

UNDP Management Response Template
Joint UNDP-DPA Programme for Building National Capacities for Conflict Prevention

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Overall comments: The Joint Programme management welcomes the evaluation findings and is largely in agreement with most of the evaluation recommendations. The management appreciates the finding that the programme is an excellent example of how different arms of the UN can work together successfully in pursuit of preventing violent conflict and building capacities for peace. The management agrees that the Programme has enabled better coordination between DPA and UNDP, including through the interactions and work of PDAs.

The Joint Programme management welcomes the conclusion that overall the Joint Programme meets - and in some areas, exceeds - expectations. The management agrees that through the deployment of PDAs, the Joint Programme has made an impact in supporting and strengthening conflict prevention at the country level. Furthermore, the management is in agreement that there is sufficient evidence that national ownership and leadership of PDA-supported initiatives is strong; and that by working with institutions, strategically positioned individuals, and community-level initiatives, the chances of sustainability of results beyond PDA deployment is high. The management concurs that the "PDA-modality" has been the flagship of the Joint Programme. The Programme management takes note of the caution of the evaluators that the Programme should not become a victim of its own success and needs to avoid any perception of being seen as a 'rostering service'. The Joint Programme also agrees that going ahead, the Programme needs to focus on enhancing its support provided at the country level and ensure it comprehensively responds to each country context.

The management agrees that the nature of the programme, as well as peacebuilding programmes in general, pose challenges to evaluation as results are often implicit and attribution is difficult to quantify. At the same time, the JP acknowledges the challenges it is facing in employing methods of results-based management. The Management agrees that more effort need to be made to improve the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) methods of the Programme to ensure that it can better demonstrate its impact. The Programme management further acknowledges that in the next phase of the Programme an explicit 'theory of change' (ToC) will need to be developed and reflect the different expectations stakeholders have of the Programme. The Programme team is currently in a process of developing the next phase of the Programme, and will take these findings in consideration in the design. As such, the next phase will be informed by the latest thinking in the field of RBM of conflict prevention initiatives, whilst at the same time be guided by the core principles of preventive diplomacy and mediation that require flexibility and discretion.

Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 1: In potentially enhancing and scaling-up the Joint Programme, it is suggested that management prioritise improving the quality and breadth of Joint Programme support to each country engagement rather than the quantity of country engagements. This would require regularising more rigorous and collaborative needs assessments of country situations that involve all key stakeholders (such as UNDP, DPA, RCs, UNCT and national actors) to converge expectations into basic multi-year 'engagement frameworks'. Such frameworks would identify a spectrum of needs-based support tailored to each country context, rather than necessarily defaulting to a PDA deployment approach. Working from an agreed framework, the Programme could also build-in sustainability outcomes and exit strategies from the outset. Such an approach would likely result in country engagements on average becoming more resource intensive and, as a consequence, management might effectively have to adopt a 'narrower but deeper' approach that would plateau the number of country engagements (though this depends on overall growth of Programme resource mobilisation).

Management Response: Fully agree. The Joint Programme management fully agrees that improving the quality and breadth of the Programme engagement will be a priority going ahead. In addition, the management agrees that ensuring a stronger joint vision for each country where a PDA is deployed is necessary, and an agreement to converge expectations will be required in each context. The Programme will establish the practice of setting up a type of agreement with each Resident Coordinator receiving a PDA that will outline the results to be expected from the PDA deployment.

The Joint Programme is already implementing this decision and the Programme Steering Committee agreed in a recent meeting (15 March 2018) to establish as standard practice a process to sign a type of 'letter of agreement' with RCs requesting a PDA to clarify expectations and responsibilities related to the PDA deployment including results expected from PDA deployment, performance evaluation, and co-financing (noting exceptional political circumstances in some countries may require a sensitive approach). It was also agreed to focus on enhancing the engagement of PDAs through regular backstopping by desk officers, regional bureau and hub colleagues; and prioritizing the expansion of programmatic seed funding to enable PDAs to initiate catalytic programmes in the next phase of the programme.

For now, the programme has agreed to maintain 48-50 PDA positions and enhance support to these PDAs until further resources have been identified, and the programme team enhanced to the extent that additional PDAs could be deployed. It should be noted, however, that the direction of the Joint Programme will also depend on the direction of the UN reform, and emerging needs, and the Programme will need to remain agile and flexible, to be able to respond to urging emerging needs.

Key Action(s)	Time Frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Status	Comments
1.1. Develop a draft letter of agreement with each RC requesting a PDA.	By end December 2019	Bureau for Policy and Programme Support (BPPS), DPA, receiving RCO	Ongoing	Tripartite agreement developed between RC, UNDP and DPPA. Each country has been asked to sign.
1.2. Provide additional seed funds to countries to deepen PDA engagement at the country level	By end December 2018	Joint Programme management	Completed	

Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 2: It is recommended that Joint Programme management increases the use of results-based management practices as it designs its next programme phase, including taking steps to: undertake an inclusive and collaborative design process with stakeholders and partners; facilitate a

process to review and develop a coherent and viable Theory of Change (ToC) followed then by design of a new Results Framework with realistic and clear Outcomes and expected Outputs; design workable indicators and establish baselines so that country-level results can be aggregated into global impact statements (aided by instituting 'engagement frameworks' with in-country results linked to the Joint Programme's Outcomes and ToC); establish indicators and baselines for global results the Programme might seek to achieve, elements of programme management performance and criteria for future evaluations; and re-develop M&E systems with practical reporting mechanisms that document results (not just outputs). Management should consider the addition of an M&E Specialist to the Secretariat so that it can effectively carry the additional workload of designing the next programme phase, but also the enhanced M&E approaches required for the next programme phase. Alternatively, project design and M&E specialists could be procured over the short-term to support the Secretariat during a new programme design process. Advice and support could also be sought from UNEG and/or the PBSO, as well as through collaborative partnerships with peace research and other institutions that could enhance the Programme through enhanced monitoring methodologies and innovative data management technologies.

Management Response: Fully agree. The Joint Programme management fully endorses and agrees with the recommendation to ensure that the Joint Programme is guided by the principles of results-based management. The Programme team is currently in a process of reviewing the programme and designing the next phase of the Programme by August 2018.

Recognizing that the previous results framework was not adequately guided by the RBM principles, the programme is undertaking a comprehensive consultation with the support of two consultants (one specialized in programme development and another on conflict prevention RBM) to develop the next phase of the programme, including an overarching theory of change, a results and monitoring framework which will include clear but realistic expected outputs and appropriate indicators to be used to monitor progress against the set milestones and targets. The framework will include a global set of indicators that each country receiving support from the Joint Programme will be able to connect with.

The Programme has hired two consultants to support the programme on the re-development of the M&E system, and the functions of M&E will be fully integrated into programme secretariat structure in the next cycle of the Programme.

The team will consult donor partners, RCs, PDAs, DPA and UNDP desk officers, regional offices/hubs, key UN partners (DOCO, EOSG, OHCHR, PBSO, UNICEF, UNV, UN-Women and others) in the process of re-designing the programme and the development of the results and monitoring framework.

Key Action(s)	Time Frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking	
			Status	Comments
2.1. Develop the next phase of the Programme in compliance of RBM principles, and design realistic and achievable outputs, indicators and targets.	By September 2018	Joint Programme team	Completed	Prodoc & RBM framework signed in December 2018
2.2. Link the workplans of PDAs/countries receiving Joint Programme support into the global results framework and indicators.	Continuous (by end 2019)	Joint Programme team	Ongoing	
<p>Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 3: The Joint Programme is recommended to take steps to increasingly position itself in closer support to the centres of conflict prevention and sustaining peace policy development and practice within the UN. More immediately, this could include convening a roundtable with key players supporting the SG's Prevention Agenda where national partners of the Programme and PDAs would have an opportunity to share their experiences. More long-term, the Joint Programme should explore during the design of its next programme phase how it might prioritise policy advocacy as an outcome area. Similarly, the Joint Programme should explore during the design of its next programme phase how it might expand its current learning Outcome and strategies</p>				

for the benefit of the wider UN conflict prevention and sustaining peace community of practice.

Management Response: Partially disagree. The Joint Programme management team believes that the Joint Programme is already extremely well positioned within the SG's prevention agenda and within the UN system in its advocacy role, especially given its rather moderate size. The Joint Programme is highlighted as one of the best examples of cross-pillar collaboration and UN support to the development of national capacities for conflict prevention by all the recent key publications, including the SG's report on Sustaining Peace (2018) – an excellent achievement for a \$10 million per year programme.

However, the Programme team also agrees that further advocacy and partner engagement needs to be undertaken. The Programme management has decided to hold regular Partner Events based on the positive experience from June 2017 first ever such event which was opened by the DSG and attended by more than 40 Member States.

Finally, the Programme agrees that further learning opportunities, especially peer-to-peer exchanges need to be provided for the PDAs as well as RCs, and will enhance the support provided through the Montreux series of RC workshops, and explore additional opportunities for providing learning opportunities to PDAs and RCs.

Key Action(s)

Time Frame

Responsible Unit(s)

Tracking

Comments

3.1. Establish as a regular practice the holding of partner events and deepen the engagements with RCs and PDAs through regular retreats.

By December 2019

Joint Programme team

Completed

Latest partner event with the DSG, UNDP Administrator, DPPA USG and programme partner countries held on July 15, 2019.

Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 4: The evaluators recommend that the Joint Programme both restructures the Secretariat and seeks additional partnerships to reinforce its programme management capacities. Firstly, the Secretariat should be expanded. A minimum team to enable the Programme to moderately scale-up and implement many of the enhancements recommended in the evaluation would include: a project manager with delegated decision-making authority supported by a project coordinator to adequately handle the responsibilities of a programme of this nature, a full-time specialist to establish and run the results-based M&E and reporting systems; a full-time specialist to expand and run a professional development and learning strategy directed not just at PDAs, but a wider spectrum of key stakeholders; and a finance/admin assistant. Secondly, the Joint Programme should identify and deepen strategic partnerships with think-tanks, specialised institutions and even private sector actors that may be willing to contribute resources, systems and skill-sets for enhancing programme management capacity and performance.

Management response: Fully agree. The Programme management agrees that the Joint Programme Secretariat needs to be expanded to more effectively manage the Programme, and provide support to the scaled-up operations. The Programme is currently being redesigned and will include a full review of the needed capacities within the Joint Programme team. This review will also need to take into consideration the developments in the UN reform, the internal UNDP realignment process, and available/foreseen funding.

It is already clear that the team needs to be expanded to cover the workload and to ensure that decisions can be taken and implemented in a timely manner. The Programme Coordinator position will be upgraded to a Programme Manager position (P4). The Programme Manager will have the authority to manage the programme within the agreed workplan, and in consultation with the two Team Leaders (at UNDP and DPA). Additional capacity for RBM, M&E and learning will be integrated within the Programme team.

The Programme design currently on-going is also reviewing the current partnerships and assessing how these could be best expanded to respond to the needs of the countries receiving support from the Programme.

Key Action(s)	Time Frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking	
			Status	Comments
4.1. Redesign the structure of the Programme team responsible for the implementation of the Programme.	By October 2018	Joint Programme management (DPPA and UNDP)	Completed	New structure outlined in prodoc; M&E Specialist recruited, additional new posts under recruitment

Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 5: The evaluation recommends the Joint Programme invests more to strategically position itself through partnerships across the wider UN system, particularly the development and human rights pillars. In the near-term, Joint Programme management could develop a communications and strategic engagement strategy to enhance awareness of its work and explore how it might enhance its strategic partnerships across the UN system. Including DPA regional divisions as direct members of the Technical Committee would also deepen understanding of the Joint Programme across DPA. More long-term, the Joint Programme should explore during the design of its next programme phase how it might prioritise enhanced inter-agency involvement and joint initiatives both at the global level and through joint-programming at the country level (potentially in closer partnership with the PBSO). As part of this, management needs to instigate more dialogue with senior UN management about how the Joint Programme will converge with the structural changes taking place both with the UN's peace and security architecture and its development system. Suggestions were even made by some stakeholders that an opportunity exists to utilise the successes, approaches and lessons of the Joint Programme as a foundation for establishing a strategic UN conflict prevention platform that comprehensively integrates the peace and development pillars of the UN system in support of the Conflict Prevention and Sustaining Peace Agendas.

Management response: Fully agree. The Joint Programme management agrees with the need to further develop partnerships across the wider UN system. Over the years, the programme has consolidated the partnership between DPA, UNDP and PBSO, and developed a partnership that now works as a 'well-oiled machine'. PDAs at the country level have also developed good working relations with the UNCTs, and in some countries, where Human Rights Advisors (HRAs) and PDAs are deployed, beneficial partnerships have been formed.

There is a need to further consolidate relationship between the Joint Programme and OHCHR in response to the need to ensure human rights approaches and issues inform the analysis and advice offered by the PDAs to RCs and UNCTs. The team will explore the possibility of also including OHCHR in the JP technical committee.

The Joint Programme management also agrees to include DPA regional divisions into the Technical Committee of the Programme to ensure that regional divisions are represented not only in the Steering Committee, but also in the Technical Committee.

The Joint Programme and PDAs are also working on further enhancing the relationship with the PBSO/PBF, and an increasing number of PDAs are engaged in supporting UNCTs in developing proposals for PBF funding in 2018. This relationship will be further consolidated in the next phase of the programme.

Key Action(s)	Time Frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Status	Comments
5.1. Organize a meeting with OHCHR to discuss the possibility of attending the technical committees of the two programmes	By June 2019	Joint Programme	Pending	
5.2. Include DPA regional divisions in the Joint Programme Technical Committee	Continuous (by end 2018)	Joint Programme	Completed	In new prodoc

Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 6: It is recommended that PDAs and RCs identify strong institutions (either state or non-state) that can be supported to coordinate national actors in conflict prevention work such that, even when the PDA leaves, national institutions can sustain the work. Regarding the involvement of Member States in the programme leadership, it is proposed in the next programme cycle that an ad hoc structure of programme advisors be created involving 7 Member States where PDAs are deployed. These could meet with Joint Programme management annually, with one or two virtual meetings in between. Membership can be rotated every two or three years. This group could serve as Member State advocates for the Joint Programme.

Management response: Partially disagree. The overall purpose of the Joint Programme is to build national capacities for conflict prevention, and hence all PDAs are expected to be working with key national actors to build capacities for prevention. In some instances, national institutions may not be in a place to sustain the work after few years of engagement, as building those capacities and institutions take a long time. In other countries, national institutions may not be the appropriate target even given the conflict context. Noting the findings of the evaluation and recognizing that more needs to be done to build and strengthen national capacities, Joint Programme team will focus on enhancing country specific initiatives to build national capacities for prevention in the next cycle.

It has been agreed in the Steering Committee meeting of the Programme that member states will not be involved in the management of the Joint Programme, however, the Programme will focus on enhancing interaction with member states and learning from countries receiving the support of the Programme. The Partner Event will be considered one key modality in listening and learning from member states, and the programme team will also explore other opportunities for such engagements.

Key Action(s)	Time Frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Status	Comments
6.1. Provide additional seed funds to PDAs to support building national capacities for conflict prevention.	By December 2019	Joint Programme team	Completed	
6.2. Organize a regular partner event and invite member states to	By December 2019	Joint Programme team	Completed	Took place

present on the lessons learnt of JP engagement at the country level.				in July 2019
<p>Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 7: It is recommended that the Joint Programme conduct a partnership review and develop a Partnerships Strategy that more thoroughly considers foundations, research institutes, peace practice organisations, private philanthropies and the private sector as potential partners. This would enable the Programme to expand its resource base and lead to enhanced programme quality, reach and impact.</p>				
<p>Management response: Fully agree. The Joint Programme team is currently in a process of designing the next phase of the Programme. One of the aspects of the programme development pertains to partnerships, and the Programme team will organize a consultation with donor partners as well as other UN and civil society partners to further consider which types of partnerships the programme should prioritize going forward.</p>				
Key Action(s)	Time Frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
7.1. Develop the next phase of the Joint Programme including components identifying the partnerships that the Joint Programme will engage in.	By September 2018	Joint Programme team	Completed	See new prodoc

* The implementation status is tracked in the ERC.