

Review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund

JUPS KLUYSKENS, LANCE CLARK

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**Jups Kluyskens
Lance Clark**

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AG	Advisory Group
ASG	Assistant Secretary-General
BCPR	Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery
CSC	Country-Specific Configurations
CoP	Community of Practice
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
DFID	Department for International Development
DPA	Department of Political Affairs
DPKO	Department of Peace Keeping Operations
DSA	Daily Subsistence Allowance
ECOSOC	The Economic and Social Council (UN)
EU	European Union
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
FPB	Finance for Peacebuilding Branch
GA	General Assembly
IFI	International Financial Institution
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IRF	Immediate Response Facility
JSC	Joint Steering Committee

JPO	Junior Professional Officer
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPTF	Multi Partner Trust Fund
MPTF-O	Multi Partner Trust Fund Office
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
ODA	Overseas Development Assistance
PBC	Peacebuilding Commission
PDA	Peace and Development Advisor
PBF	Peacebuilding Fund
PBSO	Peacebuilding Support Office
PIU	Project Implementation Unit
PMP	Performance Management Plan
PPAB	Policy, Planning and Application Branch
PPP	Peacebuilding Priority Plan
PRF	Peacebuilding and Recovery Facility
RA	Recipient Agency
RC	Resident Coordinator
RG	Reference Group
RoL	Rule of Law
RUNO	Recipient United Nations Organization
SC	Security Council
SBGV	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
SPF	State- and Peace-Building Fund

SPM	Special Political Mission
SRSR	Special Representative of the Secretary-General
SSR	Security Sector Reform
ToR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial development Organization
UN-SG	United Nations Secretary-General
VfM	Value for Money

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document presents the results of a global review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) undertaken by a team of consultants. This review fulfills a requirement of the Fund's Terms of Reference (TOR), which call for such independent evaluations every three years. The Review Team began its work in July 2013 and completed it in April 2014.

The Review focuses on PBF's work from 2010 onwards, the period since the previous review, and covering the most recent PBF Business Plan. The purpose of the Review, as stated in its ToR, is "to focus on the global strategy and approach of the Fund". The overall objectives of the assessment are to:

- Review the business model for the Fund, its strengths and weaknesses, and how it can be improved.
- Review the strategic positioning of the Fund at both global and national levels (among and within countries).

This Review is meant to help PBF learn from the experience of the past several years as a basis for developing a new Business Plan in 2014. The prime audiences for the report are PBF and its immediate partners within and outside the UN, as well as other key actors who contribute to peacebuilding.

The work of the Review team included reviewing a considerable number of documents, both internal and external. One week visits were made to seven countries currently receiving PBF funding - the Comoros, Guinea, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Nepal, Sierra Leone, and South Sudan. Interviews were conducted with PBF and other UN agencies and entities, UN member states, other officials in New York, and officials in a number of donor capitals.

This Executive Summary presents:

- A brief summary of the history and structure of the PBF;
- The main observations of the review; and
- Its recommendations to the PBF.

Summary of PBF History and Structure

The UN Peacebuilding Architecture

The Peacebuilding Fund is part of the larger UN Peacebuilding Architecture, which was created in order to help countries build sustainable peace and prevent relapse into violent conflict. The founding Resolutions were adopted in December 2005, but the PBF became operational in 2007, so PBF is still a very new entity.

The UN Peacebuilding Architecture consists of three parts:

- The Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) - the focus of this document.
- The Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), which works with countries that are officially "on the PBC agenda" to draw attention to the peacebuilding concerns and mobilize additional funding

- The Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) - headed by the Assistant Secretary-General (ASG) for Peacebuilding Support, who works directly under the authority of the UN Secretary-General

Operationally, the PBSO has three main Branches:

- The PBC Support Branch
- The Policy, Planning and Application Branch (PPAB)
- The Financing for Peacebuilding Branch (FPB)

PBF is at its core a mechanism for funding peacebuilding programmes in post-conflict countries. PBF delegates extensive responsibility and authority in-country to United Nations agencies and national governments, especially through the Joint Steering Committee (JSC) for programme development and implementation. The Assistant Secretary General (ASG) and FPB Branch are also assisted by the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office (MPTF-O), which handles funds and project monitoring, and by the other two Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) Branches. The PBF receives support and advice from UN agencies, donors, member states and others through the Peacebuilding Contact Group, the Senior Peacebuilding Group, and the PBF Advisory Group.

PBF is currently funding actions in 22 countries, including 14 which received new allocations in 2013. These new allocations totaled \$86.7 million, against a total to date of \$458 million. This 2013 figure was close to the \$100 million indicative target PBF has set for annual allocations.

PBF received \$40.8 million in new donor contributions from 18 member states in 2013, a lower amount than the previous year but nonetheless one that reflects the strong PBF position in terms of funds for allocation. These unspent funds in hand constituted \$122.7 million at the end of 2013, against a cumulative total donor contribution figure of \$540.1 million. These funds have been provided by a diverse donor base made up of 56 contributors. They are handled in-country by the relevant UN agencies known as Recipient UN Organizations (RUNO's). According to the SG Report 2013, 18 RUNO's received funding in 2013, with UNDP, UNICEF, UNOPS and UN Women receiving the largest transfers, accounting for 60% of this amount.

Main Report Observations

PBF's Two Financing Facilities – IRF and PRF

The Peacebuilding Fund has two “windows” for disbursing funds – the Immediate Response Facility (IRF) and the Peacebuilding and Recovery Facility (PRF).

The IRF is the project-based financing facility of the PBF that was created to address critical peacebuilding needs in the immediate aftermath of conflict, or as a result of a dramatic change in the country situation. It provides rapid funding for immediate peacebuilding and addressing urgent peacebuilding needs to support critical transitions. The PRF, on the other hand, is the programme based financing facility of the PBF, typically aimed at countries within five years following the end of the conflict. The PRF is the primary vehicle for PBF funding, providing $\frac{3}{4}$ of the total funding to date. PRF programmes focus on medium and long term peacebuilding needs. PBF programmes are operating longer and later in the peacebuilding phase than initially envisioned, in large part reflecting that peacebuilding is a lengthier period than was appreciated even a few years ago.

The IRF is often utilized as the initial PBF response to a new peacebuilding situation. It builds on a number of PBF assets, such as being fast and flexible, and focusing on practical, immediate needs. Initial IRF funding may be followed by PRF projects or by subsequent IRF ones. There are also a variety of situations in which the advantages of the IRF lead to its use later in the peacebuilding phase. This repeatedly occurs when new tensions or key challenges to the peace process arise, to help bridge the “transition” of a closing UN Mission, and to re-start PBF programmes that have been suspended following a violent change of government.

There is widespread support for the use of the IRF. Stakeholders value its speed and flexibility. The ability to design projects, have them approved, and receive funds up front has important benefits to projects, gives credibility to peace efforts, and allows the government to deliver concrete assistance to its people. The flexibility (which IRF shares with PRF) of being able to deal with a wider range of actors (militaries and rebel groups) and actions (e.g., paying per diems) than some other donors is also considered useful.

However, the conflict and funding gap analyses for an IRF are relatively brief. The short planning phase can sometimes produce a project portfolio consisting of small projects that lack strong strategic focus, and the short IRF time frame may sometimes also reduce government engagement and ownership of projects.

Nonetheless, most stakeholders called for the increased use of IRF programming and urged PBF to be pro-active in reaching out to the UN agencies and governments in countries that might benefit from it.

The programme development process for PRF programmes is more extensive and takes more time than for the IRF. It has been the focus of considerable PBF attention in the recent years, leading to a better articulated and more extensive methodology with useful guidelines and templates. It is important for PBF to continue articulating its niche in the medium and long term, and to clearly communicate to its stakeholders the benefits of the PRF approaches in these time frames. Numerous recommendations are made throughout this report to improve various aspects of PRF programming.

PBFs Four Priority Areas

PBF’s Business Plan articulates “Four Priority Areas” that contain eleven Outcome Areas (shown in bullets below). Each funded project must fit into one of these Outcome Areas.

Priority and Outcome Area

- | |
|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Support the implementation of peace agreements and political dialogue<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Security sector reform (SSR)• Rule of law (ROL)• Disarmament, demobilization, reintegration of former combatants (DDR)• Political dialogue for peace agreements2. Promote co-existence and peaceful resolution of conflict<ul style="list-style-type: none">• National reconciliation• Democratic governance• Management of natural resources (including land) |
|--|

3. Revitalize the economy and generate peace dividends
 - Short term employment generation
 - Sustainable livelihoods
4. Re-establish essential administrative services
 - Public administration
 - Public service delivery (including infrastructure)

The Review found the Four Priority Areas quite relevant to peacebuilding needs and sufficiently broad to encompass a considerable range of activities. Thus, no new priority areas are proposed.

A number of persons worried that the SSR and DDR Outcome Areas are both broad and costly. The concern was that PBF should carefully apply its own criteria to the projects it considers in these areas in order to make sure that its support adds value and doesn't simply top up a wider donor funding pool.

Within these Priority Areas, a number of topics were flagged for special further attention by in-country stakeholders. Among these are:

- The root causes and key “drivers” of conflict
- Youth (especially young men)
- Corruption
- Language issues (as they pertain to conflict)
- Conflict early warning systems; and
- Technical assistance for developing national strategies

PBF's Criteria and Niche

PBF has made significant efforts to define its “niche”. These include highlighting the key criteria of its work, as well as other distinctive aspects that have been cited by stakeholders. This niche is not meant to be unique, though it does make PBF useful and relatively unusual in the peacebuilding field.

There is no definitive list of the various criteria that PBF projects seek to embody. Thus, this Review has noted those that are most often flagged by PBF as crucial to its work. The Review then assessed the extent to which PBF embodies these criteria in practice. These criteria include the following:

Fast – This criteria is clearly valid for IRF programmes. The PRF programmes are not nearly as fast, but are arguably faster than most other donors.

Flexible – IRF programmes are flexible in their breadth of focus and in their streamlined procedures. PRF programmes also allow considerable flexibility across its priority areas. PRF programme development processes are also flexible in delegating authority to the Joint Steering Committee to develop priorities and select projects, and to UN agencies to use their own procedures and regulations for implementation.

Relevant - PBF's work has direct and immediate relevance to a country's peacebuilding process and it addresses critical peacebuilding gaps. While there are sometimes weaknesses in the creation and use of the conflict analyses, PBF's work seems to be regularly relevant to the peacebuilding needs of its programme countries.

Catalytic – PBF’s work is meant to be catalytic in two senses: by catalyzing the provision of additional resources, and by catalyzing wider peacebuilding actions. PBF gives catalyzing additional resources more emphasis than most donors, making it part of the project evaluation criteria for both IRF and PRF. However, there are aspects of PBF’s priorities that make resource mobilization difficult, such as prioritizing risk-taking projects and supporting “aid orphan” countries. While there is considerable anecdotal evidence of success in resource mobilization, it is hoped that a PBF review of its strengthened 2013 field data will provide more information on the extent of PBF success.

PBF has also strengthened its tools and guidance for catalyzing additional peacebuilding actions, including recently expanding the sub-categories. While virtually all projects focus on implementing key aspects of the peacebuilding process, and examples of such catalytic effects were observed, it is hoped that a review of the 2013 field data will provide evidence of the extent of such efforts to catalyze additional peacebuilding actions.

Risk-taking, innovation, and funding politically sensitive actions – It is clear that PBF is serious about promoting these attributes, providing practical guidance about how to do so, and emphasizing them in its reports and documents. It appears that UN agencies are well aware of this advocacy, and as a result are probably taking more risks than they would otherwise. It is also clear that these are challenging criteria. The sense of the Review Team is that PBF projects typically take more risks than the average donor, but it is not clear that the majority of PBF projects consistently demonstrate these attributes strongly.

Funding key actions which others are not (i.e., funding “gaps”) – PBF prioritizes actions that other donors a) are not able to move fast enough to fund, b) are unwilling to fund because of the risks, and/or c) are unable to fund because of their regulations. The Review Team encountered numerous cases of IRF funds moving faster than those of other donors, and thus filling gaps. There were examples of risk-taking, as noted above, but not at the level of becoming a routine action across the portfolio. There were cases when PBF was able to usefully fund actions when regulations such as those of the Official Development Assistance (ODA) blocked some other donor initiatives.

Capacity building - PBF prioritizes working with the host nation’s government to carry out their roles in leading and coordinating peacebuilding activities. In practice this effort has seen mixed results and needs greater funding. There are also observers who contend that the relatively low amount of PBF funding for Priority Area Number 4 on “Establishment or re-establishment of essential administrative services” should be markedly increased, as strengthening the core administrative functions is crucial to peacebuilding. PBF does not provide funds to UN agencies for their overall capacity building, but it does work with UN in-country staff to carry out PBF procedures, processes and projects.

National Ownership - PBF has strengthened its emphasis on national ownership in the past several years, especially in terms of government engagement in the Joint Steering Committee. In general, governments appear to be playing lead and coordinating roles, but this has sometimes been weakened by gaps in government capacity, which can reduce its ability to fully engage in PBF work.

Political Commitment – Early experience showed how crucial having the clear and firm commitment of key government officials was to the success of PBF programming. Evidence of such a commitment is now a criteria for country eligibility, and it is promoted in other ways as well (e.g., supporting government agencies designated to handle peacebuilding actions), but it will take some time to see if this will result in substantial improvements.

Inclusivity - PBF has also sought to increase the involvement of national NGOs and CSOs, as well as local leaders and beneficiaries. There appears to have been some success regarding national NGOs and CSOs, in particular, in project implementation. In reaching out to local leaders and beneficiaries,

PBF relies on the RUNOs and their implementing partners. More needs to be done in this regard, as there is still a top-down approach to project design and site selection, and to some extent in project implementation.

Stakeholders also attribute further distinctive characteristics to PBF's work. Among these are:

Focus on funding “aid orphan countries” – This attribute was featured in the early days of PBF and remains a priority for it. However, PBF now also funds countries where there is significant donor attention, but where it can provide value-added and fill important gaps, which is a useful approach.

Neutrality of the UN – There is an advantage in many peacebuilding situations of a fund that has the generally perceived neutrality of the United Nations. This point was made repeatedly by government officials and other donors, who noted that many bilateral aid donors were perceived as having political agendas.

As summarized above, these PBF criteria are extensive and ambitious. PBF is not always able to reach such a high bar. For example, criteria such as risk-taking, catalyzing the unblocking of peacebuilding processes, and filling donor gaps are not easy to do or routinely accomplished. However, the peacebuilding field benefits from PBF having a high level of ambition, both in terms of what it is able to accomplish directly, and in helping to “push the envelope” for what can be done in the peacebuilding field more broadly.

PBF's Partnerships

PBF is still a relatively new and modest-sized fund that delegates great authority and responsibility to those in-country. Thus, much of its impact depends on the actions of its partners.

PBF places particular emphasis on strengthening government capacity. When the partnership between the UN and the government is strong, there is considerable mutual learning about how to deliver results on the ground. However, more can still be done to strengthen government capacity. Also, while PBF gives special attention to funding actions that cannot be funded by the government, it must work with other donors and government officials to ensure the proper alignment and complementarity of these activities.

PBF also sometimes uses government strategic documents in place of the PRF's Peacebuilding Priority Plan. This approach increases the strategic focus of peacebuilding work, avoids duplication of effort, strengthens coordination, and builds national ownership. However, it can lead to difficulties if the documents lack an adequate peacebuilding focus and if they do not include the risky and politically-sensitive programming that is a PBF priority, which PBF must mitigate.

Other UN agencies are key design and implementing partners of PBF-funded programmes. The main concern in this regard is that some agencies lack experienced peacebuilding staff. This puts a premium on PBF's technical assistance.

PBF also has important relationships with the UN's Department of Political Affairs (DPA) and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO). PBF's ability to fund peacebuilding actions that relate to the overall mandates of DPA-led Special Political Missions (SPMs) can and has added to the credibility and capacity of these missions. DPA and PBF are exploring (together with UNDP) how they might increase the number of Peace and Development Advisors (with expertise in politics, peacebuilding, and post-conflict development), providing much-needed help in the development and coordination of PBF programmes, while giving DPA a greater field presence across a wider range of countries.

DPKO staff expressed interest in continuing to collaborate with PBF on projects that would help address gaps in DPKO-related programmes, as well as in having PBF promote and fund politically sensitive actions that DPKO supports but cannot fund. There was also widespread agreement that PBF funding can be useful at the closing of a UN Mission and assist with the transition.

PBF also partners with international and national NGOs and CSOs. Some of these organizations have similar capacity limitations as do some of the UN agencies, emphasizing the need for strong technical assistance by PBF and others with substantial experience.

The most recent PBF guidelines note the importance of national NGO participation in project planning and implementation. However, country visits and a review of related documents indicated that national NGO participation in roles other than as implementing partners still remains limited.

PBF also partners with international NGO's at headquarters and globally, and has received useful support from PeaceNexus and Interpeace in particular. These partnerships strengthen PBF's already lean staffing and help to address the growing demand for further field support. Further partnerships of this type should be explored.

The Review Team found limited engagement of local leaders and the local population in most PBF project development, and more but still not full participation in most project implementation. Most often it appeared that UN agencies that already had a strong emphasis on local participation incorporated it in their PBF work, while those who were weak on these aspects did not. PBF is working to increase such participation.

PBF also has relationships with other funders. In most countries, the World Bank and the European Union are members or observers in the JSC. This enhances coordination and is particularly important when these organizations fund their own peacebuilding programmes. The EU's Fund for Stability (Ffs) has in several cases successfully cooperated closely with the PBF.

The World Bank's State and Peace Building Fund (SPF) operates in some PBF countries but the Review team could not systematically assess PBF's partnership with this Fund. There appears little coordination with the SPF or the African and Asian Development Banks.

The New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States focuses on improving aid effectiveness and overall peace and statebuilding efforts. UNDP and PBSO participate in the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States on behalf of the UN. This offers a unique opportunity for the PBF to contribute its experience and knowledge to the New Deal. In addition, the New Deal principles provide opportunities for both the PBF and PBC to align with the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States.

Key Steps in Programme Development

The determination of country eligibility is a crucial step within the overall PBF programme development process. All countries must be officially declared eligible by the UN Secretary-General in order to receive funding. One route is to be formally taken onto the agenda of the UN Peacebuilding Commission, as such countries are automatically eligible for PBF funding. This applies to 6 among the 22 current PBF active countries.¹ A second route for country eligibility is to receive PBF funding for Immediate Response Facility (IRF) projects totaling up to \$3 million dollars under authority delegated from the Secretary-General to the ASG of PBSO.

¹ "Active countries" refers to those where PBF projects are currently being implemented, or where the country has been declared eligible and the programme development process is under way.

The main PBF country eligibility process – for IRF funding above \$3 million and for all Peacebuilding and Recovery Facility (PRF) funding - includes an application put forward by the senior UN official in-country (e.g., the UN Resident Coordinator). The eligibility process then entails internal review by the PBSO, inputs from the Senior Peacebuilding Group, and, if approved by the ASG of PBSO, submission to the UN Secretary-General for a final decision.

In practice, the eligibility process includes significant informal discussions prior to any formal application. These are generally between government representatives and the senior UN officials in-country, as well as the ASG of PBSO and PBF staff. Many of these discussions end with the mutual conclusion that the country is not a good fit for PBF funding. This has been the case in approximately 14 countries since 2010.

The recent new PBF countries indicate a de facto broadening of the types of post-conflict settings where PBF works. The inclusion of countries such as Bosnia and Herzegovina reveals a willingness to initiate or continue funding later in the peacebuilding process than was generally envisioned in PBF's first years. There is merit in PBF's new funding breadth, but only if it is clear that the funds can help drive important peacebuilding processes in each circumstance.

Some feel that eligibility preference should be given to “aid orphans”, countries that receive little international attention and aid. This view was central to the creation of the UN Peacebuilding Architecture in the first place. This stipulation, however, has been less strictly applied in recent years, and need not be, as long as PBF can provide clear value-added in other contexts, and that this is not done at the cost of support to “aid orphan” countries.

Part of the programme development process includes undertaking a conflict analysis. Respondents consistently stated that a strong conflict analysis is a crucial prerequisite for a well-targeted and successful PRF programme. A sizable number of PBF programmes and projects were seen as having weaknesses in this area. Overall, there was a sense that conflict analyses were improving, but constraints in time, effort, and inclusivity must still be addressed.

Field respondents also noted problems in the “funding gap analysis”, which is meant to identify where PBF funding can best help. In many post-conflict settings, such studies encounter large gaps in data due to lack of donor information and limited government capacity.

The process for determining the size of a country's funding “envelope” entails initial informal discussions between the UN senior leadership in-country and PBF/PBSO at headquarters - discussions which generate an initial indicative range for the envelope. The field then develops its overall funding request, which may entail further negotiations with PBF/PBSO headquarters. The criteria for determining funding amounts are not clear and do not appear in the PBF Application Guidelines.

Joint Steering Committees (JSCs) play a key role in programme development and implementation. Co-chaired by a senior government official and the senior UN official in-country, JSCs are composed of various peacebuilding stakeholders, including key government, UN, and development partner representatives and civil society members. Their usefulness and performance vary based in part on their composition, as well as the host government's and the UN's engagement, interest and capacities. The Review Team found that NGO or CSO representation on the JSC is often inadequate and PBF needs to correct this. JSCs can provide strong National Ownership of the PBF programme, a key determinant of implementation success and sustainability.

For PRF programme development, another major step is developing and selecting among project proposals. This entails having UN agencies develop proposals within the framework of the priorities identified in the Peacebuilding Priority Plan.

One recurring concern was that some UN agencies were said to be forwarding proposals developed earlier that did not demonstrate much innovation or adequate peacebuilding specificity. Another was the tendency of some agencies to see the PBF as a pie for all to divide. PBF must balance between an inclusivity that draws expertise from the range of UN agencies in-country, and the desire to target agencies with the most relevant experience and the greatest chance of success.

A related topic is whether PBF should seek to diversify its funding among more small projects, or concentrate on fewer, larger ones. Some donors in particular support the fewer-but-larger-sized approach, arguing that it generates a “critical mass” needed for impact, and lower collective transaction costs. Some other observers contend that weak implementation capacity in fragile states argues for a diverse portfolio in order to reduce the odds of overall failure and to encourage innovative, risk-taking pilot projects. The Review Team did not find conclusive evidence in-country for either view.

For the PRF, concerns were expressed that in some cases the programme development process took a year or more to complete. Most felt that it should be concluded much sooner. PBF is now trying to address this concern by increasing technical assistance to the field, and by insisting on shorter time lines for action in the field, but should also explore possible ways to streamline PBF procedures.

PBF Support to the Field

PBF has put considerable effort into strengthening and expanding the written guidance that it provides for the field. Such guidance is generally much sought after and appreciated in the field, where few people have long experience with PBF.

An important aspect of this support is PBF’s Knowledge Management information and tools. With active programmes in 22 countries, PBF has one of the most extensive information databases existing in the peacebuilding field. It also has important links with the PBSO Policy Branch and the PBC Lessons Learned mechanism. PBF’s growing emphasis on Monitoring and Evaluation (M & E) also positions it well as a knowledge resource. Thus PBF should both increase its internal Knowledge Management capacities and actions as well as play a stronger leading role in Knowledge Management in the peacebuilding field.

The person in overall charge of PBF functions in-country is the senior UN official. Given his or her multiple duties, the bulk of the management duties for the PBF functions lies with the relevant senior UN coordination officer and his/her UN coordination staff.

However, in most locations PBF’s work is but one aspect of a crowded UN agenda, and it sometimes does not receive adequate attention. Further, funding for UN coordination in the field is diminishing, which negatively impacts PBF and calls for PBF advocacy actions.

Earlier, PBF was able to fund a number of field coordination posts through its own headquarters funding reserve. As these are now essentially exhausted, the posts are mostly funded as part of the overhead on PBF projects. The same is true for PBF secretariats, which are now a budget line in the PRF in-country programme funding.

Another useful mechanism for staff support in-country is the “surge capacity”. This is accomplished through temporary PBF (or PBSO) missions to the field. Many field respondents asked to receive more support of this kind, which PBF needs to strengthen and expand.

PBF’s business model calls for a “light footprint” in-country. It relies on UN coordination staff, supplemented by PBF staff and external consultants, to carry out its coordination and support work. This model is only viable if headquarters staff provide high quality support and guidance, improve and expand the guidance materials, provide training and dissemination in their use, and perform important “surge capacity” functions. Thus, a key concern for PBF-Headquarters is the match between its workload – current and projected – and its capacity.

The PBF staff at headquarters is already stretched thin. Yet there are also calls for the amount of work to be done at PBF-Headquarters to increase. In this context, this Review sees expanding the almost skeletal PBF headquarters staffing as an essential element for continued success and as a cost-effective investment.

Managing the Fund

PBF’s 2014 budget for managing the Fund is approximately \$2.5 million, with the largest amount going to staff costs. PBF funding comes primarily as a 3% overhead of the donor contributions that it receives. In previous years PBF has been able to top up its annual operating funds by drawing on the reserve of overhead monies built up through contributions in the Fund’s early years. However, that reserve is now essentially exhausted.

Thus, the current financing model and yearly variations in the level of new donor funding make it very difficult for PBF to plan and carry out sustained headquarters functions and field support. Secondments are also subject to changes in donor will and capacity. In its next Business Plan, PBF should determine what modest annual budget increases it needs, develop credible justifications for this, and seek the necessary funds. It should also propose options for a sustainable funding base.

There has been discussion among some PBF stakeholders as to whether PBF should place a 20-country limit on the number of countries it funds. The main rationale for this limit is that PBF’s current workload is stretching its staff capacity very thinly.

The Review Team agrees that PBF, with its very minimal staffing levels, faces pressure to carry out its roles, even as the success of PBF support missions is generating further demand. Thus, it would be cost-effective for donors to expand PBF’s capacity as necessary to take on additional countries should the need exist.

PBC and PBF

A crucial partner for the PBF is the UN Peacebuilding Commission (PBC). At present, 6 countries - Burundi, Central African Republic, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia and Sierra Leone - are on the agenda of the Commission. All are thus automatically eligible for PBF funding. Since the creation of the PBF, PBC countries have received more than half of the total PBF funding. These 6 are all longer term recipients, having begun receiving funds in 2008 or earlier.

During the implementation of its current Business Plan from 2011 to 2013, PBF has worked to further develop its procedures, systems and processes for both PBC and non-PBC countries. As a result it has evolved into a strengthened programmatic and financial entity with a clear idea of its funding and programme priorities. This process has also led to its acting more independently from the PBC. Thus,

while PBC can draw attention to particular funding needs of its countries, the final decision about what to fund lies with PBF and with the ASG of PBSO.

A major concern of many interviewees was that the PBC had not been able to systematically mobilize substantial additional resources for PBC countries. Perhaps this expectation is unrealistic in an environment where funds are scarce, especially for “aid orphan” countries. However, PBC’s fundraising problems can place additional pressure on PBF to continue funding in these countries.

PBC countries are also the main focus of the discussion on possible PBF “exit strategies”. While PBF funding has ended in a number of non-PBC countries after one or more programme cycles, no country has left (or “graduated” from) the PBC agenda, and all of the 6 PBC countries continue to receive PBF funds. A PBF exit strategy is now being discussed for Sierra Leone and Burundi, with the likelihood that should PBF cease funding, the PBC will continue its engagement in an advocacy role to promote Security Council attention and for resource mobilization for these countries.

There is also discussion about incorporating PBF “exit strategies” at other points in the programming cycle. ‘Up front’ exit strategies could appear in the design stage of a PRF programme and be assessed at mid-term. Exit strategies or scenarios for phasing out should also be developed at mid-term when decisions about the final tranche of funding are taken

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Finance for Peace Building Branch, which directly manages PBF (under the supervision of the ASG of PBSO), has strengthened its M&E staffing since 2010, expanding from one to the three full-time M&E officers. As a result, its M&E work has improved, notably in the areas of headquarters support to project design, monitoring and reporting.

MPTF-O also plays an important role in monitoring and reporting on PBF projects. It is responsible for the receipt of donor contributions, the transfer of funds to RUNOs, the consolidation of narrative and financial reports, and the submission of these to PBSO and PBF donors. The MPTF-O has recently become more prescriptive in insisting that project reporting includes a narrative on the key peacebuilding contributions and project outcomes. Both donors and the PBF management appreciate MPTF-O’s work and value the MPTF-O internet portal “Gateway”, where virtually all public PBF reports, including extensive documentation on PBF projects, are available.

Many countries lack adequate M&E capacity. In most cases, only the larger UN agencies such as UNDP and UNICEF have a designated M&E officer who can monitor the Fund’s projects. Other agencies rely on project staff. Direct M&E support from PBF at country level has been particularly effective in strengthening M&E in the design phase, including developing Theories of Change and approaches to measuring peacebuilding Outcomes.

In the seven countries the team visited, it appears that M&E remains weak. Agencies find it challenging to establish a baseline and to define measurable results, especially for soft outcomes such as reparations for victims of violence or supporting dialogue initiatives.

The topic of Knowledge Management appears crucial both at headquarters and in-country. Countries have frequently shared information and learned from PBF projects elsewhere. At both the global and country levels thinking is emerging on how inter-country learning can be facilitated through introducing “communities of practice” (COPs) which PBF is now establishing.

Value for Money

PBF's current focus is to ensure that projects are cost efficient, but there is little evidence that the main entities responsible for PBF programming in its countries (the UN agencies, JSC, Technical Committees, PBF Secretariats) are consistently applying principles designed to ensure Value for Money by "Maximizing the impact of each dollar spent to effectively implement PBF's Business Plan in contributing to peace outcomes". This principle needs to be considered at the design, implementation and evaluation stages of PBF's portfolio in country to increase effective and efficient use of resources.

Despite declining budgets for the management of the Fund, PBF is well aware that it needs to control its management costs and ensure a balance between resources available for countries and for managing the Fund. It has already committed to timely delivery of quality support and is continuing to explore measures, including video-teleconferencing and economy travel, to do so within its means.

Gender

In his 2010 report on Women's Participation in Peacebuilding (S/2010/498), the UN Secretary-General presented a Seven-Point Action Plan to strengthen implementation of the Security Council resolution 1325 on Gender. To help reach the goals of this Plan, PBF created the Gender Promotion Initiative (GPI). Currently eight countries receive support, which include gender targeting and mainstreaming. The PBF Application Guidelines now state that gender sensitivity is a cross-cutting priority and an essential part of the assessment of all priority plans and project proposals.

As part of the Seven-Point Action Plan, PBF committed to allocating at least 15 per cent of its resources to projects designed to address women's needs and to advance gender equality or empower women. In 2013, however, only 7.4 % of PBF funding met this target, despite the fact that the approval rate by PBSO of projects focused on gender equality in peacebuilding is very high. In 2012 the figure was higher, 10.8 per cent, as a result of the GPI, which demonstrates the usefulness of such proactive approaches.

In an effort to stimulate more demand, in 2013 PBF increased its technical guidance to partners through expanded treatment in the new PBF guidelines and the launch of a new training programme in partnership with UN Women.

The PBF focus on women predominantly targets women as beneficiaries. There is, however, a need to promote projects which target women as peace builders as well.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Review Team makes the following Recommendations, which are addressed to PBF unless indicated otherwise. In cases where a similar recommendation applies to more than one area, it is placed where most appropriate, and cross-referenced to the other area(s).

I. IRF and PRF (Chapter 5)

1. Examine how to increase the use of IRF funds, not only in the early parts of the peacebuilding phase but also in later points, as a way to address new and urgent peacebuilding needs and issues, such as spikes in tension or conflict, new elections, etc. Increasing IRF use should not be at the expense of PRF resources.
2. PBF/PBSO strengthen its “surge capacity” to help support IRF programme development processes in-country, as problems in these processes have more to do with the quality of dialogue and level of expertise than they do with the length of time needed to carry them out.
3. Confirm that the current ceiling of \$10 million for IRF programming per country refers to its active not its cumulative funding.
4. Look for situations where creative use of IRF funding can make a difference, as PBF is currently doing in Central African Republic to help deploy human rights staff.
5. Increase the appropriate use of IRF and PRF funds by taking a pro-active approach of reaching out to the UN and governments in countries that might benefit from PBF programming.
6. Clarify its policies and guidelines to ensure that the projects it funds (especially through the PRF) in the later stages of the peacebuilding phase (and especially in crowded donor environments) have distinct value-added and promote its criteria. (See also Chapter 9)

[Most of the discussion in the following chapters 6-9 focuses on PRF, so most recommendations regarding the PRF are made in those chapters.]

II. The Four PBF Priority Areas (Chapter 6)

1. Clarify that PBF funding within DDR and SSR is focused on PBF’s distinct value added.
2. Clarify that PBF is not open to addressing every type of “peace dividend”, and indicate the parameters of its sub-set of “peace dividends.”
3. Expand its programming and actions in Priority Area #4 (“re-establish essential administrative services”), including within the new joint UN/World Bank Working Group on Public Administration, given that core government functions are crucial to peacebuilding but have received a low proportion of PBF funding to date. (See also Chapters 7 and 8)

4. Develop stronger methodologies and approaches – in cooperation with PPAB and others such as Peace Nexus – to better address specific subsections within the Four Priority Areas noted during country visits, including:
 - Key conflict causes and drivers
 - Youth, especially young men
 - Anti-corruption actions, and language issues (when a key part of conflict dynamics)
 - Conflict Early Warning Systems
5. Develop pilot initiatives between countries to address cross border peacebuilding needs, as led by national governments.

III. PBF Programming and Partnerships (Chapters 7, 8 and 9)

Chapter 7 – PBF’s Criteria and Niche

1. Carry out a robust evaluation of the results of the increased PBF programme reporting for 2013, especially in the areas of catalytic actions and other PBF criteria, including to provide adequate information for quantitative (and improved qualitative) analysis of the implementation and impact of these criteria.

[Recommendations regarding PBF criteria are made in other chapters, including 8 and 9]

Chapter 8 – PBF Partnerships

1. Increase efforts to help strengthen in-country government capacity within relevant ministries that can manage and implement roles in peacebuilding as a way to increase national ownership.
2. Continue to use national strategies as an alternative to a Peacebuilding Priority Plan when appropriate, taking care to assess if the plan leaves any gaps in the product or process. If so, take steps to mitigate the gaps, e.g., by undertaking an additional peacebuilding review and appending the related information and recommendations to pre-existing strategies. (See also Chapter 9)
3. Increase the programming capacity of PBF partners in-country and the peacebuilding domain more broadly by promoting increased Knowledge Management through collaborative learning and research on relevant peacebuilding topics, and effective training and information sharing in partnership with the PPAB and the UN agencies and entities in particular. (See also Chapter 7)
4. Advocate for the creation and strengthening of special peacebuilding personnel in UN agency headquarters and/or regional offices to provide technical assistance to their staff in-country, including to mitigate the problem of uneven UN agency peacebuilding capacity in-country.
5. Expand partnerships with international NGOs that can provide assistance to PBF, such as staffing at headquarters, advice and help on the development and use of PBF guidelines and procedures, and training and other direct support in the field. (See also Chapter 10)

6. Expand the use of the joint PBF/UNDP/DPA mechanism (and possible UN Volunteers support) of Peace and Development Advisors as an important way to increase PBF's coordination and leadership capacity in-country. (See also Chapter 10)
7. In order to strengthen in-country programming capacity, explore further how to pre-identify and vet selected INGOs that could quickly launch and implement new PRF programmes, and introduce pilot efforts for this strategy in 2-3 countries (both PBC and non-PBC).
8. Further promote the systematic involvement of national NGOs and CSO in all programme stages and in JSCs. (See also Chapter 7)
9. Strengthen its requirements for increased engagement of the local population and local leaders in its programme development and implementation, including via changes in the PBF Guidelines and use of effective existing methodologies for such engagement. (See also Chapter 7)
10. Create a partnership strategy for increased collaboration in-country and globally with International Financial Institutions (especially the World Bank, the African Development Bank, and the Asian Development Bank) and the European Union.
11. Clarify the alignment of PBF funding with international aid effectiveness agreements (in particular the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States).

Chapter 9 - Main Steps in Programme Development

1. Include the question of "How would the addition of a new country affect PBF's overall strategic positioning (country-specific and globally)?" which is now part the IRF project eligibility review, in the PBF main country eligibility process as well.
2. In terms of conflict analysis:
 - Provide technical assistance to strengthen and deepen conflict analysis in order to increase PBF's targeting and added value in its Outcome areas; and
 - Strengthen PBF's quality assurance efforts for conflict analyses, including training for relevant personnel in-country, support missions to help carry them out (including through external partners such as PeaceNexus), and insisting that conflict analyses are undertaken for all PRF programmes (and strongly encouraged for IRF to the extent feasible without slowing the action).
3. Add PBF's voice, including via senior UN officials in-country, to calls for action to improve in-country resource mobilization/donor databases. Model good donor behaviour by continuing to make efforts to obtain and share the best resource mobilization information it has, e.g., through its "funding gap" analysis.
4. Utilize performance based funding for new rounds of PRF support, i.e., that it commit lower initial amounts and then provide further funding based on the successful use of the first amount (with the possibility of the second envelope overlapping the first).
5. In order to streamline the PRF programme development process, consider ways to reduce the time and labor required, e.g., by a) providing a clearer delineation of what kinds of actions PBF would not normally fund, b) increasing the use of the Concept Note mechanism,

and c) soliciting feedback from the field (including via the relevant PBF secretariat and/or UN Coordination staff) to identify the main bottlenecks and propose specific solutions.

6. Investigate possible alternative approaches for PBF secretariats, including the use of technical teams in government ministries and agencies to increase national ownership.

IV. PBF Support to the Field (Chapter 10)

1. Continue and further strengthen the development and dissemination of guidance and relevant documents to the field, identify and address gaps in this information, further strengthen PBF's own Knowledge Management capacity and actions, and take a leading role in a stronger joint Knowledge Management effort with the relevant UN agencies and entities and other key peacebuilding actors.
2. Advocate strongly for the adequate funding needed for UN coordination staffing and actions in-country, in order to strengthen the UN coordination capacity in-country (which plays a leading role in coordination of PBF programmes).
3. Continue to fund PBF programme coordination staff in-country through inclusion of these costs in PBF project funding.
4. Expand the use of surge field support, seek to provide such support as early as possible in the programme development process, and use surge personnel to help build local capacities.

V. Management of the Fund (Chapter 11)

1. Determine what additional staff PBF needs at headquarters for the next Business Plan, for both ongoing and expanded actions (e.g., increased surge capacity, stronger Knowledge Management actions, strengthened Monitoring and Evaluation, etc.) and present the case for such expansion to the UN administration and donors.
2. Expand the number of "active countries" beyond 20 as and when valid new country situations arise, and increase PBF's very lean staffing and budget as necessary to support such increased programming, in order to bring its value-added assistance to such countries.
3. In the context of preparing its next Business Plan, develop options for a sustainable headquarters funding base. This should include undertaking a comparative analysis of how other UN Funds manage costs sustainably.

VI. PBC and PBF Cooperation (Chapter 12)

1. Develop relevant scenarios and possible benchmarks for assessing when it is appropriate to exit from a PBC country.
2. Take a phased approach to such an exit in PBC countries, as in cases such as Sierra Leone and Burundi.

3. Develop a strategy for communicating to Government, implementing partners and other stakeholders at the initiation of funding for both PBC and non-PBC countries that PBF is a temporary funder that enters and exits based on clear criteria.
4. PBF and PBC should align their tools and time frames where possible, and harmonize their support instruments, taking the New Deal and aid effectiveness agreements as a reference point. In addition, they could consider more joint work or missions to reduce transaction costs (in particular for governments).

VII. Monitoring and Evaluation and Value-for-Money (Chapters 13 and 14)

Chapter 13 – Monitoring and Evaluation

1. Draft a Master Plan to accompany the next Business Plan as a way to help monitor the Funds' overall performance. Several specific actions need to be undertaken by PBF to: i) improve measuring the results of the new Business Plan at Headquarters; ii) continue supporting countries in improving monitoring and evaluation; and iii) monitor new initiatives to increase effectiveness of the Funds' operations.
2. Identify common indicators for country Peace Outcomes in comparable PBF sectors or priority areas. This will help PBF to aggregate results at a global level and compare results among PBF countries.
3. Consider using the same evaluation teams for second generation PRFs in order to improve the measurement of results and impacts over time.
4. Improve and streamline the reporting lines between the field and PBF headquarters, including reporting against standard frameworks and common indicators for Peace Outcomes. This will help PBF capture results in-country as well as at a meta level. PBF could also consider reconciling reporting to MPTF-O and the PBF in order to link achievements of PBF interventions and the costs incurred.
5. Promote further inter-country exchanges and learning, including holding another workshop like the 2013 Cape Town workshop midway through its new Business Plan.
6. Develop brief country reports at the end of IRF and PRF funding cycles to inform donors about achievements.
7. Undertake mid-term assessments for PRF funding in order to increase the performance of the Fund, including to making necessary programme changes while time allows doing so.

Chapter 14 - Value-for-Money

1. Operationalize PBF's Value for Money approach by developing a PBF-specific definition of the term and by placing information and requirements regarding value-for-money in its guidelines and support documents in order to systematically build this concept into its programme cycles.

VIII. Gender – Chapter 15 (Chapter 15)

1. Review the use of the overall Gender Marker mechanism in order to undertake more accurate and useful scoring against the PBF target of using 15% of PBF funding for gender programming, and to promote greater gender equality.
2. Review the use of Gender Marker #2 for greater use in scoring against the PBF target of using 15% of PBF funding for gender programming in order to promote greater mainstreaming of gender equality actions.
3. Examine why there is still failure to meet the 15% target of PBF funding for gender programming, including lessons learned from the useful undertaking of the Gender Promotion Initiative in eight countries, and launch new initiatives.
4. Explore how to strengthen the capacity of UN agencies to carry out gender and gender-sensitive peacebuilding work (including possible partnership with UN Women).
5. Determine how PBF programming can include analysis and action regarding women's roles as actors in creating conflict (and not just as victims of it) and how addressing these gender aspects can be better incorporated as an integral part of conflict prevention and mitigation.
6. Promote women's participation as agents of change at all stages of prevention, protection, reconciliation, negotiations, and recovery, in line with UN Security Council resolutions.

1 INTRODUCTION

The United Nations Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) is the Secretary-General's Fund to support activities, actions, programmes and organisations that seek to build a lasting peace in countries emerging from conflict. It was established in 2005, and has been operational since 2007.² The Secretary-General has delegated overall management of the PBF, including the direction of its resources and monitoring of activities, to the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO), which consists of three branches:

- I) the Peacebuilding Commission Support Branch
- II) the Financing for Peacebuilding Branch
- III) the Policy Planning and Application Branch

Direct management of the PBF is handled by the Financing for Peacebuilding Branch, under supervision of the Assistant Secretary General (ASG).

The PBSO proposed to the Secretary-General's independent Advisory Group for the PBF that a review be undertaken in 2013, which the Advisory Group endorsed. Undertaking a review also fulfills a requirement of the Fund's 2009 Terms of Reference (TOR), which call for independent evaluations every three years.³ The independent Advisory Group recommended that Review focus on the global strategy and approach of the Fund.

After a call for proposals Channel Research was selected to undertake this review. The Review Team began its work in July 2013 by preparing a review plan and methodology, as called for in the Terms of Reference (TOR - see Annex A).

2 SCOPE OF THE REVIEW

As per the TOR, the present Review focuses on "the global strategy and approach of the Fund" since 2010.⁴ The overall objectives of the current assessment are to:

- Review the business model for the Fund, its strengths and weaknesses, and how it can be improved. This will include reflection upon the mechanics of the Fund; its two main facilities; the role of the Joint Steering Committee; relations between PBSO management in New York and the field; technical assistance for peacebuilding programme design; relations with partners; budget approval by headquarters; and selection of fund users and projects at country level.
- Review the strategic positioning of the Fund at both global and national levels (among and within countries). Among the issues to be addressed globally, the Review will explore the appropriateness of the set of countries that the PBF has assisted, when to use Immediate Response Facility (IRF) and the Peacebuilding and Recovery Facility (PRF), and the processes that PBSO has put in place to make country eligibility recommendations. At

² "Outcome Document", World Summit 2005, United Nations, 15 September 2005. At the 2005 World Summit, the United Nations began creating a peacebuilding architecture based on Kofi Annan's proposals. The proposal called for three organizations: the UN Peacebuilding Commission, which was founded in 2005; the UN Peacebuilding Fund, founded in 2006; and the UN Peacebuilding Support Office, which was created in 2005. These three organizations enable the Secretary-General to coordinate the UN's peacebuilding efforts.

³ Arrangement for the revision of the terms of reference for the Peacebuilding Fund Report of the Secretary-General Sixty-third session, agenda item 101. General Assembly, 13 April 2009

⁴ Terms of Reference, page 9

the in-country level, the Review will address the extent to which PBF activities catalyze the peacebuilding that was envisioned by the founders. The Review will reflect on how PBF activities respond to increasing demand for strong partnerships with national governments, international financial institutions (IFIs) and civil society organizations while ensuring high value for money in an era of scarce resources.

An initial review of the PBF was undertaken by the UN's Office of Internal Oversight Services in 2008, and a second in 2009 based on the request of 5 donors⁵. As a result, the Fund's core Terms of Reference were revised in 2009, and it developed a new Business Plan for 2011-13 as well as an associated Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system anchored around a Performance Management Plan (PMP). Application Guidelines to increase understanding and accessibility of the Fund were first published in 2009, and revised in 2013 and 2014.

Prior to the present Review a meta-evaluation was undertaken in order to identify key strategic issues in the country-specific PBF evaluations conducted from 2010-2012⁶. It has served as a key point of departure for the present Review.

The Financing for Peacebuilding Branch of PBSO⁷ appointed a Reference Group (RG) which provided feedback to the Review Team on key outputs associated with the Review. For an overview of the Terms of Reference for the RG, please see Annex B.

There is a clear requirement for PBF to learn from the experience of the past several years as a basis for effective management, including the development of a new Business Plan starting in 2014. Based on the findings of the Review, this report proposes recommendations to help PBF reflect on its achievements and challenges and to prepare for a new stage of peacebuilding support. In many instances these recommendations are not exclusively addressed to PBF as their full implementation depends on PBFs interaction with and the support of other UN entities in New York and in-country, the government of countries with PBF programmes, other UN members states, and other key actors in this field. The prime audiences for this report, therefore, are PBF and its immediate partners within and outside the UN, as well as other key actors who contribute to peacebuilding.

3 THE REVIEW APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

During the initial phase of this Review, interviews and discussions were held in New York from 15-19 July 2013. These discussions, an initial review of the available documentation, and discussions with the senior management of the Financing for Peacebuilding Branch of PBSO resulted in the Inception Report, which presented a review methodology consisting of:

- Preparation of the Inception Report
- Document review
- Country visits to seven countries
- Creation of a Case Study approach based on the TOR

⁵Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the Independent Evaluation of the Peacebuilding Fund. Assignment No. IED-08-06 30 December 2008. Robert McCouch, N. Jogoo and D. Arapakos. Review of the Peacebuilding Fund, by Nicole Ball and Mariska van Beijnum, June 4, 2009

⁶ Meta-evaluation of country-specific PBF evaluations. Mariska van Beijnum, Conflict Research Unit, Clingendael Institute. May 2013

⁷ The Peacebuilding Fund is managed by the Financing for Peacebuilding Branch of the PBSO, under the direct supervision of the Assistant Secretary-General of PBSO. Thus, when this Review speaks of PBF in terms of management issues, it is referring to this Branch and the ASG of PBSO, unless noted otherwise.

- Electronic Survey sent to a selection of 10 countries
- Creation of a Performance Scorecard tool for possible PBF use

3.1 Document Review

The Review Team benefited from access to a considerable number of documents relevant to this study, including

- Key documents from PBF and PBSO such as annual reports, guidelines, templates, thematic reviews, country evaluation reports, specific reports on criteria, and analyses of peacebuilding;
- Multi Party Trust Fund Office (MPTF-O) documents available on the website as well as specially-prepared materials indicated in the text;
- Country evaluation reports, project data and overviews, conflict analyses, Peacebuilding Priority Plans (PPPs), and other specific material provided by the UN Country Review Teams related to the country visits;
- The websites of PBSO, PBF and PBC; and
- Documents collected by the Review Team

For an overview of the documents consulted, please see Annex C.

3.2 Country Visits

Country selection took place in close consultation with PBF. It was based on a set of criteria (see Annex D) that included: i) a mix of PBC and non PBC countries; ii) countries which received IRFs, PRF's or both; iii) the number of participating organizations; iv) country evaluations conducted or planned; v) availability of UN management and staff in-country; vi) countries that had first time PBF support and multiple cycles of support; and vii) the total PBF support to a country. The countries selected were the Comoros, Guinea, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Nepal, South Sudan, and Sierra Leone. Due to election violence in October 2013, the Guinea visit was postponed by several weeks.

During the course of this Review the PBSO Policy Branch commissioned a Thematic Review on Gender and Peacebuilding which started in November. The Review Team thus worked closely with this consultant-reviewer, Ms. Eleanor O'Gorman, who joined the PBF Review missions to Nepal and Guinea.⁸

3.3 Thematic Areas

The TOR for this review contained an initial 49 guiding questions which the Review might address. The Review Team grouped these questions, together with others that arose during the Inception Period, into eight thematic areas. Each thematic area contained a number of sub-sections, with specific questions for each. The detailed Matrix is located in Annex E. For an overview of how ToR questions were integrated into the thematic areas, please see Annex F. The thematic area methodology is described in more detail in Annex G. A list of people met can be found in Annex H.

⁸ Independent Thematic Review on Gender for the UN Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) – Final Report, March 2014, Dr. Eleanor O'Gorman. Senior Associate, Centre for Gender Studies University of Cambridge, UK

Box 1: The Eight Thematic Areas

- | | |
|----|---|
| 1. | Preparation and implementation of PBSO’s work |
| 2. | Headquarters Decisions on Programme Parameters |
| 3. | Immediate Response Facility and Peacebuilding and Recovery Facility |
| 4. | Strategic position, comparative advantage, and PBF niche |
| 5. | Catalytic Effects |
| 6. | Exit strategies for PBF support to countries |
| 7. | Peacebuilding Commission/Peacebuilding Fund |
| 8. | Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) and Learning |

The eight thematic areas were used to organize relevant information from the various documents the Review Team examined. A thematic area study template was used for all of the interviews and country visits. After each visit, separate data collection reports were prepared based on the case study template and reviewed by the UN representative in-country and PBF.

Given the range of different stakeholders both within and outside of the PBSO, the Review Team established four different “clusters” of interviewees and data as a way to increase triangulation within and among clusters. The Review Team interviewed 397 persons in-country, in New York, and in other locations, and met with a number of others in large groups

Table 1: The four clusters in which interviewees were placed

Category of Interviewees	Number of Persons Interviewed
Cluster I: PBF and its affiliates in New York - PBSO, including its Advisory Group, UN HQ officials and Members States in New York	68
Cluster II: Donor Country experts - Peacebuilding experts, IFI’s	38
Cluster III: Beneficiary-country stakeholders - In-country PBF stakeholders, including the UN Agencies, donors, implementing partners, and the local population in the project areas	Sierra Leone 42; South Sudan 38; Comoros 17 Guinea 26; Liberia 45; Nepal 78; Kyrgyzstan 41 (and others in larger groups)
Cluster IV: Donors in their capitals. Donor capitals who contribute to the PBF	11

3.4 Electronic Survey

A survey with 24 questions was developed by the Review Team to help assess the views of various PBF stakeholders in countries that had received recent PBF support. Topics covered included PBF’s support from its New York Headquarters, how strategic the Fund was in-country, and what the survey recipients expect in the future from the PBF. The survey was used to supplement the qualitative data and provide an additional source of triangulation.

Only countries that received support during the 2011-2013 period were invited to respond, including the countries that the Review Team visited. Ten countries were selected in close cooperation with the PBF: Burundi, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Niger, Papua New Guinea, South Sudan and Yemen.

The survey was sent to 419 persons, of whom 105 responded, which gave a response rate of 25%. This low response rate limits the use of the data. Among the 25% there was a relatively high

response from the United Nations group in-country who constituted 58.4% of the 105 respondents. Thus, this percentage of UN respondents makes their answers useful in analyzing the local UN perspective on PBF's work. This is important as this category of respondents has the greatest direct experience in-country with PBSO and PBF.

3.5 Performance Scorecard

The Review Team was asked by PBF to assist with its efforts at quantifying information on the impact of its projects and programmes. The aim was to develop a prototype tool that could draw information from the various PBF reports in an efficient fashion.

The Review Team worked on this tool by examining annual country reports from 2009, 2011 and 2013 and organizing the data against a set of criteria to identify wider trends. However, the reporting was not consistent in terms of indicators for catalytic effect, gender, etc.; the guidelines and templates changed over time; and the database is not robust enough to make the scorecard viable. It therefore proved difficult to identify trends over time. The steps that PBF is undertaking to strengthen its reporting and M&E tools may make this possible in the future.

3.6 Limitations of the Review

As with any study, this one has limitations. Time was a particular obstacle - the short amount of time for country visits and analysis meant that some of the 49 Guide Questions in the Review's TOR (to which additional questions were added during the review) received limited attention.

Another overarching challenge was the relative lack of quantitative data on PBF programmes, especially regarding the achievement of criteria set by the PBF. The relative lack of quantitative data is hardly unique to PBF, and it is a problem that PBF is working to address. Nonetheless, the Review Team relied primarily on interviews and documents. When an observation is linked to particular respondents or clusters, the report writers have sought to make this attribution. However, since the review could not rely on polling or quantification, the final observations, conclusions, and recommendations are those of the Review Team.

Further limitations include the following:

- There was limited ability to reach persons who could share information about PBF's interventions prior to 2010. (Although the Review focuses on the period from 2010 forward, interviews with those knowledgeable of prior activities might have provided fuller background context). The Review Team interviewed 3 former UN senior level officials who were appointed in 3 of the 7 countries the Review Team visited.
- Only 4 PBC Configuration chairs were available for interview.
- At an early stage of the work the Review Team learned that the performance of the Fund is very country- and context- specific. Generalizing data from 7 countries was therefore challenging since the PBF supported between 20 – 22 countries during the period under review. Introducing the eight thematic areas increased the likelihood that trends would emerge across the seven countries.

- It proved difficult to disaggregate PBF’s impact on peacebuilding from that of the multiple forces and players involved in peacebuilding in general, and in PBF’s organization and network in particular.⁹ For example, UN agencies support activities in specific sectors or priorities from their own resources. In most Priority Areas, other donors and INGOs are also active and it was not possible to determine PBF’s specific contribution over a specific period.

4 PBF: AN OVERVIEW

The following section provides an overview of PBF’s work. It summarizes the creation of the UN “peacebuilding architecture,” of which PBF is a part, and its main components and branches. It then summarizes the main aspects of PBF itself, before noting several points regarding the wider peacebuilding field that are particularly relevant to PBF.

4.1 The UN Peacebuilding Architecture

The Peacebuilding Fund is part of the larger UN Peacebuilding architecture which was created in order to help countries build sustainable peace and prevent relapse into violent conflict.¹⁰ The founding resolutions were adopted in December 2005, but in practice the PBF became operational in 2007, so it is still a very new entity.

The UN Peacebuilding architecture consists of three parts:

- The Peacebuilding Commission (PBC)
- The Peacebuilding Fund (PBF)
- The Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO)

THE PEACEBUILDING COMMISSION (PBC) is an intergovernmental UN body that supports peacebuilding in countries emerging from conflict and advises the General Assembly and the Security Council on these countries and related concerns. The Commission works with countries that are officially “on the PBC agenda” to draw attention to peacebuilding concerns, to outline mutual commitments to address the main peacebuilding challenges, and to help mobilize additional funding to address these concerns. The PBC advises the PBF regarding possible funding, but the decisions are made by the ASG for Peacebuilding Support (i.e., the head of the PBSO Office) and senior PBF staff. In practice the six PBC countries which have been admitted by the UN Secretary-General have received 59% of total PBF funding through 2013, and 57% of PBF funds transferred to the field in 2013.

THE PEACEBUILDING FUND (PBF) is of course the focus of this document, and an overview follows in the present Chapter.

THE PEACEBUILDING SUPPORT OFFICE (PBSO) is headed by the ASG for Peacebuilding Support, who works directly under the authority of the UN Secretary-General and supervises the PBSO. The responsibilities of this Office include supporting the Peacebuilding Commission by providing policy

⁹ Attribution means the extent to which PBF funding is responsible for the results achieved and contribution analysis is an approach to evaluation which aims to compare an intervention’s theory of change against the evidence in order to come to robust conclusions about the contribution that it has made to observed outcomes. It reflects a plausible account of the difference that PBF funding has made to peacebuilding.

¹⁰ In 2015 a review is planned for the UN Peacebuilding Architecture.

and strategic advice as well as secretariat services, and administering the PBF and helping to raise funds for it. The PBSO also helps to foster a coherent, coordinated approach to peacebuilding across the UN family, and to spread lessons learned and good practices in the UN and beyond.

Operationally, the PBSO has three main Branches:

- the PBC Support Branch;
- the Policy, Planning and Application Branch; and
- the Financing for Peacebuilding Branch, which manages the PBF

The **PBC Support Branch** serves as a Secretariat to the PBC. It has 8 staff members headed by the ASG deputy. It provides support to the PBC Configuration and Configuration Chairs for each of the 6 countries currently on the PBC agenda. PBC Country-Specific Configurations (CSCs) are selected from members from the PBC Organizational Committee and look at issues particular to individual focus countries and bring together participants from New York with partners in the field through a series of formal and informal meetings.¹¹

Requests for advice from the PBC can be made by the General Assembly (GA), the Security Council (SC), the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) or the Secretary-General, as well as any member state who wishes to seek advice. The Commission deals only with countries emerging from conflict once a peace accord has been concluded and a minimum degree of security exists. Countries themselves need to express an interest in order to be considered for the PBC.

If a PBC country requests PBF funding, the PBC, with assistance from the PBC Support Branch, has the opportunity to comment on the proposal. In many cases, apart from their formal comments, the Configuration Chair for the country in question and his/her team has a direct involvement in the elaboration of the Peacebuilding Priority Plan and/or the design of the project. PBSO also strongly encourages UN Country Teams to ensure that PBF support and PBC priorities are well aligned and complement each other.¹²

The **Policy, Planning and Application Branch (PPAB)** is made up of 5 staff, and is responsible, within the PBSO, for helping to develop common policies, tools and approaches in collaboration with relevant UN departments, agencies, funds and programmes as well as with the relevant non-UN partners. It also has a role in Knowledge Management, helping to position the PBSO as a center of knowledge about peacebuilding by developing, identifying, compiling and disseminating lessons learned and good practices. It works with the Finance for Peacebuilding Branch to support evaluation studies, selecting topics for thematic reviews and assists in surge capacity at the start of PBF interventions.

The **Financing for Peacebuilding Branch (FPB)** is composed of 9 Staff, including 2 on secondment and 1 Junior Professional Officer. This Branch, led by its Director and working under the supervision of the ASG for Peacebuilding Support, directly manages the PBF. It provides information and facilitates discussions with governments and UN personnel about possible PBF funding, and supports the field

¹¹ In addition to the Organizational Committee members, the Country-Specific Configurations (CSC) include other participants such as neighboring countries, regional organizations, multilateral organizations, financial institutions and representatives of civil society. From among the Configuration a chair is chosen. The PBC consists of the Organizational Committee (OC), the Country Specific Configurations (CSC) and the Working Group on Lessons Learned. The OC consists of 31 Member States drawn from the Security Council (7), the General Assembly (7), the Economic and Social Council (7), the five top financial and troop contributors, and the EU, World Bank, IMF and the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

¹² PBF Application Guidelines, January 2014, page 15

in the development, implementation, and evaluation of PBF programmes and projects. In New York, the FPB works closely with the MPTF-O, which handles the movement of funds to the field and many aspects of project reporting and monitoring.

4.2 The UN Peacebuilding Fund

Within the context of the UN peacebuilding architecture, it is important to be clear about what the PBF is, and what this report means when referring to it. In the narrowest sense, the PBF are the monies channeled to PBF projects in-country. A more accurate description, however, is that the PBF is the Funding mechanism itself, as directed and overseen by the ASG for Peacebuilding Support and managed by the Finance for Peacebuilding Branch. When this Review refers to “PBF-Headquarters” it is these core elements of PBF that are referred to.

The Peacebuilding Fund was officially launched in 2006 based on General Assembly resolution 60/180 and Security Council resolution 1645 to stand alongside the Peacebuilding Commission and Peacebuilding Support Office and ensure the early availability of resources for launching critical peacebuilding activities. These resolutions requested the Secretary-General to “establish a multi-year standing peacebuilding fund for post-conflict peacebuilding,” to be managed by the Secretary-General on behalf of Member States. The Fund’s purpose is to respond to country-identified peacebuilding priorities via UN sponsored programming. Its Terms of Reference (A/63/818) revised and approved in mid-2009, determine current operations and state that the PBF:

- Is a global fund designed to support several countries simultaneously and combining the scope of a global fund with the country-specific focus of a multi-donor trust fund.
- Will support interventions of direct and immediate relevance to the peacebuilding process and contribute towards addressing critical gaps in that process, in particular in areas where no other funding mechanism is available.
- Shall provide immediate response, recovery needs and peacebuilding assistance to countries on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission, and those not included under the PBC’s agenda.

PBF provides its funds through two facilities:

- The **Immediate Response Facility (IRF)** is the project-based financing mechanism of the PBF that was created to address critical peacebuilding needs in the immediate aftermath of conflict or as a result of a dramatic change in a country. It provides rapid funding to address urgent peacebuilding needs and support critical transitions. With small, catalytic resources, the Fund demonstrates to governments and citizens that new paths to sustainable peace are possible. Through the end of 2013 allocations via the IRF have constituted 24% of the total PBF allocations.
- The **Peacebuilding and Recovery Facility (PRF)** is the programme-based financing mechanism of the PBF, typically aimed at countries several years after the end of a conflict. PRF provides longer-term support for initiatives consolidating peace in conflict-affected countries that have made clear commitments to addressing post-conflict fragility. It also creates mechanisms for effective partnerships between national authorities, the UN, donors, and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) at the country level to support governments with strong

commitments to peacebuilding.¹³ Through the end of 2013, PBF allocations via the PRF have constituted 76% of the total PBF allocations.

PBF focuses on “**Four Priority Areas**” that contain eleven lower-level Outcome Areas. Each project must fit into one of these Outcome Areas. The Priority and Outcome Areas are:

1. Support the implementation of peace agreements and political dialogue
 - Security sector reform (SSR)
 - Rule of law (ROL)
 - Disarmament, demobilization, reintegration of former combatants (DDR)
 - Political dialogue for peace agreements
2. Promote co-existence and peaceful resolution of conflict
 - National reconciliation
 - Democratic governance
 - Management of natural resources (including land)
3. Revitalize the economy and generate peace dividends
 - Short term employment generation
 - Sustainable livelihoods
4. Re-establish essential administrative services
 - Public administration
 - Public service delivery (including infrastructure)

Another key aspect of PBF is the various criteria that it considers essential in making decisions about country eligibility and selecting projects for implementation. While there is no definitive list, this Review has identified what it sees as the core criteria for countries receiving PBF support (See Chapter 7). Collectively these criteria define PBF’s niche within the peacebuilding field and set a high standard for performance.

The Review also discusses PBF’s commitment to: promote capacity building for national entities, giving special attention to countries whose peacebuilding needs are receiving relatively little donor attention (the so-called “aid orphan” countries); fund organizations outside of the UN network; bring the neutrality of the UN to peacebuilding situations; and remain neutral regarding tensions among parts of the UN itself.

4.3 Management Approaches

PBF is run at Headquarters in New York by the Finance for Peacebuilding Branch, under the supervision of the ASG for Peacebuilding Support. The PBF staffing is exceedingly lean, an efficiency made possible by the PBF approach of delegating extensive authority and responsibility to the MPTF-O in New York and to local UN and government officials in-country.

The MPTF-O, managed by UNDP, serves as the PBF Administrative Agent and is responsible for the receipt of donor contributions, the transfer of funds to Recipient UN Organizations, the consolidation of narrative and financial reports, and the submission of these to the PBSO and to PBF donors. The

¹³ PBF Application Guidelines, Jan 2014, page 8

MPTF–O prepares a yearly Consolidated Annual Progress Report on activities implemented under the PBF.

In-country, IRF projects are developed for final Headquarters approval, and then PBF’s in-country partners implement and monitor them. For PRF projects, design and development is coordinated by the Joint Steering Committee (JSC), co-chaired by senior government and UN officials. The JSC also selects the projects for funding and oversees their implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. PBF prides itself on being fast and flexible, including setting clear and rapid time lines for programme development and implementation.

4.4 Programmes and Funding Levels

PBF is currently funding actions in 23 countries, including 15 which received new allocations in 2013. Three countries – Guinea, Kyrgyzstan and South Sudan – accounted for 68% of the new funding for 2013¹⁴. These new allocations totaled \$75.4 million, against a total PBF allocation amount of \$458.4 million to the end of 2013. This was significantly more than the unusually low figure in 2012, and close to the \$100 million indicative annual target it has set. Since its establishment PBF has received \$540.1million in contributions.

PBF received \$40.8 million in new donor contributions from 18 member states in 2013. This is a lower funding amount than the previous year but one that reflects PBF’s strong position in terms of funds available for allocation, which constituted \$122.7 million at the end of 2013, against a total donor provision to date of \$540.1 million. These funds have been provided by a very diverse donor base made up of 56 contributors.¹⁵

Funds are handled in-country by Recipient UN Organizations (RUNO’s). 18 RUNO’s received funding in 2013, with UNDP, UNICEF, UNOPS and UN Women accounting for 79% of the amount.¹⁶ As this suggests, PBF entails extensive delegation of responsibility and authority to the United Nations and national governments, mainly through the PBF Joint Steering Committee, for programme and project development and implementation. The ASG and FPB Branch are assisted by the MPTF-O in the handling of funds and related project monitoring, and by the other two PBSO Branches, the Peacebuilding Contact Group, Senior Peacebuilding Groups, and the Advisory Group.

4.5 What is “Peacebuilding”?

The question “what is peacebuilding?” has a considerable number of answers. This in part reflects the fact that the field is still fairly young, with many of its key components still under debate. It also reflects the complexity of the field, with a wide range of actors and situations. Many of those active in peacebuilding use terms such as stabilization, conflict management, or early peacebuilding to describe their work, with varying views as to how these processes relate to peacebuilding overall.

PBF acknowledges the variety of definitions of peacebuilding, but identifies one in its current Application Guidelines – that of the May 2007 report of the Secretary-General’s Policy Committee. According to this report, peacebuilding is “a range of measures targeted to reduce the risk of lapsing

¹⁴ Please note that South Sudan and Kyrgyzstan were already active PBF countries with IRF allocations provided since 2010.

¹⁵ Not all donors are countries and can include Funds and the private sector.

¹⁶ Numbers prepared for the team by the MPTF-O, February 2014

or relapsing into conflict by strengthening national capacities at all levels for conflict management, and to lay the foundation for sustainable peace and development.”¹⁷

One definitional concern is whether PBF programmes deal with Conflict Prevention. In practice, they do in the post-conflict context, i.e., in terms of helping prevent a relapse into conflict, but not in periods prior to reaching a credible peacebuilding milestone (sometimes referred to as the “peacebuilding handshake”), such as a comprehensive peace agreement.

Over the course of this review there was widespread agreement, especially in the field, that while further work on defining “peacebuilding” should be encouraged, resolving this overarching question is not essential to carrying out expanded and more effective work by PBF and its partners in the peacebuilding area. The PBF as the SG’s Fund for Peacebuilding is gathering experience on how to do peacebuilding guided by its principles and financing modalities. Conveying the results of its work to partners is essential but it should also share its experiences beyond its partners and contribute to emerging debates and new international agreements such as the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States.

The delineation of PBF’s work in peacebuilding is important among other reasons in order to clarify the line between the regular work of the UN agencies (especially development work, but occasionally humanitarian work) and that of peacebuilding. There are recurrent concerns that some UN agency personnel may view the PBF as simply another potential funding source for projects that they have identified in the course of their regular country programme, with inadequate targeting of peacebuilding needs and activities. PBF tries to mitigate this by delineating clear guidelines and providing quality assurance reviews and clear programme logic requirements.

5 PBF’S TWO FINANCING FACILITIES - IRF AND PRF

The PBF has two “windows” for dispersing funds – the Immediate Response Facility (IRF) and the Peacebuilding and Recovery Facility (PRF).

5.1 IRF

As noted earlier, the IRF “is the project-based financing mechanism of the PBF that was created to address critical peacebuilding needs in the immediate aftermath of conflict, or as a result of a dramatic change in the country situation. It provides rapid funding for immediate peacebuilding and addressing urgent peacebuilding needs to support critical transition moments.” The PRF on the other hand “is the programme based financing mechanism of the PBF, typically aimed at countries within five years following the end of the conflict.”¹⁸

While the bulk of this report addresses various aspects of these two funding mechanisms, the present section concentrates on several points of special importance to them as distinct but related mechanisms. First, it reviews the evolving ways that each mechanism is used. Second, it presents stakeholder perceptions of their utility and value. And last, a key strategic issue related to the concept of ‘time’ is raised for each mechanism. For the IRF, the issue involves handling the time

¹⁷ United Nations, *UN Peacebuilding: An Orientation*, (New York: United Nations, 2010), 49.

¹⁸ PBF Application Guidelines, January, 2014, page 13

constraints created by the immediacy and urgency of its implementation. For the PRF, the issue entails clarifying its roles in the medium and longer term phases of peacebuilding.

The IRF continues to be utilized as the primary initial response to new PBF peacebuilding situations. This approach builds on a number of assets of the PBF, such as its speed and flexibility, and its focus on immediate practical needs. Initial IRF funding may be followed by PRF projects, or in some cases by further IRF ones. In Kyrgyzstan, for example, the IRF fast response following violence in southern Kyrgyzstan led to further IRF programming.¹⁹ PBF feels that beginning with a rapid IRF programme can be especially helpful in determining whether the need exists for further support - it helps PBF to learn if the needs go beyond the IRF timeframe and it allows in-country stakeholders to become familiar with PBF methodologies. Overall the Review concluded that initial IRF programming usefully lays the basis for possible future PRF funding.

However, there are also situations in which the advantages of the IRF lead to its being used later in the peacebuilding phase. This frequently occurs when new tensions arise. During elections, for example, when quick funding is urgent, IRF monies can complement those of other donors. For example, IRF programming provided training and support to youth in Sierra Leone so that they could shift from carrying out violence for politicians to promoting peaceful elections.²⁰

IRF funding can also be used to help bridge the “transition” related to the closing of a UN Mission. For example, in Sierra Leone, as the Department for Political Affairs (DPA)-led UNIPSIL mission prepares to close, an IRF tranche is being finalized to address some of the remaining peacebuilding needs. IRF funds were also used in Guinea-Bissau to re-start PBF programming suspended after a violent change of government. Its PRF programme is still suspended but IRF funding was made available to contribute to pre-election work. After the elections PBF will assess its continued work.

The Review concludes that there is strong and widespread support for these uses of the IRF. Stakeholders in the field valued its speed and flexibility - the ability to design projects, have them finalized and approved, and receive 100% of the funds up front was praised not only for its project-specific benefits, but also for giving credibility to peace efforts, and for helping the government show itself as an effective institution for positive change. The flexibility to deal with a wider range of actors (including militaries and rebel groups) and interventions (for example, paying Daily Subsistence Allowance (DSA) than many other donors was also considered useful. UN agencies were especially positive regarding the IRF mechanism, as it required a minimum of programme development actions beyond those already available to most agencies.

Thus, the Review Team found that the IRF is both productively implemented in a range of peacebuilding situations and valued by PBF stakeholders and other observers. However, the Review Team also identified a number of limitations related to the use of the IRF modality. Most of these concerns are linked to the short time frame for project development that is built into this model.

One limitation is that the conflict analysis and funding gap analysis for an IRF project are relatively brief and sometimes weak, especially when done early in the peacebuilding period, when they may suffer from lack of clarity about the conflict and lack of adequate information about the available funding. Further, several observers noted that the short planning phase encourages some UN agencies to be less innovative and to undertake variations of programmes with which they were already familiar. The short time frame was also said to sometimes promote project portfolios that scattered funding across a range of smaller projects, with a resulting lack of strategic focus. Such

¹⁹ Team’s Kyrgyzstan report

²⁰ Team’s Sierra Leone report

limitations are heightened by the fact that unlike most PRF programmes, IRF programmes lack a secretariat to help develop and coordinate project planning.

The **Review Team recommends** that PBF/PBSO strengthen its “surge capacity” to help support these IRF programme development processes in-country, as these problems have more to do with the quality of dialogue and level of expertise than they do with the length of time needed. However, as noted in Chapter 10, PBF/PBSO’s ability to provide increased “surge capacity” is limited by the small staff at Headquarters, which needs to be addressed as well.

The short IRF time frame, and in some situations the fluid post-conflict circumstances, may also reduce government engagement and ownership of projects. Early in the peacebuilding process, government capacity is often low, and officials face many pressing demands. The substantial time spent with government officials and other stakeholders during the PRF design process, and the consensual agreement forged on appropriate interventions, are generally not part of the short IRF programme development period. Perhaps as a result, IRF projects were also often light on capacity building activities, emphasizing instead the rapid delivery of concrete benefits.

With regard to IRF project implementation, another problem was repeatedly mentioned, that of not having enough time to finish activities within the time frame. Recognition of this problem led PBF to shift the project length from 12 to 18 months in 2010 after the 2009 revision of the Fund’s ToR. This change was well received in the field, and is supported by the Review Team, although there was concern that even this additional time was inadequate, and that project extensions may still be needed. In South Sudan, for example, the intense and lengthy rainy season, combined with a minimal all-weather road system, limits programme implementation to approximately six months annually.

The Review Team did not have the capacity to determine how all of these limitations might be mitigated. Most respondents felt that they were simply part of the trade-off for having fast and flexible funding, and they cautioned against changes that might unintentionally reduce the core nature of IRF funding.

There was also recognition that most of these concerns were addressed by the PRF programming that often followed. However, the attractiveness of the IRF may lead some within the UN to prefer it even when the PRF, with its emphasis on strong planning, inclusive processes, and national ownership, is more appropriate. PBF should be vigilant to avoid such misuse of the IRF.

A question raised repeatedly in the field and with the other stakeholders attests to the popularity of the IRF - given its widely perceived benefits, what might be done to increase its use? The **Review Team recommends** that PBF should use the same strategies it uses to increase its programming overall, and take a pro-active approach by reaching out to the UN and governments in countries that might benefit from PBF programming. **PBF should also look creatively** at further situations where IRF funding can make a difference, as PBF is currently doing in Central African Republic to help deploy human rights staff. Increased use of IRF funds, however, should not be at the expense of PRF funding. If IRFs can be increasingly used, PBF may need to increase its annual programme target.

To expand its capacity for new IRF programming, PBF is also considering changing the parameters of the \$10 million IRF funding ceiling per country. The UN administration previously considered this meaning an all-time funding limit, but PBF is now promoting the interpretation that it applies only to the funding level of active programming.²¹ This PBF effort reflects the fact that the peacebuilding

²¹ PBF Application Guidelines, January 2014, page 9: “If a country is declared formally eligible for PBF funding by the UN Secretary General, it can receive up to \$10 million for the IRF project portfolio (counting active project portfolio, not projects which are operationally closed)”.

phase often lasts a considerable time, with the possibility that conflicts and tensions may recur. The **Review Team supports** the PBF interpretation, as PBF needs to have the flexibility to carry out new IRF programming if it is needed.

5.2 PRF

Turning to the Peacebuilding Recovery Facility, the PRF is the larger PBF funding facility, providing approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of the total funds to date. It should be noted that most of the discussion in the following chapters 6-9 focuses on PRF, so most recommendations regarding the PRF are made in those chapters.

The PRF programme development process is more extensive and takes more time than the IRF. This process has been the focus of considerable PBF attention in the recent years, leading to a better articulated and more extensive methodology with useful guidelines and templates as well as studies and reviews (e.g., the thematic reviews which are a joint PPAB-FPB initiative).²²

In the PRF's programme development processes, there is not an emphasis on speed. Instead, the design emphasizes the benefits of a longer programme preparation process (although one that is arguably faster than many other donors), which are witnessed in a stronger product, greater collaboration, and a commitment to capacity building. These processes entail a much stronger and more inclusive conflict analysis, which is necessary for optimal targeting of peacebuilding programmes. The funding gap analysis can improve the targeting of PBF monies to areas in need. The ability to review possible programme areas and determine priorities for PBF funding has proven crucial for government officials, UN staff, and other stakeholders, allowing them time to more fully assess the peacebuilding needs and arrive at a shared understanding of programming options. The additional design time can also help better focus the frequently contentious process of selecting project proposals on addressing the key needs, and allow UN implementing agencies to more precisely determine needs and requisite activities.

PRF programmes are increasingly working later and longer in the overall peacebuilding phase, with many countries receiving a second or third round of PRF funding. This shift to medium and long term programming in part reflects the reality that peacebuilding is lengthier than was widely appreciated even a few years ago, with the recovery and reconciliation processes taking a considerable number of years. Many countries also experience spikes of new tension and even conflict within this peacebuilding phase, and may have both insecure and peaceful regions. Some countries also find themselves stuck in the peacebuilding process, at risk of relapsing into conflict.

There is value in PBF/PRF programmes in these parts of the peacebuilding phase "staying the course". There are too many examples of incomplete international aid programmes and efforts, and of development and political attention turning away from peacebuilding in its later stages, even as major peacebuilding needs remain. Further, PBF's commitment to catalytic effects for resource mobilization can be especially important for peacebuilding efforts in the later peacebuilding stages, when media, political, and aid attention has often moved on.

Thus, **the Review Team recommends** that PBF clearly articulate its roles, niche and processes for working in the medium and long-term peacebuilding periods, and communicate them to stakeholders.

²² PBSO published three thematic reviews on SSR and Peacebuilding (2012), on DDR and Peacebuilding (2011) and Peace Dividends (2012) and a gender thematic review is currently being undertaken

6 PBF’S FOUR PRIORITY AREAS

PBF’s substantive areas of focus were established at its creation and revised in 2009. These Four Priority Areas, and the Outcome areas within each, are:

1. Support the implementation of peace agreements and political dialogue
 - Security sector reform (SSR)
 - Rule of law (ROL)
 - Disarmament, demobilization, reintegration of former combatants (DDR)
 - Political dialogue for peace agreements

2. Promote co-existence and peaceful resolution of conflict
 - National reconciliation
 - Democratic governance
 - Management of natural resources (including land)

3. Revitalize the economy and generate peace dividends
 - Short term employment generation
 - Sustainable livelihoods

4. Re-establish essential administrative services
 - Public administration
 - Public service delivery (including infrastructure)²³

6.1 Funding By Priority Area

Allocations to date have focused more on the Fund’s first two priority areas - implementing peace agreements and supporting reconciliation, which together account for 72% of resources spent – than on the second two.

Table 2: The percentage breakdown of PBF funding for 2012 according to each Priority Area.

Priority area 1	35%
Priority area 2	35.5%
Priority area 3	16.2 %
Priority area 4	13.2 %

Source: Annual Report 2012, page 4

In some instances interviewees felt that the first two Priority Areas were critical especially in the early period after a peace agreement had been signed, and saw Priority Area Three as more associated with the root causes of conflict or residual issues. Some said Priority Areas Three and Four were more appropriate for support by other donors such as the IFIs and the EU.

6.2 Priority Area One

Several interviewees noted concerns about PBF programming regarding Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) as well as Security Sector Reform (SSR), in Priority Area Number One. Programmes in these two fields have been the focus of a large proportion of PBFs

²³ PBF Application Guidelines, January 2014, page, 10

overall funding, and typically involve PBF funding a portion of a very large and expensive programme in-country. The concerns involve ensuring that PBF is not simply topping up the funding and programming of others, but is operating within its own criteria and parameters, and with some distinct value-added. Thus, **the Review Team recommends** that PBF clarify the parameters of its programmatic work in DDR and SSR, ensure its value-added, and ensure its complementarity to the funding of others.

6.3 Priority Areas Three and Four

Discussions over the course of the review focused primarily on Areas Three and Four, particularly the subject of “peace dividends”, mentioned under Priority Area 3. The current draft PBF Guidelines define peace dividends as “tangible results of peace that are delivered ideally by the state, or are at least attributable to it, and are accessible to communities in an equitable manner”.²⁴

Many country respondents felt that this concept was so broad as to make programmatic targeting difficult. For a country such as South Sudan, virtually every aspect of the government, economy, and social service sectors was severely damaged by decades of war. Thus, “peace dividends” could potentially cover a very wide range of actions. The **Review Team recommends** that PBF clarify that it is not open to addressing every type of “peace dividend”, and should indicate the parameters of what its sub-set of “peace dividends” entails.

The thematic review of Peace Dividends undertaken for the PPAB/Policy Branch recommends that PBF include greater support to administrative and social services in its funding portfolio since these have a direct and positive impact on the sustainability of the peacebuilding process. It suggests that expansion should occur in particular in Priority Area 4, but in the same report it is also recommended that the PBF should take social service contributions into consideration more prominently across each of its four Priority Areas.²⁵

The 2014 PBF Application Guidelines acknowledge that “public administration and social services, delivered in an effective and equitable manner, can address grievances and that underlie or trigger violent conflict and offer a means for the state to reach out to society and rebuild its legitimacy and systems of accountability”. In addition, the same guidelines state that: “With governments primarily focused on security and political processes in post-conflict settings, restoring basic administrative services becomes a key priority as a way to restore state legitimacy and rebuild the confidence of conflict weary populations”.²⁶

PBF has, according to the SG’s report from 2013, shown improvement in its support for the (re)establishment of administrative services: “while this outcome has historically been a weaker performer, in 2013, 42.8 per cent met the higher score, up from zero the year before. The good marks were driven largely by Côte d’Ivoire, and follow a trend noted elsewhere that many of PBF’s greatest contributions in 2013 have been through projects that strengthen the role of the state in formerly unstable or marginalized areas”.²⁷

However, the fact that these increases occurred primarily in a single country suggests that PBF needs to further increase its programming in this area. The Review Team could not assess from its country

²⁴ PBF, Application Guidelines, January 2014, page 5.

²⁵ Peace Dividends and Beyond, Prepared by the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office, 2012, Contributions of Administrative and Social Services to Peacebuilding page 5

²⁶ PBF Application Guidelines January 2014, page 5 and 11.

²⁷ The SG report 2013, page 17

visits to what extent there is strong demand in-country for support in Priority Area Four, but the electronic survey results indicate that there is growing interest.

The UN has recently undertaken an inter-agency/inter-departmental review of the lessons learned regarding core public administration functions in post-conflict situations, and what further actions are needed in this area. The creation of a UNDP-led Public Administration Working Group, under the authority of the UN Policy Committee, is meant to lead to a number of actions in which PBF (through PBSO) can be an important participant and contributor. This includes helping to establish and operate a “knowledge portal” and the creating a joint UN/World Bank technical coordination mechanism. With its risk-taking and rapid IRF funding, PBF has a potential role to play in addressing the recurrent funding gap for post-conflict assessments of public administration needs.

Thus, the **Review Team recommends** that PBF expand its programming and actions in Priority Area #4 (“re-establish essential administrative services”), including within the new joint UN/World Bank Working Group on Public Administration, given that core government functions are crucial to peacebuilding but have received a low proportion of PBF funding to date.

6.4 Other Areas for Further PBF Attention

In-country stakeholders also cited several issues that **the Review Team recommends** for greater PBF attention.

Youth were mentioned regularly in-country visits and across the four Priority Areas, and this theme was also noted as a significant issue in the survey. There is a growing recognition of the key role of young men not only in perpetrating violence, but also as decision-makers in both conflict and peace. While PBF is devoting attention to reducing young men’s engagement in violence, more project focus is needed, as well as more learning about what peacebuilding actions have the strongest impact.

Other areas were flagged as well for special attention. One of these was anti-corruption actions. Corruption is seen as both a conflict driver (when particular groups are capturing resources disproportionately) and as a challenge in project implementation (where ensuring effective control of project assets and outputs is essential).

Language issues, including in language of instruction in schools, in use in the media, and in use in governance, were also a concern. Methodologies for dealing with language volatility need to be developed, including possible expanded actions to promote and support neutral media.

There were calls from interviewees in-country for PBF to take a stronger role in the creation and implementation of conflict early warning systems. Peacebuilding situations are often at very high risk of relapsing into conflict, but conflict early warning systems are not routinely put in place. One problem is that elements of an early warning system can be created which are thought to be adequate but are not. The methodologies used to develop early warning systems covered more general topics such as economic indicators and income disparities, but tended to ignore the proximate factors that could lead more directly to violence. Thus, it is suggested that PBF poll its ongoing country programmes to get a more comprehensive picture of the existence of such early warning systems, their strengths and weaknesses, and what kinds of support might be most helpful to strengthen them.

Another **Review Team recommendation** is for PBF to fund technical assistance to help with the creation of national strategies for peace, especially their analytical underpinnings. The timely provision of international experts could be useful in advancing these often difficult undertakings. In

addition, analytical work on such national strategies could be undertaken to further examine peacebuilding challenges in specific themes or sectors that PBF and the JSC consider a priority in a country.

Another possible area of attention is regional approaches. This topic arose in West Africa, where Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea-Conakry, and Guinea-Bissau all continue to experience peacebuilding challenges, such as insecurity, youth unemployment, and lack of border control. The Review Team met with senior officials of the Mano River Union, who confirmed that there were indeed peacebuilding problems shared by all its member states (Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea-Conakry, and Cote d'Ivoire). One approach towards more regional action for peacebuilding, and which **the Review Team recommends**, is for PBF to develop pilot initiatives, led by national governments who share cross-border peacebuilding concerns, to address cross-border peacebuilding needs.

Issues regarding women were noted repeatedly, and are discussed in Chapter 15.

7 PBF'S CRITERIA AND NICHE

The leaders of PBF have made significant efforts to define its niche, including according to the key criteria that guide its operations. This niche is meant to be useful and relatively unusual in the peacebuilding field, but not unique. This is particularly important because PBF programmes are meant to fill gaps left by other donors and thus provide significant value-added.

Chapter 6 reviewed the substantive focus areas of PBF, i.e., the Four Priority Areas and the Outcome areas that fall under each. These categories distinguish what PBF does within the larger universe of peacebuilding operations. These areas are not unique to PBF, but they are not meant to be. In any case, such specialization (e.g., on creation of youth centers) would arguably be better ascribed to the relevant UN Recipient Agency that is implementing the project.

This chapter reviews the criteria and related aspects that collectively define much of PBF's niche, and assesses the extent to which PBF actually embodies these characteristics. It also speaks to the question of PBF's comparative advantages, which the Review found difficult to assess given the lack of definitive information. It should be noted that recommendations regarding various PBF criteria are made in other sections of this Report, including Chapters 8 and 9.

7.1 PBF's Criteria for Its Programming

The various criteria that PBF embraces help define its niche. There is no definitive list of the criteria PBF uses to determine how it works. Indeed, various PBF and external documents contain some differences.²⁸ The criteria that this Review sees as most central to PBF's work are:

- Fast and flexible
- Relevant
- Catalytic
- Risk-taking, including working with politically sensitive topics
- Filling donor gaps

²⁸ For example, the PBF's 2009 ToR, the different guidelines that were developed during the PBF's Business Plan. PBF support countries, however, that comply with its 2009 ToR

- Capacity building
- National ownership
- Inclusivity
- Political commitment

For PBF these criteria are both key operating principles and aspects of its distinctive profile. Thus, it is important to discuss the extent to which PBF actually applies them in its programming.

Fast and Flexible - As discussed further in Chapter 5, while PBF's Immediate Response Facility (IRF) has a number of constraints, it has earned a strong reputation for being both fast and flexible. Respondents in the field were consistently impressed by the speed with which decisions about applications are made and funding moved from Headquarters. Heightened flexibility is perceived in both the streamlined application procedures and the range of substantive areas that IRF projects can cover.

The PRF is a different model, with a more extensive programme development process. While this process takes much longer than the IRF, it is more inclusive, targets programme actions better, and seek to address more fundamental causes and drivers of conflict. While the PRF development process is arguably as fast or faster than most other donor development processes, its typical time frame of 8-12 months cannot be considered fast, especially in comparison to its partner facility.

The range of substantive areas in which PRF projects operate is both wide and flexible. The PRF shows flexibility in areas such as the use of alternatives to the PBF conflict analysis and PPP, and (like the IRF) by delegating virtually complete authority (except for certain reporting, monitoring and evaluation actions) to the Recipient Agency for project implementation. PRF programme development procedures have become more extensive in recent years, describing the form of project proposals and the criteria of the projects themselves, and are seen as flexible by those interviewed in the field.

Overall, the Review Team assesses the IRF as being fast and flexible, and the PRF as being rather flexible, but not unusually fast.

Relevance - PBF states that it "supports interventions that have direct and immediate relevance to a country's peacebuilding process and that contribute towards addressing critical gaps".²⁹ This is built into PBF programmes through a conflict analysis that identifies Structural Conflict Factors, Proximate Conflict Factors and Triggers. The conflict analysis is meant to ensure a common understanding of conflict causes, dynamics and consequences; to provide the basis for a needs prioritization; and to contribute to an overall peacebuilding strategy in the country. Based on this analysis, a Peacebuilding Priority Plan (PPP) is drawn up and finalized by the Joint Steering Committee (JSC). Projects are then selected in part based on their relevance to the PPP, with those selected meant to address the most important drivers of conflict and peace during the implementation phase.

Overall, the Review found the PBF projects to be consistently relevant to peace processes. To the extent that there are weaknesses in targeting the most crucial issues, these are mostly due to weaknesses in the implementation of conflict analysis in some countries.

Catalytic - From its founding PBF has emphasized the need to catalyze additional, sustainable funding for peacebuilding. For example, UN General Assembly Resolution A/60/984 states that the "Use of fund resources is meant to have a catalytic effect in helping to bring about other, more sustained

²⁹ 2012 Annual Report, PBSO, page 8

support mechanisms, such as longer term engagements by development agencies and bilateral donors”.³⁰

In recent years, PBF has introduced a new second catalytic category distinct from fundraising, i.e., that of catalyzing wider peacebuilding actions. While its definition remains a work in progress, the PBF Guidance Note 5.2 on “Programming for Catalytic Effects” identifies three main types of such actions:

1. Launching a new element in a peacebuilding effort;
2. Unblocking a stalled peace process; and
3. Undertaking innovative, risky or politically sensitive interventions (especially ones that others are unwilling or unable to support)

Incorporation of these two categories of catalytic effects into the reporting, monitoring and evaluation processes has been a priority in the last years. Beginning in 2012, for semi-annual and annual project reports and for annual reporting by JSCs, information has been explicitly required regarding the extent and impact of catalytic effects.

While this information base was uneven and rather anecdotal in 2012, PBF will be looking at the 2013 information in greater detail and with more rigor in order to draw out more conclusions. This will include quantitative analysis and measurements of the extent to which “catalytic effects” of the programmes and projects are meeting the Performance Management Plan indicators for catalytic leverage. At this time it is not possible to definitively assess quantitatively the extent to which either category of catalytic effects is met in the field.

Thus, **the Review Team recommends** that PBF carry out a robust evaluation of the results of the increased PBF programme reporting for 2013, especially in the areas of catalytic actions and other PBF criteria, including to provide adequate information for quantitative (and improved qualitative) analysis of the implementation and impact of these criteria.

However, the review found considerable anecdotal evidence, in interviews, project reports, and other documents, that the PBF was having *a catalytic effect on resource mobilization*. An example is the funding received to extend the PBF-funded UNICEF youth centers in the primary conflict areas in southern Kyrgyzstan, which were then expanded to other areas from where young men had travelled to fight.³¹

Given the large number of PBF projects, it was not possible to determine from such anecdotal information whether these examples, as impressive as they are, demonstrate that the majority of PBF projects produce catalytic effects, or whether they are doing so at a higher rate than peacebuilding projects funded by other donors (for which information was also not available).

Some of those interviewed, especially in the field, questioned whether PBF programmes have some inherent comparative advantage over those funded by other donors when it comes to mobilizing resources. This included questioning whether the substantive focus of PBF projects (i.e., within its Four Priority Areas) had some extra attraction for donors, or whether the relevant UN personnel in the field (e.g., the Resident Coordinators and UN agencies) had any special type of resource mobilization tools, or higher motivation for resource mobilization for PBF programmes than for other projects and programmes.

³⁰ UN General Assembly resolution A/60/984, 22 August 2006, page 4

³¹ Review Team’s Kyrgyzstan country report November 2013

However, PBF's criteria – that is, *how* it works - did strike some interviewees as encouraging further donor funds. The PBF sometimes funds activities that other donors are not willing or able to fund, e.g., that are politically sensitive and risky, or that donors are barred from funding because of their regulations. As several donors explained, there are donors who understand that risky and sensitive peacebuilding projects need to be implemented, but do not want to fund them directly. Without leaving their 'fingerprints' on projects, they are happy to put a relatively modest percentage of their aid funding through an entity that has the will and methodology to do so.

However, a portfolio with a high percentage of risky projects is likely to have a higher than average failure rate, with reduced donor interest in follow-on to failed projects. There were also questions as to whether the level of risk or constraints regarding donor regulations would be any less for follow-on projects, which might leave donors preferring that PBF continue the work, rather than fund it themselves.

PBF's emphasis on funding actions in "aid orphan" countries (countries with little international funding) may sometimes also make catalytic fundraising more difficult. Such countries are by definition locations where donors are fewer and funding less available, reducing the opportunities for further fund leveraging.

Overall, there is very strong support by donors for seeking to catalyze additional and sustainable funding to continue as a central feature of PBF's work. A number of donor officials interviewed noted that most donors aspire to such effects, but few are able to attain them. Stakeholders reiterated that the fundamental principle that "success breeds success" remains the key factor.

In summary, there is widespread appreciation for PBF's desire to be catalytic regarding resource mobilization. However, there was also recognition of just how difficult this goal is in the challenging niche and difficult countries where PBF works. Thus, for PBF, promoting catalytic effects for resource mobilization needs to remain a core ambition, but should not be a requirement for each project.

In terms of *catalyzing wider peacebuilding actions*, PBF has put considerable effort into exploring what this category means and how to apply it. This includes the recent document by PBF's partner PeaceNexus, as well as the "PBF Guidance Note 5.2 – How to Program for Catalytic Effects".³² Since these documents were only recently disseminated to the field, their impact is not yet clear. Among those who knew of them, there was general appreciation for their substance, as well as for the reaffirmation of PBF's commitment to risk-taking and to undertaking politically sensitive actions.

PBF programmes may have some catalytic effects beyond those noted in its documents. For example, its focus on funding a range of UN agencies may help to galvanize the engagement of institutions that might otherwise remain on the sidelines. In Guinea and Sierra Leone, for example, other UN agencies matched PBF funds, designed second generation projects, or decided to include a peacebuilding into a specific sector such as natural resource management.

Overall, PBF has markedly strengthened the tools and guidance it uses to catalyze additional peacebuilding actions and help unblock peace processes. However, while there were examples of projects having such a catalytic effect, it appears that only a minority had this attribute *per se*, although virtually all projects focus on implementing key aspects of the peacebuilding and peace processes and are meant to fill significant gaps in it.

³²Peacebuilding Fund, Guidance on the establishment and reporting requirements for new PBF-PRF projects. No date.

Risk Taking - PBF risk taking comes in several forms, i.e., related to security, programmes, and political sensitivity.

For PBF partners in the field, risk is often associated with security risks that must be mitigated in order to implement projects. In-country PBF projects use the same security measures as the UN system overall, and these measures sensibly mitigate security risks. Nonetheless, security risks still sometimes impact projects, such as shifting the site of water storage facilities and water pumps in Jonglei state, South Sudan, away from the initial target beneficiary population due to armed conflict in the area.

Programmatic risk-taking can mean undertaking innovative approaches, or expanding programmes into new areas or new categories of beneficiaries. PBF's emphasis on promoting such approaches is generally well-acknowledged and appears to have some practical impact in encouraging UN agencies to take further programmatic risks than they otherwise might have.

However, while many donors and agencies like to think that they are promoting "cutting edge" approaches, the reality is that major innovation is rarer than generally acknowledged, not only in peacebuilding but in development overall. Thus, in terms of innovative approaches, they were most often seen in cases of customizing an approach for use with new types of beneficiaries or in new areas, or in trying to take a pilot effort to scale.

PBF's emphasis on promoting politically sensitive actions demonstrates its willingness to take chances through its funding. It will be important for project proposals and ongoing project management to explicitly consider steps to mitigate the risks where possible, and to clarify the balance between the risks and the likely results.

PBF's promotion of risk-taking through its politically sensitive programming is unusual among donors, most of whom describe themselves as "risk-adverse", and within the UN. These risks, of course, entail the increased likelihood of project failure, which might potentially make them less attractive to PBF's donors. However, donors with whom this Review Team spoke understood this concern and supported PBF's continued risk-taking. Moreover, the perceived relative neutrality of the UN in comparison with some other donors often provides it with special opportunities to address -sensitive issues that the PBF is well placed to fund.

For PRF programmes, the requirement that projects be approved by the JSC, which is co-chaired by a senior government official, has the potential for limiting the extent of political risk taking – though some officials may actually have a stake in promoting the needed range of actions. While each country has its own specific political sensitivities, PBF support for programmes that address political sensitivities was seen as useful, including by government officials. In Liberia, for example, the PBF was the "first mover" in supporting the Land Commission. After this risky step, the Government and then other donors came to support it.

PBF should explore expanding its support in programmatic and financial risk taking in areas which it assesses and have a potential high peacebuilding impact, including to lay the foundations for a catalytic effect if the effort is successful.

Funding "Donor Gaps" - Donors gaps refer to peacebuilding needs that donors have not funded because they are not able to move fast enough, are more risk averse, or because of their own regulations.

Identifying funding gaps in a systematic fashion is usually quite difficult, due to the lack of relevant information, problems of donor coordination, and limited host country capacity. Donors and other

respondents often cited IRF speed as an important asset in addressing peacebuilding gaps, with few others capable of such a fast response. PBF projects that involved risk-taking, especially in terms of political sensitivities, were often too risky for other donors. For example, other donors appreciated PBF support for youth in Sierra Leone to shift from being conflict perpetrators to advocates of peaceful elections; they felt it complemented the regular “basket” of electoral projects.

Regulations and procedures also produce donor gaps, the most frequent being those related to Official Development Assistance (ODA). While it was not clear how extensive this problem is, there were instances of PBF filling a gap created by such regulations. For example, in the Comoros, PBF supported the establishment of the Coast Guard and the rehabilitation and strengthening of an army hospital that was opened to civilians. This project reduced mistrust between the population and the army, one of the conflict drivers in the Comoros.

Capacity building – PBF does not provide funds to UN agencies for their overall capacity building, but it does work with UN in-country staff to carry out its procedures, processes and projects. As discussed in Chapter 8 the **Review Team recommends** that it increase its collaboration with the relevant UN agencies and actors to provide a stronger collective peacebuilding Knowledge Management capacity.

PBF prioritizes strengthening the host nation’s government capacity to fulfill its roles in carrying out PBF projects. The results are mixed, with room for capacity building to improve project performance and sustainability. Many government entities do not have a specific peacebuilding or conflict prevention function (Nepal is the exception) which makes targeting difficult.

PBF also supports strengthening government capacity in PBF Priority Area Number 4, “Re-establish essential administrative services”. The **Review Team recommends** (see Chapter 6) that the relatively low amount of PBF funding for its Priority Area Number 4 should be increased, since the core government functions are crucial to peacebuilding - particularly if the peace outcomes that have been identified in the PPP focus on specific national or local government entities.

National Ownership – A related topic, National Ownership has always been emphasized by PBF, but it has received special attention in the last few years after earlier reviews found it weak in many programmes.

As part of this increased emphasis, PBF has worked to strengthen the engagement of government officials in the Joint Steering Committee. (See also Chapter 9). The JSC is co-chaired by the relevant senior government officials and includes other government officials as well. Officials also sit on JSC technical support entities. The JSC is responsible for setting the programme priorities through the creation of the Peacebuilding Priority Plan (PPP), project selection, and project oversight.

PBF has given special emphasis to the JSCs in recent years and they are generally well engaged in programmes. In countries where the PBF is a relatively large donor, such as the Comoros, there tends to be a higher level of government representation. Where the JSC is subsumed into a larger fund, it can have the advantages of aligning priorities and strengthening coordination, but it sometimes reduces attention to PBF funding and criteria. This is the case for example in Sierra Leone where the JSC was in place prior to the creation of the Development Partners Committee (DEPAC). The DEPAC reflects efforts by the Government to consolidate its aid monitoring and policy.³³ In practice,

³³ The Joint Steering Committee was generally seen as having been active. Members took their responsibilities for project vetting and selection seriously, with the prospective Resident Agency and implementing partner making presentations to the JSC, and with debates within the JSC on the correct application of PBF guidelines. Team’s Country Report for Sierra Leone.

governmental involvement and commitment varies widely from country to country and depends on the organization of the JSC.

In some post-conflict settings, parts of the government face circumstances that limit their capacity to play their optimal roles within PBF programmes. The administrative and managerial capacity of some governments can be weak, especially soon after conflict, e.g., when often those with military experience are pressed into administrative roles for which they may have little experience, and when national personnel with sufficient educational experience can be in short supply. Problems with corruption have occurred, as well as the related problem of “elite capture” of project benefits, either directly or to their political benefit. There can also be problems when parts of the government are themselves engaged in ongoing tensions or conflicts, including in restricting politically sensitive PBF actions.

Inclusivity - Some concerns were expressed, especially in the field, that National Ownership should not be equated with government ownership. In particular the question was raised as to how to increase the participation of national NGOs, CSOs, local governments, local leaders, and project beneficiaries. This has sometimes been discussed in the context of increasing the “inclusivity” of PBF programming.

PBF’s new Guidelines call for national NGOs and CSOs to be more systematically engaged in PBF programmes, in the functioning of JSCs, and as implementing partners of the Recipient UN Organization (RUNOs). In some countries, such as Liberia, certain NGOs and CSOs have full voting rights and provide inputs into JSC processes, while in countries like South Sudan they are included as “observers” and do not participate.³⁴ Further emphasis from PBF will be necessary to incorporate these actors adequately into PBF programmes. (See Recommendation in Chapter 9)

In terms of expanding the participation and inputs of local leaders and people in the project areas, PBF is often seen as capital city-centric, with its main decisions being made in the urban and political hub. The increased inclusion of leaders and other residents in project design and implementation can mitigate this problem. It may lead to benefits such as more effective targeting and better design, limitations on the “elite capture” of the project benefits, greater National Ownership, greater sustainability for the projects, and greater dialogue about problems that arise during implementation.

The **Review Team recommends** that PBF continue to increase these types of “inclusivity” by including local actors in its listing of “Key Actors Involved” in the Application Guidelines, building local consultations into project design requirements, and providing RUNOs and their implementing partners with guidance.³⁵ It should be noted that many NGOs and some UN agencies already have expertise with such inclusive approaches and PBF can draw on their experience. (See Chapter 8)

Political Commitment - A criteria related to National Ownership that has become increasingly important to PBF is having a clear and firm political commitment from the government. Early experience showed that the lack of government commitment could prove a severe constraint to effective programming, limiting capacity building for government and other actors, and beneficiary impact. Increased PBF attention to this matter has led to the addition of government and stakeholder

³⁴ This raises questions of how representative some NGOs are – especially when requirements of legal registration may limit who does or doesn’t count as an NGO

³⁵ PBF Guidelines, January 2013, page 26: “The JSC is an inclusive platform for engaging national and international stakeholders in peacebuilding, including key government, UN, civil society and development partner representatives (including the EU, WB, and bilateral donors).” The same guidelines also that a conflict analysis should be inclusive (page 12); RUNO’s should coordinate in an inclusive manner, (page 14).

commitment as a criteria for country eligibility in the Application Guidelines. In some instances governments create agencies to respond to conflicts or peacebuilding, thereby showing commitment and providing a good opportunity for PBF engagement.³⁶

This PBF criteria is important and should be supported. However, situations might arise where this requirement may allow persons within the government to delay or block a project due to its political sensitivity. Thus PBF and senior UN officials in the country may have to balance the importance of a project against the difficulties inherent in government approval, and may opt to fund a project despite limited official commitment.

7.2 Further PBF Attributes

There are also further attributes that various interviewees suggest also distinguish PBF's work. Among these are:

Focus on funding "aid orphan countries" – Since its inception, PBF has worked with countries that enjoy little donor assistance. However, PBF also funds countries where there is significant donor attention, but where it can fill important funding gaps.

Funding entities outside of the immediate organization – A number of interviewees noted that, unlike the World Bank and UNDP's Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, PBF funds projects managed in-country by other organizations, rather than by the funding entity itself.

Neutrality of the UN – There is an advantage in many peacebuilding situations of a fund that benefits from the perceived neutrality of the United Nations. This point was made repeatedly by government officials and other donors. Most of the largest bilateral aid agencies were perceived as having political and economic agendas.

Neutrality within the various "pillars" of a UN mission – UN representatives and close observers noted that in countries with UN Missions, PBFs perceived neutrality within the UN network allowed it to focus on crucial peacebuilding needs, without undue deference to particular segments of the Mission.

7.3 Comparative Advantage

In order to compare PBF's attributes with those of other relevant funders - consider PBF's "comparative advantage" - definitive information is needed about the relevant characteristics of those other organizations. This Review lacked such information regarding PBF's main comparators, i.e., other multi-donor trust funds that focus on peacebuilding, such as UNDP's Bureau for Crisis Management, the World Bank's State and Peace Building Fund, and the EU's Instrument for Stability.

One effort at a comparative review of these four entities (but not across the range of attributes discussed above) was undertaken by DFID in 2010.³⁷ At that point in time, the authors concluded that:

³⁶ In Kyrgyzstan the State Agency on local administration and interethnic relationships under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic

³⁷ "Funding Peacebuilding and Recovery: A Comparative Review of System-wide Multi-Donor Trust Funds and Other Funding Instruments for Peacebuilding and Post-Conflict Recovery", draft final report, 21 May 2010, Department for International Development.

- All of the funds examined can play an important role in addressing peacebuilding and post-conflict recovery challenges;
- Improved coordination and complementarity is needed to ensure the best allocation of resources and to avoid duplication of interventions;
- An important weakness across these funds is the lack of assessment of their performance and impact; and
- Critical peacebuilding and post-conflict recover priorities continue to be under-funded.

Insofar as the authors spoke to comparative advantages of PBF relative to the other three multi-donor trust funds, they concluded that:

- PBF is strengthened by a direct link to senior UN leadership at the country and Headquarters level, has a broad donor base, and has relatively inclusive governance structures at Headquarters and country levels;
- The UN funds' (i.e., PBF and UNDP/BCPR) close linkages to national strategic planning processes, and in some instances, their capacity to promote national dialogue on peacebuilding priorities are comparative advantages;
- The UN funds, in particular PBF, have the potential to become critical funding instruments in difficult transition contexts; and
- Thanks to these factors and UN in-country presence, PBF could play a catalytic and leading role in international efforts to ensure greater, more effective, and strategic support to peacebuilding and post-conflict recovery objectives.

8 PBF'S VISIBILITY AND PARTNERSHIPS

8.1 PBF's Visibility

One aspect of PBF's work noted by the Review Team was its relative lack of visibility in beneficiary countries. A number of donors flagged this topic, noting that it was a typical concern for their own funding. However, they were not sure that low visibility should be a concern for PBF. During the seven country visits undertaken for this review, PBF's profile was indeed found to be consistently low. This is in some ways part of its overall "light footprint" in-country. Uniquely among donors, PBF does not have a logo for ensuring visual recognition of its projects. In fact, its projects were generally portrayed to and understood by local beneficiaries as coming from the UN, its partner, and/or the Government – not from the PBF in particular. In most cases, donors in the host countries had significant, though often incomplete awareness of PBF's presence and funding.³⁸ In South Sudan, several key international donors who contribute to PBF globally had little knowledge of PBF funding. In countries on the PBC agenda, there were reports that early PBF funding was often misunderstood to originate from the PBC, though that does not seem to be the case at present.

Some observers felt that this low profile may reflect earlier UN sensitivities about whether PBF might become another in-country UN agency, competing for attention by becoming "operational" (a term often used in many ways, but essentially meaning having a significant staff and facilities presence in-country, especially at project sites). The UN agency staff with whom the Review Team spoke seemed quite comfortable with the current PBF approach, in which their agency received funds without

³⁸ Not all donors are aware that PBF has two funding modalities, the IRF and PRF.

having the sense of PBF as a competitor for in-country visibility. While there was certainly resistance to any appearance of a separate PBF office, there was general recognition of the need for at least several UN coordination staff focused on PBF work, whether at a UN coordination office (e.g., the office of the UN Resident Coordinator) or in a secretariat located in the office of the Joint Steering Committee or its equivalent. PBF's partners in-country, including the senior UN official and relevant UN coordination staff, felt that they were following the guidance of PBF, and that PBF did not need a higher profile. Discussions with PBF revealed that this is generally the case.

Overall, most in-country partners do not believe that low visibility harms the PBF. They appreciate its emphasis on improving impact and promoting unusual criteria in its programming without looking for a high profile in the process. They felt that it was important for the government to be aware of PBF's donor role, but much of this awareness could be generated in the JSC and the Ministries who implemented the particular projects. However, **the Review Team recommends** that PBF confirm with its international donors that they are content with this approach, as it is their money that the PBF is utilizing. Based on the donors with whom the Review Team spoke, there will likely be few voices advocating a higher profile.

8.2 Partnerships

PBF is a relatively new and modest fund that delegates great authority to in-country implementers and has a "light footprint" of its own. It is nonetheless ambitious about how it works and what impact it has. Since much of this impact depends on the actions of others, partnerships are exceedingly important. PBF partners include:

- The government in-country - both as a partner and in terms of PBF helping build government capacity;
- The UN system - including UN agencies, key Departments, and coordination efforts
- NGOs, CSOs and local actors
- The World Bank, the African and Asian Development Banks, the European Union and other funds with significant peacebuilding components.
- The New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States

8.3 PBF's Partnership with In-Country Governments

PBF has worked to promote strengthened leadership and engagement with host governments in programme countries both in their role in PBF programming, and as part of PBF's special emphasis in Priority Area Number 4 to "Re-establish essential administrative services".

As discussed in Chapter 7, PBF emphasizes National Ownership and government roles on the JSC for PRF programmes, including in its programme development guidelines and support. When the partnership between the UN and the government is strong, there is considerable mutual learning about conflict causes and drivers, gaps in funding, priority needs and actions, and appropriate project modalities. Training opportunities with government officials have been well received.

While IRF funding addresses immediate needs, inherently limiting its capacity building aspects, the PRF focuses on medium and longer term goals. This allows for better understanding of the government's needs and capacities. In most cases, however, the government's role in PBF programmes is limited to participation in the JSC, and its capacity needs are not always systematically addressed.

In most fragile states capacity building is challenging since governmental functions are so deteriorated. In Liberia, the PBF has established secretariats in government ministries which function like a programme implementation unit (PIU). This approach generates debate, including as the number of PIUs is supposed to be reduced under the fragile states principles.³⁹ Creating duplicate structures has been criticised in part since they may not be sustainable. Several interviewees suggested that building ministry capacity to manage and implement its own peace roles may be a good alternative, thereby increasing national ownership.

Another relevant aspect of PBF's operations is its relationship to relevant government funds, or ones that the government may operate jointly with other partners, such as the South Sudan Recovery Fund, and the UN Peace Fund for Nepal. PBF has usefully sought to target its funding toward programmes that complement activities supported by others and to finance actions that often cannot be funded via the Government. However, each fund has specific objectives, governance structures and procedures, and ensuring proper alignment and complementarity will require significant attention and time in each situation.

A related point is that of using government strategic documents in place of the PRF's Peacebuilding Priority Plan. As discussed in Chapter 9, this approach has important advantages: it increases the strategic focus of peacebuilding work, avoids duplication of effort, strengthens coordination, and builds national ownership. However, difficulties also arise regarding the relative lack of peacebuilding focus in alternative documents. There are also concerns that an alternative strategy may not be as strong on PBF criteria such as risk-taking in politically sensitive areas. These challenges might be mitigated by undertaking an additional peacebuilding review and appending the related information and recommendations to pre-existing strategies. The **Review Team recommends** that the PBF continue to utilize these alternative strategies and mitigate the PBF specific concerns that may arise.

Capacity building in terms of PBF's implementation of its Priority Area Number 4 on re-establishing essential administrative services is discussed in more detail in Chapter 6. In essence, the **Review Team recommends** that PBF seek to expand its relatively low amount of programming in this area, whose importance (including in the context of the Fragile States initiative) is noted in the latest PBF Application Guidelines. This includes PBF participation in the new Working Group on Public Administration recently set up by the United Nations (in collaboration with the World Bank).

8.4 PBF's Partnership with the UN Agencies and Departments

The UN agencies are key partners for PBF both at Headquarters and in-country. At Headquarters the Peacebuilding Contact Group and the Senior Peacebuilding Group are useful mechanisms for consultations.⁴⁰ No particular concerns were raised about these Headquarters relations and mechanisms.

However, the Review noted concern about the capacity of UN agencies in-country to design and implement strong peacebuilding projects. This capacity is uneven, with some agencies having more experience and giving more attention to peacebuilding (e.g., UNDP, UNICEF and UN Women) while

³⁹ One of the indicators for the principles is how many PIUs are parallel to government structures. See: <http://www.oecd.org/dac/incaf/internationalengagementinfragilestatescantwedobetter.htm#SLE>

⁴⁰ Peacebuilding Contact Group: Interagency working groups meet on a quarterly basis with representatives (technical level) of: UNDP/BCPR, UNICEF, UNWOMEN, UNIFEM, DPA, DPKO and WFP.

others have significantly less institutional experience and commitment to peacebuilding as a specialty.

The result is that some UN projects are weaker in both design and implementation. This reality often poses a quandary for senior UN coordination officials in a country, including those dealing with PBF programmes. Should they promote the participation of a wider group of UN agencies, including those with less capacity but potentially useful approaches and skills, or should they emphasize existing in-country peacebuilding experience and capacity?

Part of this problem can be ascribed to the relative newness of the peacebuilding field and hence the limited number of staff with peacebuilding experience, which puts a premium on PBF technical assistance to its staff in-country. Some agencies, such as UNDP, UNICEF, IOM, and UN Women, have created relevant peacebuilding field support components at Headquarters, or at least have several staff at Headquarters promoting and providing such support. However, the two largest units – those of UNDP and UNICEF – are undergoing major changes that involve absorption into other entities, and they appear to be losing a significant number of peacebuilding posts in the process.

Regarding this problem of uneven UN agency capacity, the **Review Team recommends** (as described in more detail in Chapter 10) that PBF advocate for the creation and strengthening of special peacebuilding personnel in UN agency Headquarters and/or regional offices to provide technical assistance to their staff in-country. The **Review Team also recommends** that PBF/PBSO take a strong lead role in the further joint inter-agency development of Knowledge Management, training, and other information and skills dissemination vehicles, which can have multiplier effects across the agencies.

Within the UN, PBF also has important relationships with the *Department of Political Affairs (DPA)* and the *Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO)*.

The relationship with DPA has been complex, with some observers stating that parts of DPA initially felt that PBSO, with its PBF and PBC Branches, should fall under its jurisdiction, or at least report to its head since peacebuilding work is political in nature. However, it appears that the discussion has moved on more recently to how the two entities can mutually support each other.

A number of observers inside and outside of DPA flagged DPA's challenges in undertaking work in-country, in particular in the Special Political Missions (SPMs) that DPA operates. This includes sometimes lacking adequate numbers of staff with strong field experience and support mechanisms required to allow the mission to be fully operational in challenging security settings. PBF's ability to fund peacebuilding actions that relate to the overall mandates of SPMs has added to their credibility and capacity in conflict analysis and monitoring, peace dialogue, and conflict prevention and mitigation. PBF projects can also help in the area of elections support, which is a DPA specialty.

As discussed further in Section 8.4 PBF, UNDP and DPA are exploring how they might increase the number of joint Peace and Development Advisors (PDAs) working on peacebuilding issues in the field. Such personnel, with expertise in politics, peacebuilding, and development in post-conflict settings, can provide much-needed help in the development and coordination of PBF programmes, while giving DPA a greater field presence across a wider range of countries. Discussions are also underway as to whether UN Volunteers can help support PDAs. The **Review Team supports this initiative and recommends** that PBF expand - where possible – the joint PBF/UNDP/DPA deployment of additional PDAs.

The other key UN department for PBF is the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO). DPKO is present in a many countries that receive PBF funding, including DRC-Congo, Ivory Coast, Lebanon,

Liberia, and South Sudan.⁴¹ These missions are often sizable, with large military, police, and other components. They often work in the same focus areas as PBF, such as Rule of Law, Security Sector Reform, and DDR. While DPKO missions are usually termed “peacekeeping”, some are also now receiving mandates for actions in peacebuilding, and are even termed “peacebuilding missions” as in the case of South Sudan.

Despite its large size and budget, DPKO has major limitations when it comes to receiving voluntary contributions, which are often available for peacebuilding actions complementary to those it undertakes.⁴² DPKO staff expressed interest in continuing to collaborate with PBF on projects that would help address gaps in DPKO programmes (such as DDR) as well as promote politically sensitive actions (such as Peace Commissions, Constitutional Review Commissions, etc.) that DPKO supports but cannot fund.

There was also widespread agreement that the transition period at the closing of a UN Mission, whether DPKO- or DPA-led, is a point in time when PBF funding can be especially useful, e.g., in the case of Sierra Leone. It can help address unfinished peacebuilding needs and convey the message that the country is still receiving special UN attention. (See section 12.8.)

PBF is also working with both Departments to strengthen their capacity to implement PBF projects. PBF funding through DPA and DPKO is just beginning, so it is premature to assess its effect.

Another issue for PBF is the *promotion of UN coordination and coherence*. During its early years PBF experienced major pushback from UN agencies and departments who did not want it to coordinate UN in-country peacebuilding actions or see itself as another UN agency in the field.

PBF’s in-country coordination roles today are not that ambitious; they try instead to promote coordinated use of tools such as conflict and funding gap analyses, and to use the Joint Steering Committee as a forum for wider discussion of peacebuilding issues and needs. PBF projects can also be a practical mechanism to increase joint UN understanding of and dialogue about political issues on the ground. As discussed in more detail in Section 13.6, there is an important niche for PBF in the peacebuilding Information/Knowledge Management domain. Here PBF can learn from the experience of entities such as OCHA, which found that coordination improvements can come from the exchange of information and analysis. Thus, PBF can bring significant value-added by promoting increased learning and research on relevant peacebuilding topics, and effective sharing of this information.

In this coordination context, various respondents expressed concern about the practicality of joint UN projects. Despite some years of effort to harmonize administrative, financial and programmatic procedures across UN agencies, e.g., through initiatives such as “One UN” and “Deliver as One”, those in the field consistently find joint programming too difficult and labor-intensive to be practical since they require the merger of different approaches and procedures. What the Review sees as a particularly practical approach on the ground entails implementing the viable aspects of joint work, i.e., joint project design, clear delineation of separate but related programme and administrative actions, coordination of programme activities, and some joint sharing of premises and other support components.

⁴¹ For a full overview of UN DPKO presence, please see <https://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/operations/current.shtml>

⁴² The largest operation is in DRC, MONUSCO with an approved budget of \$1,456,378,300 for the fiscal year 2013/2014

8.5 PBF's Partnership with NGOs, CSOs and the Local Population

Another category of actors who are especially important for PBF are the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). Various international and national NGOs and CSOs are partners with UN agencies for the implementation of PBF projects. Some of these organizations face capacity limitations similar to their UN sponsors, including sometimes having few staff with experience in the peacebuilding field and limited implementation capacity, especially in post-conflict settings. Such problems are generally offset by their knowledge of the local situation and actors, and their skills in relevant technical areas, and they can often be addressed by careful selection of UN implementing partners, and by targeted capacity building support.

An issue that arose frequently during the Review was the use of international NGOs as direct recipients for PBF funding. The main benefit of such an approach is that there are a number of INGOs that specialize in peacebuilding, and whose expertise are at least a match for many of the UN agencies. Among the advantages to funding INGOs directly are that: i) they often have long standing experience in peacebuilding and have developed their own approaches and methodologies; ii) they focus on specific groups or sectors which can supplement others; and iii) they have presence beyond the capital which may speed up support to specific beneficiaries. On the other hand INGOs are sometimes looked at critically by government, which may need to vet and approve a selection of INGOs that could work directly with PBF. Many donors supported this PBF model. The **Review Team recommends** that PBF pilot the use of international NGOs as direct recipients of PBF support in several countries.

National NGOs and CSOs are especially crucial partners. The Review Team found that national NGO and CSO participation in roles other than implementation still remained too limited. The **Review Team recommends** that PBF further promote the systematic involvement of carefully selected national NGOs and civil society representatives in all programme stages. In this context it is appreciated that the most recent PBF guidelines note the importance of national NGO participation in project planning and implementation, and as possible project implementers working with a RUNO. These guidelines also suggest a national NGO role in Monitoring and Evaluation and national NGO participation on the JSC.

The Review Team also found little engagement of *local leaders and the local population* in PBF project development, and a more mixed picture in project implementation. Most often those UN agencies that already have a strong emphasis on such participation incorporate local engagement in their PBF work while those that were weak on these aspects do not. Thus, PBF programming can sometimes become “capital city centric”, vulnerable to having politicians and elites speaking on behalf of the population without adequate input from the potential beneficiaries themselves.

The **Review Team recommends** that PBF strengthen its requirements for local engagement in PBF programmes in part via changes in the PBF Guidelines. The emphasis on “Do No Harm” principles does incorporate some important aspects of local participation in its questions and methodology, and these aspects could be strengthened. Inclusion of the local population in the “Key Actors Involved” section would also reinforce its importance. Methodologies for engagement of the local population, including identifying and working with key groups in order to avoid having only a few persons speak for the whole, are readily available, and should be disseminated (as PBF is already doing with other useful non-PBF documents).

PBF also partners with *international NGOs at PBF Headquarters* and has received useful support from PeaceNexus and Interpeace. The partnership between PeaceNexus and PBSO started in 2010. As an in-kind contribution, PeaceNexus provided advice on how the PBF can be more catalytic in

stimulating effective peacebuilding. It is also assisting the PBSO and the PBF in putting this advice into practice at the country level through its “Guide to Programming for Catalytic Effects in Peacebuilding”.⁴³ Interpeace works towards strengthening the capacity of violence-afflicted countries to manage conflict without recourse to violence or coercion. It has seconded one staff member to PBSO to boost peacebuilding expertise and resources.

These partnerships are adding important manpower to PBF’s already lean staff, and they are helping address the growing demand for further field support. The **Review Team recommends** that further partnerships of this type be developed. One cautionary note should be kept in mind – such partnerships, while they provide important “multiplier” effects, also require staff time from PBF, which needs to be addressed given PBF’s limited current staffing capacity.

8.6 PBF’s Partnership with Other Relevant Funds and Funding Mechanisms

In most countries the World Bank and the European Union are members or observers in the JSC, and the World Bank is a member of the UN Country Team. This enhances coordination and is of particular importance when these organizations fund their own peacebuilding programmes. The EU’s Instrument for Stability (IfS)⁴⁴ has in several cases cooperated closely with the PBF. In Guinea, for example, PBF has a partnership with the EU and UNDP that complements its pillars. PBF and the EU also worked closely during the 2013 elections and PBF supplemented EU’s election support since the donor resources were limited. PBF is considered particularly useful in unforeseen situations such as elections, when funds have to be mobilized fast.

There are also examples where the PBF works closely with the World Bank and ensures complementarity in its financing. This is reinforced through the Bank’s focus on creating financial and fiscal stability. The World Bank’s State and Peace Building Fund (SPF)⁴⁵ operates in some PBF countries but the Review Team could not systematically assess PBF’s partnership with this Fund.

Across the countries visited the Review saw little coordination and cooperation with regional Banks such as the African Development Bank and the Asian Development Bank. The African Development Bank has undertaken considerable work in fragile states, and supports the various international agreements and Fragile States Principles. Similarly, the Asian Development Bank has developed various approaches to conflict affected states and also employs fragility assessments and conflict sensitivity tools. Partnerships with these Banks appear to be weak or nonexistent.

⁴³ Peace Nexus and PBF, *Programming For Catalytic Effects In Peacebuilding. A Guide*. September 2012

⁴⁴ IfS provides grants for projects which aim to increase the efficiency and coherence of the Union’s actions in the areas of conflict prevention and crisis response, crisis preparedness, peace-building, and addressing security threats, including climate security. The IfS doesn’t require a conflict analysis, and is free of most of the ongoing regulations of the EU. It is law- and case-based and needs a comparative analyses to justify that such additional resources are needed, based on a set of stability related criteria. Projects under 2 million Euros can be mobilized very quickly.

⁴⁵ The World Bank’s multi donor State- and Peace-Building Fund (SPF), created in 2008, supports measures to improve governance, institutional performance, and reconstruction and development in countries emerging from, in, or at risk of sliding into crisis or arrears. SPF funds are available to all Bank member countries, IBRD and IDA-eligible countries, as well as countries in arrears. The SPF supports strategic initiatives/projects that; i) pilot innovative initiatives that address the challenges of fragility and create a foothold for wider development involvement; ii) assist countries that are in arrears; iii) promote cross-cutting, innovative approaches to the challenges of conflict and fragility; and iv) capture and disseminate the lessons of SPF activities to promote better understanding of the dynamics of fragility and conflict and develop effective strategic and operational approaches <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/PROJECTS/STRATEGIES/EXTLICUS/0,,contentMDK:22031772~menuPK:519150~pagePK:64171531~piPK:64171507~theSitePK:511778,00.html>

Bilateral Funds, such as the UK's Conflict Pool and the Danish Peace and Stabilization Fund, are also active in PBF countries.⁴⁶ The Instrument for Stability (EU) and Conflict Pool (DFID) are instruments that share some of the PBF's characteristics, such as fast processes to mobilize resources, low level of funding threshold and complementarity to normal programming. Also the USAID Office for Transitional Initiatives (OTI) is a fast and flexible mechanism for peacebuilding funding that focuses on providing in-kind support, as this is often difficult for countries in the early peacebuilding phase.⁴⁷ However, the Review found limited PBF coordination with these entities in the field. **The Review Team recommends** that PBF draft a partnership strategy for increased collaboration in-country (as well as globally) with International Financial Institutions (especially the World Bank, the African Development Bank, and the Asian Development Bank) and with the European Union.

8.7 PBF and the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States

The New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States / International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding was created in 2008, based on the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the 2007 DAC Fragile States Principles.⁴⁸ It focuses on improving aid effectiveness and overall peace and Statebuilding efforts in fragile states.

The UN is an active member of the International Dialogue, and the UNDP and PBSO participate in it on behalf of the UN. PBSO also currently co-chairs (with the Government of DRC) a working group to develop indicators for the Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goals. This offers an important opportunity for the PBF to contribute its experience and knowledge to the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States.

PBF's priorities are consistent with the priorities of the New Deal, including the shared emphasis on National Ownership. Five of the seven New Deal pilot countries also receive PBF funding or received funding recently.⁴⁹ In Sierra Leone, for example, the government has decided that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will set up a new department of Legal Affairs to respond to this agreement. It will also host a department for Human Rights and Refugees which may be relevant to the next PBF support. The Review Team heard several times that a significant number of government officials were ambivalent about using the term "fragile state" to characterize Sierra Leone, perhaps preferring to emphasize its successful recovery and its new status as a good location for development investment.

Review Team discussions in-country and with donors indicated that the New Deal Principles provide an opportunity for PBF to participate in this wider discussion, and some donors suggested that the PBF should adopt the New Deal principles in their own programming. There has also been discussion

⁴⁶ The Conflict Pool funds conflict prevention, stabilisation and peacekeeping activities that meet the UK Government's conflict prevention priorities as set out in the Building Stability Overseas Strategy. It brings together the work of the three departments traditionally involved in conflict prevention work: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), The Department for International Development (DFID) and The Ministry of Defence (MoD) to conduct joint analysis, establish shared priorities and design and implement joint conflict prevention and management programmes. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/conflict-pool>.

⁴⁷ The USAID Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) is the office within USAID that supports U.S. foreign policy objectives by helping local partners advance peace and democracy in priority countries in crisis. Seizing critical windows of opportunity, OTI works on the ground to provide fast, flexible, short-term assistance targeting key political transition and stabilization needs. OTI targets its uniquely-designed programming in countries experiencing a political crisis or emerging from conflict. Since 1994, OTI has helped establish a foundation for longer-term development assistance in 32 countries by promoting reconciliation, fostering peace and democracy, providing income generation, and jumpstarting nascent government operations. <http://www.globalcorps.com/oti.html>

⁴⁸ For easy reference the remaining text will refer to the New Deal meaning the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States

⁴⁹ DRC, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Central African Republic, South Sudan and Timor Leste

to what extent these New Deal principles could replace PBF's own principles but the Review Team considers the PBF principles sufficiently underpinning its Niche. PBF, however, could undertake additional steps to better align to these principles, share its experience and knowledge and take an active role. The New Deal Principles include to:

- Use the Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goals as a crucial foundation to enable progress towards the MDGs and to guide our work in fragile and conflict-affected states.
- Focus on new ways of engaging with conflict-affected and fragile states. We will develop and support one national vision and one plan to transition out of fragility.
- Build mutual trust by providing aid and managing resources more effectively, and also aligning these resources for better results.⁵⁰

PBF is already working closely with the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States and the post-2015 UN agenda, so is the PPAB. The latter participates in the Experts Group Meeting on the post-MDGs 2015 development agenda. The ASG and other PBSO staff participate in various meetings and forums, including the Global Meetings of the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding. It is not clear, however, to what extent PBF contributes to the New Deal discussions globally and in-country.

The latest guidelines state that: "The New Deal emphasizes the need to anchor support activities in nationally owned peacebuilding plans and endorses the use of compacts as a means to implement those plans. The PBF contributes to the achievement of these peacebuilding and state-building goals, and looks for opportunities within its current Priority Areas to support the New Deal principles."⁵¹

Although PBF works closely with stakeholders in-country to address themes and actions supported by the New Deal principles, the Review Team found little evidence that such actions refer explicitly to the New Deal. Moreover, in PBC countries, PBC has a compact or strategic framework with the government which PBF in most cases supports with its resources. This compact is not dissimilar from the compact that is envisaged by the New Deal yet these are parallel systems.

9 KEY PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT STEPS

In any aid programming, many of the most critical decisions are made in the programme development phase. This is certainly true for PBF. Programme development entails the incorporation of a set of criteria and tools that require substantial dialogue among all partners and stakeholders. The present section reviews the main steps in the *development* of a PBF country programme. Issues related to the subsequent *implementation* of PBF programmes are discussed throughout other sections of this report, while those regarding Monitoring and Evaluation are discussed in Chapter 13.

The present section discusses:

- Country selection;
- The size of the country funding envelope and for programme priorities;
- Joint Steering Committees;
- The creation of the Peacebuilding Priority Plan on which the country programme is based;
- The development and selection of project proposals;

⁵⁰ <http://www.newdeal4peace.org/new-deal-snapshot/>

⁵¹ PBF Application Guidelines, January 2014, page 5

- The size of project funding;
- The duration of the project development period; and
- Quality assurance for programme development.

9.1 Country Selection

The determination that a country is eligible for PBF funding is obviously a crucial step in the work of PBF. This not only determines where PBF will work and who will benefit from its funds, but it also determines its focus within the larger world of peacebuilding. Country selection also sets the framework for further decisions regarding the setting of priorities and projects to fund.

All countries must be officially declared eligible by the UN Secretary-General in order to receive funding. One route to eligibility is by being formally taken onto the agenda of the UN Peacebuilding Commission. This route applies to 6 among the 22 current active PBF countries.⁵² Requests for advice from the Commission can be made by the General Assembly (GA), the Security Council (SC), the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) or the Secretary-General, as well as any member state who wishes to seek advice.

To date six countries have been placed on the agenda of the PBC since its creation. The only country that has officially applied to the PBC and been rejected is the Comoros. The Review Team also heard of some countries that considered applying but preferred not to have what they understood might be the negative connotations of “fragility” associated with being a PBC country.

A second route for eligibility is that countries may receive PBF funding for Immediate Response Facility (IRF) projects (rather than for a multi-project PRF programme) totaling up to \$3 million dollars under authority delegated from the Secretary-General to the ASG of PBSO. This is done under a “provisional eligibility process”. The criteria for IRF project approval are similar to those used in the main process reviewed below, but with the inclusion of additional criteria that are appropriate to such project level decisions (e.g., on the demonstrated capacity to implement the project). The IRF requirements include consideration of the important subject of “how would the addition of a new country effect PBF overall strategic positioning (country-specific and globally)?”⁵³ The **Review Team recommends** that PBF should include this criteria in the main-country eligibility process as well.

The main PBF country eligibility process – for IRF funding above \$3 million and for all Peacebuilding and Recovery Facility (PRF) funding - includes the application for country eligibility as put forward by the senior UN official in-country (e.g., the UN Resident Coordinator). The PBF country eligibility process then entails review by PBSO internally, inputs from the membership of the Senior Peacebuilding Group, and, if approved by the Head of PBSO, submission to the UN Secretary-General for a final decision.

In practice, the country eligibility process includes a major component of informal discussion prior to any formal application. These are generally between representatives of the government and the senior UN officials in-country, as well as the ASG of PBSO and senior PBF staff. This can range from an initial phone call to a more extensive discussion in New York or elsewhere. Through this process the country representatives learn more about what kinds of peacebuilding situations PBF works in and the kind of support it can provide.

⁵² “Active countries” refers to those where PBF projects are currently being implemented, or where the country has been declared eligible and the programme development process is under way.

⁵³ PBF Application Guidelines, January 2014, page 20

A significant number of such explorations end with the mutual conclusion that the country is not a good fit for PBF funding, and no formal application is put forward. There have been exploratory discussions with approximately 14 countries from 2010 to the present which have ended in the mutual decision to not forward a formal application. Almost all of those formally put forward were approved. The countries with new PBF programming in 2013 have various post-conflict problems (i.e., Niger, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, Somalia, Mali, and Bosnia, with Columbia a possibility soon).

One important factor in the eligibility process is related to the “demand” side, i.e., the extent to which countries (including both government and UN officials within them) are aware of PBF as a possible funding and programming option. The relatively small number of applicants may suggest an overall lack of awareness. In response, PBF has been reaching out to potential recipient countries through their UN missions in New York for exploratory discussions.

The new PBF countries signal a de facto broadening of the types of post-conflict settings that PBF addresses, and therefore of the countries that are eligible for funding. The inclusion of countries like Bosnia in 2013 suggests that PBF is funding programmes later in the peacebuilding process than it had in its first years.

This change reflects the recent acknowledgement by PBF and others that peacebuilding needs arise later in the process than originally recognized and that PBF can help prevent a relapse into conflict in situations where the conflict was not of major scale, but a relapse could be. As an example of the latter situation, PBF programming in Kyrgyzstan originally followed a relatively limited bout of violence because there was a substantial risk of further conflict. This example may prove useful in re-confirming that eligibility for PBF funding is not restricted to “fragile states”.

The informal discussions on country eligibility are not especially transparent. If there are donor discussions they are not formal ones, and the Review Team did not receive any information that shows that donors have any influence over such decisions. The Review sees the informal and de facto confidential nature of these discussions with potential PBF funding countries as reflecting the wishes of those countries, and does not see a need to change them.

The formal criteria for evaluating country eligibility include:

- Evidence of critical peacebuilding needs, gleaned through a conflict analysis and a financial “gap” analysis;
- Crucial peacebuilding opportunities, including evidence of the commitment of government and national authorities; and
- Potential for a catalytic effect on additional funding, or unblocking key peace processes

Regarding the first criteria, a *conflict analysis* is central to the creation of the Peacebuilding Priority Plan on which PRF programming is based, and to the targeting and design of the PRF projects. In the name of speed, IRF funding does not require a conflict analysis, a JSC, or a PPP. Countries which receive IRFs, however, are stimulated to analyze the situation and the actors and understand how the proposed intervention is fitting within that analysis. IRF project development and approval is discussed in Chapter 9.

A strong conflict analysis is a crucial requirement for a well-targeted and successful PRF programme. It clarifies planned outputs and outcomes in a way that facilitates effective monitoring and evaluation. A sizable number of early PBF programmes, and a few recent ones, were weak in this

area, and in a few cases conflict analyses were not undertaken. There is also a need to update the conflict analysis during programme life in order to reflect changing circumstances.

Overall, PRF conflict analyses have received increased attention since 2013, and have in general improved in terms of methodology and analysis. However, various problems were noted regarding some recent ones. Sometimes there is a lack of clarity about who is responsible for leading and participating in the conflict analysis. The capacity of the staff in-country to carry it out effectively is also sometimes an issue, since a good analysis requires training and expertise that may not be available. There were also comments on the challenge of fostering national and local agreement without diluting the focus on politically sensitive topics, and the challenge of ensuring adequate participation, including at the local level.

PBF does not have its own conflict analysis methodology. However, there are adequate methodologies available from other actors, including the UNDP. The constraints on conflict analysis have more to do with ensuring adequate time and effort, inclusive participation, and sufficient training. Given these concerns, as well as the typical pressure for speed at this initial programme development stage, the **Review Team recommends** that PBF further strengthen its quality assurance efforts for these conflict analyses, including training for relevant personnel in-country, support missions to help carry them out (including through external partners such as PeaceNexus), and insisting that conflict analyses are carried out for all PRF countries and are encouraged for IRF countries.

Field respondents also noted some problems with the “*funding gap analysis*”. This analysis is meant to identify current and planned donor funding for peacebuilding in order to clarify where PBF funding might help fill gaps. In many post-conflict settings, these studies suffer from inadequate data when donors fail to provide information and from limitations in a government’s capacity to receive, analyse and consolidate the data.

These problems are of such a scale that it is unlikely that PBF can make a significant improvement on its own. One practical measure that the **Review Team recommends** is for PBF to add its voice, including via senior UN officials in-country, to calls for action to improve resource mobilization databases. **PBF should also model** good donor behaviour by continuing to make efforts to obtain and share the best information it can for programming purposes.

Regarding the second country eligibility criteria, due to several negative early experiences, PBF has focused in recent years on gaining “*political commitment*” for its programmes. See more detailed discussion in Chapter 7. With the creation of the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States initiative, a country’s self-declared status as a “*fragile state*” and its commitment to developing a New Deal Compact for building Peaceful States is seen by PBF as strong evidence of the commitment of the government to peacebuilding, but these do not eliminate the need for a formal application process.

The potential for *catalytic effects* – the third country eligibility criteria -- is important to give attention to from the onset of programming, but in practice is hard to predict. Hence, the Review suggests that some flexibility is needed for its use as a country eligibility criteria. See more detailed discussion in Chapter 7.

During this Review, a number of additional factors were found to be part of eligibility decisions.

One is the need for an event that marks a clear and credible beginning for the peacebuilding phase (sometimes characterized as the “*peacebuilding handshake*” event) and gives confidence that the commitment to peacebuilding is in place. An example is a comprehensive peace agreement. This expectation is reasonable and should be continued.

In countries where PBF has been working already, but suspended its programming, PBF may work with a lower threshold regarding subsequent commitments. Thus, through the IRF, PBF has re-engaged with countries such as in Guinea Bissau and Central African Republic after its support was suspended. Such re-engagement was welcomed by interviewees since the PBF can act fast and is flexible and can respond quickly. (See also section 12.10).

Another issue is the level of international aid to a country, particularly regarding peacebuilding needs. Some feel that a requirement, or at least a preference, for country eligibility should be its status as an “aid orphan”, i.e., a country that is receiving minimal international aid and attention to its peacebuilding needs. The desire to assist these “aid orphans” was central to the creation of the UN’s peacebuilding architecture in the first place. It has, however, become less significant as a PBF eligibility criteria since then, reflecting PBFs view that it can be useful in countries with multiple peacebuilding donors by complementing their efforts. There is merit in this view, but only if it is clear that PBF can help drive important peacebuilding actions and processes. Thus, the **Review Team recommends that** when funding in a “crowded donor field” PBF should give special attention to defining its value-added. Examples may include providing quick-starting IRF funding to address urgent needs, focusing on higher risk undertakings, and helping to maintain attention on peacebuilding needs.

Questions arose during the Review about PBF not funding countries in ongoing crisis, such as Syria. The PBF response is that it focuses on the peacebuilding phase, not ongoing conflict, and that countries need to have a credible nationwide peacebuilding process to qualify for PBF funding. This position is reasonable, given the considerable challenges already facing peacebuilding work, and that programming in conflict situations requires considerable special experience, expertise and capacity.

9.2 Size of the Country Envelope, and of Funding For Programme Priorities

In the initial years of the PBF, PBF/PBSO decided itself on the size of the funding envelope for each country. This included countries such as Sierra Leone and Burundi where PBF provided \$35 million each and let the UN in-country determine how to use it (with somewhat mixed results).

More recently this process entails initial informal discussions between the UN senior leadership in-country (on behalf of the government and the UNCT) and PBF/PBSO in New York as a way to provide an indicative funding range. The field then develops its overall funding request, as concretized in the Peacebuilding Priority Plan, which may lead to some further negotiations with PBF/PBSO Headquarters about the final amount. The criteria that PBF/PBSO uses to set its indicative funding parameters and its final amount are not clear and do not appear in the PBF Application Guidelines. PBF appears to judge this on a case by case approach.

There has been a trend over the last several years towards PBF providing relatively smaller funding envelopes than in its initial years -- topping out at around \$15 million as compared to around \$30. This reflects PBF’s sense that it can be more effective to commit lower initial amounts and then provide further funding based on the successful use of the first tranche (with the possibility of the second envelope overlapping the first). This performance based approach is now strongly recommended by PBF for new PRF funding and could in the future require a review of results before a new tranche is released.⁵⁴ PBF says that this trend towards lower individual country allocations is not be linked to any overall reduced funding allocation by the PBF, as shown by its total budget allocation of \$86.7 million in 2013, over twice that for 2012.

⁵⁴ PBF Application Guidelines (Draft), January 2014

The rationale for funding based on performance and ongoing needs is reasonable and the **Review Team supports its use**. The **Review Team recommends** that PBF introduce performance based funding for new rounds of PRF support.

While funding recipients would generally appreciate larger amounts, the Review Team did not hear of situations where the lack of additional resources made a critical difference in the viability of a programme. One potential drawback of lower funding envelopes is that some in the field are concerned about the increased time and labor involved in developing PRF programmes, resources which they are more willing to commit if the funding is higher. This concern is often linked to the size of the overall donor funding in the country. PBF's relative size is obviously larger in less crowded donor fields – in the Comoros rather than South Sudan – and can be more crucial for agencies with smaller country budgets than those with larger ones.

The *funding level for each of the main pillars within a country programme* is proposed within the PPP sent by the Joint Steering Committee to PBF/PBSO Headquarters. Headquarters may make some re-allocations reflecting its views on the relative importance of the pillars, the likely costs of actions within them, or other concerns. These changes can sometimes be seen in-country as Headquarters stepping into the field's area of expertise, and they require significant dialogue in order to ensure that the best possible conclusion is agreed to by all key actors. (A related discussion of the selection of PBF projects is in section 9.5).

9.3 The Joint Steering Committee

The Joint Steering Committees (JSCs) are co-Chaired by a senior government official and the senior UN official in-country. They are composed of various peacebuilding stakeholders, including key government, UN, civil society, and development partner representatives. They are responsible for coordinating the creation of the Peacebuilding Priority Plan (PPP), including the prerequisite assessments (e.g., the Conflict Analysis), and for proposing to PBF/PBSO the key programming topics and needs. The JSC determines the PBF peace outcomes, and also reviews and selects among project proposals and provides oversight and support for project implementation. In addition to the JSC's management and leadership functions, it is also meant to provide a forum for peacebuilding coordination and prioritization. In some cases this has provided JSC's with the political space to discuss country-wide peacebuilding needs and identify what PBF can contribute.

Opinions on the usefulness of the JSC mechanisms vary from country to country. There is agreement that much of the quality of the JSCs depends on their composition, as well as the host government and UN engagement, interest, and capacities. Therefore it is important that PBSO and the UNCT ensure that the right persons are included, that there is an effective focus on peacebuilding, and that the PBF guidelines and procedures are followed.

PBSO's position is that if similar coordination structures already exist in a country, PBF should use them instead of creating new ones. This has been the case for example in South Sudan, where this approach is also relevant from the perspective that PBF is working in a crowded donor environment and should avoid duplication. The Review Team, however, could not detect to what extent such assessments have been done systematically in other countries.

JSCs are meant to be a key mechanism for promoting National Ownership, not only regarding the government, but also through the inclusion of national NGOs or NGO umbrella organisations. However, as shown in Annex I, in many countries it is not known whether NGOs are included or the question does not appear applicable. NGOs play a critical role in assessing and addressing

peacebuilding needs from their perspective having access to vulnerable groups, and working in relevant specific regions or sectors. Moreover, they can have a key role in holding government accountable for effective peacebuilding actions. The **Review Team recommends** that PBF ensures that JSCs include NGO and/or CSO representatives.

As discussed further in Chapter 8 above, PBF found little engagement of local leaders and the local population in PBF project development, and a more mixed picture in project implementation. Thus, PBF programming can sometimes be overly “capital-centric”, and needs to benefit from the information and analysis, input and engagement of local actors. Thus, the **Review Team recommends** that PBF strengthen its requirements for local engagement in PBF programming, including with the strong support of the JSCs to ensure that this takes place.

JSCs also benefit from having skilled working level technical committees that prepare the JSC agenda and provides technical expertise required. Such technical committees can also play a crucial role in vetting project proposals, including assessing their technical and management aspects, and advising the JSC on their relative merits, and assisting with the further strengthening of proposals selected. As such review is a critical part of PBF programme development, it is important to get strong participation from relevant government entities to assist in this regard.

The Review Team heard from a number of UN agencies in-country that JSC decision-making should be more transparent. In some cases, for example, it was felt that the JSC did not insist on a strong conflict analysis while this is clearly indicated in the PBF Guidelines. If a conflict analysis is deemed not necessary, then an appropriate and relevant alternative analysis needs to be available and assessed on its appropriateness for PBF Outcome areas.

Annex I demonstrates that the JSC’s cover a wide range of characteristics taking the country and the context into account. For example, there is a mix of JSC’s stand-alone or integrated in government. RUNO’s representation differs and could be on a rotational basis or all UN agencies in-country. In most cases, however, there are co-chairs of the JSC and in all cases government representation. The Review Team could not detect a blueprint for what the ideal JSCs could be since many have also encountered changes over time. Some good practices have emerged that are highlighted above.

9.4 Peacebuilding Priority Plan

The creation of a Peacebuilding Priority Plan (PPP) - along with a JSC to oversee it - is a distinguishing feature of the PRF process. The PPP contains four main topics:

- the rationale;
- main objectives and peacebuilding interventions (including the Theories of Change);
- an implementation plan (including the anticipated catalytic effects); and
- a management and coordination plan.

The dialogue between Headquarters and the field on determining programme priorities was generally described by participants as collegial and productive. Where there was concern, however, in particular at PBF Headquarters and from a number of outside observers, was on the need for more consistent conflict analysis and financial gap analysis to help focus the prioritization, as discussed earlier in this Chapter.

During this Review, issues were raised concerning the programmatic scope of the contents of PPPs. One concern was whether the scope was adequately broad for PBF projects to address many of the most important peacebuilding concerns.

The centerpiece of this PPP substantive framework are the Four Priority Areas. The interviewees and documents indicated that these four areas (as discussed in more detail in Chapter 6) defined a broad enough range for major peacebuilding work, and that they were consistently relevant to peacebuilding needs in PBF countries. Some felt that there were certain categories of intervention that deserved greater emphasis, such as programmes focused on youth, language issues, or key public administration functions, but these can fit conveniently within the Four Priority Areas.

Another concern was whether the PPPs had adequate focus. For example, Joint Steering Committees can encounter political pressure to fund actions across a wide arc of needs and actors. However, impact was generally improved when the PPP focused on a short list of key topics and on strong integration among the main components. A related issue is that if all RUNO's in-country apply for PBF and projects are honored, fragmentation may result. The latest PBF Application guidelines accept the idea of concept notes and RUNOs could be encouraged to focus their projects on specific sectors and thematic areas to help avoid fragmentation.

Another concern was the use of alternative plans. If a relevant and credible national plan is already in place (e.g., the joint Government-United Nations Peacebuilding Support Plan in South Sudan) then by PBF regulations it can stand in place of a PPP. The substitution of an existing strategic plan for a PBF-specific one can increase strategic focus, avoid duplication of effort, reduce the time and labor required for PPP development, and strengthen coordination efforts.

However, this approach can also have limitations. The pre-existing strategic plan may have been created through a process that involved less attention to peacebuilding issues than a PPP requires. It may lack adequate information on the four PPP components and Four Priority Areas noted above. There were also concerns that the PBF emphasis on risk-taking and politically sensitive issues may be weaker in documents such as Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers. PBF funding may simply fill a gap in a pre-existing plan, but lack the distinguishing features of typical PBF programmes.

To address these concerns, **PBF (in-country, but also as reviewed at Headquarters) must assess** whether the plan in question gives adequate attention to PBF concerns. If not, actions must be taken to revise it accordingly. (See also Chapter 8). Such an approach was taken in Nepal, where the UN Peace Fund for Nepal co-lead by the government provides a common overall plan and structure for this Fund, of which PBF is the largest contributor. The UN Peace Fund for Nepal focuses on implementing actions which complement the Nepal Peace Trust Fund (government lead), and in some cases it funds activities that are too sensitive for government.

A special case of the relationship between non-PBF strategic plans and PPPs can be found in countries on the Peacebuilding Commission's agenda. The PBC process includes the creation of a Strategic Framework for Peace Building or Statement of Mutual Commitment⁵⁵ distinct from the PPP. This Framework brings together the Government of the country, the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission, and national and international partners to promote common peacebuilding objectives.

⁵⁵ The statement of mutual commitment is in principle the same as the strategic partnership. It is intended to be a "flexible instrument" that could be adjusted in the light of developments in the country. It focuses on the country's peacebuilding challenges and highlights issues and actions to be taken for each of the agreed priorities. It also spells out the engagements of both the Commission and the Government, and defines the frequency with which the mutual commitments will be reviewed.

In some PBC countries there is alignment between one or more of the objectives of the Strategic Framework and the PPP. In some instances, such as Liberia and Guinea, the PPP shares the same peacebuilding priorities. However, in other cases, the PPP is developed at a different time, reducing alignment between the two. Country visits also revealed that in some PBC countries the PPP is not aligned to PBC's strategic framework or vice versa.

The Review Team believes that alignment can be increased through closer consultation between the PBC and PBF. In such circumstances, the JSC and PBC Configuration Chair can play critical roles in this process, but such issues need to be discussed and decided on a case by case basis. This consultation may also provide opportunities to harmonize time frames, as the PPP and the strategic frameworks often have different schedules. (See section 12.5)

9.5 Developing and Selecting Project Proposals

For PRF programme development, another major step is that of developing and selecting among project proposals. This entails having UN agencies develop project proposals within the framework of the priorities that have been identified by the Peacebuilding Priority Plan. These proposals are developed against criteria and within formats provided by PBF (sometimes customized in-country as needed).

In some locations, an additional step is the creation of Project Concept notes. These shorter documents can be used prior to development of full-blown project proposals as the basis for provisional selection by the Joint Steering Committee, with those UN agencies whose notes passed this step then expanding the notes into full project documents with advice and assistance from relevant staff. This additional step is seen as a way of reducing the labor costs of the UN agencies. (see discussion in Section 9.5).

One of the concerns about project development raised in-country was that some UN agencies appeared to be forwarding proposals that had been developed earlier but had not been funded by other donors. While these projects may have merit, they were not developed using PBF-specific steps such as the conflict analysis and prioritization discussions that help agencies understand the nature of the peacebuilding dynamics. As a result, possible synergies were sometimes lost as well. This can sometimes happen because the agency does not have strong experience in peacebuilding, and incorrectly sees any development work during the peacebuilding phase as *de facto* constituting a peacebuilding programme.

The project selection step can also accentuate competition among the UN agencies. In some cases, smaller agencies, who receive funding from only a few sources, may feel that the relatively modest amounts of PBF funding are more crucial for them than for the larger agencies. There is also a trend for the larger agencies to have more specialized peacebuilding technical assistance available to them from their Headquarters.

Another recurrent problem is the tendency of some agencies to see the PBF as a pie from which all UN agencies in-country should have a piece. Indeed, PBF faces a tension between being inclusive, and thus drawing on the expertise of a range of UN agencies, and maximizing the chances of a successful project by focusing on agencies with relevant experience. There can be considerable pressure to take the expansive approach by generating many small projects or by having joint projects with more participating agencies than are necessary. This requires the Resident Coordinator or other senior UN official to insist on clear linkages of projects to the conflict analysis findings.

The January 2014 Draft PBF Guidelines seek to address this concern by insisting that PRF projects be developed in “a consensual manner through collaborative approach between those agencies that are best placed to contribute to a specific Priority Plan outcome (based on their mandate, experience and capacity on the ground).” This latest guidance shifts the balance of the “inclusive versus experienced” decision-making more towards the selection of UN agencies with substantial peacebuilding experience.

Yet this approach may face difficulties in practice. It is not clear that problems regarding competition among agencies will disappear by requiring them to reach consensus. The UN has for years sought to promote approaches that encourage inter-agency coordination, such as the “Deliver as One” concept, but with limited success. PBF’s collaborative approach is consistent with this larger effort, but it is likely to encounter similar problems.

9.6 Size of PBF Projects

A related topic is whether PBF should seek to diversify its funding among more small projects or concentrate on fewer, larger projects. At present PRF project funding amounts are determined by the Joint Steering Committee. For IRF projects, the size is suggested by the field with final approval from PBF/PBSO Headquarters. Thus, PBF would need to issue new guidelines if it wants to address the size of funding for PRF projects.

A number of donors supported a fewer-but-larger projects approach. Their main rationales were that it would generate a “critical mass” needed for significant impact, and it might reduce transaction and staff costs. However, others said that the often weak implementation capacity in fragile states argued for a diverse portfolio in order to reduce the odds of overall failure by “putting too many eggs in one basket.” They also said that the kind of innovative and risk-taking pilot projects that PBF favors entail a relatively modest cost. The **Review Team noted merit on both** sides of this argument, **and concluded** that these decisions should remain with the JSC and reflect the specifics of each country’s context.

9.7 Duration of Programme Preparation

A related issue raised during the Review was that the PRF programme development process can take too long. Some programme development processes took up to a year or more, which most respondents felt was excessive. This concern was in fact the one most frequently raised during the Review Team country visits.

This is an important issue, and the Review Team did not have comprehensive information regarding the length of the process for new countries. It is therefore recommended that PBF bring together this information and determine the extent of this problem.

According to respondents, this problem was particularly acute in the project proposal development and approval steps, not in the earlier steps of country eligibility and PPP development.

Thus, focusing on project development and approval, one potential source of a lengthy project development and selection process might be PBF procedures, which involve extensive guidance and formats as well as evaluation criteria and proposal requirements. However, in general, applicants in the field found these features useful. Rather the complaints focused mostly on the amount of effort agencies devoted to creating their proposals, only to feel that the evaluation criteria were more

restrictive than they had understood, the decision process sometimes opaque, the appeals process time-consuming, and in particular that with more information up front about what PBF does and does not fund, they could have avoided the effort involved in creating a proposal with little chance of being approved.

PBF should consider ways to reduce the time and labor required for project development. One **Review Team recommendation** is for a clearer delineation of what kinds of actions PBF would *not* normally fund. Advocates of this approach felt that it would help prevent agencies from expending resources on proposals that would ultimately be rejected. This information could be provided through PBF documents as well as on “surge capacity” missions. While some in PBF felt that such a statement might unduly restrict the innovation that PBF tries to promote, the breadth of what PBF does fund is sufficient to allow extensive room for such innovation.

Another **Review Team recommendation** is to increase the use of project Concept Notes. This approach requires agencies to provide a short (e.g., 4-5 pages) document that provides key information about the proposed project. Only those Concept Notes that are provisionally approved by a technical review group and the JSC are then developed into full proposals. While this adds an additional step to the process, it also limits the extensive proposal development effort to only those with a reasonable chance at funding. This seems a practical alternative approach which should be undertaken.⁵⁶

In the January 2014 version of the PBF Draft Application Guidelines, this subject receives new attention. The Guidelines states that once the PPP is approved by PBF/PBSO, the JSC must convert it into active projects within six months or make a request for an extension. This puts pressure on the JSCs to move expeditiously, but ignores the fact that part of the delay may grow from PBF procedures themselves.

The latest draft Application Guidelines also seek to speed up PRF programme development processes by launching a “Quick Start” PRF project approval process. In circumstances where the PPP contains elements that are especially urgent, the JSC may submit one or several project proposals together with the PPP. These may be “pre-approved” by PBF/PBSO for immediate implementation. It will take a year or two before it is clear how useful this approach will be.

A final **Review Team recommendation** is that PBF should elicit feedback from the field regarding how best to address this matter. This might be done by targeting the relevant PBF secretariat and/or UN Coordination staff to ask them to identify the main bottlenecks, and propose specific solutions.

9.8 PBF’s Quality Assurance in Programme Development

The Review Team heard considerable discussion in the field and at Headquarters about the appropriate roles of the PBF in quality assurance in the development and finalization of project proposals (and concept notes, when utilized).

PBF support is particularly important when agencies in-country have limited capacity to develop strong peacebuilding projects. There is also sometimes a need for the PBF to support the coordination staff and JSC in clarifying PBF priorities and assessing project proposals (or concept notes). This support may also enhance the perceived neutrality of the selection process.

⁵⁶ The PBF Application Guidelines 2014 includes that these can be used, page 27.

The PBF is trying to address some of these concerns. The latest Guidelines from January 2014 assert that: ‘PBSO plays a critical role in the review and approval of proposals for both IRF (at the project level) and PRF (at the Priority Plan level) facilities. In addition to its formal role in decision-making, PBSO offers technical support for project and programme design, development of in-country Fund management structures, monitoring, reporting, and evaluation. In some cases, this can include a package of ‘surge support’ that may include PBSO personnel or PBSO partners or peacebuilding consultants deploying to the country to prepare key documents for PBF submission”.⁵⁷

Yet this support is sometimes perceived as a double-edged sword. It can lead to complaints about slowing down the process and Headquarters intrusion. However, the Review Team also heard from UN coordination staff who welcomed the additional technical assistance, as well as moral and political support for the rejection of some project proposals.

Interviews with PBSO programme managers confirmed that direct assistance is requested for specific elements on the project cycle and that programme staff support the field in these areas on a regular basis. These requests arrive informally on a case by case basis and provide both PBSO and the country a chance to discuss quickly what the best way forward is. Surge support to assist on specific topics such as M&E in project proposals (a PBSO mission to Kyrgyzstan) or longer term involvement to assist in conflict analysis and the PPP (PBSO longer term assistance to Yemen) are all appreciated in the field. The challenge with this type of support is to advise without dominating, as PBF doesn’t want itself to become present in the field. A more recent development is that PBSO engages in the process from the beginning to offer help and initiate discussions to reduce having to provide assistance at a later stage, thereby slowing down the process by demanding revisions.

10 SUPPORT TO THE FIELD

PBF’s programme management approach emphasizes the roles and responsibilities of those in-country. PBF and PBSO at Headquarters have major roles in approving IRF projects, in determining country eligibility for PRF programmes, and in finalizing and approving the Peacebuilding Priorities Plan (PPP). However, the lead on the PPP, as well as virtually all of the responsibility for decisions on project selection and implementation, fall on those in-country. Thus, it is crucial that these roles are well defined, and that the guidance from Headquarters is clear and comprehensive. It is also crucial that there is adequate capacity in-country, with additional support provided by PBF-Headquarters.

This section focuses on:

- PBF information and guidance to those in-country; and
- Staffing in-country for the necessary PBF actions.

The related topic of whether PBF Headquarters has adequate staffing capacity is addressed in Chapter 11.

10.1 Information and Guidance

PBF has put considerable recent effort into strengthening and expanding the written guidance it provides to the field. A prime example is the Application Guidelines and their accompanying annexes,

⁵⁷ PBF Application Guidelines, January 2014, page 15.

which were disseminated in draft form in 2013 and in revised form in January 2014. These Guidelines have been developed through an iterative process that includes considerable inputs from and dialogue with the field, including at a workshop in Cape Town in 2013 which had participation from 10 PBF countries. Other guidance documents are those on “catalytic effects”, and the recent thematic studies done by the PBSO policy branch/PPAB.

The development and effective dissemination of such guidance has been an area of particular PBF strength and is generally much appreciated in the field, where the newness of PBF and its model of delegating authority to its in-country partners mean that the need for guidance is keenly felt. A number of UN field coordination units have customized and elaborated on aspects of these guidelines for their use. In Nepal, for example, the criteria for project selection are used by other agencies.

As discussed in more detail in Chapter 13, PBF already has good Knowledge Management functions. With active programmes in 22 countries across a range of issues, it has one of the most extensive information bases in the peacebuilding field. It also has important links with the PBSO PPAB/policy branch and the PBC Lessons Learned mechanism. PBF’s growing emphasis on monitoring and evaluation, including efforts at quantifying result and making cross-country comparisons, adds to the value of the information it collects.

In this context the **Review Team recommends** that PBF a) continue and further strengthen the development and dissemination of guidance and relevant documents to the field, b) continue to identify and address gaps in this information (e.g. regarding the kinds of project actions it does not typically fund), and c) further strengthen its own Knowledge Management capacity and actions, in particular taking a leading role in a stronger joint Knowledge Management effort working together with the relevant UN agencies and entities, and other key peacebuilding actors. (See also section 13.6).

10.2 Personnel and Staffing In-country

The person in charge of PBF functions in-country is the senior UN official. This can be the UN Resident Coordinator, or in cases where there is a UN Mission, the Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) or other top UN representative. If the Mission has Deputy SRSG’s, the lead responsibility is normally delegated to one of them. Much of the quality and impact of PBF programmes depends on the vision, leadership, political ability, and management skills of this senior official.

In the countries visited by the Review Team, and those written about by others, most of these officials seemed capable and engaged. Programmes ran especially well in places where the official understood the peacebuilding context, had a vision for how PBF could add value, and demonstrated active leadership. The ability of PBF to take risks in politically sensitive areas depends heavily on the ability of this person. Success in such efforts also requires a senior UN official with sufficient political savvy to mitigate related difficulties. Management worked most effectively when the senior official delegated clearly and appropriately, while retaining monitoring and oversight of management functions.

The UN Country Team and the UN Heads of Agencies play critical roles in matching PBF’s peacebuilding outcomes with their agencies’ capabilities. Heads of Agencies play an important role in coordination and liaison with all stakeholders, including donors and NGOs. They also help to develop PBF’s portfolio, design and implement projects, and interact with government officials on PBF’s behalf. As members of the UN Country Team, they can help identify the strategic direction of PBF’s

work and assist in applying PBF's guidelines and templates. Most UN Heads of Agency seem well engaged and committed. There is, however, some variability in experience and expertise with PBF's funding mechanism, and in some cases, with peacebuilding itself. Thus, there is a considerable need for and appreciation of PBF support, both in terms of relevant information and missions to the field.

Given the multiple duties and crowded agendas of the senior UN official, the bulk of the ongoing PBF leadership and management functions lie with the relevant senior UN coordination officer and with his/her staff. In most cases, these staff are well engaged, although they have mixed levels of experience with peacebuilding. PBF surge capacity and other support missions are much appreciated by them.

However, in most locations PBF's work is only one aspect of a crowded coordination agenda, so UN coordination units cannot give it full attention. Unfortunately, UN coordination funding and staffing levels are often inadequate to meet the full coordination needs, and funds for UN coordination staff in general, especially those coming via the UN Development Operations Coordination Office (DOCO), are dwindling. Thus, the **Review Team recommends** that PBF advocate strongly for the adequate funding needed for UN coordination actions and personnel more broadly in-country.

In some countries, PBF was once able to fund a number of field coordination posts through its own Headquarters funding reserve. However, those reserves are now exhausted. PBF now usefully addresses this lack of adequate numbers of UN coordination staff to carry out PBF functions in-country primarily through funding PBF staff and secretariat costs through inclusion in PBF project funding. This approach should be continued.

One especially important modality for strengthening PBF support in-country is that of the Peace and Development Advisor (PDA). These officials are sometimes given other names, but they all carry out the important function of linking peacebuilding and development. PDAs belong to a programme run jointly by UNDP and DPA that currently deploys approximately 26 PDAs to 25 conflict and post-conflict countries. (See also Chapter 8)

In some countries PDAs already play important roles in PBF work. In Kyrgyzstan and Guinea, for example, PDAs were deployed before PBF started, and they helped with programme development. One lesson learned from this experience is to avoid shifting PDAs into significant PBF management tasks for which they are not trained and which is not an effective use of their expertise.

A related field support action is the possible deployment of UN Volunteers as companion posts for PBF-focused PDA deployments. According to initial meetings between PBSO and UNV on this topic in July 2013, these staff posts could include a focus on monitoring and evaluation. This initiative should certainly be supported.

The **Review Team recommends** that the use of PDAs and UN Volunteers be expanded. UNDP and DPA already have a joint training programme for new PDAs, a framework within which PBF could fit. Deploying PDAs also has important value for DPA, which lacks staff in the field. It can help DPA to address host-country sensitivities about the stigma of having an official DPA presence, which some feel implies a "failed state."

In addition to field coordination posts, another useful mechanism for staff support in-country is the use of "surge capacity". This is when PBF (or other PBSO) staff or consultants undertake a temporary mission to the field. Past missions have helped implement program planning tools (such as the conflict analysis and funding gap analysis), set up key structures such as the JSC, and design and draft the PPP. They can also help to focus UN agency projects on PBF priorities select project proposals, and clarify PBF funding priorities. PBSO/PBF is exploring the idea of further involving INGOs in this

regard by tapping analysis and design expertise of organizations such as International Alert, Peacenexus, and Interpeace.

The UN survey respondents indicate that the field appreciates support in various areas, including support to strategic plans and project criteria (79%) and help with technical and analytical work in a non-project fashion (75%). PBF/PBSO support was also highly appreciated in the field, and the main concern raised was how to get more. It was also noted that temporary personnel should not replace personnel in-country, but instead help to cope during labor-intensive periods.

Annex J illustrates that surge deployment via PBSO increased significantly in 2013. In 2013, overall 30 such activities took place in comparison to 16 in 2012, and 10 have already been completed in the first quarter of 2014. This included an increase in the number of PBSO short or medium size missions as well as those of partners. Video workshop conferencing has also been used as an effective tool for field support.

Thus, the **Review Team recommends** that PBF a) expand the use of surge field support, b) seek to provide such support as early as possible in the programme development process, and c) use surge personnel in particular to help build local capacities, e.g., through helping conduct training programmes.

This continued and expanding support, however, can only be provided if PBF has sufficient staff in Headquarters. Therefore, as discussed further in Chapter 11, the **Review Team recommends** that the staffing complement in Headquarters be expanded based on an assessment of the workload for the new Business Plan and the priorities identified in this Plan.

11 MANAGEMENT OF THE FUND

This section discusses PBF's human resource levels at Headquarters, and the extent to which it is sufficient for carrying out the management and support functions of the Fund. It also discusses how PBF cooperates with the other two branches of the UN's peacebuilding architecture, PBF's financing for its Headquarters' functions, and the need to find ways to stabilize and expand these resources. It should be noted that issues regarding staffing and personnel in-country are discussed in section 10.2.

11.1 PBF's Capacity at Headquarters

PBF's business model calls for a "light footprint" in countries of operation, where it relies heavily on UN coordination staff, supplemented by PBF staff and external consultants on missions to the field for coordination of PBF programming, and on UN agencies, the government, and other in-country partners for implementation. This model is only viable if there is sufficient high quality work being done by PBF staff at Headquarters, not only providing direct country support but also improving and expanding field support materials and providing training in their use.

Thus, a key issue for PBF Headquarters is the match between its workload and its capacity. The Review Team observed that the PBF Headquarters staff are already stretched thin even as there are calls for their workload to increase. The positive response of those in the field to "surge capacity" missions, especially those by PBF staff, is understandably leading to further calls for support. This Review also calls on PBF to enhance its work in the areas of Knowledge Management.

In this context, the **Review Team recommends** expanding the almost skeletal PBF Headquarters capacity as an essential element for continued success.

PBF's current Headquarters staffing consists of 9 posts: 6 paid from PBF overhead on extra budgetary donations to the Fund, two filled by secondees, and one Junior Professional Officer financed by the Australian government. In addition, PBF overhead on donations pays one post placed in PBSO and one post in the DPKO Executive Office, which administers PBSO. In addition, there is one staff from Interpeace seconded to PBF.

The Review Team did not have the mandate or capacity to identify the specific types of additional personnel PBF would require meeting its projected future workload. It is clear, however, that the current capacity is insufficient. Thus, the **Review Team recommends** that PBF determine what additional staff it needs at headquarters over the next Business Plan, for both ongoing and expanded actions (e.g., increased surge capacity, stronger Knowledge Management actions, strengthened Monitoring and Evaluation, etc.), and presents the case for such expansion to the UN administration and donors.

There has been a related discussion among some PBF stakeholders as to whether PBF should place a limit on the number of countries that it funds at any given time. The figure most often cited is 20, which has been the advice of the PBF Advisory Group. The main rationale for the limit is that the PBF's current workload stretches its ability to carry out its leadership and support functions. In the course of the present review, a number of donors stated that should such a number be used, it should be considered an indicative ceiling rather than a hard limit. This topic has gained more importance now that the number of PBF "active" countries has reached 22.

The **Review Team agrees** that PBF, with its minimal Headquarters staffing, is already under pressure to carry out its roles, even as its success in providing Headquarters-based support missions generates demand for more support and for related Knowledge Management activities. The **Review Team recommends** that PBF be supported to expand its staffing at Headquarters as needed, including should additional countries seek and meet the eligibility requirements, and thus increase its number of "active" countries. PBF has clear value-added in this peacebuilding field, and operates with a model of a very lean headquarters budget and staffing table. These assets should continue to be used to bring important and useful support to more beneficiaries at a relatively modest cost to its donors.

Lastly, **the Review Team heard** consistently from across the range of stakeholders that a key element of the improvements made by PBF over the review period was its strong senior management. Within a small organization such as PBF it will be especially important in particular that a management culture that includes elements such as seeking out problems and addressing them, and of emphasizing partnerships with others, be firmly entrenched in the organization so that they are continued across changes in senior personnel when they inevitably occur.

11.2 Financial Resources

PBF needs to determine how to obtain adequate levels of financial resources for its needs, and to stabilize and sustain its core budget for the implementation of the next Business Plan. For budget purposes, PBF Headquarters costs include the personnel and operating costs of the Financing for Peacebuilding Branch of PBSO.

From its creation, the PBF operating budget at Headquarters has been primarily funded from the 3% overhead it receives on donor contributions to PBF. These donations were quite large in the first

several years, and could be tapped when operating costs ran higher than the 3% received for a particular year. However, as these funds are now essentially exhausted, PBF's operational budget is now directly tied to the 3% overhead it receives on its yearly donor contributions (supplemented by staff seconded by UNDP, UNHCR and the Government of Australia, and by support from external partners such as InterPeace and PeaceNexus).

In 2013 PBF management responded to donor and Advisory Group recommendations to expand its level of programming to recipient countries. It thus identified seven priority countries to receive focused staff attention and support missions at critical planning moments. Largely as a result, the Fund allocated more than \$80 million in 2013, versus \$35 million in 2012. This came much closer to reaching the indicative allocation target contained in the current PBF Business Plan of \$100 million per year. PBSO will continue prioritizing key countries in 2014, focusing on a new set of countries identified during a PBSO/FPB retreat in September 2013, and will continue to use \$100 million per year as its indicative figure.

PBF has managed to programme this higher amount in 2013 despite a budget reduction of more than 5% from 2012. The 2013 budget was \$2.8 million with the largest allocations earmarked for posts, rent and mission travel. PBF's budget for 2014 fell to \$2.5 million, in line with funds available from the 3% overhead of donor contributions.

Thus, the current model of financing PBF management from a 3% overhead on donor contributions seems unsustainable, especially given yearly variations in the level of donor contributions. Underlying problems include the exhaustion of the surplus from earlier years and the fact that PBF is unlikely to get donors to put in a fresh \$100 million annually to replenish the indicative \$100 million they will be allocating in 2014. This leaves PBF with a "bridging" problem between years. In addition, secondments, on which PBF relies to help fulfil its headquarters tasks, are subject to changes in donor will and capacity. Finally, as noted earlier this Review suggests that the FPB branch take on additional tasks regarding field support, Knowledge Management and developing a master plan for M&E, which cannot be undertaken with the current staffing levels.

Thus, the **Review Team recommends** that, in the context of preparing its next Business Plan, PBF should develop a proposal for creating a sustainable PBF-Headquarters funding base. This plan should include undertaking a comparative analysis of how other UN funds and entities obtain such funding and related resources.

PBF should consider the identifying and funding a core staffing complement that must be retained and considered as fixed costs, not subject to yearly variance as a result of donor contributions. This would require a mechanism for providing a reasonably steady level of funding. The Fund could agree with donors and the Advisory Group to set a fixed minimum amount for staff costs. PBF's minimal staffing complement should be part of the multi-annual work plan and include surge support to countries and expansion of the knowledge management, gender, and M&E support to countries.

The Business Plan should also consider identifying additional tasks and priorities that can be financed as variable costs, depending on budget needs. Examples of such tasks might include developing new products or conducting research on topics that further support the Business Plan, including thematic reviews and a seminar with UN country teams and peacebuilding experts. PBF would have to seek additional resources for these actions through partnerships, donors, or secondments and it would need to provide a strong rationale for such funding.

Cost sharing principles could also benefit PBF work in very concrete terms such as the PDA mechanism or future seminars. For AG meetings and visits to the field, Member States or donors

represented in the AG could contribute funds. PBSO could also discuss how joint activities with the other Branches and DPKO and DPA can be jointly financed.

Finally, a way to better understand of how PBF funding could be more sustainable is to undertake a comparative study of UN and non-UN funds.⁵⁸ This would provide PBSO and the AG with comparative cost data and learn how PBF can develop a sustainable base for managing the Fund. An additional advantage would come from examining the governance structures of these funds, since an alternative PBF financing structure may need stronger governance. A new structure could increase transparency and accountability, providing donors with a better understanding of PBF's cost structure and management.

11.3 PBF's Work with Other PBSO Branches

The Fund is part of the PBSO but the synergy between PBF and the other two PBSO Branches is somewhat mixed. There is useful collaboration in providing of Policy, Planning and Applications Branch (PPAB) staff to help with country analysis in the field, and in Thematic Reviews, which are relevant to PBF. However, interviewees have questioned the extent that PPAB has provided an analytic function to support both the PBF and PBC in policy orientation and advice.

The PPAB was initially set up to do analysis and research for PBSO countries, but now it also focuses on discussions related to post-MDG peacebuilding and security as well as the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States. It is therefore more outward looking and less concerned with direct support to the other two branches. The vision of the ASG is to develop a "repository of knowledge" through having the PPAB work with the Financing for Peacebuilding Branch to do so. This Review Team agrees with this concept, since knowledge management and taking a greater lead in outlining best practices are critical elements of the next Business Plan. (see section 13.6)

Concerning the third PBSO Branch – the Peacebuilding Support Branch - some initial thoughts to merge the Finance for Peacebuilding Branch and the Peacebuilding Support Branch were abandoned due to staff resistance and concerns about PBF's independence. Moreover, some suggested that PBF staff is project oriented and needs to keep a strong donor focus while PBC staff operate in a political environment oriented toward member states.

12 PBC AND PBF

12.1 Overview of the UN Peacebuilding Commission

Within the UN Peacebuilding Architecture, PBF is closely related to the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), created in 2006 to provide political support for peacebuilding efforts and focus the international community on post-conflict countries. PBC is specifically mandated to:

- Bring together all relevant actors and advise on integrated strategies for post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery;
- Help to marshal resources and ensure predictable financing for immediate post-conflict activities and sustained financial investment over the medium- to long-term;
- Extend the period of attention by the international community on post-conflict recovery;

⁵⁸ Benchmarking is a systematic process for identifying and implementing best or better practices which lead to a set of standards and identification of a (new) standard.

- Develop and disseminate best practices in support of countries emerging from conflict.
- Help countries that are formally taken “on its agenda”.

In the UN resolutions establishing the Peacebuilding Commission, the General Assembly and the Security Council decided a country can be included on the PBC’s agenda with requests from the Security Council, the General Assembly, the Secretary General, the ECOSOC, or a member state.

The PBC includes an Organizational Committee, made up of 31 member countries, and country-specific configurations. Country-Specific Configurations (CSCs) do the bulk of the PBC’s work. The Configuration mechanism brings together the government of the specific country in question with relevant international and national actors to discuss critical peacebuilding priorities and a long-term strategy aimed at preventing a relapse into conflict. A Configuration Chair is chosen from the Configuration members and, jointly with the different actors, prepares a strategic framework for peacebuilding for the country concerned.

All countries on the PBC agenda are automatically eligible for PBF funding. At present, 6 countries - Burundi, Central African Republic, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia and Sierra Leone - are on the agenda of the Commission, and are part of the 22 current “active” PBF countries. Since the creation of the PBF, PBC countries have received more than half of the total PBF funding⁵⁹, and these 6 are all long term recipients, having begun to receive funds in 2008 or earlier.

12.2 PBC and PBF Relationships and Cooperation

The synergy between the PBF and PBC is meant to be mutually reinforcing, e.g., with PBF benefiting from the political guidance and advice of the Commission and the PBC receiving briefings by the Chair of the PBF’s Advisory Group on specific country priorities and projects.

PBC and PBF serve as the principle instruments of the UN Peacebuilding Architecture, but have evolved in different ways since their inception. In their initial years, the PBC was keen for PBF to be a principle instrument to finance peacebuilding actions in its countries, including countries seen as “aid orphans” or fragile states. PBC also assumed that it should have a strong voice in determining the level and programming focus of PBF funding in PBC countries. In this regard, PBF funding was seen as an important incentive for countries to get on the PBC agenda. Initially PBC also saw PBF as an instrument to respond to Security Council resolutions regarding countries on its agenda.

During the implementation of its 2011-2013 Business Plan, PBF has worked to further develop its procedures for both PBC and non-PBC countries. As a result PBF has evolved into a strengthened programmatic and financial entity in its own right, with a sharper focus on peacebuilding needs in countries that meet its criteria whether or not they are on the PBC agenda. This process has led PBF to act more independently of the PBC, with a substantial response to non-PBC countries. Thus, while today’s PBC can usefully bring attention to the funding needs of its countries, the final decision about what to fund and how much lies with PBF and the ASG of PBSO. This has created some controversy. Some donors are of the opinion that PBF should continue to focus on PBC countries, while others believe that non-PBC countries are in need and that the focus should be on them.

Cooperation between these two Branches in the PBSO appears to have improved since 2010, including regarding information exchange and communication. Some of the Configuration Chairs act

⁵⁹ For 2013 57% of allocations were made to countries on the Peacebuilding Commission’s agenda. SG Report 2013, page 3

as ‘middlemen’ between the PBC and PBF. However, a majority of the donors and UN entities with whom the Review Team spoke believe that, despite efforts to collaborate, underlying structural tensions between the PBC and PBF still prevent the UN peacebuilding architecture from being fully effective.

The concerns raised in these interviews fell mostly into three categories:

- the roles that the PBC can play in-country;
- the levels of funding that PBF could or should provide to PBC countries; and
- whether PBF should continue to provide high levels of funding to PBC countries if these do not leave the PBC agenda at some point in time.

12.3 Roles of the PBC In-Country

A special concern is how PBC and PBF function in the field. PBC has no representation on the ground and is not systematically involved in the preparation and implementation of PBF projects. Instead, PBF works closely in-country with other UN representatives, government officials, and civil society groups.

A number of those interviewed in-country saw PBC as more of ‘an occasional visitor’ with a New York-centered approach, which therefore may not always have the necessary peacebuilding and country knowledge to engage in effective dialogue with local actors.

Some UN entities also saw instances of the PBC competing with the highest UN representative in-country or duplicating efforts of other UN entities. This has sometimes limited the credibility of its advisory role, since it is not always in a position ‘to bring all the actors together’. From a government and INGO perspective, it was not always clear who was speaking on peacebuilding matters on behalf of the UN in-country.

However, the Review Team also found instances where the PBC Configuration Chairs played an effective role in organizing political dialogue on peacebuilding, committing considerable time to the endeavor. The Chair can help to identify peacebuilding needs and ensure that the Fund correctly identifies and responds to priorities. Chairs can also engage with governments to put sensitive topics on the agenda, and can press them to address peacebuilding needs and mobilize resources. Of course, the highest UN representative, who has a permanent presence, can do this as well. Thus, the effectiveness of the Chair depends highly on the individual who occupies it, and how well he/she is accepted in the country.

12.4 Levels of PBF Funding to PBC Countries

Another concern of many interviewees was that neither the PBC nor its Chairs have been able systematically to mobilize significant additional resources for PBC countries.

This expectation may be unrealistic in an environment where resources are scarce, such as “aid orphan” countries. Indeed, the call for the PBC to seek additional funds continues precisely because its countries suffer chronic resource shortages. They can stabilize and develop only if peace agreements have been fully implemented and the threat of conflict abates. National governments in particular see the need for continued PBC resource mobilization and expect that the country will

remain on the PBC agenda for a long time. Moreover, none of the PBC countries have ever graduated from the PBC agenda.

The PBC's problems in raising additional funds can put pressure on the PBF to continue its funding, even though it is only a partial response to peacebuilding needs since PBF resources are limited and may not last for the duration of a country's PBC engagement -- a possibility currently being discussed. The concern about PBC claims on PBF funding is particularly acute because PBF disbursements to PBC countries have been consistently high. The funding for PBC countries still accounts for more than half of the total PBF commitments.

The 6 PBC countries have received substantial resources from the PBF, even when some of them had UN peacekeeping missions.

Table 3: PBF Resource envelopes for PBC countries

	On PBC agenda since: 1 indicates year and 2 indicates when the Strategic framework was adopted between PBC and country	PBF first year of contributions	Total PBF resources received in US mil \$ (annual report PBF 2012)	UN missions
Burundi	1.2006 2.2007	2007	49,2	BNUB
Sierra Leone	1.2006 2.2007	2006	46,9	UNIPSIL In transition
Guinea Bissau	1.2007 2.2008	2008	23,8	UNIOGBIS
Liberia	1.2010 2.2010	2007 declared eligible	28,7	UNMIL
Central African Republic	1.2008 2.2009	2008	33,4	BINUCA
Guinea Conakry	1.2011 2.2011	2007 declared eligible	27	-

The countries that have received the largest share of PBF funds since 2007 are Burundi (\$49.2 million), Sierra Leone (\$46.9 million) and the Central African Republic (\$33.4 million), all of which are on the PBC agenda. PBC countries have received a high proportion of PBF resources in part since most of them are considered 'aid orphans'.

The table below shows that PBF provides significantly more resources to PBC countries than to non-PBC countries. For the PBC countries the PRF is the modality most utilized whereas the IRF accounts for 12% of total funding.

Table 4: PBF allocations to all countries. 2008 - 2013

PBF Allocations by Country and Type (in USD million)	Date of Approval of Priority Plan	Cumulative to date PRF (\$)	Cumulative to date IRF (\$)	Cumulative to date Tot/Cum (\$)

PBC Countries				
Burundi	Feb. 2008 and May 2011	44.200.000,00	5.000.000,00	49.200.000,00
CAR	June 2008 and Feb. 2010	30.000.000,00	4.306.253,00	34.306.253,00
Guinea	Apr. 2009, Dec. 2011 & 2013 (multiple)	45.233.382,28	10.759.453,62	55.992.835,90
Guinea-Bissau	June 2008 and Jan. 2011	22.800.000,00	3.355.385,00	26.155.385,00
Liberia	Feb. 2008, May 2011, Oct. 2013	50.154.000,05	1.719.470,00	51.873.470,05
Sierra Leone	Oct. 2008 and Dec. 2010	43.700.000,00	6.417.879,00	50.117.879,00
Subtotal PBC COUNTRIES		236.087.382,33	31.558.440,62	267.645.822,95
Non-PBC Countries				0,00
Bosnia & Herzegovina				0,00
Chad			4.788.011,00	4.788.011,00
Comoros	Dec. 2008 and May 2013	11.500.000,00	400.000,00	11.900.000,00
Cote d'Ivoire	Jul. 2008	12.500.000,00	6.077.750,00	18.577.750,00
DRC	Jul. 2009	20.000.000,00		20.000.000,00
Guatemala	Nov. 2010	10.000.000,00		10.000.000,00
Haiti			3.800.000,00	3.800.000,00
Kenya			1.000.000,00	1.000.000,00
Kyrgyzstan	Sep. 2013	15.100.000,00	9.999.948,30	25.099.948,30
Lebanon			3.008.472,00	3.008.472,00
Libya			2.428.044,00	2.428.044,00
Myanmar			3.630.192,64	3.630.192,64
Nepal	Jul. 2008 and May 2012	18.000.000,00	898.800,00	18.898.800,00
Niger			2.999.650,00	2.999.650,00
Papua New Guinea			160.414,40	160.414,40
Somalia			3.995.100,00	3.995.100,00
Sri Lanka			3.000.000,00	3.000.000,00
Sudan			17.073.613,00	17.073.613,00
South Sudan	Feb. 2013	10.000.000,00	8.522.890,00	18.522.890,00
Timor-Leste			993.625,00	993.625,00
Uganda	Aug. 2010	14.000.000,00	1.020.000,00	15.020.000,00
Yemen			5.590.352,00	5.590.352,00
PBF Review			294.464,00	294.464,00
Subtotal NON- PBC COUNTRIES		111.100.000,00	79.681.326,34	190.781.326,34
TOTALS		347.187.382,33	111.239.766,96	458.427.149,29

Source: MPTF-O February 2014

One of the concerns regarding the level of PBF funding to PBC countries is whether the high funding level for PBC countries reduces its allocations for non-PBC countries. PBF has had more funds than it could programme throughout most of its existence, so it would seem that over these years PBF funding was not a zero-sum game. However, the recently instituted PBF yearly target of allocating \$100 million is higher than any year since 2007, and PBF has less funding reserves than in earlier years, so this issue will likely be receiving more attention.

The **Review Team recommends** that while PBF should continue to fund PBC countries in need of such peacebuilding support, it should also examine with the PBC when such support can be reduced or stopped. This could be done before a country leaves from the PBC agenda. The 2015 review of the UN Peacebuilding Architecture will need to assess whether PBC countries should be automatically eligible for PBF support and for how long. These points link with the discussion later in this chapter of PBF exit strategies for PBC countries.

12.5 PBC and PBF working modalities

The PBC and PBF work with different instruments to support PBC countries. PBF uses the JSC as the key decision-making entity on projects under the PRF funding modality. However, JSCs don't report to the PBC. The two entities also work from different strategic documents: the PBC uses the Statement of Mutual Commitment (SMC) while the PBF uses the Peacebuilding Priority Plan. The meta-evaluation study confirms that countries on the PBC Agenda develop and utilize the Strategic Framework for peacebuilding,⁶⁰ which typically seeks only limited alignment with PBF's Priority Plan. In cases such as Liberia, joint reviews help to align the priority areas of the JSC and the Strategic Framework, and both in turn respond to government medium term plans.

In practice, while the PBF and PBC differ in-country and their consultations are not always aligned, in the New York PBSO office it appears that the PBC and PBF staff do cooperate and consult. Here the Branches' shared staff model has contributed to information sharing and cooperation between the two Branches.

In Burundi and Guinea, PBC and PBF work closely together. Recently the PBC chair, PBF and the ERSG discussed the PBF's priority plan in Burundi and identified a critical focus on youth political wings in preparation for the 2015 elections. PBF will now provide funding for this commonly recognized need. In Guinea, the second Priority Plan was approved in December 2011 and is aligned with the Statement of Mutual Commitment between the PBC and the Government of Guinea. The plans focus on the same 3 priority areas: SSR; National Reconciliation; and Youth and Women employment. In Liberia the PBF supports the three priorities in the Statement of Mutual Commitment.

In other PBC countries, however, the different PBC and PBF processes and tools are not always well synchronized. Another concern is the time frame. PBF and PBC support missions are not always planned jointly and drain available government capacity in-country. Such separate actions could also undermine the ONE UN principle, the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States and relevant aid effectiveness agreements. The Configuration Chair functions best as a person who can coordinate and ensure effective cooperation. In most cases, however, coordination takes place on an ad-hoc basis.

These concerns point to the need for the PBC and PBF to revisit their functions, roles and responsibilities and to assess the extent to which they can operate in an effective and

⁶⁰ Meta-evaluation of country-specific PBF evaluations, Mariska van Beijnum, Conflict Research Unit, Clingendael Institute, May 2013, Page 25

complementary fashion in the current UN architecture. The PBC needs to clearly define its added value and its advocacy role, including the role of the Chair and the Configuration set-up. The PBF, by contrast, responds to peacebuilding needs in PBC countries from a technical and programmatic perspective.

The Review Team recommends that the PBF and PBC align their different tools and time frames where possible and harmonize their different support instruments, taking the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States and aid effectiveness agreements as a reference point. In addition, they could consider more joint work or missions to reduce transaction costs for governments. From a country perspective, this coordination would allow the UN to speak with a common voice. Such an effort could also improve government ownership of PBF and PBC processes. The Configuration Chair in cooperation with the Director of FPB and the UN representative could lead the initiative.

The review of the UN Peacebuilding Architecture in 2015 will be a critical moment to re-assess how the roles and responsibilities of both the PBC and PBF can be redefined to strengthen the UN architecture.

12.6 PBF Exit Strategies

There are a number of stakeholders, donors in particular, who feel that PBF should develop a policy regarding when and under what circumstances it should exit from a country (i.e., cease funding), and when and how it should create and implement an exit strategy to do so. As PBC has ended funding in multiple non-PBC countries, but never for a PBC country, this is a PBC issue in particular. Thus, the discussion below on “exit strategies” refers to PBC countries.

Those advocating for creation of PBF policy for exiting PBC countries contend that the lack of such an exit strategy leads to:

1. Lack of clarity in PBF’s criteria
2. Tied-up resources that could be available for other countries, in particular non-PBC countries
3. A habit of perpetual assistance that ultimately undercuts PBF’s niche; and
4. Lack of clarity on when PBF’s support no longer has added value or comparative advantage

Some observers contend that some PBC countries may be ready for an exit strategy but remain on the PBC’s agenda because they lack the resources to continue peacebuilding on their own. As long as countries are on the PBC agenda they can expect the PBF to respond to needs even though PBF staff may conclude that an exit is appropriate. In the absence of alternative financing modalities, the PBF can be used to prolong assistance even though the rationale has declined. In other words, countries may be ‘tempted’ to remain on the PBC agenda since it makes PBF resources available. This anomaly needs to be further examined in the upcoming 2015 UN Peacebuilding Architecture Review.

More recently, other elements have entered the discussion of PBF’s need to prepare exit strategies. Donors and UN representatives underline PBF’s independence, insisting that it should have the right to end its programmes in any country. In PBC countries, however, it would need to do so in close collaboration with the PBC, the UN, and the government. It is possible that in Sierra Leone the PBF will prepare and implement an exit strategy while the PBC continues its engagement. Most interviewees consider it to be PBC’s role to ensure continued attention for the country and advocating for resource mobilization. Nonetheless, the lack of alternative peacebuilding resources and donors has made it difficult for PBF to decrease its funding and prepare an exit.

12.7 Creating an Exit Strategy at the Beginning or Mid-Point of a PBF Programme

Discussion of an exit strategy could sharpen the definition of PBF's niche and strategic position in-country. There are opportunities to incorporate PBF "exit strategies" at various points in the programming cycle, including 'up front' in the design stage of a PRF programme or at mid-term. There is a strong call for PBF to prepare exit strategies 'up front'⁶¹ in the design documents of PRF programmes. Donors indicate that this needs to be discussed at the beginning, or at latest the midway point, of the PBF support period. Exit strategies may be particularly useful at mid-term when decisions about the final tranche of funding are taken.

Defining an exit strategy 'upfront' is challenging since the PBF would need to estimate when it can leave or set benchmarks at a given moment in time. In both PBC and non-PBC countries peacebuilding is not a linear process and estimates of completion may be difficult. Peacebuilding depends on emerging scenarios in a country, such as elections, the work of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission, or residual conflicts.

However, the lack of a preliminary exit strategy raises different expectations. In most instances PBF is associated with UN agencies that stay in countries long beyond the peacebuilding phase. **The Review Team recommends** that PBF develop a strategy for communicating its status as an impermanent fund, one that enters and exits based on clear criteria.

One way to start work on an exit strategy is to systematically assess during mid-programme reviews or new PRF or IRF commitments what circumstances would lead to the termination of PBF programming. For PBC countries, for example, UN mission drawdowns could serve as a starting point to engage in a transition strategy and determine what PBF's contribution should continue to be.

Some stakeholders, however, are skeptical of the need for exit strategies, especially for PBC countries with continued peacebuilding needs. There are also doubts about the usefulness of developing benchmarks or blueprints for exit since PBF's departure should reflect the context and status of peacebuilding in each country. Some argue that a "phased approach" based on cumulative results is the best way forward. A phased approach could include the slow reduction of support and the handover of responsibilities to other stakeholders.

12.8 PBF Leaving or Phasing Out at the End of a UN Mission In-Country

There are now a number of instances in which PBF funding has been provided in the "transition" situation created by the closing of a United Nations Mission. Graduation from the PBC agenda, as well as the end of PBF programming, is now being discussed for Sierra Leone and Burundi. The ending of the UN mission (UNIPSIL) in Sierra Leone in March 2014 provides the PBF with a concrete opportunity to develop an exit strategy policy and build scenarios on how to do so. There is some debate about whether PBF should close when the Mission does or continue programming for the foreseeable future, and whether its exit strategy should last several years.⁶²

According to the Peacebuilding Commission Working Group on Lessons Learned "a special financial arrangement should be considered in order to respond to the special needs of countries in the

⁶¹ The meta evaluation recommends that this UN PBF review provide insights in the experiences to date in developing a clear and *upfront* exit strategy for the PBF. Italics from the Review Team.

⁶² PBF leaving prior or after PBC graduation and also irrespective of UN mission draw down.

aftermath of conflict under the special political mission set-up. In the case of Sierra Leone, for example, it has not achieved diversity in donors. It was underscored that allocations from the PBF can be utilized to fill the gaps created between political and development mandates”.⁶³ Situations like Sierra Leone can also raise the question of the link between continued PBC presence and PBF funding, since PBC actions may extend beyond the point where PBF funding is appropriate.

Box 2: Sierra Leone: Is PBF Ready to Leave?

PBF funding can be provided in the “transition” situation created by the closing of a United Nations Mission. Some characterize Sierra Leone’s stability as fragile. Many of the recommendations of the highly credible Truth and Reconciliation Commission remain to be implemented, the near-meltdown into conflict in 2009 remains on the minds of many, and many root causes of the conflict, including massive corruption, great disparity of wealth, and high unemployment, persist. Competition and corruption related to minerals appear to be increasing, and there is concern about the continued ethnic nature of politics.

UNIPSIL’s pending departure should be seen as a concrete indicator of Sierra Leone’s success. Some key benchmarks of such success, over ten years after the official end of the war, include two successful national elections, creation of two PRSPs, and improved security. The US Embassy has recently begun processing of Sierra Leone’s application for Millennium Challenge Corporation funding and Sierra Leone is no longer categorized as a fragile state in their terms.

Senior UN decision-makers have clearly decided that some types of “bridging” activities following the departure of UNIPSIL are needed, and the prospective IRF tranche is one such activity. There is general consensus in-country, at UN Headquarters, and among donors that PBF can play an important role during this period by focusing on the “unfinished business” of peacebuilding. Possible examples include addressing the constitutional review process with a view to strengthening conflict prevention and resolution processes, and support to the security sector and Human Rights Commission. The PBC will continue to remain, hoping that it can maintain international attention to Sierra Leone and promote additional funding. Nonetheless, these changes raise questions about what benchmarks PBF should use in considering its departure.

12.9 Possible Criteria for Initiating an Exit Strategy

In Sierra Leone, it is reasonable to assume that PBF could prepare an exit strategy and that the country could graduate from PBF support contingent on indicators and benchmarks for different scenarios and time frames as well as consensus among all stakeholders. Since the situation of each post-conflict state is different, however, it is not realistic to make a rigid set of guidelines or criteria in advance. **It is recommended** that the PBF develop scenarios for initiating an exit strategy and take a phased approach in cases such as Sierra Leone and Burundi.

Some possible criteria for initiating a PBF exit strategy might be:

- Mission draw down
- Successful elections
- The successful end of a PRSP
- The existence of key organizations working to keep the peace

⁶³ Peacebuilding Commission Working Group on Lessons Learned, “Resource mobilization for peacebuilding priorities and improved coordination among relevant actors”, 6 April 2011 Chairperson’s Summary, page 3

The exit strategy might be guided by:

- Resolutions by the Security Council which sets the pace
- The Strategic Framework (PBC)
- Scenarios in the Peacebuilding Priority Plan
- Midterm review or assessment of PBF programmes
- Donor and government agreement on termination based on agreed lack of further peacebuilding needs that PBF can meet
- Donors who will fill the former gaps
- Conflict analyses

PBF's role and contribution:

- PBF should be part of transition planning in a UN Mission draw down
- JSC should be the mechanism to prepare a PBF exit strategy in collaboration with PBC
- Close cooperation between PBC and PBF, and strategic framework assessment
- Midterm review of its programming can help identify benchmarks for possible exit

12.10 PBF Suspension of Its Support and Reengagement to PBC Countries

In some cases PBF has been criticized for suspending its support to PBC countries that have fallen back into conflict such as the Central African Republic (CAR) and Guinea Bissau. In Guinea-Bissau, the PBF has started to reengage with the arrival of the new ERSG. Its PRF programme is still suspended but an IRF was made available to contribute to pre-election work. After the elections the PBF can assess how it can reactivate PRF funded work. Suspension and return to support can only be done on a case by case review and in close collaboration with DPA. There are no PBF criteria for such re-engagement. In CAR partial unfreezing may have symbolic value and can show that the PBF is willing to engage. As argued in Chapter 5, the IRF is an appropriate instrument to re-engage.

13 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring and Evaluation have improved over the course of the recent Business Plan, partly as a result of increased staffing capacity at Headquarters. This section discusses the PBF's approach to Monitoring and Evaluation, both in Headquarters and in-country, and options for further improving it.

13.1 Monitoring and Evaluation at Headquarters

The Finance for Peacebuilding Branch has strengthened its human resources since 2010 in response to the Advisory Group and donor recommendations⁶⁴, expanding from one to three full-time M&E officers, including one seconded by UNDP and a JPO position funded by Australia. This increased capacity allows PBSO to provide more regular assistance to UN Country Teams, including training on monitoring and evaluation, which is also provided by Peace Nexus and locally hired experts. As a result, PBF's M&E work has improved, notably in the areas of in-country project design, monitoring and reporting.

The Fund's M&E approach is based in part on the Performance Management Plan (PMP), which is a Global Results Framework that sets out its strategic peacebuilding objectives and expected outcomes

64 DFID has asked for evidence of results and value-added of PBF interventions.

from country portfolios. The PMP provides strategic guidance to the field on (i) a common understanding of peace-relevant results and the underlying Theory of Change; and (ii) how to measure them in quantitative and qualitative terms. This guidance should drive the overall programme effectiveness of PBF-funded projects.

This PMP reflects the Business Plan priorities and collates information at an aggregate level regarding how country projects contribute to peacebuilding targets by priority area. Performance is measured against a 2010 baseline and uses scores from PBSO project assessments, periodic reports, and independent country evaluations.

With the start of the Business Plan, a results-oriented planning and budgeting process has been put in place, as well as an improved reporting system. The PMP aims for streamlined monitoring and results reporting from the field to PBSO to ensure PBSO's oversight. A country-specific results framework is used as a reference point for project monitoring and reporting.⁶⁵

During the 2011-2013 Business Plan period, there were fluctuations in terms of meeting the target outputs and contributing to peace outcomes. There are multiple reasons for these fluctuations, including management delays, the timing of support, and changes in the context. Moreover, country reporting is often inadequate due to a lack of M&E capacity and challenges in reporting based on a solid M&E design, including the identification of baselines, measurable indicators and assessing the extent to which outputs contribute to peace outcomes.

As a consequence, examining results at an aggregate level such as the PMP may not be methodologically sound since many different country results need to be combined. The **Review Team therefore recommends** identifying common indicators for country peace outcomes in comparable sectors or priority areas that would help in assessing how each outcome is being achieved and how the outcome contributes to PBF's strategic priority areas. This would make the results more robust and transparent and would provide PBFs M&E unit with a stronger oversight capacity. It would also become possible to compare country results.

13.2 Reporting

Project reporting appears uneven in quality and is often input- and output-focused, with little information on outcomes or impact. (Some, such as the current UNOPS project to build Hafirs in South Sudan, indicate that outcomes are "to be determined later.") Theories of Change⁶⁶ are not always applied as a standard tool to underpin PBF programming and they are particularly challenging for the 'soft areas' of PBF's work such as counseling and initiating dialogue processes among groups. Many UN agencies find reporting on peacebuilding results and outcomes challenging. As the trajectory of peacebuilding is uneven, there are often no baselines or the intervention depends on qualitative data and unpredictable processes. In addition, identifying measurable indicators is challenging. UN agencies rely on implementing partners who struggle with the same challenges.

In addition to direct assistance and training for the Headquarters' M&E section, the MPTF-O provides recipient UN agencies with guidelines and templates to support design, monitoring, evaluating and

⁶⁵ The PMP is organized around the PBF's four priority areas and nine outcome areas, which are given by the Fund's 2009 Terms of Reference. The PMP provides a set of standard indicators for these nine sub-areas. RUNOs are urged to draw from the PMP outcomes and indicators in designing the scope and focus of their projects as well as their Results Frameworks. From PBF Guidelines, 2014, page 31.

⁶⁶ Theory of Change explains the assumed process of change by outlining causal linkages in an initiative, i.e., its shorter-term, intermediate, and longer-term outcomes. The identified changes are mapped –as the "outcomes pathway" – showing each outcome in logical relationship to all the others, as well as chronological flow.

reporting on PBF projects.⁶⁷ PBF’s reporting procedures are governed by the standard Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between the MPTF-O and RUNOs, which are responsible for reporting on progress against anticipated outcomes twice a year: a six-month report due on 15 July and an end-of-year annual report due on 31 March. In addition, RUNOs are required to submit annual financial reports by 30 April to the MPTF-O. For projects that have concluded, end-of-project reports are required.

The reporting lines are clearly defined in the guideline⁶⁸:

Table 5: PBF / MPTF-Office Reporting Cycle:

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

Source: PBF Application Guidelines, 2014

MPTF-O is responsible for the receipt of donor contributions, the transfer of funds to RUNOs (based on approvals by the appropriate governing body), the consolidation of narrative and financial reports, and the submission of these to PBSO and PBF donors. It reports once a year. PBF, in collaboration with MPTF-O, has designed the narrative reporting template that RUNOs then upload onto the internet portal “Gateway.”

The MPTF-O has recently become more prescriptive in insisting that project reports include a narrative of the key peacebuilding contributions and project outcomes. Both donors and the PBF management appreciate MPTF-O’s work and value “Gateway”, where virtually all public PBF reports, including extensive documentation regarding PBF projects, are available.

PBF requires reporting on projects every six months and the table below indicates that 48% of the UN respondents appreciate support in semi-annual and annual reports and also support with other reporting requirements. However, the Country Office in Nepal considers quarterly reporting more effective for monitoring processes and anticipating changes. The shorter interval helps the Resident Coordinator and his staff to identify problems and take necessary actions, including discussions with government and other stakeholders.

Reporting on the PBF’s criteria is uneven. Gender and catalytic effect, for example, are not systematically reported upon, making it difficult to assess the impact of programmes.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ For example PBF’s Template 4.1 M&E Plan, 2013
⁶⁸ PBF’s Application Guidelines, January 2014, page 35

Table 6:

Among the following services provided by the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO), which have been particularly relevant to the needs and objectives of your organization or unit vis-à-vis strategic planning for PBF funding?

Answer Options	Very Relevant	Partly Relevant	Not relevant	No opinion/Not applicable
Use of final evaluation	34%	27%	8%	31%
Status of results achievements	35%	33%	10%	22%
Reporting for accountability purposes	43%	21%	11%	25%
Internal performance assessments	35%	29%	9%	26%
Annual reviews	35%	32%	11%	22%
Joint Steering Committee (JSC) annual reports	38%	28%	12%	22%
6-month and annual project reports	48%	23%	11%	18%

Survey 2013: respondent could tick all those that apply.

13.3 Country Evaluations

Country evaluations are useful both as learning tools and for improving future programming. They are of interest to a broad audience, including the UN Country Team, donors, the PBC and the Configuration chair, governments, INGOs and NGOs, and academics. These are considered critical in assessing PBF’s results in-country. They provide a good overview not only of programme results but also of PBF’s approach to peacebuilding, its financial modalities, entities such as the JSC, and the different preparatory and implementing arrangements. Country evaluations are accessible on PBF’s website.

The country evaluations initiated by the PBF take place according on a regular basis and are considered very relevant by 34% and relevant by 27% of the UN respondents. PBSO requires a portfolio-wide, independent evaluation for all PRF allocations. These evaluations are designed and managed by the PBF M&E Unit in New York, in close cooperation with the JSC and PBF Secretariat. Final external project evaluations are mandatory for IRF projects that are above \$1.5 million, last more than 12 months, or are particularly innovative or risky. Country evaluations assess how effective the PBF has been in its overall portfolio.

Although the country evaluations differ in scope and quality, a number of recurrent M&E have been identified by the Review Team and the “meta-evaluation” review. Weaknesses in M&E systems and

⁶⁹The Review Team found that the criteria less consistently reported upon include: catalytic effect (and the evidence that the outcome/activity is catalytic) , risk taking nature, gender marker, flexibility, cost effectiveness, description on how the PBF is filling a financial donor gap, National Ownership, political commitment (by Government and national authorities). Criteria that are consistently reported upon include: Key project outputs and outcomes, Relevance to peacebuilding, key challenges/ bottlenecks/ shortcomings and key lessons learned regarding both success and failure.

capacity are mentioned frequently in the country evaluations. This may explain why the support in the table above is considered so relevant to RUNOs. In a few cases the UN Country Teams were critical of country evaluations and raised questions about their independence. The Review Team could not systematically assess what these issues included and to what extent their concerns were justified. In most cases the evaluations are undertaken by international and national consultants. To improve measuring results over time the **Review Team recommends** that PBF should consider using the same evaluation teams for second generation PRFs in order to deepen analysis of PBF's impact over time.

13.4 Global Level Sharing of Information and Reporting

At the global level, PBSO reports to the Secretary General through Annual Reports, which discuss PBF's yearly results in relation to PBF Outcome and Thematic Areas. The reports include a separate section on PBF Oversight and Monitoring that discusses M&E.⁷⁰ The MPTF-O also produces separate Annual Reports for the PBF. These provide detailed information about achievements by country and globally, and in relation to the four areas of the Business Plan. They also provide an overview of the Fund's financial situation, including annual donor contributions and PBF allocations. These reports are considered useful by interviewees. Please see table below in this section which demonstrates the appreciation of the RUNOs. They provide donors with valuable information about PBF funding and how it complements their own assistance.

At the global level, PBSO has also started strengthening PBF's Knowledge Management activities. Its key resources include: i) country level evaluations and the annual reports of the SG; and ii) thematic reviews and publications undertaken by PPAB.

While country evaluations were discussed above, the thematic reviews are selected through UN inter-agency and inter-departmental consultation with the Peacebuilding Contact Group. They are part of a series of multi-partner studies examining different thematic areas of peacebuilding supported by the PBF. Their objective is to identify good practices in each area and factors that contribute to successful and sustainable intervention. To date, three thematic reviews have been published.

The first two thematic reviews focused on areas where PBF had high investments: Security Sector Reform and DDR. Both reviews were undertaken in collaboration with the Inter-Agency Task Forces on SSR and DDR. The third review on Peace Dividends benefitted from cooperation with The United Nations Working Group on Public Administration in Post-Conflict Environments (PA working group). The Thematic Reviews were produced with active consultations in the field and PBF Headquarters.

The **Review Team, however, did not find any evidence** that these reviews are being actively consulted in the field. Thematic reviews could constitute an important source of learning if there were a stronger focus from PBSO on motivating UN country teams to replicate best practices. Together with the PPAB, the PBF could increase the number of reviews analyzing its niche in the four priority areas and address additional cross cutting themes such as youth or gender.

⁷⁰ In the 2013 report, for example, it was stated that: "This past year brought additional staffing resources to the M&E Unit, enabling It to expand country-level support and initiate policies for improved program performance and knowledge about peacebuilding. Through its expanded capacity, PBSO deployed M&E support missions to Burundi, Kyrgyzstan and Papua New Guinea, and piloted a cost-savings workshop via video-teleconference to Yemen. In addition to greater assistance in the design phase, the M&E Unit initiated training and guidance for monitoring and reporting by Joint Steering Committees". Page 19

As the table below suggests, the thematic reviews are not as relevant as the country evaluations.

Table 7:

Among the following services provided by the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) which have been particularly relevant to the needs and objectives of your organisation or unit vis-à-vis strategic planning for PBF funding?

Answer Options	Very Relevant	Partly Relevant	Not relevant	No opinion/Not applicable
Secretary General reports	34%	25%	12%	28%
Other information resources	24%	37%	10%	30%
PBF website	30%	32%	16%	22%
Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office GATEWAY website	36%	32%	12%	20%
PBSO annual report	32%	37%	12%	18%
Country evaluations	43%	24%	13%	21%
Thematic reviews	32%	31%	12%	25%

Survey 2013: UN respondents could tick all those that apply

PBF has also started to use a scorecard system to assess a select number of M&E and project data reports in order to understand whether and how peacebuilding outcomes are achieved⁷¹. The Review Team assisted in reviewing country reports based on a set of criteria but the data were insufficiently robust to determine any trends. This implies that reporting in-country needs to improve as discussed earlier in this chapter.⁷²

Another global concern is that many countries do not have adequate M&E capacity. In most cases only the larger UN agencies such as UNDP and UNICEF have a designated M&E officer to monitor the Fund's projects; other agencies rely on project staff to monitor results. Direct M&E support from PBF at the country level has been effective in strengthening M&E in the design phase, including developing Theories of Change and approaches to measuring peacebuilding outcomes. The table below suggests that more than half the respondents indicate that such support needs to come at the early stages of the support. The latter is recognized at PBSO and if such support can be organized in time it may also positively affect the timeframe for PRFs.

Table 8:

Among the following services provided by the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) which have been particularly relevant to the needs and objectives of your organisation or unit vis-à-vis strategic planning for PBF funding?

Answer Options	Very Relevant	Partly Relevant	Not relevant	No opinion/Not applicable
Start of new programme phase	43%	25%	10%	22%
Workshop with all stakeholders for implementation guidance	51%	22%	12%	15%

⁷¹ PBF's PRF financing is linked to peacebuilding outcomes and reporting on outcomes is critical in terms of PBF's performance and understanding its contribution to peacebuilding. The need to demonstrate results is also an increasing demand from donors who need evidence that PBF can make an effective contribution.

⁷² Country reports were reviewed for the years 2009 (13 reports reviewed), 2011 (17 reports) and 2013 (the number of reports available on the MPTEF-O website for 2013 was 6⁷²). In total 37 reports have been reviewed.

M& E and reporting	55%	27%	10%	16%
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Survey 2013: respondents could tick all those that apply

The above support is also a direct result of the increased M&E capacity in New York. The PBF has undertaken M&E support missions to several countries and organized training sessions that were appreciated by recipients. Templates for design, monitoring, reporting and evaluation have been developed and require agencies to reflect on project logic, Theories of Change, outcomes, and impact. In-country, there is a continuous call for a strong results framework, and the appreciation for PBF support missions expressed by UN Country Teams indicates that more assistance is needed, which the Review Teams supports. The table below demonstrates the continued call for M&E support.

Table 9:
Looking ahead, please indicate priorities areas for improving PBSO/PBF performance in the coming years.

Answer Options	Very necessary	Somewhat necessary	Not at all necessary	No opinion
Providing more guidance on strategic plan or project criteria	79%	14%	6%	2%
Revision of the PBF ToR (the 4 priority areas)	40%	48%	8%	5%
Improving Monitoring & Evaluation	61%	30%	5%	5%
Improving cooperation with other UN entities such as Department of Political Affairs (DPA) and Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO);	63%	23%	2%	12%
Developing Partnerships with the International Financial Institutions (IFI's) to increase PBF's ability to perform in-country	60%	31%	4%	4%
PBSO presence in-country through long term (national) staff appointments	46%	38%	14%	2%
PBF supporting and financing technical and analytical work in a non-project fashion, for example support to a strategic plan or analysis pertaining to a specific peacebuilding topic relevant to the country in which PBF operates;	75%	16%	8%	2%

Survey 2013: UN respondents could tick all those that apply

13.5 Management of M&E In-Country

At the country level, PBF's M&E function differs depending on how its support is organized. The implementing UN agencies, the JSC, technical committees, and PBF secretariats have various responsibilities for M&E and in some cases additional staff has been made available. The effectiveness with which they perform their roles varies substantially, depending on available capacity and experience.

While the JSCs in theory⁷³ should monitor and evaluate PRF projects, only sporadic evidence (e.g. occasional project visits by individual JSC members) suggested that they did so. Their M&E role vis à vis the UN agencies is also not clear. In some cases, UN agencies report to both the JSC and the MPTF-O; in other cases to the MPTF-O only. Reporting requirements are different for the PBF and their own agency. Furthermore, UN agencies use their own M&E procedures and country frameworks that are not necessarily congruent with PBF's, and PBF reporting is not always in line with UNDAF indicators.

A number of donors have initiated evaluations of the PBF as a Fund, and these include attention to M & E⁷⁴. A Norwegian report, for example, recommends increasing PBF's quality control of project implementation and points out of some instances of parallel reporting by PBF's various UN implementing agencies.⁷⁵ The complaint that PBF reporting requirements for semiannual and annual reports differ from UN agencies' Headquarters is also heard in-country. This variety increases the transaction costs for UN agencies. Donors such as Australia, the UK and Denmark conduct multi-lateral assessments of the PBF and provide valuable feedback.

The **Review Team recommends** that PBF improve and streamline the reporting lines between the field and PBF Headquarters, including reporting against standard frameworks and common indicators for peace outcomes. This will help PBF capture results in-country as well as at a meta level. PBF could also consider reconciling both reporting to MPTF-O and PBF to demonstrate at what costs results have been achieved.

In countries where a Peace and Development Advisor, a Strategic Planning Officer, or other similar staff at the RC's Office provide oversight, M&E generally improves due to regular coordination, monitoring, and assistance.

In countries where the PBF has a secretariat, M&E reporting is also generally strengthened. In Liberia, the creation of an M&E unit in the Support Office of the Ministry of Interior considerably enhanced the monitoring function of PBF projects. In Guinea, by contrast, the PBF secretariat synthesizes reports from the UN agencies but there is no framework for systematically reporting on achievements against the priority plan.

The challenge to improve M&E lies in the first instance at the country level where the M&E function and results framework are operationalized. Country M&E frameworks need to be designed to respond to global level measurement of the Fund's impact, which implies that Headquarters M&E staff must be able to have a full view of country processes. The survey results indicate that there is a call for continued support. See Annex J.

The PBF's efforts to improve the global M&E system, reporting, knowledge management and communication since 2010 have been noted by donors and interviewees and further support is strongly encouraged. The **Review Team recommends** continuing the surge capacity to UN country teams and expanding with more staff capacity at PBSO.

⁷³ PART-E-Template-4.2-JSC-Annual-Reporting-UPDATED includes an Assessment of the current implementation status and results of the Peacebuilding Priority Plan

⁷⁴ DFID Project Completion Report "UN Peacebuilding Fund", 2010; NORAD "Appraisal of the Peacebuilding Fund" 2012; Norwegian MFA/NORAD, Assessment of the United Nation's Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) 2013.

⁷⁵ NORAD "Appraisal of the Peacebuilding Fund" 2012; Norwegian MFA/NORAD, Assessment of the United Nation's Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) 2013.

13.6 Knowledge Management and Learning

Lessons learned were increasingly cited by PBF and donors as important elements in PBF's in-country programming and financial modalities. Learning became more central to PBF over the course of its recent Business Plan. Recently PBSO and the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes co-hosted their first global workshop in Cape Town, South Africa, to discuss the effectiveness of PBF support. It was attended by participants from ten PBF-recipient countries. Topics identified in preparation included:

- UN peacebuilding architecture, synergy between PBF and the Peacebuilding Commission, and PBF's strategic focus and added value within the country specific peacebuilding context;
- Strategic lessons on PBF design and implementation coming from country evaluations;
- Planning for PBF support, including conflict analysis, priority setting, and results frameworks;
- PBF management strategies for achieving results and catalytic effects, including roles and responsibilities of various actors;
- PBF requirements for monitoring and reporting on programme performance, including the Performance Management Plan;
- PBF knowledge building and discussion of a potential Community of Practice.

Participants were enthusiastic about this workshop, finding it a useful and inspiring way to learn from each other and suggest amendments to the PBF guidelines. This is confirmed in the table below. It also provided an opportunity for UN country teams to interact directly with PBSO staff and management, providing a platform for feedback on the recent guidelines and discussing options for improvements. The **Review Team recommends** that PBF promote further inter-country exchanges and learning including another Cape Town like event midway through its new Business Plan.

Table 10:
Learning among countries and teams may increase the effectiveness of the PBF. What would be the most practical and effective way of learning if you were to participate in a particular event?

Answer Options	Response Percent
Regional workshops	84,1%
Webinars	31,9%
Specific access to PBSO website for thematic discussions;	36,2%

Survey 2013. Respondents could tick all answers that apply

One result of the workshop is that the topic of Knowledge Management appears much higher on the agenda of both PBSO and country programmes than before. In Nepal, for example, the RC's office is giving special attention to Knowledge Management and how it can contribute to learning that can be shared with other UN agencies, governments, and donors. The latter showed a strong interest.

During the country visits, the Review Team learned that inter country exchange has led to frequent information sharing and learning from PBF projects elsewhere. For example, Nepal and Kyrgyzstan exchanged information regularly. PBF is now working on creating "communities of practice" (CoPs) to promote further inter-country learning.⁷⁶ An important asset of these exchanges is that PBF can

⁷⁶ In some countries, technical advisory groups have formed, e.g. in Liberia and Kyrgyzstan, which are to supervise and ensure the quality of projects' design, with a special focus on M&E, outcome and impact, reporting and a Theory of Change.

more systematically assess the effectiveness of its approaches and programming and feed this information into its future Business Plan, performance plan, policies, and procedures. In this regard the PPAB could assist with analytical work in order to ensure that there is a repository of knowledge to benefit the UN architecture and the peacebuilding community. PBF is already contributing to studies undertaken by PPAB, including the development of peacebuilding and Statebuilding indicators and a thematic review on employment and peacebuilding undertaken jointly with the World Bank. Knowledge management and knowledge building relies on M&E systems to generate learning on how PBF addresses conflict and enhance future accountability. The **Review Team recommends that** PBF works with PPAB to seek additional support in analysis that will assist the PBF in creating a repository of knowledge, including on gender. (see also section 11.3)

A key part of the advocacy efforts entails promoting UN agencies to provide an adequate number of peacebuilding specialist posts at their Headquarters (and/or regional offices) so that they can develop peacebuilding methodologies and related actions. PBF should advocate for joint actions, with other UN agencies and partners, to develop coordination mechanisms that include methodology and other Knowledge Management improvements. The **Review Team also recommends** that the knowledge management system be further developed, with PBSO working closely with other UN Headquarters agencies, including DPA.

PBF already has major assets in hand with regard to strengthening its Knowledge Management functions and providing capacity building role in this field, It works in over 20 countries, with a range of actors (government, UN agencies, NGOs, etc.) and substantive areas. It has mechanisms in place already to collect, analyze and synthesize M&E data and other information from these locations and actors.

A pilot or working group among countries that share similar peace outcomes in PRFs and related projects which could help with defining a Theory of Change, creating a M&E system, and improving reporting. Themes that may be particularly interesting are gender focused peace outcomes such as economic recovery and sexual violence, youth, or national reconciliation. Some typical IRF thematic areas such as elections, security sector reform, and national dialogue also qualify for such joint work.

13.7 Country Reporting

Donors and member states have said that country reporting is valuable to them and that a robust M&E system should provide PBF with brief, useful reports. If donors are informed about the Funds' achievement at the end of the funding cycle, they will be in a better position to provide additional support and undertake bilateral programming. This may also increase the Fund's chances at having catalytic effect. The **Review Team recommends** that PBF develop brief country reports for donors at the end of funding both IRF and PRF cycles to inform donors about achievements.

In the course of the country visits, the Review Team discussed midterm assessment, especially for PRF projects and interviewees confirmed that such reviews could be useful. Currently midterm reviews are not systematically undertaken. Midterm assessments have many advantages.

1. It would allow projects to make mid-course adjustments in countries where the peace process is erratic and nonlinear.
2. It could be used to trigger the second tranche of PBF resources and help PBF and partners align their peacebuilding support.
3. It would increase PBF effectiveness over time and make the PRF modality more flexible.
4. It can provide useful information that could be used in standardized reports to collect achievements and aggregate results at a global level.

The **Review Team recommends** that PBF undertake mid-term assessments for PRF funding increasing the performance of the Fund.

14 VALUE FOR MONEY

Although the Terms of Reference for this Review refer to 'Value for Money' (VfM), PBF does not have a definition of the term or an explicit statement of how it applies to the Fund's interventions. Typically, Value for Money is interpreted as using resources efficiently.⁷⁷

However, the PBF Application Guidelines take Value for Money as a criteria for project preparation and selection, with the decision meant to include assessment of "what steps have been or will be taken to ensure that the UN obtains 'value for money' through the project?"

Since PBF does not have an explicit definition of the term, the Review Team examined other studies that provide useful definitions or criteria. The most relevant study was produced by the U.K.'s Department for International Development (DFID).⁷⁸ It outlines DFID's definition of Value for Money and a framework for applying it in practice. The DFID study suggested a number of aspects that VfM might imply, and several approaches to assessing them, including the so-called 3 E's- economy, efficiency, effectiveness - and of cost-effectiveness.

Box 3: DFID's Value for Money approach

Economy Are we or our agents buying inputs of the appropriate quality at the right price?
Efficiency: How well do we or our agents convert inputs into outputs?
Effectiveness: How well are the outputs from an intervention achieving the desired outcome on poverty reduction?
Cost-effectiveness: How much impact on poverty reduction does an intervention achieve relative to the inputs that we or our agents invest in it?

In addition the document states that: "DFID's 3Es framework shows that the Value for Money agenda is not just about cutting costs. What we're directly buying with taxpayer money (outputs) and what this transforms into at the development outcome level are key parts of the VFM agenda. The results agenda is about being clear what outputs and outcomes we can realistically expect from an intervention whether this is from a direct DFID intervention or working through a partner. These results are not just short-term tangibles but should also be longer-term sustainable benefits for developing countries. We need to continue to drive forwards the agenda and influence all our partners to get better at expressing results".⁷⁹

Based on DFID's approach, PBF's working definition of Value for Money could be:

"Maximizing the impact of each dollar spent to effectively implement PBF's Business Plan and contribute to peace outcomes"

⁷⁷ PBF Guidelines, 2014, page 20. In template E for JSC's the text is as follows: Value for money: Did the PPP provide value for money, that is, is the level of outcomes proportionate to the level of investment? What is the evidence?"

⁷⁸ DFID's approach to Value for Money, Department for International Development, July 2011, Quest reference: 3116186

⁷⁹ Idem, page 6

Several concerns related to VfM have emerged during this Review, some of which go beyond the project level where PBF currently applies the concept.

14.1 Value for Money in the Project Cycle

PBF currently seeks to ensure that projects are cost efficient. There is, however, little evidence that the entities responsible for PBF programming in-country (i.e., the UN agencies, the JSCs, Technical Committees, PBF Secretariats) consistently apply VfM principles. Discussions of cost-efficiency and effectiveness may take place during project preparation but very little is recorded. There is also little discussion about VfM in monitoring and evaluation. In some cases JSCs consider efficiency criteria in their selection of projects but in most cases standard budget lines are applied and little budget scrutiny is conducted.

A positive sign is that the RC's Office and Peace and Development or Strategic Planning Officers, who manage and monitor the PBF portfolio, often seek synergies to ensure that UN agencies use resources in an optimal way. They do not, however, necessarily refer to VfM principles. In Nepal the Review Team found a useful start: the RC's office defined 11 assessment criteria for project selection and approval. The final criteria is Value for Money or cost effectiveness, a criteria addressed in three questions: i) Does the project offer reasonable value for money, considering the scale of the problem being addressed? ii) Does the project build on existing resources, capacities, strengths and experience? iii) Are all project implementation costs (e.g. M&E, gender, inclusion, conflict sensitivity) built into the budget?⁸⁰ These questions provide a useful basis for discussion in the UN Country Team as well as in the JSC or an equivalent mechanism.

Another challenge for PBF is that the decisions and actions taken after a project is approved are very decentralized - they are taken, monitored, and reported on by UN agencies and the JSC (or an equivalent). It is the Review Team's impression that even though Headquarters may prioritize VfM, those in the field apply it only inconsistently due to a lack of understanding and commitment.

There has been less attention to implications of risk taking for VfM. The PBF Application Guidelines assert that: "risky projects most often imply one of three considerations: i) the setting in which the project is implemented is volatile, ii) the sensitivity of the issue the project addresses is rife with tension or seeks to dismantle existing exclusionary forms of power, or iii) the innovative and political nature of the approach raises the risk that the project may be side-lined by spoilers".⁸¹ In all cases, these risks may have implications for VfM.

The **Review Team recommends** that PBF operationalize its Value for Money approach by developing a PBF-specific definition, and by placing information and requirements regarding value-for-money in its guidelines and support document in order to systematically build this concept into its programme cycle. The latter should include how risks can be taken and at what costs, leading to estimates of the potential loss if outputs are not achieved. This information could assist in the decision making process by providing a financial estimate of the price of risk.

Cooperation among UN agencies in proposal development or project implementation, as in Nepal and Kyrgyzstan, can be cost effective and lead to policies and procedures that prompt more cooperation. If this were to occur, the joint expertise of UN agencies could increase the quality, capacity, speed, and cost-effectiveness with which PBF achieves outcomes and have a positive effect

⁸⁰ Team's country report on Nepal, page 17.

⁸¹ PBF Application Guidelines, January 2014, page 12

on cost-effectiveness. Such practices, however, occur only in a few countries and should be stimulated elsewhere.

As discussed elsewhere, in most cases PBF programmes do not produce a substantial increase in UN inter-agency coordination. There are some examples where UN agencies cooperate in project development and prepare joint proposals, but in most cases, UN agencies implement individual projects based on their mandate and expertise. Interviewees noted that even when UN agencies submitted joint proposals, implementation was managed through individual agency budgets. UN agencies also have different administrative systems which impede joint work. Field respondents urged UN leadership to encourage more harmonization of UN agency administrative procedures and regulations.

A related issue is that PBF projects sometimes outstrip the personnel capacity of the implementing UN agencies. Larger UN agencies often have sufficient staff, but smaller agencies may need to hire new international and national staff. Consequently, PBF funding is often used to finance international staff and in some instances it was suggested that national staff could have been recruited instead, including at a lower cost.

Interviewees also questioned the multiple overheads on PBF programmes. Since the PBF model involves UN agencies receiving funds and passing them to one or more implementing partners, overhead costs for multiple organizations reduce the resources available for programme activities.

This concern has contributed to debate over whether PBF should include pre-selected INGOs among its “recipient organizations.” In addition to reducing overheads by cutting out the need for a RUNO, these INGO’s would bring considerable peacebuilding expertise, thereby increasing the Fund’s effectiveness. The speed of implementation may increase while costs decline.

Using national implementers may also be more sustainable and less costly. However, there is also evidence that building this knowledge and training national implementers can take time, sometimes several funding rounds, and the frequent turnover in UN staff in post-conflict zones may undercut the effort.

A problem that appeared in both the meta-evaluation and country evaluations is that the UN procurement requirements have sometimes delayed the start of projects and therefore lowered PBF’s effectiveness. This is particularly problematic if a quick response is required. In some cases PBF’s support precedes that of other donors, and delays may affect outputs and peace outcomes.

A related issue is that of difficulties in assessing accountability and transparency due to the number of implementers involved in PBF projects. Results Based Management (RBM) can also suffer from the absence of robust reporting and data collection. This is not unique to the PBF, but it is nonetheless a problem.

The Fund has normally operated as a sole funder of projects. In only a few instances has it co-funded activities or been part of a larger pool, such as the UN-Peacebuilding Fund for Nepal. Its partnerships with other IFIs and in-country Trust Funds are limited and there have been few attempts to reduce transaction costs or increase opportunities for joint funding. Advantages of joint funding are that PBF’s programming could be better aligned with that of other donors and governments, and that its modus operandi and financing modalities would be better understood. In some instances the Review Team heard that PBSO was reluctant to co-fund activities since it would reduce PBF’s claim to specific results.

It is not always clear whether the JSC or PBF secretariat has increased effectiveness and reduced transactions costs, or whether their consumption of resources constitutes a funding drain⁸².

PBF has not yet fully applied aid effectiveness criteria that promote harmonization and coordination of aid or make explicit how it could align and reinforce the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States (see section 8.7.) The New Deal's five elements⁸³ and its focus on new ways of engaging provide other opportunities to rethink PBF's tools and instruments. For example, the New Deal advocates one plan and one vision to which all partners commit. If a fragility assessment is undertaken in a country where PBF wishes to engage, it could join and use the tool for its own programming, thus reducing transaction and opportunity costs. Moreover, PBF's value-added in-country could be strengthened if it became a leader on relevant New Deal principles such as defining peacebuilding goals and monitoring across the New Deal countries which it supports. Such an approach could also reinforce PBF and PBC cooperation as both would be part of this new vision. (See also section 12.5).

PBF is under increasing pressure from donors to apply VfM principles more systematically, both at Headquarters and in its projects. PBF might take some additional actions to further include VfM in its programming.

Incorporating these principles in reporting requirements can provide examples of good practice that can be used elsewhere and increase the use of these principles.

Earlier in this Review it was noted that mid-term reviews of PRF programmes could increase the fund's effectiveness by assessing whether its investments are well targeted and efficiently implemented. VfM could be one of the criteria to judge whether the next funding tranche should be released, as there would be significant experience by that time on which to judge VfM.

An informal roster of expertise for such support may help to promote this emphasis.

⁸² The PBF secretariat in South Sudan is estimated to cost US \$ 700,000 for the new funding round of PRF which is estimated at US \$ 10,000,000. In Guinea the budget of the permanent secretariat is managed by the UNDP, in the 1PP the budget was US\$ 300,000 USD and was increased to US\$ 800,000 USD for the second phase – it covers equipment, PBSO missions from NY to Guinea, capacity building workshops and some projects such as “Community of Peace Practitioners”. The second PBF support was US \$ 24 million of which US \$ 15 million was for elections.

⁸³ The five elements include: fragility assessment, one vision one plan, use peacebuilding and state building goals to monitor progress, compacts and support dialogue and leadership.

15 GENDER

Gender issues did not feature prominently in the Terms of Reference of the Review, but PBF has undertaken a number of recent actions to strengthen its work in this area⁸⁴ and the Review Team felt that the subject, and these actions, required more Review attention. The Review Team included gender in all of its country visits, but in practice there was limited information available on the topic. PBSO's Independent Thematic Review on Gender may help provide more insight, and this Review benefited from working together with the gender Consultant, Ms Eleanor O'Gorman, during two of the Review country visits.

This chapter reviews the main PBF gender initiatives, and provides an overview of their implementation to date. It also suggests a number of actions that should be considered in order to strengthen PBF's gender work.

15.1 Gender-Related Initiatives

A number of actions have been taken by PBF in recent years to strengthen the gender focus of its programmes. The PBF Application Guidelines state that gender sensitivity is a cross-cutting priority: "The integration of gender considerations and empowerment of women and girls, as well as the reduction of gender-based discrimination and inequalities, is therefore an essential part of the assessment of all priority plans and project proposals, whether women's needs and priorities are the principal objective or not".⁸⁵

In his 2010 report on Women's Participation in Peacebuilding (S/2010/498), the UN Secretary-General presented a 7-Point Action Plan to strengthen implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325 on Gender. As part of that Plan, he committed the PBF to allocate at least 15% per year of its resources to projects designed to address women's needs, advance gender equality, and/or empower women. The October 2012 mid-term target was 10 %.

PBF is working towards achieving the 15% target. Under the Seven Point Action Plan, Governments and UN Country Teams are required to include a gender analysis in their assessment and planning processes and are urged to allocate 15% of programme budgets to projects that have gender equality as the main objective. They are also called on to mainstream gender equality across all projects.⁸⁶

To reach these goals, PBF initiated the Gender Promotion Initiative (GPI), which aims to:

- Help implement the commitments of the Secretary-General's 7-Point Action Plan on Women's Participation in Peacebuilding;
- Address gender-equality concerns and strengthen women's empowerment within the PBF portfolio; and
- Stimulate UN system learning on gender-responsive peacebuilding projects, including the collection and dissemination of good practices.

This PBF initiative included a \$5 million call for proposals for peacebuilding projects that would advance gender equality, address women's and girls' needs, and/or empower women. Sixteen

⁸⁴ The same is the case for Human Rights. Both topics are treated in the PBF Application Guidelines, January 2014 and all UN agencies are obliged to mainstream Gender and Human Rights. The guidelines specific how Gender and Human Rights must be addressed, including due diligence policy considerations for Human Rights.

⁸⁵ PBF Application Guidelines, January 2014, page 11.

⁸⁶ Idem, page 11

countries that had been declared eligible by the Secretary-General to receive PBF funding were invited to submit proposals and seven countries -- Guatemala, Guinea, Nepal, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda -- received assistance.

The SG's Report on PBF for 2013 asserts that: "the PBF seeks to meet my target of allocating at least 15 per cent of peacebuilding funds to projects that have gender equality as the main objective. In 2013, however, only 7.4% of PBF funding met this target, despite the fact that the approval rate by PBSO of projects focused on gender equality in peacebuilding is very high. In 2012 the figure was higher, 10.8%, due largely to PBF's "Gender Promotion Initiative", highlighting the value of proactive approaches".⁸⁷

In an effort to stimulate more demand, in 2013 PBSO increased the provision of technical guidance to partners through expanded treatment in the new PBF guidelines. The PPAB launched a new training programme in partnership with UN Women, piloted in June with 30 practitioners from 18 countries.

The Gender Marker system, ranging from 0 to 3, is a rating that indicates the extent to which gender issues are addressed in project proposals. Projects receive gender marker scores based on the following criteria:

- Score 3 for projects that have gender equality as a principal objective (targeted actions).
- Score 2 for projects that have gender equality as a significant objective (gender mainstreaming).
- Score 1 for projects expected to contribute in some way, but not significantly, to gender equality.
- Score 0 for projects not expected to contribute noticeably to gender equality.

The responsibility to score the project lies with the submitter. In doing so, the UN agency needs to assess whether its project is based on a solid gender analysis and whether gender has been integrated into the outcomes, outputs, target population groups, activities, indicators and budget.⁸⁸

Many interviewees have pointed out that the gender marker is a self-assessment, and thus its results may be biased. There is also concern that projects which have a significant focus on girls and women, but do not make them the primary target population, in fact represent a "mainstreamed" approach and often have relevant strategies, but are given no weight in assessing whether PBF is meeting the 15% target. There have also been challenges in measuring percentages. In Guinea, for example, it is impossible to detect the percent of the budget allocated for projects with a gender perspective.⁸⁹

The **Review Team recommends** that PBF review the use of the overall Gender Marker mechanism in order to undertake more accurate and useful scoring against the PBF target of using 15% of PBF funding for gender programming, and to promote greater gender equality. **It also recommends** that PBF review the use of Gender Marker #2 for greater use in scoring against the PBF target of using 15% of PBF funding for gender programming, in order to promote greater mainstreaming of gender equality actions.

Many interviewees question whether a fixed target across the PBF portfolio is the right approach since this is an average when what is needed is a systematic focus on how PBF's country portfolios respond to women's peacebuilding needs. The Review Team supports this observation since gender sensitive peacebuilding remains challenging and methodologies and targeting should be improved

⁸⁷ SG's Report on the PBF for 2013, page 3

⁸⁸ Idem, page 11

⁸⁹ Team's Guinea Report November 2013

before the target is increased. Moreover, the decline in the target since 2013 demonstrates that additional measures and support are needed to help UN Country Teams address gender. The **Review Team recommends** the use of the Gender Marker in order to undertake more accurate and useful scoring against the PBF target of using 15% of PBF funding for gender programming, and for promoting greater gender equality.

PBF's gender initiatives were appreciated by those in-country and by others with an interest in gender issues, but many underlying problems persist which hinder a fully effective gender strategy. There appears to be a big discrepancy between what the guidelines suggest and practices in-country.

There are some good examples of gender sensitive local programming. In Nepal, for example, the portfolio includes efforts to address land reform and community security from a perspective of women's participation.⁹⁰ Addressing issues of inequality related to resource access and ownership, participation in decision-making, and benefit sharing early in the peacebuilding process is a critical condition for lasting peace and development. In Guinea, gender mainstreaming took place across the priority areas, and youth and women's employment is a priority area of the second Priority Plan, strongly supported by the Prime Minister.⁹¹ In some countries there is more emphasis on specific resolutions which can have a peacebuilding element.

15.2 In-country challenges

All UN agencies are expected to address gender systematically and all are obliged by UN policy to gender mainstream their projects and activities. Few, however, have a strong and explicit "gender and peacebuilding" approach.

In this context, the UN Women agency can play a critical role in ensuring that a gender approach is incorporated in PBF's portfolio from the start, including gender sensitive conflict analysis, a gender sensitive response in projects and budgets, and a response to the GPI. It could also play important roles in contributing to the JSC and technical advisory groups, which assist in defining PBF peacebuilding outcomes, identifying the Peacebuilding Priority Plan, and reviewing project proposals. However, in some PBF countries, UN Women is not present or has no regional representation. Thus, significant contributions can be provided by gender experts in UN agencies and in the RC's Office. The availability of such capacity, however, differs from country to country.

The **Review Team recommends** that PBF explore how to strengthen the capacity of UN agencies to carry out gender and gender-sensitive peacebuilding work (including possible partnership with UN Women).

The PBF focus on women predominantly targets women as recipients or beneficiaries of project outputs -- for example, a minimum percentage of women must be targeted in training, or receive microcredits or other support. There is also a need to promote projects which target women as peace builders. A good example is found in Kyrgyzstan, where women from different ethnic groups bake bread together or drain canals, activities from which both groups benefit.⁹²

There are a number of peacebuilding topics that are especially relevant to women. Among these are sexual violence, access to justice, land issues, economic recovery, implementation of specific UN

⁹⁰ Team's Nepal Report December 2013

⁹¹ Idem footnote 102

⁹² Team's Kyrgyzstan Report November 2013

resolutions, developing national action plans, and women's participation in peace processes and elections. The **Review Team recommends** that PBF Promote women's participation as agents of change at all stages of prevention, protection, reconciliation, negotiations, and recovery, in line with UN Security Council resolutions. On a related point, the **Review Team recommends** that PBF programming include analysis and action regarding women's roles as actors in creating conflict (and not just as victims of it) and how addressing these gender aspects can be better incorporated as an integral part of conflict prevention and mitigation.

One subject that came up during some country visits was whether peacebuilding programmes on sexual violence were continuing as special peacebuilding actions beyond the point when they should be seen as part of a larger social problem. Responses to conflict-related sexual violence, including legal support and reparations, have been critical in transitional justice and clearly respond to peacebuilding needs. In Liberia, support from the PBF has enabled the establishment of a specialized unit within the Ministry of Justice dedicated to prosecuting crimes of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV), as well as training the judiciary and police on case-processing and victim support.⁹³ After a certain amount of time, however, one may ask whether sexual violence should still be considered a special peacebuilding action, or if it should be mainstreamed into peacetime social priorities and include a focus on prevention and mitigation, mental health, and trauma.

15.3 Challenges with gender sensitive Peacebuilding

PBF should keep in mind that it needs to respond to gender commitments as expressed in the Seven Point Action Plan on Gender Responsive Peacebuilding. How can PBF and PBSO address these challenges and develop an approach to gender sensitive peacebuilding in its work? Including gender in the PBF portfolio is useful, but it is not sufficient if the goal is to illuminate the underlying relationship between gender and peacebuilding and to clearly identify actions to address it. One way forward is to examine PBF portfolios in countries where gender sensitive peacebuilding has worked well and learn from those interventions.

The Independent Thematic Review on Gender concludes that: "Despite emerging good practices and growing numbers of projects in different thematic areas of gender-responsive peacebuilding, there is a need for greater momentum and scale in these efforts. While many individuals and institutions point to good cases they know in the field or cite particular case studies in their own work that for them demonstrate good practice in gender-responsive peacebuilding, there is a strong consensus from the research of the need to accelerate the number and scale of projects and good practices. This would drive greater operational impact at the field level and help to develop the significant bodies of good practice and case studies that can form the evidence base for measuring change and impact in gender-responsive peacebuilding. This requires greater and sustained financial and programmatic support."⁹⁴

The Review Team supports this analysis, including based on its exposure to 5 other countries. A bottom-up approach to learning what has worked in those countries that benefitted from GPI support will help PBF to scale up efforts and to understand what level of effort is needed to ensure that the 15% target is met and that more PBF countries benefit from gender responsive peacebuilding. The earlier recommendation that PBF conducts studies on gender sensitive peacebuilding in specific outcome areas could support this effort. The **Review Team recommends**

⁹³ Team's Liberia Report, January 2014

⁹⁴ Independent Thematic Review on Gender for the UN Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) – Final Report, March 2014, Dr. Eleanor O'Gorman. Senior Associate, Centre for Gender Studies University of Cambridge, UK page 8.

that PBF examine why there is still failure to meet the 15% target, including lessons learned so far from the useful undertaking of the Gender Promotion Initiative in eight countries, and launch new initiatives.

The GPI has had limited results and the 15% target has dropped significantly. More guidance and support is needed at country level to ensure that a minimum of PBF resources are gender focused and that more gender sensitive peacebuilding programming is done. The **Review Team recommends** that PBF should track its impact on gender responsive peacebuilding by country. The advantage to this tracking is that more attention will be given to a country-focused approach; assisting the UN agencies and helping them measure results. Although the 15% target may be useful at an aggregate level in meeting PBSO's commitment to the Seven Point Action Plan on Gender Responsive Peacebuilding, introducing a country focus will help PBSO ensure that gender sensitive peacebuilding is conducted adequately in all PBF countries.

A related concern is that gender capacity in PBSO is limited to only one programme officer located in PPAB. It is necessary to ensure that programme officers remain current on gender approaches and can advise UN Country Teams on programming for and measuring gender results.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The UN Peacebuilding Fund is still a young entity within a larger field that itself is fluid and evolving. Over the recent Business Plan period (2011-2013), i.e., the period focused on by this Review, PBF has demonstrated an ability to listen to criticisms and act on them. In the process it has been able to build a much stronger platform of policies and procedures, develop substantial credibility in-country and with its partners at Headquarters and globally, and fund programmes and projects that contribute to peacebuilding outcomes.

Across the many aspects of its work covered by this Review, several positive ones stand out. Its two financing facilities – the IRF and PRF – have proven useful, including both for being able to provide rapid assistance when needed (especially via the IRF) and to help address the conflict causes and drivers that require sustained attention in the medium and longer term parts of the peacebuilding phase (especially via the PRF). PBF's programme criteria set a high bar for itself, especially in areas such as catalytic effects and risk-taking, but it is making useful progress towards attaining them, and the peacebuilding field benefits from having a player with such high ambitions. Its efforts to strengthen its information, guidance and support to its partners in-country – both in writing and through surge capacity and related visits – has been well appreciated, and is generating calls for further expanding these efforts.

However, there is also much still to be done to address the various problems that PBF still faces, and that have been discussed in this report. Specific suggestions for doing so are contained in the Recommendations of this Review. Overall, these issues and actions fall into three main categories – internal PBF issues, wider systemic issues, and key capacity issues related to PBF's staffing, funding and overall size. These categories cross-cut the Recommendations, which are organized by Chapter in the Executive Summary.

The first category of issues and Recommendations are ones that focus mostly on internal improvements to PBF's functioning, and which constitute the majority of the Recommendations. For example, PBF needs to address the frequent perception of it being too centered on the capital city, including by stronger engagement with the local population and actors, and with national NGOs and CSOs. It needs to address concerns regarding its monitoring and evaluation work, e.g., that the measuring of its results in-country and globally remains uneven and often weak, and to use its strengthened reporting from the field over 2013 to generate stronger quantitative measurements of its ability to meet its programming criteria. PBF's promotion of gender equality in its programming needs to improve if PBF is to meet the Secretary-General's target of spending 15% of its total resources for gender programming. This includes taking a deeper look at the lessons learned from its Gender Promotion Initiative, and how such actions can be strengthened and expanded.

The second category of issues and recommendations are wider, systemic ones. These in part reflect the way PBF works. PBF's business model includes having a very small and lean headquarters staffing which (supplemented by support from several partners), focuses on certain key decisions, on providing guidance and support to the field, and on monitoring and evaluation of PBF programming. The decided majority of the PBF work is undertaken by PBF's partners in-country, including the government, UN agencies, NGOs and others.

While the key elements of this model have been in place for some time, the progress made by PBF in the past several years at addressing many issues concerning its internal functioning have allowed some of the wider systemic issues it faces to become more visible, including regarding PBF's key partners. For example the UN agencies as a group are rather uneven regarding their in-country peacebuilding experience, expertise and capacities, and most lack strong capacities at their

headquarters and/or regional offices to provide technical support to their staff in-country regarding peacebuilding programming. The government's peacebuilding capacity is often limited following a conflict, with a large discrepancy between the post-conflict demands and the limited number of staff with administrative training and experience to address them. Some in the government may themselves be conflict actors. Peacebuilding itself, as a distinct field, is still early in its development, with only a fraction of the level of information and experience that is available to development actors, or even the humanitarian aid field.

While many aspects of such systemic issues are ones that are beyond PBF's limited ability to help resolve, there are useful actions that it can take, as noted in the Recommendations. Examples include expanded use of its excellent positioning for Knowledge Management work (both within PBF and within the larger peacebuilding field), advocating for stronger UN agency commitments to peacebuilding, and increasing its capacity building work with governments.

The final category of issues and recommendations relate to PBF capacity issues, i.e., regarding PBF's headquarter staffing and funding situation, and its capacity for greater programming. PBF's current very minimal headquarters staffing level is already stretched thin, even with its model of major delegation of responsibility to others. The calls this Review heard from PBF's stakeholders for it to expand its support to the field and increase its Knowledge Management functions and leadership would further increase the tension between its workload and its staffing level. Its current funding model for managing the Fund, which is based on a percentage of donor contributions, fluctuates considerably over the years and will hinder it in the future to implement a new Business Plan. It will need to develop options for a more sustainable model, including expanding staff levels to implement the new Business Plan. The Review Recommendations do not attempt to prescribe the specific actions to resolve these issues, which require deeper analysis and discussion. However, hopefully the good track record of PBF over the past Business Plan, and its evident commitment to operating with a lean staffing structure, can provide a basis for viable resolution of them.

The Review Team also notes the issue of the overall scale of PBF's work. As PBF continues to improve and consolidate its functioning, and to demonstrate value-added for its approaches and criteria, a question frequently raised by various stakeholders (especially those in-country) is whether it can expand its overall amount of programming. In terms of the need for such assistance, it is clear that there are substantial unmet peacebuilding needs relevant to PBF in countries where PBF already works. Further, it seems quite likely that there will continue to be more countries that need PBF's type of assistance than the 20 or so "active" countries that some have suggested might be its limit, based on its current Headquarters staffing level. In terms of PBF's capacity for such an expansion, it may be that the issues flagged earlier regarding systemic issues among its partners are as crucial as those regarding PBF itself.