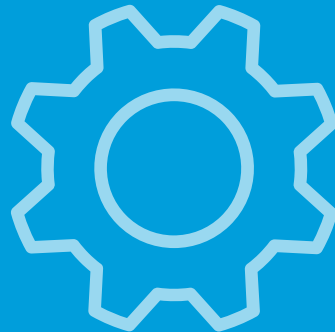


UN Secretary-General's  
Peacebuilding Fund Strategy  
2020-2024

# Midterm Review Management Response

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August 2025



United Nations  
Peacebuilding

## Management Response

### Midterm Review UN Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund Strategy 2020-2024

Date prepared: 11 April 2023. Latest update: 20 August 2025

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#### Overall Comments:

The Management of the Financing for Peacebuilding Branch is appreciative of the evaluation and recommendations. Overall, we agree with the general thrust of the recommendations. The actions committed represents the same and we have prioritized those that can be carried forward in their full spirit. The Management will remain committed to other areas of recommendations but has not mentioned every action where it is beyond the management's control to do full justice.

#### Evaluation recommendation 1. Strategic Country Support

- R1 **Ensure appropriate timing and accompaniment of SRF development and implementation:** Link the development of SRFs to the eligibility process to create synergies between the two processes (conflict analysis, prioritization), leading to swifter project development and overall reduction of transaction costs. Prioritize in-person workshops that engage in-country stakeholders, in particular national counterparts, during the course of a few months to allow for deeper reflections and ownership to develop. Avoid turning SRF development into a mere technical exercise but focus on co-creating a narrative for the PBF engagement and its desired results. Dedicate sufficient resources within PBSO (DM&E team and/or Program Officers) to lead on all aspects of the development and use of SRFs based on a clear attribution of roles and responsibilities.
- R2 **Ensure the formulation of ambitious, yet realistic strategic outcomes:** Limit the number of strategic outcomes in SRFs in proportion to the expected investments, allowing for multiple anticipated projects per outcome.
- R3 **Focus on capturing change at the portfolio level:** Abstain from indicators that are essentially just monitoring context and formulate SMART results indicators that realistically capture expected change resulting from PBF (or broader) interventions. Build a database/archive of good peacebuilding indicators and useful secondary data sources. Strengthen collaborations with DCO (for results frameworks of UNSDCF) and UN recipients (for results frameworks of Country Program Documents or at project level) for greater synergies.
- R4 **Develop clear criteria where the development of an SRF provides a clear added value:** Factors to be considered could include the absence of an eligibility request (PBC configuration countries), size and complexity of the portfolio, need for stronger alignment between different funding vehicles, lack of articulation of peacebuilding priorities in other strategic frameworks. In parallel,

experiment with more ambitious SRF processes through PBSO/PBF Secretariat support to the development of UNSDCF with a focus on defining a separate peacebuilding pillar or thoroughly mainstreaming peacebuilding as a cross-cutting issue.

- R5 **Clarify roles and responsibilities for data collection, analysis and reporting:** Encourage projects that build capacity of national actors (government, academia, CSOs) to undertake research and gather data to be integrated into the SRF. Provide additional support (financial, human resources, capacities) to PBF Secretariats and/or UN system partners or national stakeholders to fill out assigned roles. Define frequency of data collection and analysis and clarify intended use of information for reporting and data-driven portfolio management decisions. Clarify the role of SRFs for aggregated peacebuilding results across different country contexts, e.g., through the creation of an Impact Lab.

**Management response:** Agreed partly and in principle. However, the number of SRF outcomes (R2) are beyond the control of the PBF especially as we promote alignment to SDCF. The Strategic Results Framework design needs to be a country-driven and led process. The DMEL and Programming teams will invest in providing policy guidance and quality control for future processes.

Key action(s)	Completion date	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status (initiated, completed or no due date)
1.1: PBF will invest in one in-person training before end of strategy period and one virtual training in 2023 for PBF Secretariats on SRF design and monitoring systems.	Dec 2024	DMEL Unit	In-person 2024 PBF Community of Practice meeting and a subsequent virtual session focused on designated discussions and training on SRF design and monitoring.	Completed
1.2: Prioritize countries where SRFs are needed and strengthen support to the development of SRFs.	End of 2023	Programming team lead with DMEL support	Based on findings from MTR, guidelines have been modified to make SRFs to be prioritized in the cases where peacebuilding is not adequately captured in the UNSDCF. PBF Programme Support Team roster has also been providing support for SRF design upon country request.	Completed
1.3: Experiment with approaches to monitor SRFs including through data	End of 2024	DMEL Unit (with PBF Secretariats)	The target of 3 countries is ambitious and should be reduced to 1. Staff turnover in the team in 2023 and	Ongoing

collection with proactive support from HQ in at least 3 countries. PBF will explore partners (UN agencies often have good existing capacities; CSOs and others) to support data collection and create space for independent monitoring.	New date: End of 2025		reduced demand from countries made this difficult.  SRF monitoring is being explored in South Sudan and Niger. The SRF monitoring has been in the works in South Sudan for some time. SRF monitoring in Niger is delayed due to political insecurity reasons and is expected to start in Q4 2024.	
1.4: Develop SRF flow charts/guidance notes with different options of SRF development (based on context, objective of SRF) to inform (not prescribe) future SRF processes based on experience so far.	End of 2023  New date: End of 2025	DMEL team with Programme Officers and Communications team	Draft SRF flowchart and Standard Operating Procedures developed, to be finalized by the end of 2024.	Delayed. See new date

## Evaluation recommendation 2. Regional and Cross-border Programming

- R6 Optimize transaction costs: Better articulated partnership/cooperation strategies for scale up (e.g., starting at times with 2 countries, then adding a 3rd one; starting with easier issues first; moving from the local to the more institutional/national levels etc.). Prioritize PBF follow-up engagements over the proliferation of cross-border/regional projects involving more and more borders/countries. Opt for more cost-effective national programming in border areas where additional impacts resulting from addressing conflict drivers in more than one country simultaneously are not clearly demonstrated.
- R7 Deepen the involvement of national/local governments and national civil society actors at the design and implementation stages: Invest more time to raise the level of inclusion and localization and design joint analysis already as an intervention in itself, thus ensuring an adequate level of national and regional ownership and buy-in at the design stage. Assess the level and timing of national government buy-in and endorsement for a cross-border/ regional project as well as the capacity to accommodate existing power structures to avoid delayed endorsement generating slowdown or paralysis. Encourage regional strategic coordination mechanisms at strategic and technical levels or develop meaningful alternative strategies of engagement and communication. Prioritize programming that supports the policies and priorities of national government authorities and regional organizations.
- R8 Update knowledge base of cross-border/regional projects: Conduct a Thematic Review of Cross-border Peacebuilding to demonstrate high-level results and further reflect on the contribution to peace and catalytic effects of PBF's cross-border and regional programming. Invest in more analytical work at a sub-regional level, building on RCO-led regional strategic peacebuilding analysis.
- R9 Provide more systematic upfront support (financial and technical) for the development of cross-border projects: Generate a more robust process, better strategic-thinking and more involvement and buy-in from all stakeholders. Explore options, such as a more structured 'inception phase support' (similar to what is currently discussed with Peace Nexus) and providing additional incentives for direct recipients to pre-launch key personnel recruitment as well as the partnership development processes. Request the submission of a thorough start-up plan that takes into consideration the recipients' and its implementing partners' existing and anticipated capacities and integrates a risk analysis to better anticipate possible contextual developments and prepare concrete responses.

Management response: Agreed. With respect to R8, the need for learning is recognized and noted. However, it may not be through a Thematic Review modality.

Key action(s)	Completion date	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status (initiated, completed or no due date)

2.1: Extend maximum duration of regional and cross-border initiatives to 3 years to optimize costs, including updating Fund guidelines accordingly.	June 2023	PBF Management	PBF Guidelines have been updated.	Completed
2.2: Deliver technical support to country teams in the design phase of regional and cross-border programming (PST roster, regional PDA support, inception phase support, support for design workshops, deepen consultations etc).	Dec 2024	Programming teams with DMEL team support	PBF PST roster provided support for cross-border project design.	Completed
2.3: Deepen involvement with governments (including subnational and regional/inter-governmental bodies where appropriate) and civil society actors during design phase of cross-border projects.	Ongoing	Programming teams	Concept note template and project assessment criteria increased emphasis on inclusive design.	Completed
2.4: Facilitate knowledge sharing and learning on regional and cross-border initiatives based on lessons (evaluations), organizing an experience sharing workshop with various stakeholders (RCOs, PDAs, Regional Organizations, NUNOs/RUNOs, Governments, CSOs etc)	Workshop by end of 2023  New date: End of 2024  Cross-border guidance note updated (2024)	PBF Management	Workshop was organized as part of PBF COP in-person meeting in 2024.	Completed

### Evaluation recommendation 3. Facilitating Transitions

- R10 Clarify the definition of transition settings:** Develop and apply a substantive and context-specific definition of transition settings that conditions the end of PBF support to the transition on the achievement of certain benchmarks. This definition can be adapted over time and does not preclude the continuation of PBF-funding following the achievement of these benchmarks in the form of “regular”, non-transition support to sustaining peace.
- R11 Articulate the niche of PBF transition support:** Clarify the intention and scope of strategic PBF support to transition settings, including through making clear what distinguishes it from its engagement in non-transition contexts. Explore possibilities of PBSO support to the design and accompaniment of Joint Financing Strategies for transition settings.

**R12 Strengthen the strategic approach to transition support and leverage PBF-funding for greater impact:** Develop a coordinated and sequenced approach to leverage PBF support to transition settings, including through planning more deliberately for catalytic results. Tie PBF-support to UN recipients in transition settings to a proven comparative advantage in addressing remaining elements of the mission mandate. Expand partnerships, such as with the World Bank, to scale up support and experiment with matching formulas. Include a more robust analysis of national capacities in PBF procedures and assess where the facilitation of the transfer of responsibilities to national actors can be supported.

**R13 Adapt PBF support to transition settings based on a more robust evidence-base:** Commission a Thematic Review on the results of PBF support to transition settings to make evidence-based decisions on future programming. Reorient some of the support reserved to transitions from post-transition to integrated programming in pre-withdrawal settings. Accompany early transition planning financially and through the contribution of strategic accompaniment rooted in a close cooperation within the Peace and Security Pillar, which could include a more systematic participation of PBF (Secretariats and NY-based staff) in relevant exercises, such as Strategic Review Missions.

**Management response:** Partly agreed. PBF is keen to invest further in programming around transitions depending on country demands, and to learn from its current portfolio with a focus on a strong evidentiary base. PBSO takes note of a need to strengthen the Fund's strategic approach but also notes that issues related to sequencing, partnerships and analysis require action from a wider set of stakeholders especially at country level. PBSO agrees on the need for increased learning but will pursue a different approach than a PBF thematic review.

Key action(s)	Completion date	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status (initiated, completed or no due date)
3.1: Produce Briefing Note to articulate PBF offer for transition support (including elements such as increased engagement of PBF programme team in transition planning processes and link to other PBSO capacities).	End June 2023	PBF Management (Deputy Chief, PO) with PBSO Strategy and Partnerships Branch and PBC as appropriate	Briefing slides produced in lieu of Note	Completed
3.2: Undertake learning exercise on best use of PBF resources in UN transition contexts together with key UN actors	End of 2023  New date: March 2026	PBF Management with PBSO Strategy and Partnerships Branch and other UN partners	Dates adjusted after prioritizing inputs to revision of UN Transition Policy, and awaiting outcome thereof. Now to be undertaken to inform new PBF Strategy development.	Postponed

		(potentially UN Joint Project on Transitions)		
3.3: Issue a PBSO Offer on support in UN transition contexts, outlining the role of the PBF, UN-IFI partnership facility, the PBC and connection with relevant UN directives on transition planning	End June 2024  New date: End 2025	PBF Management with support from DMEL Team, PBSO Strategy and Partnerships and PBC branches	Postponed to anticipate update of UN Transition Policy	Postponed

#### Evaluation recommendation 4. Gender and Youth Empowerment

- R14 **Rollout GPI 2.0 and consider launching a YPI 2.0:** Plan for such a roll out to more countries and developing a similar type of decentralized initiative for Youth, provided that anticipated advantages are confirmed in pilot countries. Consider inviting each year a third of eligible countries to develop a 3-year localized G(Y)PI portfolio whilst ensuring quality assurance, support from and collaboration with dedicated PBSO Program Officers.
- R15 **Increase the contribution and integration of GYPI projects in PBF's SRFs or other existing country priority plans:** Develop alternative approaches to the GYPI global themes that would ensure greater national ownership and better alignment with national priorities (e.g., existing national youth or gender equality strategies) and SRFs, while ensuring WPS and YPS agendas' gaps continue to be addressed. Consider further increasing the size and duration of projects.
- R16 **Move beyond the focus on strengthening positive vectors:** While initiatives addressing women's and youth participation in peace processes, mental health, human rights defenders' activism and early warning systems etc. have their merits, more attention needs to be given to the individuals, groups, organizations, institutions or systems that influence the dynamics at large and could be engaged to transform their behaviours, change policies etc. Broaden the engagement to include work on positive masculinities, working with men and boys to generate collective shifts in attitudes and behaviours that see men as partners to support women's political participation.
- R17 **Experiment with bolder approaches to directly or indirectly engage typically overlooked or seen as hard-to-reach groups:** Engage marginalized groups more systematically without disregarding the high risks sometimes associated with such an approach. Be more rigorous in avoiding the generalization and the equation of women and youth with marginalized groups.

**Management response:** Agreed. PBF is keen to continue invest in gender equality as well as youth empowerment building on lessons from the current portfolio. However, we will study more the lessons from GPI 2.0 to inform any possible roll-out of YPI 2.0. The Fund recognizes that inclusivity is beyond women and youth as groups and certainly even within these groups it does not assume homogeneity. PBF is willing and



keen to prioritize groups based on robust gender sensitive conflict analysis which considers the differential impacts of conflicts on various groups which may include indigenous groups, minorities, people with disabilities etc. Fund will ensure that its guidelines and materials reflect the same.

Key action(s)	Completion date	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status (initiated, completed or no due date)
4.1: Continue rollout of GPI 2.0 and start collecting lessons learned	End of 2023	Programming teams with GPI and YPI coordinator	Cohort Evaluation of GYPI projects completed.	Completed
4.2: Update the Gender Marker Guidance Note	End of 2023	Gender Advisor + PBF Gender team & DMEL team	Gender Marker Guidance Note revised.	Completed
4.3: Conduct a thematic review focused on Youth, Peace and Security	End of 2024	DMEL team	YPS Thematic Review has been completed and published.	Completed
4.4: Promote the application of Community Engagement Guidelines through PBF programming.	End of 2024	Gender Advisor, Human Rights Advisor and GPI and YPI coordinator	PBF Guidelines updated.	Completed

#### Evaluation recommendation 5. CSOs support

**R18 Further explore ways of increasing CSOs' engagement:** Increase the number and quality of genuine joint projects between UN agencies and CSOs (international or national ones) and between INGOs and national CSOs. Use innovative models such as resorting to UN agencies or national/ international CSOs to act as real intermediaries to reach frontline local organizations (of women and youth in particular) and/or managing agents of small-grants facilities (i.e., consider replicating the innovative local CSOs' funding mechanism being currently tested in the Sahel region in comparable national and/ or regional contexts as appropriate). Diversify partnerships with all kinds of CSOs that could have an impact on peacebuilding, including organizations ranging from community-based socially oriented organizations all the way to peacebuilding specific or human rights organizations.

<p><b>R19 Be more intentional about building institutional and operational capacities when collaborating with national/ local CSOs as implementing partners:</b> Consider providing dedicated budgets lines and associated progress indicators. Explore ways of simplifying the national CSO eligibility procedures in the spirit of PBF's timely, flexibility and risk-tolerance principles (e.g., provision of funds to CSO direct recipients from an UN-agency rather than MPTFO).</p>				
<p><b>Management response:</b> Agreed. PBF is committed to incentivize and finance UN system to promote CSO engagement through systematic/scalable accountability system.</p>				
Key action(s)	Completion date	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status (initiated, completed or no due date)
5.1: Promote the application of Community Engagement Guidelines through PBF programming.	End of 2024	Gender Advisor, HR Advisor and GPI and YPI coordinator	PBF Guidelines updated.	Completed
5.2: Continue to partner with CSOs through initiatives such as GPI 2.0 and other initiatives	End of 2023	Programming teams with GPI and YPI coordinator	Between 2021, 2022 and 2023 the share of allocation of total approvals to CSOs as direct recipients of funds was 10.6%, 13.4% and 18.9% respectively. Between the three years, the number of local CSOs that are direct recipients of PBF funds increased from 2 to 5 to 11.	Completed
5.3: Encourage and support more joint UN-CSO programmes.	March 2024	PBF Management	In 2023, 12.9 per cent of newly approved projects were joint UN-CSO projects, including with local civil society organizations, an increase from 4.5 per cent in 2022.	Completed

#### Evaluation recommendation 6. Catalytic effects

**R20 Better articulate the catalytic nature of PBF's engagement:** At the country portfolio level, identify context-specific opportunities for catalytic programming based on the key peacebuilding changes sought in the SRFs. Ensure that the country level M&E team examines several projects that claim catalytic effects, to determine to what extent those expectations have been met and they contributed to the

realization of the set country goals. At the project level, put greater emphasis on the development of a clear strategy to not only mobilize actors and resources that will build on the work started by PBF programming but also foster national ownership for additional activities relevant to peacebuilding to occur. Such a concerted and strategic approach requires dedicated time, effort and monitoring over the lifetime of the project.

**R21 Encourage the set-up of more partnerships:** Diversify partnerships with bilateral donors, the World Bank, governments, INGOs, regional organizations etc. through both programmatic collaboration (e.g., joint analysis and planning) and strategic positioning of the Fund as gap filler, initiator of critical intervention or proof of concept peacebuilding approaches that others can then take to scale through larger financing instruments.

**Management response:** Agreed.

Key action(s)	Completion date	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status (initiated, completed or no due date)
6.1: Undertake a study to understand PBF's catalytic role in 2022 and recommends ways to embed sustainability and catalytic effects from design stage.	End of 2023	DMEL team	Aggregation exercise for 2022 completed. Catalytic Effect Guidelines developed.	Completed
6.2: Prioritize engagement with leaderships on the ground (RCs) to better position PBF as catalyser for larger stream of peace financing.	Ongoing	PBF Management	Institutionalization of annual global virtual meetings with RCs and ASG for Peacebuilding Support to discuss PBF priorities and positioning, in addition to country-by-country engagement with RCs.	Completed (ongoing)

#### Evaluation recommendation 7. National ownership

**R22 Undertake a process of JSC revitalization:** Ensure that a functioning and active oversight mechanism is in place in all countries with considerable PBF investments. Be more adamant about the importance of having regular national (or regional as applicable) JSC meetings, co-chaired by RCs and relevant high-level government counterparts and inclusive of some civil society, local government and development partners representatives.

**R23 Seek alternative ways of ensuring national ownership and leadership in exceptional situations:** Diversify options of working in countries undergoing violent conflict and/or where national authorities are either delegitimized or overthrown. This includes defining clearer parameters for PBF's engagement in estranged situations, seeking ways to work more with local governments and creating the space/ legal framework for civil society continued engagement.

**Management response:** Agreed.

Key action(s)	Completion date	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status (initiated, completed or no due date)
7.1: Revitalize Joint Steering Committees	March 2024	Programming Teams	In 2023, Joint Steering Committees were functional in 19 of the 26 eligible countries and territories. Bosnia and Herzegovina and Somalia held their first committee meetings in 2024.	Completed
7.2: Encourage and support more joint UN-CSO programmes.	March 2024	PBF Management	In 2023, 12.9 per cent of newly approved projects were joint UN-CSO projects, including with local civil society organizations, an increase from 4.5 per cent in 2022.	Completed
7.3: Discussion and internal note on options of working in countries with exceptional situations.	June 2024 New date: March 2026	PBF Management	Agreed as part of 2025 prioritization strategy to prepare customized approach to Sahelian States Alliance (AES) countries.	Ongoing

#### Evaluation recommendation 8. Cohesive UN strategies

**R24 Leverage the integration of PBSO into the DPPA for more coherence and greater peacebuilding impact:** Ensure PBF participation (from PBSO or through PBF Secretariats in country) in CCAs and UNSDCF development to ensure joint analysis of conflict drivers, entry points

and programmatic responses. Explore opportunities of further linking PBF support to UNSDCF in an attempt to operationalize the HDP Nexus and contribute to SDG 16. This could take the form of providing catalytic support to peacebuilding relevant elements of the UNSCDF, a clearer connection to the eligibility process and/or contributing PBF peacebuilding M&E expertise for the UNCT. Engage regional DCO and PDAs into evaluation support including integration in UNSDCF evaluations.

**Management response:** Agreed. PBF is committed to contributing to and remain aligned to the UNSDCF.

Key action(s)	Completion date	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status (initiated, completed or no due date)
8.1: Revitalize Joint steering committees	March 2024	Programming Teams	In 2023, Joint Steering Committees were functional in 19 of the 26 eligible countries and territories. Bosnia and Herzegovina and Somalia held their first committee meetings in 2024. Share of PRF-recipient countries that have Joint Steering Committees or equivalent in place increased from 59% in 2022 to 73% in 2023.	Completed
8.2: PBF will promote alignment with and track number of countries where the eligibility process is aligned to UNSDCF formulation.	March 2024	PBF Management and Programming Teams	According to the PBF Strategic Performance Framework, the number of PRF countries where PBF planning is aligned with new UNSDCF increased from 0 in 2022 to 2 newly eligible countries in 2023.	Completed

#### Evaluation recommendation 9. DM&E and Learning

**R26 Clarify the scope and intended use of M&E generated information:** Continue to explore good enough yet robust M&E practices that are commensurate with the expected peacebuilding outcomes. Further develop learning and information sharing of evaluation findings and best practices, including through the organization of (sub)regional stakeholder meetings. Articulate value for money considerations of evaluative exercises beyond accountability purposes.

**R27 Strengthen support to Design, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning:** Ensure adequate and sustainable staffing in PBSO within the DM&E Team, with additional focus on design, monitoring and data analysis. Strengthen collation and aggregation of data at global level while strengthening DM&E systems and capacities at country level, e.g., through support to PBF Secretariats and projects supporting national capacities (of government and civil society) for collection and analysis of data on peacebuilding results and SDG 16.

**Management response:** Agreed. PBF acknowledges the need to strengthen its focus on design, monitoring and data analysis dependent on sustainability of structure and capacity.

Key action(s)	Completion date	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status (initiated, completed or no due date)
9.1: DMEL will provide guidance and training for design and monitoring of programmes for priority countries.	Dec 2024	DMEL team	Training was conducted by end of 2024.	Completed
9.2: PBF will aggregate results at portfolio and global levels.	Feb 2024	DMEL team & Data Analyst	Aggregation exercise completed.	Completed
9.3: Organization of sub-regional stakeholder meetings around M&E with brainstorming around monitoring, evaluation and design of projects and dissemination.	Feb 2024	DMEL team & Programming Officers	M&E Peer Support Group set up, with sub-regional online meetings to follow.	Completed (through COP and PSG)
9.4: Engage with additional UN and non-UN actors for impact measurement of peacebuilding	Dec 2024	DMEL with PBSO & other actors	Partnerships for impact evaluation are ongoing. PBF allocated funds for impact evaluation until end of 2025.	Completed