

## The Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund (PBF)

### Project Evaluation Checklist

*Last Updated: September 2023*

#### Executive Summary

- ✓ Is clearly presented and reflects an analytical summary of conflict drivers and desired peacebuilding outcome (i.e., goes beyond activity-level reporting).
- ✓ Includes **all necessary elements** about the project and the evaluation:
  - overview of the project (project code, full title, country and target localities, project start and end dates, funds recipients/implementing agencies, project budget)
  - evaluation timeline, purpose, objectives and intended audience
  - evaluation methodology
  - key summary of 1) findings, 2) lessons learned, and 3) recommendations
- ✓ Serves as a standalone document useful for informing decision-making and is of relevant conciseness and depth for key users (**maximum of 5 pages**). It does not introduce new information from what is presented in the rest of the report.

#### Story for PBF website

- ✓ A story for the PBF website (1200 to 1500 words) has been drafted by the evaluators in close cooperation with the PBF communication team. The story highlights lessons learned and achievements of the evaluated project and quotes from stakeholders.

#### Background/Introduction

- ✓ Clear and relevant description of the project including **objective(s), location(s), timeline, budget, and implementation status** (including any extensions and rationale for why extension was granted). Reference is given to whether the project is part of one of the **PBF priority windows**: Gender Promotion Initiative (GPI)/Youth Promotion Initiative (YPI), cross-border, or transitions.
- ✓ Clear and relevant **description of intended beneficiaries**, in terms of numbers reached (with disaggregation by location, gender, age, disability, as appropriate for the purpose of the evaluation), their needs and interests in relation to peacebuilding.
- ✓ Clear and relevant description of the context of the project, including a **conflict analysis** that addresses the conflict setting and conflict drivers and manifestations, as well as other key issues (i.e., policy, socio-economic, political, cultural, power/privilege, institutional, international factors).
- ✓ Linkages drawn to the **SDGs** and relevant targets and indicators for the area being evaluated, as well as to **national peacebuilding plans** and **PBF Strategic Results Framework** (for interventions funded after 2020, if applicable).
- ✓ Identification of implementing agency(ies), national implementing partners, local communities, social institutions, and other stakeholders; and of linkages between them (e.g., **stakeholder map**).

### Evaluation purpose, objective, and scope

- ✓ **Purpose of evaluation** is clearly defined (e.g., accountability and/or learning), including key intended uses and users.
- ✓ Clear and complete description of **evaluation objectives**/what the evaluation seeks to accomplish (e.g., assessment of the project's peacebuilding results). Any changes made to the objectives included in the ToR are explained.
- ✓ Clear and relevant description of the **scope of the evaluation**: what will and will not be covered (thematically, chronologically, geographically with key terms defined), as well as, if applicable, the reasons for this scope. The intent to consider peacebuilding/conflict mitigation should be clear.
- ✓ **Stakeholder participation in the implementation and management of the evaluation process** is discussed, including the engagement of project beneficiaries and civil society implementing partners (if applies), and how to adequately reflect the stakeholders' perceptions (i.e., as informants, as Evaluation Reference Group, in the validation of findings), including how the management of joint evaluations is organized, if applicable.
- ✓ Clear description of the intervention's **intended objectives**.
- ✓ **Causal relationship between project outputs and outcomes** is presented in narrative and/or graphic form (e.g., results chain, logic model, theory of change). The presentation incorporates conflict dynamics, including the drivers of conflict the project aims to address.
- ✓ Project's **theory of change (ToC) is assessed** and, if shortcomings are found, it is reformulated/improved by the evaluators (ToC is developed by evaluators for projects that do not have one). **Assumptions** are clearly articulated and are assessed for validity by evaluators.

### Design and methodology

- ✓ Evaluation **questions and sub-questions are appropriate** for meeting the objectives and purpose of the evaluation. **The relevant criteria (Relevance; Efficiency; Effectiveness; Sustainability; Coherence; Conflict-sensitivity; Catalytic; Time-sensitivity; Risk Tolerance and Innovation; Localization – as mentioned in the evaluation matrix) are specified and are aligned with the questions.** Note that it is more important to have the right questions rather than many questions, as a large number of questions/sub-questions can dilute the focus of the evaluation.
- ✓ **Evaluation matrix** is provided in the report (or as an annex to the report) that includes:
  - Questions and sub-questions per evaluative criterion
  - Methods for data collection/data sources (e.g., key informant interviews, focus group discussions, project monitoring reports, surveys, etc.)
  - Evaluation-specific indicators and benchmarks to assess a given question/sub-question.

*See annex of this checklist for a template evaluation matrix.*

- ✓ **Evaluation design and set of methods** (e.g., non-experimental, theory-based, contribution analysis, etc.) are relevant and adequately robust for the evaluation's purpose, objectives, and scope; and are fully and clearly described (including the rationale for selection of tools). Stakeholder groups are engaged in multiple ways to support triangulation (i.e., data collection goes beyond KIIs for government officials/ implementers and FGDs for beneficiaries).
- ✓ **Data sources** are appropriate - these would normally include qualitative and quantitative sources (unless otherwise specified in the ToR) - and are all clearly described.
- ✓ **Sampling strategy** is provided - it should include a description of how diverse perspectives are captured (or, if not, provide reasons for this). The sampling strategy should be comprehensive for all methods, including KII, FGDs, and site visit selection, and should show how the sampling is representative thematically, geographically and by stakeholder group, as relevant.
- ✓ Clear and complete description of the **methods of analysis**.
- ✓ Methodology allows for **drawing causal connections between outputs and expected outcomes**, including capturing how the intervention has contributed to peacebuilding change.
- ✓ Clear and complete description of **limitations and constraints faced by the evaluation**, including those related to security-related travel limitations, availability and adequacy of baseline or monitoring data, or other gaps in the evidence that was generated and mitigation of bias, and how these were addressed by the evaluators (as feasible). Identified limitations need to be accompanied by mitigation strategies.
- ✓ Clear description of **how the methodology was responsive to human rights, gender equality, and Leave No One Behind**.
- ✓ Explicit reference to the **UNEG obligations of evaluators** (independence, impartiality, credibility, conflicts of interest, accountability) and/or the principles in the 2020 revised **UNEG Ethical Guidelines** (integrity, accountability, respect, beneficence). Includes a description of how these were applied and/or the Ethical Pledge is included as an annex.
- ✓ **Conflict sensitivity and Do No Harm considerations** are described and are apparent within the conduct of the evaluation (i.e., is there evidence that the evaluators considered conflict dynamics when engaging stakeholders and ensured no one was put risk; are questions framed in a way that is sensitive to local conflict factors; power dynamics amongst participants are taken into account). Other **ethical safeguards** appropriate for the issues relevant to methodology are also described (i.e., confidentiality, data security, respect for dignity and diversity, right to self-determination, fair representation, Do No Harm approach when consulting beneficiaries and particularly minors and vulnerable groups). Special safeguards should be described for collecting data with children, if minors were involved in data collection – only obtaining informed consent from guardians is not enough. If organizational ethical clearance was obtained, it should be explicitly noted.

## Findings

- ✓ Findings marshal **sufficient levels of evidence** to systematically address all of the evaluation's questions, sub-questions, and criteria, including conflict-related issues.
- ✓ Explicit **reference to the project results framework/ToC** in the formulation of the findings.

- ✓ Evaluation **uses credible forms of both qualitative and quantitative data**. Quantitative data can be numerical expressions of coded qualitative data. Main findings must be supported by more than one data source with explicit citations/references to specific groups of stakeholders. The evaluation **presents both output and outcome-level data** as relevant to the evaluation framework. **Triangulation is evident** through the use of multiple data sources.
- ✓ Findings are clearly presented and are **supported by and respond to the evidence** presented, both positive and negative. Key findings should be clearly highlighted (i.e., through a summary of findings for each question or bolded finding statements). Findings are **based on clear performance indicators, standards, benchmarks**, or other means of comparison as relevant for each question. There is an **in-depth level of analysis of outcome-level results** in particular.
- ✓ **Causal factors** (contextual, organizational, managerial, etc.) leading to achievement or non-achievement of results are clearly identified in the analysis. **Unintended results**, and the reasons for these, are also considered.
- ✓ There is **adequate coverage and analysis of cross-cutting themes** – human rights, gender equality, and Leave No One Behind. **Disaggregated data** is presented to show differential results (distribution of results across different groups) as relevant to the intervention.
- ✓ Assessment of the **adequacy of the intervention's monitoring system** (i.e., completeness and appropriateness of results/performance framework, including M&E tools and their usage) to support decision-making.
- ✓ Findings refer to and **make use of the intervention's baseline and monitoring data**, including mid-line, end-line and perception surveys (if available).

### Conclusions and Lessons Learned

- ✓ Conclusions are clearly formulated and **reflect all of the criteria** that were to be covered as well as the **cross-cutting themes**. They are derived appropriately from the findings, clearly presenting the strengths and weaknesses of the intervention. They do not introduce new information.
- ✓ Conclusions **add insight and analysis** beyond the findings. They reflect the purpose and objectives of the evaluation and are sufficiently forward looking.
- ✓ Identified **lessons learned stem logically from the findings and have wider applicability and relevance** beyond the object of the evaluation. They are clearly and concisely presented yet have sufficient detail to be useful for organizational learning. The lessons learned section should answer the question: **what has been learned from the evaluation that would be useful for other/subsequent interventions in same country and in other contexts?**

### Recommendations

- ✓ Recommendations align with the evaluation purpose, are clearly formulated and logically derived from the findings and conclusions. They **address any major weaknesses identified in the findings**. The

recommendations on cross-cutting themes, including **gender equality**, and about the intervention's **M&E system**, must be included.

✓ Recommendations are **useful and realistic within the peacebuilding (and PBF) context**. They are **actionable** for primary intended users and uses (specific and relevant to the intervention); guidance is given for implementation, as appropriate.

✓ **Clear identification of stakeholders responsible for action for each recommendation** (i.e., PBF, funds recipient/implementing agency, government counterpart), including the lead if multiple actors are responsible. A clear target should specify not only an organization but the level (e.g., HQ, RC, agency) and/or department/unit. There should be **no more than 10 recommendations** and they should be prioritized (e.g., urgent, high, medium).

### Report structure and presentation

✓ **Opening pages** include:

- Country
- Project number (MPTFO & PBF)
- Full project title
- Project start and end dates (month and year)
- Funds recipients
- Timeframe of the evaluation
- Date of the evaluation report (month and year)
- Names/organizations of evaluators
- Name of the organization commissioning the evaluation
- Table of contents (including, as relevant, tables, graphs, figures, annexes; list of acronyms/abbreviations, page numbers)

✓ **Annexes** include:

- Terms of Reference for the evaluation
- Evaluation matrix (if not provided in the body of the report)
- List of stakeholder groups participating as informants (numbers of participants disaggregated by stakeholder group, and gender, if latter not provided in methodology section)
- Results chain/ToC/logical framework (unless included in the body of the report)
- List of site visits
- Data collection instruments (such as survey or interview questionnaires – in the language of the evaluation report)
- Bibliography/list of documentary evidence
- Other appropriate annexes could include additional details on methodology, information about the evaluator(s), etc.

✓ Structure is easy to identify and navigate (for instance, with **numbered sections, clear titles and sub-titles**, well formatted).

- ✓ Structure follows an easily discernible **logical flow**. Context, purpose, and methodology would normally precede findings, which would normally be followed by conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations.
- ✓ Report is of reasonable length; it does not exceed number of pages that may be specified in ToR. If not specified, project evaluations **should not exceed 30 pages** (excluding annexes).
- ✓ Report is **easy to understand** (written in accessible way for intended audience) and generally free from grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors. Inclusive language is used.
- ✓ Frequent use of well-chosen **visual aids** (such as infographics, maps, tables, figures) to convey key information. These are clearly presented, labeled, and referenced in text.

### **UN-SWAP & Disability inclusion**

- ✓ Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) is **integrated in the evaluation scope of analysis**, and evaluation criteria and questions are designed in a way that ensures GEWE-related data will be collected.
- ✓ A **gender-responsive methodology, methods and tools**, and data analysis techniques are selected.
- ✓ Evaluation **findings, conclusions and recommendations reflect a gender analysis**.
- ✓ Evaluation is **disability inclusive** in respect to its overall design, methodology, and analysis.

**Annex: Evaluation matrix template (to be adjusted as relevant)**

<b>Evaluation Criterion</b>	<b>Evaluation Question</b>	<b>Evaluation Sub-Question</b>	<b>Data collection method and source</b>	<b>Evaluation indicator</b>	<b>Evaluation benchmark</b>
<b>Relevance</b>	Q1: Was the project relevant in addressing conflict drivers and factors for peace identified in a conflict analysis?	Q1.1:			
		Q1.2:			
	Q2: Was the project appropriate and strategic to the main peacebuilding goals and challenges in the country at the time of the project's design? Did relevance continue throughout implementation?	Q2.1:			
		Q2.2:			
	Q3: Was the project relevant to the UN's peacebuilding mandate and the SDGs, in particular SDG 16?	Q3.1:			
		Q3.2:			
	Q4: Was the project relevant to the needs and priorities of the target groups/beneficiaries? Were they consulted during design and implementation of the project?	Q4.1:			
		Q4.2:			
	Q5: How relevant and responsive has the project been to supporting peacebuilding priorities in the country?	Q5.1:			
		Q5.2:			
	Q6: Did the project's theory of change clearly articulate assumptions about why the project approach is expected to produce the desired change? Was the theory of change grounded in evidence?	Q6.1:			
		Q6.2:			
Q7: To what extent did the project respond to peacebuilding gaps?	Q7.1:				
	Q7.2:				
<b>Efficiency</b>	Q8: How efficient was the overall staffing, planning and coordination within the project (including between the implementing agencies and with stakeholders)? Have project	Q8.1:			
		Q8.2:			



	funds and activities been delivered in a timely manner?				
	Q9: How efficient and successful was the project's implementation approach, including procurement, number of implementing partners and other activities?	Q9.1:			
		Q9.2:			
	Q10: How well did the project collect and use data to monitor results? How effectively was updated data used to manage the project?	Q10.1:			
		Q10.2:			
	Q11: How well did the project team communicate with implementing partners, stakeholders and project beneficiaries on its progress?	Q11.1:			
		Q11.2:			
	Q12: Did the project provide value for money? Have resources been used efficiently?	Q12.1:			
		Q12.2:			
	Q13: To what extent did the project ensure synergies within different programs of UN agencies and other implementing organizations and donors?	Q13.1:			
		Q13.2:			
Effectiveness	Q14: To what extent did the project achieve its intended objectives and contribute to the project's strategic vision?	Q14.1:			
		Q14.2:			
	Q15: To what extent did the project substantively mainstream gender and support gender- and youth-responsive peacebuilding?	Q15.1:			
		Q15.2:			
	Q16: How appropriate and clear was the project's targeting strategy in terms of geographic and beneficiary targeting?	Q16.1:			
		Q16.2:			
	Q17: Was the project monitoring system adequately capturing data on <b><i>peacebuilding</i></b> results at an appropriate outcome level?	Q17.1:			
		Q17.2:			



<b>Sustainability</b>	Q18: To what extent did the project contribute to the broader strategic outcomes identified in nationally owned strategic plans, legislative agendas and policies?	Q18.1:			
		Q18.2:			
	Q19: Did the intervention design include an appropriate sustainability and exit strategy (including promoting national/local ownership, use of national capacity etc.) to support positive changes in peacebuilding after the end of the project?	Q19.1:			
		Q19.2:			
	Q20: How strong is the commitment of the government and other stakeholders to sustaining the results of PBF support and continuing initiatives?	Q20.1:			
		Q20.2:			
Q21: How has the project enhanced and contributed to the development of national capacity in order to ensure suitability of efforts and benefits?	Q21.1:				
	Q21.2:				
<b>Coherence</b>	Q22: To what extent did the project complement work among different entities, especially with other UN actors?	Q22.1:			
		Q22.2:			
	Q23: If the project was part of a broader package of PBF, to what degree were the project's design, implementation, monitoring, and reporting aligned with that of other projects?	Q23.1:			
		Q23.2:			
Q24: How were stakeholders involved in the project's design and implementation?	Q24.1:				
	Q24.2:				
<b>Conflict-sensitivity</b>	Q25: Did the project have an explicit approach to conflict-sensitivity?	Q25.1:			
		Q25.2:			
	Q26: Were the implementing agencies' internal capacities adequate for ensuring an ongoing conflict-sensitive approach?	Q26.1:			
		Q26.2:			
	Q27.1:				

	Q27: Was the project responsible for any unintended negative impacts?	Q27.2:			
	Q28: Was an ongoing process of context monitoring and a monitoring system that allows for monitoring of unintended impacts established?	Q28.1:			
		Q28.2:			
<b>Catalytic</b>	Q29: Was the project financially and/or programmatically catalytic?	Q29.1:			
		Q29.2:			
	Q30: Has PBF funding been used to scale-up other peacebuilding work and/or has it helped to create broader platforms for peacebuilding?	Q30.1:			
		Q30.2:			
<b>Time-sensitivity</b>	Q31: Was the project well-timed to address a conflict factor or capitalize on a specific window of opportunity?	Q31.1:			
		Q31.2:			
	Q32: Was PBF funding used to leverage political windows of opportunity for engagement?	Q32.1:			
		Q32.2:			
<b>Risk Tolerance and Innovation</b>	Q33: If the project was characterized as “high risk”, were risks adequately monitored and mitigated?	Q33.1:			
		Q33.2:			
	Q34: How novel or innovative was the project approach? Can lessons be drawn to inform similar approaches elsewhere?	Q34.1:			
		Q34.2:			
<b>Localization</b>	Q35: Were national and local stakeholders sufficiently consulted and involved throughout the project cycle?	Q35.1:			
		Q35.2:			
	Q36: To what extent did the project strengthen the capacities of national and local stakeholders (national and local governments and CSOs)?	Q36.1:			
		Q36.2:			
	Q37: How useful did national and local stakeholders consider PBF’s support?	Q37.1:			
		Q37.2:			