paix	Political process: Women empowerment and gender equality	PB 1, 1.8	Fonds pour les femmes congolaises (FFC)	\$ 400,000.0	8/10/2022
Côte d'Ivoire	PBF/CIV/D1: Les jeunes comme moteurs de prévention des discours de haine	Political process: youth empowerment and participation	PB 1, 1.9	UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP	\$ 2,500,000.0	12/31/2021
Côte d'Ivoire-Liberia	PBF/IRF-346: Cross border engagement between Cote d'Ivoire and Liberia to reinforce social cohesion and border security – Phase II (Cote d'Ivoire)	Political process: Inter-community relations	PB 1, 1.7/1.7.1	IOM, UNDP	\$ 3,000,000.0	1/16/2022
El Salvador	PBF/IRF- 414: Juventudes salvadoreñas construyendo paz y resiliencia: Derecho a ciudadanía participativa e incidencia en los municipios de Jiquilisco y Tecoluca	Political process: youth empowerment and participation	PB 1, 1.9	UNESCO, UNFPA, NIMD (Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy)	\$ 1,499,530.1	8/15/2022
Gambia (The)	PBF/GMB/A-1: Strengthening sustainable and holistic	Basic services: Safe and sustainable return and (re-)	PB 5: 5.5	IOM, ITC, UNFPA	\$ 2,300,000.0	3/17/2022

	reintegration of returnees in The Gambia	integration of internally displaced persons, refugees, and migrants				
Guatemala	<a href="#">PBF/IRF-306</a> : Construir la cohesión social de las comunidades que reciben jóvenes retornados como un puente hacia una reintegración pacífica y efectiva	Political process: youth empowerment and participation	PB 1, 1.9	FAO, IOM, UNESCO	\$ 1,500,000.0	11/21/2021
Guatemala	<a href="#">PBF/IRF-307</a> : Creating new avenues of resilience to sustain peace: Kaqchiquel, Q'eqchi' and mestizo women pathfinders for peace at the center	Political process: Women empowerment and gender equality	PB 1, 1.8	ILO, UNODC, UNWOMEN	\$ 1,500,000.0	11/22/2021
Guinea	<a href="#">PBF/IRF-309</a> : Appui à la réduction de l'instrumentalisation et des violences politico-sociales des jeunes taximotards en période électorale	Political process: youth empowerment and participation. Electoral process	PB 1, 1.1 / 1.9	IOM, UNFPA, UNDP	\$ 1,250,295.0	10/21/2021
Guinea	<a href="#">PBF/IRF-327</a> : Foniké*, entrepreneurs sociaux pour la paix en Guinée (*Les jeunes)	Political process: youth empowerment and participation	PB 1, 1.8	SFCG	\$ 1,500,000.0	12/31/2021
Guinea	<a href="#">PBF/GIN/B-9</a> : Renforcement de la confrérie des Donzo pour la protection de l'environnement et la cohésion sociale en Haute Guinée	Economy: Management of natural resources	PB 6, 6.3	Accord	\$ 850,000.0	5/28/2022
Guinea Bissau	<a href="#">PBF/IRF-406</a> : No landa Djuntu - Drawing the pathway together: new leadership for meaningful participation, peace and stability in Guinea Bissau	Political process: youth empowerment and participation	PB 1, 1.9	Interpeace	\$ 341,000.0	8/10/2022
Kyrgyzstan	<a href="#">PBF/KGZ/A-6</a> : Inclusive governance and Justice system for Preventing Violent Extremism	Safety and Security: PVE	PB 2, 2.7.1	OHCHR, UNICEF, UNWOMEN, UNDP	\$ 3,089,265.0	6/14/2021
Kyrgyzstan	<a href="#">PBF/KGZ/A-7</a> : Communities resilient to violent ideologies	Safety and Security: PVE	PB 2, 2.7.1	UNFPA, UNICEF, UNWOMEN	\$ 2,601,082.0	7/10/2021
Kyrgyzstan	<a href="#">PBF/IRF-308</a> : Empowering women	Political process: Women empowerment and gender equality	PB 1, 1.8	ILO, IOM, UNWOMEN	\$ 1,450,000.0	11/21/2021
Lebanon	<a href="#">PBF/IRF-344</a> : Dealing with the Past: Memory for the Future	Political process: Reconciliation	PB 1, 1.3	OHCHR, UNWOMEN, UNDP	\$ 3,000,000.0	12/31/2021
Liberia	<a href="#">PBF/IRF-411</a> : Protection and Support of Enabling	Political process: Women	PB 1, 1.8	Kvinna till Kvinna	\$ 495,000.0	8/10/2022

	Environment for Women Human Rights Defenders and LGBTQI Rights Defenders in Liberia - PROSEED	empowerment and gender equality				
Liberia	PBF/IRF- 412: Sustainable and inclusive peace in Liberia through promoting women leadership and participation in civic and political life and their strengthened role in conflict resolution	Political process: Women empowerment and gender equality	PB 1, 1.8	ZOA	\$ 1,289,614.8	8/31/2022
Liberia	PBF/IRF-319: Advancing implementation of UNSCRs on Women Peace and Security (WPS) through strengthening accountability frameworks, innovative financing and Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB)	Political process: Women empowerment and gender equality	PB 1, 1.8	OHCHR, UNWOMEN	\$ 1,500,000.0	11/27/2021
Madagascar	PBF/IRF- 415: Promouvoir la résolution pacifique des conflits à travers le renforcement du leadership des femmes dans les processus de prise de décision	Political process: Women empowerment and gender equality	PB 1, 1.8	ONG Institut Electoral pour une Démocratie Durable en Afrique (EISA), bureau de Madagascar	\$ 300,000.0	8/16/2022
Madagascar	PBF/MDG/B-2: Renforcement des mécanismes institutionnels inclusifs pour la consolidation de la paix dans le Sud	Political process: Conflict management capacities, mediation and dialogue capacities	PB 1, 1.4	IOM, UNFPA, UNDP	\$ 3,521,396.8	7/15/2022
Madagascar	PBF/MDG/D-1: Prévention de la violence, de la délinquance juvénile et de l'insécurité dans les régions de Diana et Sava	Political process: youth empowerment and participation	PB 1, 1.9	ILO, UNFPA, UNICEF	\$ 1,499,926.0	7/15/2022
Madagascar	PBF/IRF-320: Répondre aux menaces à la paix et à la cohésion sociale liées aux migrations non maîtrisées par l'appui à l'autonomisation et à la promotion des femmes à Madagascar (Projet REAP)	Political process: Women empowerment and gender equality	PB 1, 1.8	IOM, UNDP	\$ 1,709,965.8	12/1/2021
Madagascar	PBF/IRF-336: TANOMAFY-JAP - Jeunes Ambassadeurs de Paix	Political process: youth empowerment and participation	PB 1, 1.9	NGO Sampan'Asa momban'ny Fampandrosoana, Fiangonan'i Jesoa Kristy et Madagascar : SAF/FJKM	\$ 467,000.0	12/26/2021



				(Agence coordinatrice)		
Madagascar	<a href="#">PBF/IRF-321</a> : Art populaire au service des Jeunes engagés pour la Consolidation de la Paix dans le Sud de Madagascar	Political process: youth empowerment and participation	PB 1, 1.9	UNFPA, UNDP	\$ 1,650,114.5	12/2/2021
Madagascar	<a href="#">PBF/MDG/B-3</a> : Consolider et accélérer les acquis de la paix à Madagascar durant la crise du COVID-19	Political process: State-society relations	PB 1, 1.7.2	IOM, UNFPA, UNDP	\$ 1,726,984.3	12/15/2021
Mali-Niger	<a href="#">PBF/IRF-299</a> : Appui aux initiatives transfrontalières de dialogue communautaire et avec les acteurs du secteur de la sécurité et de la justice pour la consolidation de la paix au Mali et au Niger (Mali)	Political dialogue: Facilitating and promoting inclusive dialogue	PB 1, 1.2	UNODC, UNWOMEN	\$ 3,014,166.0	3/31/2021
Mauritania	<a href="#">PBF/MRT/A-1</a> : Consolidation de la paix à travers l'engagement des femmes et de la jeunesse et le renforcement des capacités des communautés dans la région frontalière du Hodh El Chargui	Political process: Women empowerment and gender equality, youth empowerment and participation	PB 1, 1.8/1.9	IOM, UNHCR	\$ 1,500,000.0	3/22/2022
Niger	<a href="#">PBF/IRF-359</a> : Comprendre et traiter les facteurs de conflits le long des routes migratoires à Agadez	Political process: Conflict management capacities	PB 1, 1.4	IOM	\$ 2,500,000.0	7/6/2022
Nigeria	<a href="#">PBF/IRF-273</a> : Integrated Approach to Building Peace in Nigeria's Farmer-Herder Crisis	Economy: Management of natural resources	PB 6, 6.3	FAO, OHCHR, UNWOMEN, UNDP	\$ 3,000,000.0	12/16/2020
Papua New Guinea	<a href="#">PBF/PNG/A-2</a> : Sustaining Peace in Bougainville	Political process: Electoral process / Legislature and political parties	PB 1, 1.1/1.5	UNDP, UNWOMEN, UNFPA	\$ 5,000,000.0	7/31/2022
Rwanda	<a href="#">PBF/IRF-341</a> : Support to the reintegration of ex-FDLR combatants and dependents repatriated to Rwanda from the Democratic Republic of Congo	Safety and Security: DDR	PB 3, 2.5	UNWOMEN, UNDP	\$ 1,499,999.2	6/18/2021
Sierra Leone	<a href="#">PBF/SLE/D-2</a> : Mitigating localized resource-based conflicts and increasing community resilience	Economy: Management of natural resources	PB 6, 6.3	WFP, UNDP	\$ 3,000,000.0	3/30/2022
Sierra Leone	<a href="#">PBF/IRF- 417</a> : Inclusive Conflict Prevention and Peace in Sierra Leone	Political process: youth empowerment and participation	PB 1, 1.9	Cordaid	\$ 1,360,000.0	8/18/2022

Solomon Islands	<a href="#">PBF/SLB/E-1</a> : Inclusive Governance of Natural Resources for greater social cohesion in the Solomon Islands	Economy: Management of natural resources	PB 6, 6.3	UNDP, UNWOMEN	\$ 2,149,820.4	1/9/2022
Somalia	<a href="#">PBF/IRF-330</a> : Youth Building Peace	Political process: youth empowerment and participation	PB 1, 1.9	Life and Peace Institute (LPI)	\$ 1,000,000.0	9/30/2021
South Sudan	<a href="#">PBF/SSD/A-2</a> : Breaking the Cycle of Violence - rehabilitating justice and accountability mechanisms for the transformation of survivors and perpetrators of violent conflict into change agents for peace	Rule of Law and Human Rights: Capacity of justice institutions, including prisons	PB 3, 3.4	UNICEF, UNDP	\$ 3,000,000.0	4/3/2022
Tajikistan	<a href="#">PBF/IRF-343</a> : Empowering youth for a peaceful Tajikistan	Political process: youth empowerment and participation	PB 1, 1.9	UNICEF, UNWOMEN, UNDP	\$ 2,000,000.0	12/31/2021
Tunisia	<a href="#">PBF/IRF-288</a> : Pérenniser la paix en Tunisie par l'inclusion des jeunes au niveau local	Political process: youth empowerment and participation	PB 1, 1.9	UNESCO, UNWOMEN, UNDP	\$ 2,998,889.0	12/31/2020
Yemen	<a href="#">PBF/IRF-322</a> : Empowering Yemeni youth towards peace: ensuring access to information and participation	Political process: youth empowerment and participation	PB 1, 1.9	UNESCO	\$ 1,499,989.8	11/30/2021



**PEACEBUILDING  
FUND** 

# SECRETARY-GENERAL'S PEACEBUILDING FUND

**Synthesis Review of  
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(PBF) 2021–2022  
Evaluations and  
Evaluative Exercises**

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