

**SECRETARY-GENERAL'S PEACEBUILDING FUND
PBF PROJECT PROGRESS REPORT TEMPLATE**



PBF PROJECT PROGRESS REPORT

COUNTRY:

TYPE OF REPORT: SEMI-ANNUAL, ANNUAL OR FINAL

DATE OF REPORT:

Project Title: Supporting the Western Balkan's collective leadership on reconciliation: building capacity and momentum for the Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO)	
Project Number from MPTF-O Gateway:	
PBF project modality: X IRF <input type="checkbox"/> PRF	If funding is disbursed into a national or regional trust fund: <input type="checkbox"/> Country Trust Fund <input type="checkbox"/> Regional Trust Fund Name of Recipient Fund:
List all direct project recipient organizations (starting with Convening Agency), followed type of organization (UN, CSO etc): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● UNDP ● UNFPA ● UNICEF <p>The Albania country offices of the above agencies will be the direct recipient organizations. In turn, they will work with their Agency offices across the region: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo¹, North Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia.</p>	
List additional implementing partners, Governmental and non-Governmental: RYCO (Regional Youth Cooperation Office)	
Project commencement date²: 15 October 2018 Project duration in months³: 18 months, extended until December 31st 2020.	
Does the project fall under one of the specific PBF priority windows below: <input type="checkbox"/> Gender promotion initiative <input type="checkbox"/> Youth promotion initiative <input type="checkbox"/> Transition from UN or regional peacekeeping or special political missions <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cross-border or regional project	
Total PBF approved project budget* (by recipient organization): UNDP: \$ 2,024,975 UNFPA : \$ 552,120 UNICEF : \$ 422,650 Total: \$ 2,999,745	

¹ For the UN, all references to Kosovo shall be understood in the context of Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999). For RYCO, this designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with Security Council Resolution 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

² Note: commencement date will be the date of first funds transfer.

³ Maximum project duration for IRF projects is 18 months, for PRF projects – 36 months.

**The overall approved budget and the release of the second and any subsequent tranche are conditional and subject to PBSO's approval and subject to availability of funds in the PBF account*

How many tranches have been received so far: 1

Report preparation:

Project report prepared by: Eno Ngjela (UNDP), Elida Nuri (UNFPA), Mirlinda Bushati (UNICEF)

Project report approved by:

Did PBF Secretariat clear the report:

Any comments from PBF Secretariat on the report:

Has the project undertaken any evaluation exercises? Please specify and attach: N/A

NOTES FOR COMPLETING THE REPORT:

- *Avoid acronyms and UN jargon, use general / common language.*
- *Be as concrete as possible. Avoid theoretical, vague or conceptual discourse.*
- *Ensure the analysis and project progress assessment is gender and age sensitive.*

PART 1: RESULTS PROGRESS

1.1 Overall project progress to date

Briefly explain the **status of the project** in terms of its implementation cycle, including whether all preliminary/preparatory activities have been completed (1500 character limit):

This is the first report for the project and during the first six months of 2019, the project partners have been focusing on starting the activities, setting up implementation mechanisms and mobilising the necessary human resources. A regional introductory meeting took place in January 2019 and the first steering committee of the project took place in April 2019. Following extensive consultations, an additional component has been agreed with the regional offices of UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF to conduct a regional survey on peace perceptions and following youth-led dialogue and advocacy in the Western Balkans. This was first introduced UNDP IRH and UNFPA EECARO in the January meeting and presented in further detail at the steering committee meeting in April.

During this period, RYCO started the recruitment processes for strengthening the capacities of the central office as well as local branch offices – to be financed through this project. In addition, RYCO launched its second open call for proposals through which RYCO intends to support and empower civil society organizations and secondary schools to implement activities in the areas of regional youth cooperation, mobility and exchange; and enabling environment for regional youth cooperation. The call focused on two priorities (i) Regional youth cooperation, mobility and exchange and (ii) Enabling environment for regional youth cooperation. UNICEF completed a Mapping of Educational Initiatives for Intercultural Dialogue, Peacebuilding and Reconciliation among Young People in the Western Balkans 6.

Considering the project's implementation cycle, please **rate this project's overall progress towards results to date:**

Certain delays are reported during this period as the right administrative modalities were being decided and completed. With the addition of another component, the project was extended until the end of 2020.

In a few sentences, summarize **what is unique/ innovative/ interesting** about what this project is trying/ has tried to achieve or its approach (rather than listing activity progress) (1500 character limit).

The project supports peacebuilding efforts in Western Balkans through the strengthening of the Regional Youth Cooperation Office. Being a new institution and operating in a volatile environment, RYCO will be supported to strengthen its internal capacities and will be enabled to achieve its mission. Considering that one of RYCO's main tools to achieve its mission is through financial support to regional projects and initiatives, its grant facility system is being designed with increased outreach and inclusiveness. RYCO will be equipped with effective tools to Monitoring and Evaluation, enabling it to keep track on challenges it faces and impact its interventions produce. Finally, RYCO will be supported with an increase of human resources, especially in view of its Monitoring and Evaluation activities. The project has a distinct cross-border character with extensive interaction of UN agencies present in the WB6 and RYCO local branch offices as well as partners - governments, civil society and youth groups. It has to be noted that particular attention has been paid to coordination and synergies with other PBSO funded projects in WB in order to

maximise results and elevate the potential impact. As the contracting parties (WB6) that are in various degrees of conflict have collectively agreed and supported creation of a reconciliation youth-exchange office, the fact that RYCO grants require joint-proposals that aim to bridge community lines is also an innovative way of supporting peacebuilding in Western Balkans.

In a few sentences summarize **major project peacebuilding progress/results** (with evidence), which PBSO can use in public communications to highlight the project (1500 character limit):

This is the beginning of the project and peacebuilding results are yet to be observed. However, the recruitment of RYCO staff and the evaluation of RYCO's second call for proposals to be financed through this project is nearing completion.

In a few sentences, explain how the project has made **real human impact**, that is, how did it affect the lives of any people in the country – where possible, use direct quotes that PBSO can use in public communications to highlight the project (1500 character limit):

This is the beginning of the project and results are yet to be observed. However, as grants contracts will be signed during the Q4 of 2019, results will be shared at the next reporting stage.

If the project progress assessment is **on-track**, please explain what the key **challenges** (if any) have been and which measures were taken to address them (1500 character limit).

Project partners have been working to anticipate the activities of the project. As RYCO is a brand-new institution, an assessment of their administrative/financial is required prior to the transfer of funds. An approach has been pursued that enables RYCO to launch the call for grants and recruit of project personnel – thus avoiding delays – even while the capacity assessment is undertaken in parallel. In addition, a new component on a regional evidence base on youth perceptions on peace and security and youth-led dialogues and advocacy was added which resulted in the approval of project extension until December 2020.

If the assessment is **off-track**, please list main reasons/ **challenges** and explain what impact this has had/will have on project duration or strategy and what **measures** have been taken/ will be taken to address the challenges/ rectify project progress (1500 character limit):

Please attach as a separate document(s) any materials highlighting or providing more evidence for project progress (for example: publications, photos, videos, monitoring reports, evaluation reports etc.). List below what has been attached to the report, including purpose and audience.

- A Mapping of Educational Initiatives for Intercultural Dialogue, Peacebuilding and Reconciliation among Young People in the Western Balkans 6
- Minutes of Podgorica coordination meeting
- Steering Committee meeting minutes
- Concept note for component 4
- ToRs for International Consultant to adapt ypeer manual to peacebuilding
- TORs – International expert on monitoring and evaluation
- TORs – International expert for the preparation of a fundraising manual

1.2 Result progress by project outcome

The space in the template allows for up to four project outcomes. If your project has more approved outcomes, contact PBSO for template modification.

Outcome 1: Social Cohesion and Reconciliation – as measured by increasing embracing of diversity, attitudes of tolerance and reduced prejudice and discrimination by youth is enhanced across the Western Balkans.

Rate the current status of the outcome progress:

Progress summary: Describe main progress under this Outcome made during the reporting period (for June reports: January-June; for November reports: January-November; for final reports: full project duration), including major output progress (not all individual activities). If the project is starting to make/ has made a difference at the outcome level, provide specific evidence for the progress (quantitative and qualitative) and explain how it impacts the broader political and peacebuilding context. Where possible, provide specific examples of change the project has supported/ contributed to as well as, where available and relevant, quotes from partners or beneficiaries about the project and their experience. (3000 character limit)?

Output 1

In line with the project proposal approved from the Peace Building Fund, UNICEF Albania has started the kick-off of activities towards preparing a methodology for peacebuilding. As a first step, the TOR-s for a consultant who conducted the mapping on the best practices in the region with regard to intercultural learning and peacebuilding were launched while the consultant has started work in April 2019. As of today, a mapping of best practices has been developed and shared with all participating Agencies and RYCO for feedback. In parallel, UNICEF has also prepared and launched the TOR-s for the development of the Peacebuilding methodology which is being currently drafted. Youth participation is one of the elements underpinning the efforts for promoting intercultural dialogue and peacebuilding. As such, even the development of the methodology for Peacebuilding in schools is designed in such a way as to allow for the opinions of youth in the region. To that end a U- report poll has been designed and the opinions of more than 4,500 young people from Albania, Kosovo and Bosnia, were received, namely on how young people would like intercultural dialogue among schools to work and what they would like to see happen in school practices and as part of a methodology for peacebuilding.

RESULTS OF U-REPORT POLL

Question	Albania ⁴ 90% response rate 456 responded out of 505 polled	Kosovo ⁵ 92% response rate 1,221 responded out of 1,322 polled	Bosnia & Herzegovina ⁶ 99% response rate 3005 responded to a total of 3043 surveyed
1. Does your school organize events or activities to promote a culture of dialogue and peace building?			
Yes:	30%	20%	32%
No:	41%	55%	39%
Sometimes:	29%	25%	29%
2. Which of the following topics, you are familiar with?			
National, social and cultural diversity:	11%	15%	19%
Tolerance towards different religions:	34%	24%	[not included]
Respect towards different ethnic & linguistic groups:	6%	8%	[not included]
Understanding of the past conflicts in the region:	5%	7%	11%
Building foundations for a better future for society:	10%	10%	12%

⁴ <https://westernbalkans.ureport.in/poll/1157/>

⁵ <https://westernbalkans.ureport.in/poll/1156/>

⁶ <https://bih.ureport.in/poll/1194/>

Preventing violence:	20%	19%	32%
Promoting a culture of peace and dialogue:	7%	6%	4%
None:	7%	10%	9%
3. What support do you think schools should provide to promote a culture of dialogue and peace building?			
Train teachers in how to promote a culture of dialogue and peacebuilding:	32%	32%	18%
Provide all students with access to learning materials on promoting dialogue and peace:	16%	16%	12%
Organize events with guest speakers who can model intercultural dialogue and peace building:	25%	25%	23%
Promote more exchanges between schools and regions:	22%	20%	42%
Other kinds of support for schools to organize activities ⁷	6%	7%	5%
4. How do you feel about learning to participate in a culture of dialogue and peace building?			
I feel it will help me and my community to be more inclusive and tolerant:	55%	61%	59%
I feel it will help make the Western Balkans region more European:	38%	31%	40%
I do not feel that a culture of dialogue and peacebuilding is particularly important for my country or my future:	6%	8%	1%

The schools which will receive training on peace building methodology have been selected by RYCO and the first training is scheduled for December 2019. The TOR-s for a consultant on the methodology for school financial management and fundraising have also been prepared. A consultant is on board and has held extensive consultations with different stakeholders while the manual is expected to be finalised by October 2019.

UNICEF has also prepared the Concept note for a study visit which will serve RYCO representatives to design and develop ideas, services and models to address social issues they identify as problems in their communities and beyond and co-create solutions that foster positive relationships and intercultural dialogue within their communities and cross- countries in the region based on the model of UPSHIFT which UNICEF is using successfully in many countries. The study visit is scheduled to take place in Kosovo during October 2019.

Output 2

UNFPA Albania started the initial activities towards adapting the y-peer methodology for peacebuilding. As a first step, the TOR-s for an international consultant were finalized in consultation with all RYCO and UN WB6, launched in July 2019, while the consultant is expected to start work in September. In parallel UNFPA COs have started the process for the development of ToRs for local consultants.

Y-peer manual is one of the UNFPA niche elements in working with out-of school young people, especially the most vulnerable. As such, a coordination meeting with the International Institute for Youth Development - PETRI Sofia - and UNFPA EECARO was organised to see the option of collaborating to adapt the current manual to peacebuilding. PETRI– Sofia is a knowledge hub and regional resource centre at the National Centre of Public Health and Analyses (NCPHA), Sofia, Bulgaria that supports youth empowerment in the areas of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), gender equality and peacebuilding in the region of Eastern Europe and Central Asia and beyond. PETRI – Sofia Centre combines peer-to-peer education using alternative methods of education (such as theatre-based techniques, role games, simulations, etc.); experience and enthusiasm of fellows from the International network of young volunteers in 52 countries on 4 continents; expertise in the field of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) education and consultation; and partnership with government institutions.

It was agreed to use PETRI expertise under the UNFPA EECARO workplan 2019 with this institution as an Implementing Partner. The paperwork has been prepared and signed. UNFPA EECARO to include in their revised workplan with IP.

Output 3

This component aims at directly strengthening the capacities of RYCO. Being a new institution and operating in a volatile environment, RYCO will be supported to strengthen its internal capacities and systems and will be enabled to achieve its mission. Considering that one of RYCO's main tools to achieve its mission is through financial support to regional projects and initiatives, its grant facility system will be upgraded and strengthened through a tailor-made approach. RYCO is being equipped with effective tools to Monitoring and Evaluation, making it possible for it to measure the impact of its interventions.

TORs for an M&E advisor have been prepared and the recruitment process is underway. The advisor will provide a methodology, elements and guidelines for the establishment of a M&E unit and system, in charge, among the other tasks, of data collection on reconciliation. Data will be collected in the areas of intervention of RYCO, in order to compare and measure the impact of RYCO's action.

Monitoring will take place in terms of implementation of the project's activities, adapting online and offline tools to track delivery of inputs and its outputs. Given the small size and frequent nature of the activities delivered, a post-treatment approach will be preferred, in the form of evaluation test provided to the participants. Such information will be then compared with data collected at the outcome level. In addition, monitoring of outcomes will also be performed, in terms of development and behavioural changes, with the purpose to provide evidence of the RYCOs influence and success in changing the dynamics of sustained reconciliation.

A system to monitor and measure RYCO's institutional performance, according to a results-based management approach for institutional effectiveness will be set up. The system will be based on the three key interrelated management results: (i) higher quality programs; (ii) greater organizational openness, agility and adaptability; and (iii) improved management of financial and HR. Indicators will be defined for both the interventions' monitoring and the institutional performance measurements; the monitoring framework will be interlinked with RYCO's Strategic Plan 2019-2021.

On the other hand, RYCO has continued with the recruitment 11 staff across the WB6 as per the project provisions and during this period has concluded interviewing processes for all the forecast positions. Staff are due to start work in September.

In accordance with UNDP rules and procedures, a capacity assessment conducted by a third party will pave the way for the financial disbursement of funds to RYCO. As per the provisions of the project document, RYCO launched the process of call for applications for grants that will be supported by this project. At the end of this reporting period, the evaluation of applications was being completed.

Output 4

After consultations with RYCO and UN agencies, the additional element on regional evidence base on peace and security and youth-led advocacy was incorporated in the amended project document. The inception workshop for the survey, bringing together UN agencies, researchers, civil society and youth representatives from the region, was agreed to take place in early October 2019.

Through this added component 4, opportunities for youth from diverse backgrounds to identify common peace and security priorities through action research and enter in constructive dialogue with their peers and decision-makers will be created, and capacities to become actors for change will be strengthened. Under this component, the project is expected to conduct youth-led action research and make available regionally comparable, youth-focused conflict analysis and evidence base on youth perceptions on sustaining peace, as well as trainings on peacebuilding, leadership and advocacy and national and regional policy consultations. The component will be closely coordinated with other peacebuilding and PBF-funded efforts (DFF and Kosovo projects) to ensure coherence and complementarity.

For this purpose, an inception phase is being prepared with UN agencies, RYCO, research experts and youth to define the scope and implementation of the research element and how this can serve as a spring-board for strengthened dialogue among peers and with decisionmakers. Expertise will be provided through the UNDP IRH in Istanbul to support the research and advocacy in technical terms, and support coordination and strategic guidance of this output.

1.3 Cross-cutting issues

<p><u>National ownership:</u> How has the national government demonstrated ownership/ commitment to the project results and activities? Give specific examples. (1500 character limit)</p>	<p>RYCO has the support of all the WB6 governments. In Albania, where RYCO is based, the organisation enjoys full diplomatic recognition and support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The steering committee meeting that took place in April was attended by the Deputy Minister of Education, Sport & Youth of Albania.</p>
<p><u>Monitoring:</u> Is the project M&E plan on track? What monitoring methods and sources of evidence are being/ have been used? Please attach any monitoring-related reports for the reporting period. (1500 character limit)?</p>	<p>Yes, it is on track. Monitoring human resources are being mobilised and no methods or reports have been produced yet.</p>
<p><u>Evaluation:</u> Provide an update on the preparations for the external evaluation for the project, especially if within last 6 months of implementation or final report. Confirm available budget for evaluation. (1500 character limit)</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p><u>Catalytic effects (financial):</u> Did the project lead to any specific non-PBF funding commitments? If yes, from whom and how much? If not, have any specific attempts been made to attract additional financial contributions to the project and beyond? (1500 character limit)</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p><u>Catalytic effects (non-financial):</u> Did the project create favourable conditions for additional peacebuilding activities by Government/ other donors? If yes, please specify. (1500 character limit)</p>	<p>Although it is too early for any catalytic effects, earlier this year RYCO faced difficulties to hold a required Board meeting due to conflicts between contracting parties. Alongside pressure from European states, RYCO's ability to point to expectations from the UN as a partner helped advocate for a resolution.</p>

<p>Exit strategy/ sustainability: What steps have been taken to prepare for end of project and help ensure sustainability of the project results beyond PBF support for this project? <i>(1500 character limit)</i></p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Risk taking: Describe how the project has responded to risks that threatened the achievement of results. Identify any new risks that have emerged since the last report. <i>(1500 character limit)</i></p>	<p>No particular unknown risk has been noted. Some political debates have affected the governing board and delays in their decision-making, which caused delays in project staff recruitment.</p>
<p>Gender equality: In the reporting period, which activities have taken place with a specific focus on addressing issues of gender equality or women’s empowerment? <i>(1500 character limit)</i></p>	<p>As it is still the beginning of the project, no such activities can be reported. However, gender aspect and gender mainstreaming has always been considered when developing ToRs, designing workplans, identifying potential partners and youth groups.</p>
<p>Other: Are there any other issues concerning project implementation that you want to share, including any capacity needs of the recipient organizations? <i>(1500 character limit)</i></p>	<p>RYCO is still building its own capacities as a brand-new organization. Its programmatic capacities are limited and the organisation is hiring additional staff to deal with the implementation of project activities.</p>

1.3 INDICATOR BASED PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT: *Using the Project Results Framework as per the approved project document or any amendments- provide an update on the achievement of key indicators at both the outcome and output level in the table below (if your project has more indicators than provided in the table, select the most relevant ones with most relevant progress to highlight). Where it has not been possible to collect data on indicators, state this and provide any explanation. Provide gender and age disaggregated data. (300 characters max per entry)*

	Performance Indicators	Indicator Baseline	End of project Indicator Target	Current indicator progress	Reasons for Variance/ Delay (if any)	Adjustment of target (if any)
Outcome 1 Social Cohesion and Reconciliation – as measured by increasing embracing of diversity, attitudes of tolerance and reduced prejudice and discrimination by youth is enhanced across the Western Balkans.	Indicator 1.1 Percentage of youth (male and female) that indicate positive attitudes towards other ethnic groups in the region.	xxx % (to be measured at baseline survey)	20 percentage points increase by end of project	Too early to report on outcome progress		
	Indicator 1.2 Percentage of youth (male and female) that have been the object of discriminatory behaviour in the past 4 months.	xxx % (to be measured at baseline survey)	20 percentage points decrease by end of project	Too early to report on outcome progress		
	Indicator 1.3					
Output 1.1	Indicator 1.1.1	N/A	50%	N/A	Baseline needs to be defined	

Capacities of targeted schools to organize/undertake intercultural dialogue in the WB6, are strengthened	% of targeted schools which initiated at least 1 new initiative to foster intercultural dialogue by end of the project					
	Indicator 1.1.2					
Output 1.2 Capacities of youth groups and grassroots organizations to access and use RYCOs resources to engage in peacebuilding and social cohesion activities in the WB6, are strengthened.	Indicator 1.2.1 % of targeted grassroots youth groups that are awarded through RYCO and other peacebuilding regional initiatives	0	50%	Progressing with some delay	The International Consultant to work on adaptation of ypeer manual to peacebuilding in process of being hired; The PETRI – UNFPA implementing partner who has produced and owns the ypeer manual is on board and prepared respective workplan. The WB6 have submitted respective workplans including hiring local consultants and ToT preparation within 2019.	
	Indicator 1.2.2 % of new self-initiatives initiated by the targeted grassroot youth groups in WB6 by end of project	0	25%	Progressing with some delay	Preparatory work on track, draft workplans prepared, however this particular intervention will happen after the manual is adapted and ToTs completed. Hence implementation planned for 2020.	
Output 1.3 RYCOs institutional capacities to	Indicator 1.3.1 % of youth, youth organizations and schools in WB	to be defined upon project commencement	increase of 20%	N/A	baseline needs to be defined	

enhance sustainable regional cooperation, peacebuilding and reconciliation amongst youth, through the small grants facility, are strengthened.	stating that RYCO is successful in achieving its mission.					
	Indicator 1.3.2 Time to review and approve the proposals (from launch – contract award) within the CFP is decreased	7 months (during 1st CFP)	Reduced by 20%	Progressing with some delay	the call for application for grants has been issued and data will be available once the contracts will be signed	
Output 1.4 Opportunities for youth from diverse backgrounds to identify common peace and security priorities through action research and enter in constructive dialogue with their peers across divides will	Indicator 1.4.1 Number of regional youth perceptions surveys on sustaining peace	0	1	No progress yet	Project amendment was not approved yet	
	Indicator 1.4.2 Number of trainings and consultations with young civic actors in the region	0 trainings, 0 consultations	6 local trainings (1 per WB6), 1 regional training, 2 regional consultations	No progress yet	Project amendment was not approved yet	

be created, confidence in and dialogue with decision- makers will be enhanced, and youth capacities to beco						
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PART 2: INDICATIVE PROJECT FINANCIAL PROGRESS

2.1 Comments on the overall state of financial expenditures

Please rate whether project financial expenditures are on track, delayed, or off track, vis-à-vis project plans and by recipient organization:

How many project budget tranches have been received to date and when do you expect to request the next tranche if applicable:

The first tranche was received in late November 2018. However, as the project was amended and another component was added, the next tranche is expected by November 2019 in order to anticipate the smooth implementations of activities.

What is the overall level of expenditure/ commitment against the total budget and against the tranche(s) received so far:

TOTAL EXPENDITURE – 128,814 USD

If expenditure is delayed or off track, please provide a brief explanation (500 characters limit):

The start of the project has gone through some extensive consultations across the Western Balkans. There have also been some administrative issues regarding RYCO's agreement with UNDP. They are now being finalized and progress is expected to pick up soon. Efforts also have been dedicated to the new component of regional survey that is also due to start soon.

Please state what \$ amount was planned (in the project document) to be allocated to activities focussed on gender equality or women's empowerment and how much has been actually allocated to date:

It is still the beginning of the project and no particular gender focused activities can be reported. However, gender aspect and gender mainstreaming has always been considered when developing ToRs, designing workplans, identifying potential partners and youth groups. By the end phase of the project implementation, the expenditures regarding gender equality will reach the amount of USD 850,900.00, as per the budget approved by PBF.

Please fill out and attach the project document Excel budget Annex showing current project financial progress (**expenditures/ commitments to date**), using the original project budget table in Excel, even though the \$ amounts are indicative only.