

# The Gambia Independent Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) Portfolio Evaluation 2017-2022

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# Executive Summary

## The Introduction

The Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) is the United Nations (UN) instrument of first resort to respond and prevent violent conflict. In The Gambia, the PBF acted as one of the first responders following the 22 years of dictatorship by President Yahya Abdul-Aziz Jemus Junkung Jammeh. Between 2017 and 2022, the PBF provided such support in the Country through 16 projects and a total investment of USD 30,913,673.

The Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) commissioned The Gambia Independent PBF Portfolio Evaluation 2017 to 2022. This learning and accountability-focused evaluation assesses the relevance, overall results and achievements, and patterns stemming from the PBF's investments in The Gambia, at portfolio level. This portfolio evaluation is timely, given its alignment with The Gambia's pursuit of re-eligibility for PBF support.

## Methodology

The evaluation employed a participatory and utilization-focused approach, engaging a wide spectrum of stakeholders, from UN entities to civil society organizations (CSOs). It also employed a gender-sensitive, inclusive and conflict-sensitivity approach to deliver a comprehensive assessment, particularly emphasizing marginalized groups, and guided by principles of respect and transparency.

The evaluation pursued a mixed methods approach, which entailed the review of 152 programmatic and national documents, interviews and community discussions with 157 stakeholders, some of which were engaged during a 7-day field mission to The Gambia.

The evaluation team sampled the following six projects to undergo an in-depth assessment:

- Support the Capacity of the Government and National Stakeholders to Establish Credible Transitional Justice Processes and Mechanism that Promote Reconciliation and Sustainable Peace in the Gambia – TJHR (PBF/IRF-172)
- Strategic Advice and Support to the Security Sector Reform (SSR) and Governance in The Gambia – SSR (PBF/IRF-173)
- Addressing Conflict over Land and Natural Resources (LNR) In The Gambia – Conflict LNR (PBF/GMB/B-1)
- Strengthening Sustainable and Holistic Reintegration of Returnees in The Gambia – Reintegration of Migrants (PBF/GMB/A-1)
- Strengthening Inclusive Citizen Engagement for More Accountable Governance in The Gambia – Governance & Accountability (PBF/GMB/A-2)
- Supporting Cross-border Cooperation for Increased Community Resilience and Social Cohesion in The Gambia and Senegal (Gambia) – Cross-Border (PBF/IRF-430)

The evaluation was guided by an evaluation matrix, with questions agreed upon by the PBSO, PBF Secretariat, and the evaluation team.

*Evaluation findings, articulated below by evaluation criteria, are followed by a set of seven recommendations.*

## Relevance

The PBF was found to be highly relevant in The Gambia. The PBF provided well-timed critical funding, given the country's post-dictatorship context and challenges. The PBF strategic areas and interventions were aligned with national needs and priorities as articulated in the 2018 and updated Conflict and Development Analysis, the 2018-2021

National Development Plan, and other strategic and planning documents.

PBF interventions in The Gambia have proven highly aligned with UN Frameworks and priorities, as outlined in the PBF 2020-2024 Strategy and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework 2017-2021. They have also addressed multiple Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG16, and are aligned with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Women, Peace and Security Agenda and Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 2250.

### Coherence and Complementarity

There is strong internal coherence in the PBF Portfolio, with noted continuity between PBF projects. PBF engagement in the country started with the initiation of several critical processes such as the truth and reconciliation process and security sector reform, and subsequently moved towards addressing specific conflict drivers – including irregular migration and returnees, as well as issues of land and natural resource – and supporting increased participation of women and youth in decision-making at various, complementary levels. Following the publication of Truth and Reconciliation and Reparations Commission recommendations, the PBF also financed several projects in support of their implementation and monitoring.

There are varying levels of complementarity, coordination, and synergies of PBF interventions with other initiatives and processes underway in The Gambia, with indication of increases over time. Several mechanisms have contributed to this, including the selection process of Agencies, Agency and implementing partner continuity, and the engagement of various national stakeholders at

project design stage. Also, the creation of the PBF Secretariat has helped increase complementarity, coordination, and synergy.

### Effectiveness

The PBF has been highly effective in contributing to the advancement of peace and prevention of conflict in The Gambia. The PBF has, for the most part, achieved its intended results, with some variation across the four strategic areas identified in the 2018 Eligibility package for The Gambia. Results are highest in the Transitional Justice and Human Rights strategic area, where the PBF has contributed to some extent to all pillars of transitional justice (namely truth-seeking, prosecution, reparation and prevention).<sup>1</sup>

Variation in the achievement of results under other Strategic Areas are noted.

- PBF has contributed to changing the perception and attitudes of communities towards returnees, particularly at the community level. It has strengthened the government's capacity to address migration issues, improving service delivery for migrants and the delivery of direct support to migrants. More limited interventions have supported the economic empowerment of returnees.
- The PBF has been moderately effective in achieving benefits for women and youth specifically, particularly in the areas of political participation with initial progress on increased participation evident at the local level. However, this participation has not always translated into meaningful representation or leadership in decision-making.
- On land, natural resource management and dispute resolution, while the PBF has provided support both at the national and local levels,

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<sup>1</sup>The four strategic areas are: Transitional Justice and Human Rights; Greater Involvement of Youth and Women; Peaceful Reintegration and Psychosocial Support; and Strengthening Natural Resources and Land Management, and Dispute Resolution.

results have mainly been achieved at the local level. Of note, the PBF has supported the re-establishment of peace in communities where land and natural resource related conflict had erupted, for example, by creating shared borehole use and management structures for farmers and herders from different communities.

Finally, project targeting strategies were generally sound and effective. There is evidence of collaborative approaches adopted to identify targeted areas in projects, including consultation with government as well as decentralized structures. While these approaches have supported an effective targeting in PBF projects, budgetary considerations were noted as having an impact on targeting, with instances where targeted areas had to be reduced, thereby affecting the impact of interventions.

### Gender and Youth

PBF's approach to increasing women and youth participation in The Gambia portfolio has been pursued primarily through three approaches, namely: building community awareness and sensitization; building the capacity of women and youth leaders; and institutional strengthening.

For instance, the PBF has played a key role in establishing and/or strengthening key structures and institutions in The Gambia, including Women and Youth Branches of the Inter-Party Committee, the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Welfare, and the Children's National Assembly of The Gambia.

Complementarities across these strategies are also notable. Overall, the approach has produced growing acceptance of women and youth leadership, with progressive change evident primarily at community and local levels.

An examination of the whole portfolio points to a majority of projects considering gender equality to

be a *significant* objective (i.e., Gender Market score 2). However, it reveals that there is a vast range in the extent to which these projects integrated gender in design, monitoring and implementation. Also, noting the added risks and concerns for women and girls in contexts of transitional justice, there is a low proportion of projects in the portfolio where gender equality is the *principal* objective (i.e., Gender Marker score 3). Overall, while gender was not sufficiently mainstreamed across the entire portfolio, it is also clear there has been a growing focus on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment over time.

### Sustainability

The extent to which PBF interventions have or are likely to produce sustainable results is variable. There is undoubtedly strong commitment by the government, CSOs and a range of donors to moving the peacebuilding agenda forward in the country. Related, the PBF has made notable contributions to the creation and strengthening of key national institutions. However, the extent to which physical assets, capacities built, and institutions established/strengthened are sustainable without further planning and/or support varies.

As the Eligibility period progressed and in more recent projects, there have been indications of more robust and comprehensive project exit strategies being developed. Yet, there is only partially shared understanding of these strategies among UN Agencies, implementing partners and beneficiaries. The evaluation has seen only limited communication and engagement on exit strategies.

### Catalytic Effect

PBF investments in The Gambia have been catalytic, both financially and non-financially. The PBF has notably provided foundations for political processes and reforms as well as for the operation of collaborative mechanisms and opportunities for national/community level dialogues. PBF

interventions have also informed subsequent investments and resulted in the inclusion of human rights and conflict sensitivity considerations into other projects and programs.

By contributing to the establishment and strengthening of institutions, PBF has also enabled these institutions to move peacebuilding work forward and become catalytic agents themselves, while raising their profile and supporting the creation of new partnerships. There is evidence of PBF interventions attracting funding in the country, as well as more limited evidence of scaling and replication of piloting approaches. Finally, PBF interventions have supported improved living conditions in communities, beyond peacebuilding and conflict resolution outcomes, in terms of nutrition and health, security and mobility.

### Efficiency

The approach to portfolio development has improved with the creation of the PBF Secretariat, leading to a more transparent process. Agencies have, for the most part, good working relationships with partners to implement PBF projects. However, budgets are not consistently appropriately matched with project expectations, across the portfolio.

Delays in disbursements from Agencies to implementing partners have created challenges for implementing partners, particularly CSOs, who report that this sometimes compromises project impact. Despite delays, projects have tended to roll out within reasonable timeframes, with reference to the country's Eligibility period.

In regard to the localization agenda, the PBF has been able to adequately and meaningfully engage with local partners in The Gambia, and this at the design and implementation stage, and particularly so with government stakeholders. Some challenges are noted in engagement with local CSOs and Non-Governmental Organizations, with a need for a more strategic engagement and mobilization of civil society actors in transformative dynamics.

Comprising a small team operating on a modest budget, the PBF Secretariat provides high value-for-money. Also, the portfolio of projects provides high-to-moderate value for money. Yet, the limited communication and visibility of the PBF's overarching purpose and value-add is such that it is misunderstood by a significant proportion of implementing partners, with expectations inadequately calibrated with the Fund's purpose and design.

M&E has been an important feature of PBF work in The Gambia from the outset of its engagement, with increased support and focus as the PBF Secretariat expanded. The M&E work of the PBF Secretariat at the project level has been adequate and improving steadily. Gaps remain in the monitoring and reporting of portfolio level results.

### Conflict-Sensitivity, Risk Management and Risk Tolerance

Conflict sensitivity was systematically integrated into project design and to a lesser extent in implementation across the PBF portfolio in The Gambia. There are strong indications of an evidence-based approach to conflict drivers (e.g., competition over access to land and water resources; lack of trust in political authorities involved in institutional reforms, et.) being considered in project design.

Across the portfolio, PBF-approved and financed projects in The Gambia were informed by comprehensive conflict analyses prior to implementation. These conflict analyses have identified key conflict drivers in The Gambia to inform PBF interventions and identify priority areas. Projects also received technical support and advice from conflict experts at the design stage, ensuring a conflict sensitive approach from the outset.

PBF interventions reviewed across the portfolio demonstrate adequate attention to risk at both design and implementation stages. Detailed risk assessments were conducted in the lead up to

implementation. There is also evidence that implementing partners for the most part developed and adopted appropriate risk mitigation measures in response to diverse political and contextual risks.

Finally, projects across the PBF portfolio have demonstrated a relatively high degree of risk tolerance, by default, given the difficult operational context characteristic of The Gambia's political transition. Innovation is happening to varying extents across the portfolio, with evidence of engagement of civil society and non-traditional partners, including local community actors and the local media ecosystem, implementation of innovative activities and tools, and support for innovative work at the peacebuilding-development nexus. Innovative approaches were found to yield good results and, in some instances, as having generated important catalytic effects.

### Conclusions and Recommendations

The evaluation team has provided seven recommendations, rooted in acknowledgment of the outstanding and beneficial work of the PBF in The Gambia, while aiming to support the PBF as it strives for global and contextually relevant excellence.

**Recommendations 1 – On Complementarity, Coordination and Synergies:** The PBF Secretariat should pursue existing, and introduce additional, mechanisms for developing complementarities and strengthening both coordination and synergies across the portfolio.

**Recommendation 2 – On Localization:** The PBF Secretariat should further improve modalities for working with CSOs and other local partners at country level, notably by developing aspirational guidance for their participation in project design, implementation, and reporting; with such guidance to be followed by Agencies in country.

**Recommendation 3 – On Gender and Youth Responsiveness:** The PBF Secretariat, with UN

Agencies following its lead, should invest focused attention on improving the gender and youth responsiveness and mainstreaming of its work and portfolio in The Gambia.

**Recommendation 4 – On Sustainability:** The PBF Secretariat should play a more active role in ensuring the effective development and implementation of contextually adapted sustainability strategies by Agencies and implementing partners.

**Recommendation 5 – On Capacity Strengthening:** The PBF Secretariat should strengthen and systematise its commitments to strengthening the capacity of national implementing partners (including government, civil society and private sector partners), given positive dividends produced thus far.

**Recommendation 6 – On Monitoring and Reporting:** The PBF Secretariat should operationalize its' dormant strategy for portfolio-level monitoring and reporting on the community-level peacebuilding and development outcomes from its interventions.

**Recommendation 7 – On Learning:** The PBF Secretariat should expand its efforts to more intentionally and systematically pursue South-South knowledge exchange and learning across countries and contexts facing similar challenges.





# Acknowledgements

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# Acronyms

<b>ADRS</b>	Alternative Dispute Resolution Secretariat
<b>ATJLF</b>	African Transitional Justice Legacy Fund
<b>AU</b>	African Union
<b>CDA</b>	Conflict and Development Analysis
<b>CE</b>	Cost-Extension
<b>CEDAW</b>	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
<b>CRC</b>	Constitutional Review Commission
<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organization
<b>DCAF</b>	Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance
<b>DIM</b>	Direct Implementation Modality
<b>DPPA</b>	Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs
<b>DSPD</b>	Department of Strategic Policy and Delivery
<b>DSSR</b>	Defense and Security Sector Reform
<b>DTM</b>	Displacement Tracking Matrix
<b>ECOWAS</b>	Economic Community of West African States
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>EUTF</b>	European Union Emergency Trust Fund
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations
<b>FGD</b>	Focus Group Discussion
<b>FMP</b>	Flow Monitoring Point
<b>GBV</b>	Gender-Based Violence
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>GEWE</b>	Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment
<b>GIZ</b>	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
<b>GMD</b>	Gambian Dalasi
<b>GRM</b>	Grievance Redress Mechanism
<b>GYPI</b>	Gender and Youth Promotion Initiative
<b>HACT</b>	Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers
<b>HRDDP</b>	Human Rights Due Diligence Policy
<b>I4P</b>	Infrastructure For Peace
<b>IABCC</b>	Inter-Agency Border Coordination Committee
<b>ICTJ</b>	International Center for Transitional Justice
<b>IDEA</b>	Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
<b>IEC</b>	Independent Electoral Commission
<b>IOM</b>	International Organization for Migration
<b>IPC</b>	Inter-Party Committee

<b>IRF</b>	Immediate Response Facility
<b>ITC</b>	International Trade Center
<b>LNR</b>	Land and Natural Resources
<b>M&amp;E</b>	Monitoring and Evaluation
<b>MGI</b>	Migration Governance Indicator
<b>MHPSS</b>	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Services
<b>MIDAS</b>	Migration Information and Data Analysis System
<b>MLACS</b>	Mobile Legal Aid Clinics
<b>MoGCSW</b>	Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Welfare
<b>MPTFO</b>	Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office
<b>NANHRI</b>	Network of African National Human Rights Institutions
<b>NCE</b>	No-Cost Extension
<b>NCM</b>	National Coordination Mechanisms on Migration
<b>NCS</b>	National Communication Strategy
<b>NDP</b>	National Development Plan
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organization
<b>NHRC</b>	National Human Rights Commission
<b>NIM</b>	National Implementation Modality
<b>NYC</b>	National Youth Council
<b>OECD-DAC</b>	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee
<b>OHCHR</b>	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
<b>OHCHR-WARO</b>	West Africa Regional Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights
<b>ONS</b>	Office of National Security
<b>OSC</b>	One Stop Centres
<b>PBF</b>	Secretary General's Peacebuilding Fund
<b>PBSO</b>	Peacebuilding Support Office
<b>PDA</b>	Peace and Development Advisor
<b>PES</b>	Public Employment Service
<b>PFA</b>	Psychological First Aid
<b>PRC</b>	Peace and Reconciliation Commission
<b>PRF</b>	Peacebuilding and Recovery Facility
<b>RCO</b>	Resident Coordinator Office
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goal
<b>SGBV</b>	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
<b>SOE</b>	State-owned Enterprise
<b>SRF</b>	Strategic Results Framework
<b>SSR</b>	Security Sector Reform

<b>TA</b>	Technical Assistance
<b>TANGO</b>	The Association of Non-Governmental Organizations in The Gambia
<b>TJHR</b>	Transactional Justice processes and Human Rights
<b>ToC</b>	Theory of Change
<b>TRRC</b>	Truth and Reconciliation and Reparations Commission
<b>TWG</b>	Thematic Working Group
<b>UEFA</b>	Union of European Football Association
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNCT</b>	United Nations Country Team
<b>UNDAF</b>	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Program
<b>UNFPA</b>	United Nations Population Fund
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
<b>UNODC</b>	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
<b>UNSDCF</b>	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
<b>USD</b>	United States Dollar
<b>VAC</b>	Violence Against Children
<b>VDC</b>	Village Development Committee
<b>WANEP</b>	West Africa Network for Peacebuilding
<b>WDC</b>	Ward Development Committee
<b>WFP</b>	World Food Programme

# Contents

<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1. INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 The Secretary-General’s Peacebuilding Fund .....	1
1.2 PBF in The Gambia .....	2
1.3 Purpose and Scope .....	2
1.4 Structure of the Report.....	3
<b>2. METHODOLOGY.....</b>	<b>4</b>
2.1 Approach and Methods .....	4
2.2 Limitations .....	6
<b>3. RELEVANCE.....</b>	<b>7</b>
3.1 Relevance to Country Context, Needs and Priorities .....	7
3.2 Relevance to UN Frameworks and Priorities.....	10
<b>4. COHERENCE AND COMPLEMENTARITY .....</b>	<b>13</b>
4.1 Coherence of the PBF Portfolio .....	13
4.2 Complementarity and Coordination with other Initiatives .....	14
<b>5. EFFECTIVENESS .....</b>	<b>17</b>
5.1 Achievement of Intended Results.....	17
5.2 Effectiveness of Targeting Strategies .....	32
<b>6. GENDER AND YOUTH .....</b>	<b>34</b>
6.1 Gender- and Youth- Sensitivity/Responsiveness.....	34
6.2 Mainstreaming Gender and Youth Across the Portfolio .....	39
<b>7. SUSTAINABILITY.....</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>8. CATALYTIC EFFECT.....</b>	<b>47</b>
8.1 Non-Financial .....	47
8.2 Financial.....	50
<b>9. EFFICIENCY .....</b>	<b>52</b>
9.1 Efficiency of Implementation .....	52
9.2 Localization and CSO Engagement .....	55
9.3 Value-for-Money .....	57
9.4 Monitoring and Evaluation Processes .....	59
<b>10. CONFLICT-SENSITIVITY, RISK MANAGEMENT AND RISK TOLERANCE .....</b>	<b>62</b>

10.1 Conflict Sensitivity .....	62
10.2 Risk Management .....	65
10.3 Risk Tolerance and Innovativeness.....	68
<b>11. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....</b>	<b>70</b>

## Tables

Table 9.1	Budget Support for Capacity Building .....	56
Table 9.2	Quality of Project Monitoring.....	61
Table I. i	The PBF Portfolio and the SDGs .....	75
Table I. ii	Alignment of the PBF Portfolio and the SDGs .....	76
Table I. iii	Stakeholder Consultation at Design Phase.....	78
Table I. iv	Example of Project Risk Management Matrix.....	88
Table II. i	Documents Reviewed.....	104
Table II. ii	Stakeholder Sampling Snapshot.....	106
Table II. iii	Project Sample.....	108
Table II. iv	Communities Visited .....	109

## Appendices

Appendix I Supportive Analysis .....	74
Appendix II Methodology .....	89
Appendix III Consulted Stakeholders.....	112
Appendix IV Bibliography .....	116

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 The Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund

Managed by the United Nations (UN) Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO), itself part of the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA), the UN Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) has been part of the UN peacebuilding architecture since its establishment in 2006. The PBF is the UN's "instrument of first resort to respond and prevent violent conflict"<sup>2</sup> and has as its primary objective of ensuring the provision of resources for launching peacebuilding activities, supporting recovery, and sustaining peace.

The PBF is a dynamic and flexible instrument, working with a vast range of UN and non-UN partners, and serving as a "hinge function" between the UN Agency world and the Secretariat political structure. While not an operational entity itself, the PBF approves and provides funding to UN and non-UN partners and is guided by **six core principles** (See **Box 1**).<sup>3</sup>

### Box 1: PBF Core Principles

Alongside UN country, regional, and global strategies and mechanisms, PBF investments follow six core principles:

- Timely
- Catalytic
- Risk-tolerant
- Inclusiveness and national ownership
- Integrated support
- Cohesive UN strategies

The PBF is a demand-driven fund which responds flexibly to peacebuilding opportunities. It anticipates the approximate distribution of investments guided by **three priority windows**:

- **Supporting Cross-border and Regional Approaches:** A comparative advantage for the Fund in a context where transnational and regionalized conflicts have spread, and international aid systems have not sufficiently adjusted to enable adequate responses.
- **Facilitating Transitions:** A major priority for the United Nations, the Fund expects the largest share of its investments in this period to support countries undergoing complex transitions, especially when UN configurations change.
- **Fostering Inclusion through Women and Youth Empowerment:** To help achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development's commitment to "leave no one behind", and to recognize the critical role of young people and women in peacebuilding.

The PBF has four focus areas:

- **Implement and Sustain Peace Agreements:** Complementing mandates of UN Missions, especially in transition contexts. Moreover, women continue to be insufficiently included in peace processes.
- **Dialogue and Peaceful Coexistence:** In view of global trends, the Fund expects continued high demand from Member States to support national capacities with the peaceful and inclusive management of critical reform and transition processes, coping with the displacement crisis, and to deal with long-lasting legacies of violent conflict.

<sup>2</sup> Secretary-General's PBF. (2020f). Secretary-General's PBF: 2020-2024 Strategy.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

- **Peace Dividends:** To ensure a peacebuilding impact, employment and social services in conflict-affected areas need to be targeted at the people who most need them, the most marginalized and hard-to-reach, and they need to have a voice in how this is provided, based on an understanding of gendered and youth dynamics.
- **Re-establishing Basic Services:** The Fund expects some increase in this area given levels of conflict and complex transitions, as well as many areas that have had little to no presence of state services, understanding that there is no automatic link between such services and more legitimacy and trust.

## 1.2 PBF in The Gambia

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In The Gambia, the PBF acted as one of the first responders following the 22 years of dictatorship by President Yahya Abdul-Aziz Jemus Junkung Jammeh. President Jammeh ruled the country through an authoritarian regime, which was marked by a flagrant disregard for democratic values and human rights principles, a centralization of power, the manipulation of justice institutions, and an absence of freedom of expression and the harassment, detainment, torture, murder, disappearance and exile of several public figures, journalists, civil society activists, students and broader critics of his regime.

Following the election win of President Adama Barrow, the PBF provided United States dollars (USD) 3.1 million in 2017 for the country's transition needs through the Immediate Response Facility (IRF).<sup>4</sup> Subsequently, an inter-agency mission was undertaken, through which the PBF identified key areas in support of the country's political transition and to address current tensions which were included as the strategic areas in the country's 2018 Eligibility package. These four strategic areas of support, which have guided the PBF's work, are **1**) transitional justice and human rights, **2**) greater involvement of youth and women in peacebuilding, **3**) peaceful reintegration (of returnees) and psychosocial support, and **4**) strengthening of natural resource and land management, and related dispute resolution.<sup>5</sup> Between 2017 and 2022, the PBF has provided such support through 16 projects and a total investment of USD 30,913,673 (noting that a 17<sup>th</sup> project was for provision of the PBF Secretariat).

## 1.3 Purpose and Scope

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As outlined in the PBF's *Evaluation Policy (2020-2024)*, in the fourth year of a country's five-year eligibility cycle, the PBF is to undergo a portfolio final evaluation as well as an evaluation of the Strategic Results Framework (SRF) – though none existed in The Gambia during the 2017-2022 period. Also, when a country applies for re-eligibility to the PBF, a portfolio evaluation is one of several inputs into the submission package.

This portfolio evaluation is timely as, at the current time, The Gambia is pursuing a re-eligibility process for support from the PBF. Accordingly, inputs into the eligibility review are slated to include:

1. National Development Plan (NDP) – The Gambia 2023-2027
2. United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2023-2027<sup>6</sup>
3. Conflict and Development Analysis (CDA) 2018 (to be updated in 2023)

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<sup>4</sup> Secretary-General's PBF. (2020b). The Secretary-General's PBF: The Gambia; Secretary-General's PBF & UNDPPA (2023). Tip Sheet on Hate Speech Prevention Programming.

<sup>5</sup> The Gambia Independent PBF. (2023). Portfolio Evaluation 2017 to 2022: Terms of Reference.

<sup>6</sup> General information about the SDCF is available at: <https://unsdg.un.org/resources/united-nations-sustainable-development-cooperation-framework-guidance>.



4. Additional Studies of the Resident Coordinator Office (RCO), including on matters of climate change, political economy, and others.
5. The current Independent Portfolio Evaluation – The Gambia Independent PBF Portfolio Evaluation 2017 to 2022

Adhering to the *Evaluation Policy (2020-2024)* and recognizing the added emphasis on monitoring, evaluation and learning outlined in *PBF: 2020-2024 Strategy*, this current portfolio evaluation was commissioned by the Design, Monitoring and evaluation team of the PBSO. Given the national, institutional, and programmatic context, this evaluation has assessed the relevance, overall results and achievements, and patterns stemming from the PBF's investments in The Gambia, at portfolio level. It assessed synergies across the peacebuilding landscape (including UN and non-UN entities) and alignment with key strategic UN and Gambian government documents and priorities. In so doing, the evaluation assessed the PBF's added value to peacebuilding, to the reduction of conflict factors/triggers, as well as identifying the need for additional support in The Gambia.

As a learning and accountability-focused evaluation, it identifies the impact of PBF support in the country against the strategic areas of support cited in [Section 1.2](#). It shares challenges and lessons learned, documents good practices, and identifies contributions to key strategic frameworks currently in the making. Finally, the evaluation is forward-looking, to help inform, consider, and explore potential areas for new or continued PBF thematic agendas and support over the next five-year programming cycle.

## 1.4 Structure of the Report

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The current evaluation report is structured as follows:

[Section 2](#): Providing details of the **methodological** approach undertaken for this portfolio evaluation.

[Section 3](#): Discussing the **relevance** of the PBF portfolio, with respect to national priorities and UN frameworks.

[Section 4](#): Examining the internal **coherence** and **complementarity, coordination, and synergies** of the PBF portfolio.

[Section 5](#): Assessing the **effectiveness** of the PBF portfolio in achieving results and in targeting stakeholders.

[Section 6](#): Examining the PBF portfolio's **gender and youth** sensitivity, responsiveness, and mainstreaming.

[Section 7](#): Assessing the likelihood of outputs and outcomes being sustained and factors of **sustainability**.

[Section 8](#): Discussing the Fund's **catalytic effect**, in both non-financial and financial terms.

[Section 9](#): Addressing a broad range of matters related to the **efficiency** of the PBF and the PBF Secretariat.

[Section 10](#): Discussing the **conflict sensitivity, risk management** and **risk tolerance and innovation** of the PBF in The Gambia.

[Section 11](#): **Concluding** and providing **recommendations** derived from the findings of the evaluation.

A series of **appendices** subsequently provide:

- (I) a [supportive analysis](#);
- (II) a detailed [methodology](#);
- (III) a list of [consulted stakeholders](#);
- (IV) and a [bibliography](#).

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1 Approach and Methods

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#### Approach

The evaluation has pursued a **participatory, utilization-focused, inclusive** and **conflict-sensitive** approach. It engaged a wide spectrum of stakeholders, from UN entities to Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). The inclusive approach ensured a comprehensive assessment, with particular consideration for marginalized groups, including women, youth, migrants, and returnees, as well as communities in higher-risk areas. It examined the integration of gender sensitivity, equity, and inclusion in project design. Additionally, a conflict-sensitive methodology was applied, guided by principles of Do No Harm, respect and transparency.

A structured **evaluation matrix** formed the basis of the study, aligning with Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) criteria and specific PBF evaluation criteria. It covered relevance, coherence and complementarity, effectiveness, sustainability, efficiency, and non-OECD-DAC criteria. The matrix was refined based on stakeholder input and document review, providing a comprehensive framework for assessment.

#### Methods

The evaluation pursued a mixed-methods approach to data collection and analysis, which allowed for the triangulation of information, increased the reliability of results, and ensured that the resulting conclusions and recommendations were credible and grounded in the realities of multiple stakeholder groups. Data collection and analysis was undertaken using tools developed in alignment with the evaluation matrix. Details on each method are provided below.

**Light Evaluability Assessment:** This phase involved using a checklist to gauge the evaluability of the portfolio based on project design, information availability, institutional context and utility. It concluded that there's sufficient substantive documentation and access to stakeholders, although a clear Theory of Change (ToC) was absent. The absence of an overarching ToC was notable, as it can create challenges around assessing and evaluating peacebuilding *changes* and the *mechanisms* of change.

**Document Review:** This step involved a comprehensive analysis of 152 programmatic and national documents to provide essential context, particularly Foundational and Strategic Documents, PBF Portfolio Documents, Project Documents, Thematic Reviews and Guidance Notes, national strategies and plan, UN Frameworks, along with others. The evaluation team focused on documents produced prior to October 2023.

**Interviews & Community Discussions:** Stakeholder perspectives were gathered through semi-structured interviews and community discussions. The Inception and Data Collection Phases engaged a diverse range of stakeholders, including PBSO and PBF staff, Agencies, implementing partners, CSOs, government representatives and beneficiaries. Over 157 stakeholders were engaged.

**Project Sampling:** Six projects were selected to undergo an in-depth assessment. These projects were selected based on various criteria to ensure comprehensive coverage of interventions in the country, including coverage of focus areas, strategic areas, geographic foci, Agencies and implementing entities, and size, while also ensuring

newer and older projects were selected, as well as the inclusion of a Cross-Border Project (PBF/IRF-430). Six sampled projects were as follows (with a bracketed shorthand for identification throughout this report):

- Support the capacity of the government and national stakeholders to establish credible transactional justice processes and mechanisms that promote reconciliation and sustainable peace in The Gambia – Phase II (focus on operationalization of Transactional Justice processes and Human Rights protection) (**TJHR Project**) (PBF/IRF-172).
- Strategic advice and support to the security sector reform and governance in The Gambia (**SSR Project**) (PBF/IRF-173).
- Addressing conflict over Land and Natural Resources (LNR) in The Gambia (**Conflict LNR Project**, PBF/GMB/B-1)
- Strengthening sustainable and holistic reintegration of returnees in The Gambia (**Reintegration of Migrants Project**) (PBF/GMB/A-1).
- Strengthening inclusive citizen engagement for more accountable governance in The Gambia (**Governance and Accountability Project**) (PBF/GMB/A-2).
- Supporting cross-border cooperation for increased community resilience and social cohesion in The Gambia and Senegal (**Cross-Border Project**) (PBF/IRF-430).

**Mission to The Gambia:** A seven-day mission was undertaken to gather a wide range of perspectives on key projects. The mission was conducted between 28 September to 4 October. Data collection took place in Banjul, where government officials, CSOs and UN Agencies were interviewed. The mission also included two days of field mission during which the evaluation team traveled across the country to the Upper River region to meet with implementing partners and beneficiaries of sampled projects. This mission provided in-depth information and insights, as the majority of stakeholder consultation took place in person, during the mission.

**Data Management:** The team utilized Dedoose software to efficiently categorize and manage data. This approach facilitated seamless collaboration within the evaluation team, ensuring a systematic and coherent evaluation process.

## Data Analysis

This evaluation employed mixed methods and triangulation to comprehensively answer Evaluation Matrix questions, enhancing credibility through method convergence. Analytical approaches included contextual, explanatory, interpretive content, and gender and inclusion analyses, aligning with qualitative datasets and document reviews. Key approaches are summarized:

- **Contextual Analysis:** Conducted a comprehensive examination of The Gambia's peacebuilding landscape, exploring regional dynamics, priorities, and challenges. This analysis was essential in assessing the relevance, coherence, and effectiveness of PBF's initiatives within the historical and current context.
- **Explanatory Analysis:** Evaluated PBF project implementation through a meticulous review of progress and final evaluation reports. The analysis was essential in assessing the effective delivery, impact, and coherence of PBF priorities, providing an overarching understanding of performance trends.

- **Interpretive Content Analysis:** Identified trends, themes, and patterns in documents and interviews, utilizing interpretive content analysis. This approach flagged converging and diverging views, contributing to preliminary hypotheses and observations, to be further explored and triangulated, as part of the final analysis.
- **Gender and Inclusion Analysis:** Prioritized inclusivity in project consideration, monitoring, and reporting. Focused on addressing challenges and opportunities for women, youth, migrants, and returnees. The evaluation utilized disaggregated data to assess progress for women and youth as distinct groups, adopting an intersectional lens for a comprehensive analysis.
- **Non-OECD/DAC Criteria Analysis:** Conducted a comprehensive analysis of the PBF portfolio, exploring conflict-sensitivity, the Fund's catalytic nature, gender responsiveness, youth sensitivity, and risk-tolerance and innovation. The evaluation scrutinized explicit strategies and effectiveness in managing conflicts, financial and programmatic catalysis, and the portfolio's approach to unique challenges for women, girls, men, boys, and young people, while delving into the innovative approach and risk mitigation strategies.

## Timeline

The evaluation, conducted from August 2023 to January 2024, consisted of three phases: Inception (August to October 2023), focused on planning; Data Collection (October to November 2023), the core assessment period; and Data Analysis and Reporting (October 2023 to January 2024), dedicated to synthesis and the drafting of deliverables.

## 2.2 Limitations

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The evaluation faced significant challenges primarily due to an unusually tight timeline. This timeline, spanning from the kickoff on 29 August 2023, to the desired draft report by 10 November and then completion by January 2024, encompassed all phases and activities, including a field mission to The Gambia. The compressed schedule arose from a delayed selection of the evaluation service provider and the imperative for the evaluation to contribute to The Gambia's re-eligibility process for UN PBF support.

The condensed timeline created an important risk related to stakeholder availability for virtual or in-person engagement during the field mission. To mitigate this, three national consultants were mobilized to provide flexible opportunities for engagement over an extended period. Close collaboration with PBSO and the PBF Secretariat ensured early stakeholder identification and timely scheduling of engagement processes. The evaluation team remains confident of the number and range of stakeholders having informed this evaluation.

A robust and highly productive working relationship between the evaluation team and PBF/PBSO was established. The evaluation was based on a pragmatic approach agreed upon by all parties, ensuring a high-quality assessment within the specified constraints. Diligence, flexibility, and innovative problem-solving guided the collective effort, allowing for the effective management of risks and related limitations.

## 3. Relevance

### 3.1 Relevance to Country Context, Needs and Priorities

**Finding 1:** The PBF was found to be highly relevant in The Gambia. The PBF provided well-timed critical funding, given the country’s post-dictatorship context and challenges. The PBF strategic areas and interventions were aligned with national needs and priorities as articulated in the Conflict and Development Analysis, the national Development Plan, and the National Youth Policy.

In 2017, The Gambia emerged from 22 years of dictatorship, following the election win of current President Adama Barrow over former President Jammeh. Former-President Jammeh left behind a country with a legacy of anti-democratic practices and human rights abuses, as well as public mistrust for national institutions, high unemployment rates and poverty, growing identity-based tensions, and conflict over natural resources management. Since entering power in 2017, the post-authoritarian President Barrow’s government committed itself to respecting, protecting and upholding the fundamental rights of The Gambia’s citizens. These commitments were then made evident in new national frameworks, including the National Development Plan (NDP) for the period 2018 to 2021, which states: “Restoring good governance, rebuilding, and restoring public confidence in key institutions, upholding human rights and strengthening access to justice, in the context of transitional justice are urgent priorities in the NDP. In this regard, government aims to enhance and improve human rights, access to justice and good governance for all.”<sup>7</sup>

The PBF acted as one of the first responders in the country, providing nearly USD 3.1 million in 2017 for transition needs to support key state institutions and mechanisms in addressing the most immediate threats to the peace and stability of the country, notably transitional justice, reform strategy for security institutions, and capacity building for the Policy, Planning and Management Unit in the Office of the President. In 2018, the Eligibility package for The Gambia was submitted and approved, identifying four strategic areas: Transitional Justice and Human Rights; Greater Involvement of Youth and Women; Peaceful Reintegration and Psychosocial Support; and Strengthening Natural Resources and Land Management, and Dispute Resolution. The relevance of these strategic areas and the critical nature of the PBF support was recognized by the President, stating: “In addition to the current support, the continued support of the Peace Building Fund will be critical to sustain peace, strengthen social cohesion and for state building. I endorse the areas of priority stipulated in the ‘Eligibility Request’ prepared by the United Nations system in The Gambia in collaboration with government.”<sup>8</sup>

National stakeholders consulted unanimously<sup>9</sup> recognized the PBF’s critical role in setting the course of the country in the Post-Jammeh area. These stakeholders praised the timing of the interventions, noting the PBF began engagement at the right time, given national needs. The initial focus on transitional justice and human rights was also recognized as focusing on the right issues, as it was anchored in a truth telling process, cracking

<sup>7</sup> The Government of The Gambia (2017) The Gambia National Development Plan (2018-2021).

<sup>8</sup> Letter signed by Adama Barrow, President of The Gambia, as included in the 2018 Eligibility Package.

<sup>9</sup> 88 national stakeholders were engaged (excluding community discussions).

open the society in a post-dictatorship period, and setting the stage for reconciliation and healing to take place. Stakeholders also recognized the need for Sector Security Reforms (SSR), considering many of these human rights abuses were executed by the security sector, and a mistrust and fear of these institutions had long been visible across the country. The SSR activities were bent on reorienting the sector from ‘regime-centered’ security to ‘human-centered’ security, considered by many to be fundamental to public trust in the country’s future.

Project evaluations provide further testament of the high relevance of the portfolio, with all 10 available and reviewed evaluations stating the high degree of relevance of PBF projects in the country. These 10 projects were approved between 2017 and 2020 and completed between 2020 and 2022 – indicating a high degree of relevance between 2017 and 2022.

The evaluation team has deemed that the portfolio development process of the PBF in The Gambia has contributed to continued alignment with national needs and ensured attunement to the changing context. The PBF portfolio is developed following an annual cycle which begins at the end of each year with a Resident Coordinator (RC) Strategic Report drafted by the PBF Secretariat and the Peace and Development Advisor (PDA), with input from the Government of The Gambia and the United Nations Country Team (UNCT).<sup>10</sup> These strategic reports include a detailed analysis of the country context, including the main peacebuilding challenges that the country is likely to face in the next 12 to 24 months. Once drafted, these are submitted to the PBSO, which begins identifying key areas of focus, in alignment with the PBF strategy. Key areas of focus are further fleshed out in collaboration with the PBF Secretariat and the PDA, and subsequent engagement with UN Agencies to begin the drafting of concept notes. Concept notes and project proposals are further informed by consultation with a range of national actors, including government officials and CSOs.

Over the years, the development of the PBF Portfolio has also been informed by CDAs<sup>11</sup>, which has further ensured the portfolio was aligned with national needs and priorities. The 2018 CDA identified six conflict drivers and six peace engines, as outlined in [Figure 3.1](#). A triangulated analysis of both project documents and stakeholder interviews indicates that the PBF addressed conflict drives and peace engines identified in the CDA through a range of activities seeking to empower women and youth, kick-starting several processes including the truth and reconciliation process and security sector reforms, several activities related to natural resources management and related conflict, the strengthening of CSOs and the establishment of new CSOs, strengthening local and regional governance structures and inclusive governance mechanisms, enhancing legal frameworks, policies and political parties’ bylaws to increase women’s political participation, among others. The PBF remained aligned with the updated 2019 CDA, which identified a few additional conflict drivers, notably vulnerabilities of climate and the national environment (with the PBF financing an intervention specific to climate conflict in 2020) as well as additional peace drivers, notably the media sector, a sector which was used in several PBF interventions to raise awareness and educate citizens.

<sup>10</sup> These reports are informed by consultations which involve Government representative but may also include other national actors.

<sup>11</sup> The 2018 CDA was developed through the leadership of the PDA, through a collaborative effort involving the Government of The Gambia, a CSO (the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding [WANEP]) and the UN (both in The Gambia and in New York).



**Figure 3.1 CDA Conflict Drivers and Engines of Peace**

Source: *The Gambia (2018). Conflict and Development Analysis – The Gambia.*

Over the years, the PBF directly contributed to the implementation of the NDP 2018-2021, notably the improvement of Human Rights through the transitional justice mechanism, the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation and Reparations Commission (TRRC), and the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC). The PBF has also supported several key areas identified in the NDP, including alternate dispute resolution, anti-corruption, civic education and decentralization and local governance.

The PBF has directly contributed to objectives outlined in the National Youth Policy 2019-2028, particularly the promotion of youth participation in the democratic process at all levels as well as in leadership at individual, family, community, and national levels. This has notably been done through initiatives such as the Youth Project (PBF/GMB/D-2), which seeks to support an increasing participation of young people in governance and decision-making processes at all levels by advocating for amendments in political party regulations to commit to youth participation in leadership and by strengthening the capacity of youth led organizations, as outlined in project documents. This was also done through initiatives such as the Women and Youth Project (PBF/GMB/D-1) and the Governance and Accountability Project (PBF/GMB/A-2), which both included advocacy for a 30% quota for women and youth in the national assembly, among other actions. The PBF was also poised to address the social, economic and health problems that confront youth, particularly through its interventions related to their reintegration, which sought to increase access to health-related services and economic empowerment.

PBF support was also aligned with key political ‘moments’ in The Gambia, as evident by a series of projects seeking to ensure peaceful elections. This includes the Governance and Accountability Project (PBF/GMB/A-2) and the Youth Project (PBF/GMB/D-2), which have both sought to ensure inclusive engagement and participation of citizens through increased dialogue between political parties as well as engaging youth as agents of peace in communities to prevent election-related violence. Moreover, the PBF financed a series of projects following the publication of the TRRC recommendations to support the implementation and monitoring of these recommendations (see [Section 4.1](#)).

However, a few consulted stakeholders, from UN Agencies, CSOs and communities in particular, recognized further need and opportunity to target interventions on livelihoods and economic empowerment, which were considered by many as being root causes of conflict. In this regard, several stakeholders noted that until

economic empowerment and security of livelihoods was significantly advanced, pockets of conflict would continue appearing across the country: making addressing this essential for long-term, sustained peace.

## 3.2 Relevance to UN Frameworks and Priorities

**Finding 2: PBF interventions in The Gambia are highly aligned with UN Frameworks and priorities, as outlined in the PBF 2020-2024 Strategy and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework 2017-2021. PBF interventions have also addressed multiple Sustainable Development Goals. They are aligned with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Women, Peace and Security Agenda, and Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 2250.**

### Relevance to the UN Peacebuilding Mandate

The PBF is the UN's leading instrument to invest in prevention and peacebuilding, with a specific mandate to respond to and prevent violent conflict. At a global level, the PBF's 2020-2024 strategy identifies three priority windows and four focus areas for its investments, drawing on the Fund's comparative advantage. A triangulated analysis of the PBF portfolio in The Gambia shows alignment of projects with all priority windows and focus areas.

The three PBF Priority windows are: 1) Facilitating transitions; 2) Supporting cross-border and regional approaches; 3) Fostering inclusion through women and youth empowerment. The PBF has provided important and significant support related to **transitional justice**,<sup>12</sup> facilitating transition from the post-dictatorship context. This is particularly noted with the PBF's contribution to the TRRC process and the establishment of the NHRC, as well as support to implement and monitor recommendations issues by the TRRC.

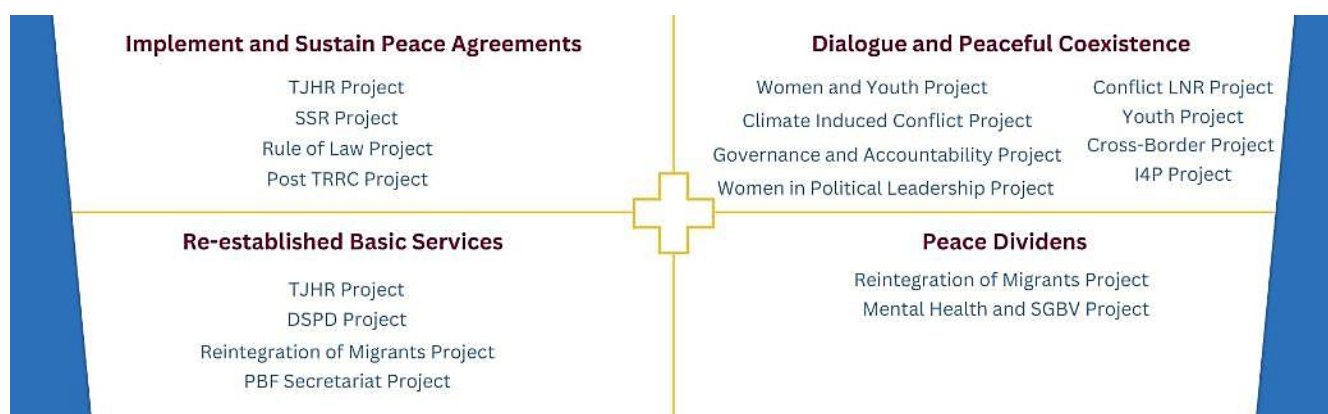
The PBF has supported **cross-border and regional approaches** through its Cross-Border Project (PBF/IRF-430) with Senegal, which seeks to "strengthen cross-border cooperation between border authorities and communities through enhanced, integrated border management and natural resources management practices in Senegal and The Gambia".<sup>13</sup> The PBF has also financed a range of projects seeking to **foster inclusion through women and youth empowerment**, including through a range of projects include activities to increase the participation and representation of young people and women in governance and decision-making processes at all levels, increase civic engagement of young people, engage young people in community mediation efforts, and support participation of women and youth in the transitional justice processes.<sup>14</sup> Alignment with PBF Focus areas is illustrated in [Figure 3.2](#) below.

<sup>12</sup> Particularly through six projects (some of which remain underway), including the TJHR Project (PBF/IRF-172), the SSR Project (PBF/IRF-173), the Rule of Law Project (PBF/GMB/A-3), the Post-TRRC Project (PBF/GMB/A-4), the Mental Health and SGBV Project (PBF/IRF-456) (Promoting peace and social cohesion through provision of mental health services and psychosocial well-being of SGBV survivors in The Gambia), and the I4P Project (PBF/GMB/B-3) (Strengthening the National Infrastructure for Peace to Promote Social Cohesion in The Gambia).

<sup>13</sup> United Nations Peacebuilding (n.d.b.). Supporting Cross-Border Cooperation for Increased Community Resilience and Social Cohesion in The Gambia and Senegal. PBF Project Document Template PBF Project Document.

<sup>14</sup> These projects include: the Increased Women and Youth participation in decision-making processes and as agents of community conflict prevention (Women and Youth Project (PBF/GMB/D-1)), the Young women and men as stakeholders in ensuring peaceful democratic processes and advocates for the prevention of violence and hate speech (Youth Project (PBF/GMB/D-2)), the Strengthening women's political participation and leadership through reformed legislation, community-level leadership, and political parties' engagement in The Gambia (Women political leadership project (PBF/GMB/A-5)), and the Empowering Gambian youth to voice their demands to duty bearers on issues of governance, reconciliation, and prevention (ICTJ Empowering Youth Project (PBF/IRF- 517)).



**Figure 3.2. PBF Focus Areas**

**Rule of Law Project (PBF/GMB/A-3):** Strengthening Community Access to Justice, Community Policing and Effective SGBV Response; **Post TRRC Project (PBF/GMB/A-4):** Support to the implementation and monitoring of the Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Commission (TRRC) recommendations in The Gambia; **DSPD Project (PBF/IRF-237):** Support to establish a strategic policy planning and management unit in the Office of the President; **Climate Induced Conflict Project (PBF/IRF-342):** Climate Conflict: Strengthening community coping mechanisms against risks of climate induced conflicts and to minimize gender related vulnerabilities and tensions in The Gambia.

Source: PBF Secretariat Database.

### Relevance to the SDGs

A triangulated analysis of the PBF portfolio also shows that the PBF has been highly aligned with the SDG, particularly SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions). PBF interventions in The Gambia have notably been aligned with SDG 16.3 on the promotion of the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensuring equal access to justice for all through interventions supporting the strengthening of the judiciary's capacity to address human rights crimes, children's rights issues, SGBV and legal issues arising from the TRRC processes as well as increased access to legal aid, particularly for women and children.

PBF interventions in The Gambia have been aligned with SDG 16.6 on developing effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels. Alignment is particularly noted given interventions on reforms (e.g., SSR), the strengthening of CSOs to hold institutions accountable, and strengthening mechanisms for engagement between communities and decision makers at various levels. They are aligned with SDG 16.7 on ensuring responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels. Alignment with this SDG is also through PBF support on empowering women and youth and increasing their participation in decision making processes.

The PBF support in The Gambia has also been relevant to other SDGs, including SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being) through projects targeting accessibility and quality of psychological and health support; to SDG 5 (Gender Equality) through projects seeking to empower women and girls and a range of activities seeking to shift the public perspective of women; to SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation) through support to increased access to drinking water; so SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) through activities to increase employment access for both returnees and non-migrants; to SDG 13 (Climate Action) through the Climate Induced Conflict Project (PBF/IRF-342); and SDG 15 (Life on Land) through projects related to natural resource management ([Appendix I](#)).

## Relevance to UN Priorities in The Gambia

In 2016, the UN drafted the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2017-2021 for The Gambia. This document outlined the strategic direction and results expected from the UN system (in collaboration with the Government) to support the national development initiatives of the Government for the period of 2017-2021.

A triangulated analysis of documents and interviews reveals that PBF interventions in the country contribute, to a certain extent, to all strategic areas and results outlined in the UNDAF 2017-2021. Most notable is the alignment of the PBF's interventions with **Strategic Result 1: governance, economic management and human rights**, particularly **Outcome 1.2** on Governance and Human Rights. As previously noted, the PBF has provided support to increase access to legal aid and strengthen the capacity of the legal system, while also supporting initiatives seeking to enhance participation, particularly of women and youth, in decision making processes.

Through the PBF's gender and youth empowerment work as well as several interventions addressed gender-based violence (GBV), the Fund is aligned with **Strategic Result 2: human capital development**, particularly **Outcome 2.5** on Youth and Gender. As previously noted, the PBF has provided support for women and youth empowerment through a range of activities including the Women and Youth Project (PBF/GMB/D-1), the Governance and Accountability Project (PBF/GMB/A-2), the Reintegration of Migrants Projects (PBF/GMB/A-1), the Youth Project (PBF/GMB/D-2) and the Women Political Leadership Project (PBF/GMB/A-5).

Finally, through its land and natural resources related interventions, including its climate conflict intervention and its cross-border interventions, the PBF is aligned with **Strategic Result 3: sustainable agriculture, natural resources, environment and climate change management**, particularly **Outcome 3.1** on Agriculture and Food Security. The PBF has notably provided support for the construction of boreholes to address conflict between farmers and herders particularly arising from damage to agricultural land. The PBF interventions have also included natural resources management components (e.g., forest management in the Cross-Border Project (PBF/IRF-430), as well as climate-related awareness raising and the development of climate-resilience initiatives.

## Relevance to Gender-Related Frameworks and Resolutions

The PBF support in The Gambia has been highly relevant in advancing various international gender-related frameworks and resolutions. Through its work on Women and Youth Empowerment, the PBF portfolio in The Gambia has aligned with the Women, Peace and Security Agenda and Security Council Resolutions 1325 (2000) and 2250 (2015). The former urges all actors to increase women's participation and incorporate gender perspectives in all UN peace and security efforts; while the latter urges Member States to establish mechanisms to enable the meaningful participation of young people in peace processes and dispute resolution.

The PBF interventions have supported The Gambia to further its compliance with the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1979. CEDAW covers three key dimensions, namely civil rights and legal status of women, human reproduction, and impact of cultural factors on gender relations. Aligned with these priorities, PBF has situated its work in The Gambia to further women's rights to own land, increase access to legal aid, and more broadly raise awareness on critical issues.

## 4. Coherence and Complementarity

### 4.1 Coherence of the PBF Portfolio

**Finding 3:** There is strong internal coherence in the PBF Portfolio, with noted continuity between PBF projects. PBF engagement in the country started with the initiation of several critical processes, such as the truth and reconciliation process and SSR, and subsequently moved towards addressing specific conflict drivers and supporting increased participation of women and youth in decision-making – and this at various, complementary levels. Following the publication of TRRC recommendations, the PBF also financed several projects supporting the implementation and monitoring of recommendations.

A triangulated analysis of the PBF project documents and stakeholder interviews indication strong internal coherence in the PBF portfolio. Projects were highly relevant and well-situated to address key national challenges and priorities in the country, and often built on one another, thereby creating continuity and favoring outcomes. An examination of the portfolio, with a focus on sampled projects, is demonstrative of this desirable approach and trend.

In 2017, PBF-supported projects contributed to the launch of several essential transitional justice processes, namely the operationalization of the TRRC and the initiation of its truth, reconciliation and reparation process through the TJHR Project (PBF/IRF-172); as well as the initiation of security sector reforms at the national level through the SSR Project (PBF/IRF-173) – itself followed by the Rule of Law Project (2020) (PBF/GMB/A-3), which focused on the security sector at a more local level. Following the launch of the TRRC and SSR processes, as well as other key national processes including consultation reform, the PBF approved a project to support the establishment of the Strategic Policy Planning and Management Unit in the Office of the President through the DSPD Project (2018) (PBF/IRF-237). The main role envisioned for this unit was in coordinating and ensuring synergies and coherence in the implementation of the various political and development reforms taking place in the country.

Subsequently, the PBF approved a series of projects to address specific conflict drivers, including conflict emerging from the return, stigmatization, and psychological suffering of irregular migrants, through the Reintegration of Migrants Project (2018) (PBF/GMB/A-1). It also financed initiatives to address conflict related to LNR through the Conflict LNR Project (2018) (PBF/GMB/B-1), the Climate Induced Conflict Project (2020) (PBF/IRF-342) and the Cross-Border Project (2021) (PBF/IRF-430). The Conflict LNR Project (PBF/GMB/B-1) focused on both national level legislation, seeking to strengthen legal frameworks for land governance and conflict resolution as well as targeted communities where conflict had already erupted. This project was followed by the Climate Induced Conflict Project (PBF/IRF-342), which focuses on mitigating conflict and tension related to encroachment of land and minimizing the escalation of competition over scarce natural resources. Finally, the Cross-Border Project (PBF/IRF-430) includes activities seeking to enhance cross-border natural resource management as well as improved community resilience, in part through support for alternative green livelihoods.

The PBF also launched interventions to increase women and youth participation in decision-making processes and in peacebuilding, with interventions sensitive to the country context. This was first launched in 2018 with

the Women and Youth Project (PBF/GMB/D-1) which sought to ensure that young people and women participated in decision-making and early warning processes at all levels. The PBF subsequently financed the Governance and Accountability Project (2020) (PBF/GMB/A-2) and the Youth Project (2020) (PBF/GMB/D-2), both focused on ensuring inclusive engagement and participation of citizens – in line with the upcoming elections. The Governance and Accountability Project (PBF/GMB/A-2) focused on performance, transparency and accountability of leadership while also supporting dialogue between political parties to avoid political polarization. The Youth Project (PBF/GMB/D-2) targeted young people to position them as agents of peace – towards ensuring a peaceful democratic process while also advocating for the prevention of violence and hate speech. As such, the PBF supported peaceful elections through both national and local interventions, placing young men and women at the center of these processes. More recently, the PBF financed the Women Political Leadership Project (2022) (PBF/GMB/A-5), which directly seeks to increase the number of women in leadership positions and decision-making platforms at all levels, through reformed legislation, community-level leadership, and political parties’ engagement.

Following the publication of the 2021 TRRC recommendations, the PBF financed three projects namely the Post-TRRC Project (2021) (PBF/GMB/A-4), the I4P Project (2022) (PBF/GMB/B-3) and the Mental Health and SGBV Project (2022) (PBF/IRF-456). The Post-TRRC Project (PBF/GMB/A-4) supports the implementation and monitoring of TRRC recommendations while the I4P Project (PBF/GMB/B-3) was approved to support the implementation of specific TRRC Recommendations including the establishment of the Peace and Reconciliation Commission (PRC). The Mental Health and SGBV Project (PBF/IRF-456) was approved to provide much needed mental health support to victims that came forward during the TRRC process. The PBF also more recently approved the ICTJ Empowering Youth Project (2023) (PBF/IRF- 517) to increase and ensure the involvement of youth in the implementation of TRRC recommendations.

## 4.2 Complementarity and Coordination with other Initiatives

**Finding 4: There are varying levels of complementarity, coordination, and synergies of PBF interventions with other initiatives and processes underway in The Gambia, with indication of increases over time. Several mechanisms have contributed to this, including the selection process of Agencies, Agency and implementing partner continuity, and the engagement of various national stakeholders at project design stage. The creation of the PBF Secretariat has helped increase complementarity, coordination, and synergy.**

Fostering complementarity, coordination and synergy is particularly important, albeit challenging, in the Gambian context, given the multitude of overlapping processes taking place in the country. Within such a complex environment, the PBF has pursued and been able to achieve complementarity with some variability across the portfolio.

There is strong evidence of PBF interventions being informed by work undertaken in other, prior and/or ongoing projects. This is noted in PBF work on the prevention of hate speech, through the Youth Project (PBF/GMB/D-2), which was well reported in its Final Evaluation as being well grounded in the experiences and lessons of other interventions, by the UN system and others, in The Gambia and elsewhere. The DSPD Project (PBF/IRF-237) is also a follow up action to an earlier UN jointly funded study which assessed the capacity and mandate of the Policy Analysis Unit of the Office of the President. Project documents from the Reintegration of Migrants Project

(PBF/GMB/A-1) indicated that the targeting of both returnees and non-migrants was based on lessons learned from European Union (EU)-funded projects, which found that focusing solely on returnees without including receiving communities can sometimes create challenges, leading to tensions between returnees and community members.

Agencies and government stakeholders notably reported that PBF projects have complemented, and in some cases supported the replication and expansion of other work, particularly in the fields of forest management, income diversification, reintegration of returnees and cross-border posts. According to a UN Agency staff, “[t]he PBF is complementing our projects. These are things that we have been doing in some communities already and we have been able to extend it thanks to the PBF”. This is evident in project design, particularly as it relates to project areas targeted. For example, targeting in the Cross-Border Project (PBF/IRF-430) was informed by ongoing work and sought to replicate work being done in other border posts of the country, as evident in project documents and reported by stakeholders interviewed.

Triangulated analysis of data sources indicates that the PBF portfolio design process has been particularly well-suited for ensuring continuity between Agencies across PBF portfolio, especially where PBF projects and activities in specific fields are led by the same Agencies across projects. The development of concept notes through engagement with Agencies and the selection of the involved Agencies on these projects based on their comparative advantage and niche area has supported continuity in Agencies on specific topics ([Appendix I](#)).

For example, United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) were the two Agencies that implemented the first transitional justice process, through which the TRRC was established and the truth and reconciliation process was launched. These were subsequently the Agencies that carried forward the PBF project on the implementation and monitoring of TRRC recommendation implementation. The project development and Agency identification and selection process, which created Agency continuity in specific peacebuilding fields, played an important role in ensuring coherence and complementarity of the PBF portfolio, both internally and externally.

Interviewed stakeholders from the UN system, as well as some implementation partners, indicate that doing so ensures that Agencies work on project components relevant to their core mandate, and in areas where they are already active – supporting external complementarity. Moreover, their involvement in several, related, PBF interventions has enabled these Agencies to ensure complementarity with previous and ongoing PBF work in the country. Drawing on the comparative advantage of Agencies was notably recognized as a key contributor of complementarity and synergy building in final evaluations for the Governance and Accountability Project (PBF/GMB/A-2) and the Rule of Law Project (PBF/GMB/A-3). In the Reintegration of Migrants (PBF/GMB/A-1), the selection of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) significantly contributed to complementarity and synergy building, as the IOM is also implementing several projects in the field, including the European Union Emergency Trust Fund (EUTF) Joint initiative on Migration Protection and Reintegration.

The project design process also includes good consultation with national stakeholders. The involvement of various stakeholders (such as CSOs and government) at the design stage, particularly government stakeholders who could inform the teams of ongoing initiatives, has been an important contributing factor. The engagement with government stakeholders was notably key in ensuring complementarity of border post support delivered under the Cross-Border Project (PBF/IRF-430). However, UN stakeholders and national implementing partners widely recognize that there is much potential for increased complementarities with external initiatives, particularly those of other bilateral and multilateral agencies and different embassies. A review of deep dive

projects indicated that while extensive consultation is undertaken at project design stages, it typically elicits the participation of UN, national and local stakeholders – such as governments and CSOs, with little representation of other international donors and development partners.

Notwithstanding, there is also some indication of increased complementarity, coordination and synergy over time, evident in both project evaluations and further highlighted in interviews. Coordination between Agencies was notably reported as a big challenge in the early years of PBF engagement. Indeed, while multiple Agencies were involved in PBF projects, these tended to work on their project components in silos, with little intra-project interactions. A review of project evaluations confirmed challenges in some of the first PBF interventions – such as SSR (PBF/IRF-173), Conflict LNR (PBF/GMB/B-1) and Women and Youth Project (PBF/GMB/D-1). These largely included coordination challenges between Agencies as well as steering committees not optimally functioning and/or fulfilling their role, a lack of resources for coordination, lack of structures at the national level to ensure coordination of international support in certain areas.<sup>15</sup> These challenges are however not reflected in more recent projects, whose evaluations indicate high degrees of complementarity, coordination and synergies.

This increase in complementarity, coordination and synergy is, at least in part, attributed to the creation of the PBF Secretariat. Stakeholders consulted, particularly Agencies, recognized the critical role the Secretariat has played in enhancing complementarity, coordination and synergy. The Secretariat was notably seen as a valuable resource to inform project design and ensure coherence across the portfolio, given Secretariat staff detailed knowledge on the PBF portfolio and the short span of projects, which in some cases can leave little time to explore and develop opportunities for synergy. Moreover, the organization of synergy meetings across projects involving multiple Agencies is highly appreciated and valued. Reflecting the perspective of many interviewees, and in the words of a UN Agency stakeholder, “PBF secretariat has ‘synergy meetings’, which was a game-changer! We learned what others are implementing and then we can ensure consistent and coherent support to our implementing partners. This promoted coherence”. While these meetings were appreciated, a desire for more synergy meetings was reported by several stakeholders consulted, particularly from UN Agencies.

Project evaluations also point to the PBF’s role in modestly enabling greater synergies between, and shared learning among UN Agencies and implementing partners, going beyond PBF projects themselves. According to the Women and Youth Project (PBF/GMB/D-1) Progress Report, “the project contributed to strengthened collaboration and partnership between the implementing Agencies (UNFPA and UNICEF) and its partners through review meetings, orientation and reflection sessions in the identification of best practices and lessons learned.”<sup>16</sup> Stakeholders further recognized that beyond continuity in Agencies, there is also continuity in technical partners, with implementing partners being involved in several projects of different Agencies, but that to avoid implementing in isolation, particularly for CSOs, greater upstream awareness-raising and synergy building would be required at project design stage, cross projects.

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<sup>15</sup> This was particularly noted as challenging in the SSR Project (PBF/IRF-173), where the evaluation notes “the International Donor Coordination was weak due to the lack of effective coordination that cut across different levels and was significantly impacting the SSR process. For example, The UN, EU, AU, ECOWAS and bilateral partners have all deployed SSR Advisors to the Gambia, which has led to multiple paths and inconsistency in the reform efforts. For example, there was a tendency to report to different power centres in areas where the partners were unilaterally supporting interventions.”

<sup>16</sup> No Author. (2021b). Increased Women and Youth participation in decision-making processes and as agents of community conflict prevention. PBF Project Progress Report.



## 5. Effectiveness

### 5.1 Achievement of Intended Results

**Finding 5:** The PBF has been highly effective in contributing to the advancement of peace and prevention of conflict in The Gambia. The PBF has, for the most part, achieved its intended results, with some variation across its four strategic areas. Results are highest in the Transitional Justice and Human Rights strategic area, with some slight variability in the other three outcome areas.

**Finding 6:** The PBF in The Gambia has been moderately effective in achieving benefits for women and youth specifically, particularly in the areas of political participation, with initial progress on increased participation evident at the local level. However, this participation has not always translated into meaningful representation or leadership in decision-making.

The PBF has effectively supported a peaceful democratic transition in The Gambia, contributing to the advancement of peace and prevention of conflict at both the national and local/community levels. The PBF support has effectively contributed to an increased climate of trust towards key institutions, with perceptual and behavioral changes – such as public expression of views and questioning of authorities. It has also launched and contributed to key processes and reforms, with evidence (or potential) to profoundly contribute to changes in The Gambia and its democratic transition, further consolidating peace. The PBF has made important contributions to the institutional landscape of the country, by establishing and strengthening governmental and non-governmental institutions.

A significant contribution has been made in strengthening the country’s civil society landscape. These institutions are critical for government and institutional accountability, as they notably serve watchdog functions and play important advocacy roles to push forward action where the public sector may be falling short. The PBF has played a key role in uplifting the CSO network, as stated by a CSO representative, by “bringing CSOs together, training them, and building them together”. It has notably supported the establishment and/or strengthened key CSOs such as the Peace Hub, the Inter-Party Committee (IPC) and The Association of Non-Governmental Organizations in The Gambia (TANGO). CSO representatives reported that capacity building provided has helped them better frame and promote peacebuilding, while also building capacity in niche areas, such as advocacy, awareness raising and to play a bridging role between the grassroots and the political sphere.

Since the PBF began engagement in The Gambia in 2017, the country is considered as having made significant advancements towards peace. These advancements are evident in the Global Peace Index, with The Gambia passing from 110<sup>th</sup> to 59<sup>th</sup> (out of 163 countries) between 2017 and 2023.<sup>17</sup> In 2021, the country also saw peaceful credible elections, effectively consolidating the country’s transition from an authoritarian regime to a democracy, and this despite persisting concerns regarding growing ethno-political practices and hate speech. Stakeholders interviewed for this evaluation widely recognized the PBF contribution to the peaceful democratic

<sup>17</sup> Institute for Economics and Peace (2017) Global Peace Index 2017; Institute for Economics and Peace (2023) Global Peace Index 2023.

process. This is partly due to the capacity building support delivered to the IPC, which led to the signing of the Janjanbureh Peace Accord by political leaders. By providing a space for political leaders across different parties to engage outside the public eye and effectively moderate points of disagreement, the IPC – with PBF support – has been able to effectively reduce tensions in communities, typically fueled by political disagreements at higher level. The PBF has also engaged at the community level, empowering and training youth to become agents of peace, fighting disinformation and hate speech, all while preventing the rise of conflict (where youth can intervene when conflict arises in their community before it escalates).

While important progress is evident in the country, stakeholders believe the peace remains fragile. The slow pace of TRRC recommendations<sup>18</sup> implementation and the progress of reforms (and the pace thereof) has been reported to hamper national development progress, which has resulted in persistent frustration. This extends beyond the PBF support, with the failure to approve the new constitution considered as an essential though yet unrealized component to the sustainability of peace. Also, challenges in advancing security sector reforms and the failure to pass the anti-corruption bill persist. Thus, while the PBF has made significant contributions to peacebuilding in The Gambia, as noted, the peace remains fragile and much work remains to be done.

### Achievement of Results by Strategic Area

The 2018 Eligibility Document in The Gambia outlines four strategic areas of support for the PBF, namely: 1) Transitional Justice and Human Rights; 2) Greater Involvement of Youth and Women in Peacebuilding; 3) Peaceful Reintegration and Psychosocial Support; and 4) Strengthening Natural Resource and Land Management and Dispute Resolution. The extent to which the PBF Portfolio between 2017 and 2022 has achieved its intended objectives and contributed to each of these areas is moderate-to-high, as seen in **Figure 5.1**, and discussed below.

**Figure 5.1 Achievement of Results by Strategic Area – At-a-Glance**



### Transitional Justice and Human Rights

Transitional Justice is defined by the OHCHR as “the full range of processes and mechanisms associated with a society’s attempt to come to terms with a legacy of large-scale past conflict, repression, violations and abuses, in order to ensure accountability, serve justice and achieve reconciliation”.<sup>19</sup> It is typically composed of four pillars, namely:

<sup>18</sup> The TRRC was established to investigate human rights violations during the Jammeh dictatorship. This included a series of hearing providing a space for Gambians to share the atrocities experienced during the dictatorship. Following these hearings, the TRRC emitted 218 recommendations in 2021. Very few of these have been implemented to date, with growing frustration given the slow pace of implementation.

<sup>19</sup> OHCHR Website. Transitional Justice. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/transitional-justice>



- **Truth-seeking:** processes to bring atrocities to light, including through the opening of archives or the establishment of a truth commission.
- **Prosecution:** judicial investigations of those having committed human rights violations.
- **Reparation:** initiatives to contribute to the reparation of the wrongs experienced by victims.
- **Prevention:** initiatives or mechanisms – including reforms and memorialization efforts – to protect individuals from further or new human rights transgressions.

A triangulated analysis of project documents and interviews indicates that the PBF has contributed to a variable extent to all four pillars of transitional justice, through a variety of complementary initiatives from 2017 to 2022.

First and foremost, the PBF has been instrumental in the **truth-seeking** process, which is at the base of the transitional justice process. Through the TJHR Project (PBF/IRF-172), the PBF had established and operationalized the TRRC, the commission which has overseen the truth, reconciliation and reparation hearings, which provided a space for Gambians to share the atrocities experienced during the dictatorship and begin the healing process. This process was formally launched in 2018 and hearings took place between January 2019 and May 2021. It entailed 22 public hearings and one closed hearing, covering the testimonies of 393 witnesses (including 78 women witnesses and 315 men out of which 229 were victims and 80 alleged perpetrators) as well as the collection of 1,200 statements (including 965 from men, 235 from women).<sup>20</sup> Efforts to make these testimonies widely available are also noted, with the production of over 2,800 live videos accessible on YouTube and the translation of material in local languages.<sup>21</sup> In 2021, the TRRC published its final report, which included 218 recommendations.

Through the truth, reconciliation and reparation process, the PBF has helped bring to light atrocities experience and opened the door to **prosecution**, independent from its support. Beyond this, the PBF has approved several subsequent projects, which have contributed to paving the ground for the prosecution of human rights abuse cases. The PBF has supported prosecution on two fronts: increasing capacity of the judicial system and increasing access to the judicial system (notably through legal aid access). This was largely achieved through the Rule of Law Project (PBF/GMB/A-3) where key actors (including judges, prosecutors and states counsel) were capacitated to prosecute cases arising from the TRRC recommendations and to prosecute SGBV offences using a survivor-centered approach (see **Box 2**). PBF projects also supported the establishment of Mobile Legal Aid Clinics (MLACS) to provide free legal, mediation and social services across the country. These clinics have provided services to 376 people (113 female and 215 male) including 73 children.

Project documents show that ongoing projects are also actively seeking to support prosecution, largely focusing on the strengthening of the judicial system. These interventions

#### Box 2: Example of Capacity Strengthening Activities

- 25 judges were capacitated on the prosecution of cases that will arise from TRRC recommendations.
- 25 State Counsels from the Ministry of Justice and 43 judges, magistrates and children's court panelists were trained on the Children's Act and Child-friendly Justice.
- 37 registrars & court clerks were trained on data management for child protection and child justice.

Source: Key Results of PBF Projects

<sup>20</sup> PBF Secretariat. (n.d.). Key Results of PBF Projects.

<sup>21</sup> Africa Label Group Inc. (2021). External terminal evaluation of the Transitional Justice and Human Rights Project.

are deemed highly important by consulted stakeholders who reported persisting challenges in accessing justice for SGBV survivors largely due to the sluggish justice system. The long time between the filing of a case and its prosecution was considered by knowledgeable and directly involved key stakeholders as endangering women who experience outrage from their community when sharing their experiences. While recognizing that building judicial capacity is a timely process, this indicates the need for further, sustained support for the judicial system to ensure that cases brought forward can be prosecuted in a timely manner.

Through the truth, reconciliation and reparation process and the facilitation of a range of community dialogues<sup>22</sup>, the PBF has also opened the door for **reparation** to take place as victims are identified and human rights violations are shared. Through the TJHR Project (PBF/IRF-172), the PBF supported the development of the TRRC reparations framework, composed of a policy, regulations and a public guidance note. The TRRC has subsequently pursued resource mobilization, including a government contribution of USD 1 million to the Victims Reparations Trust Fund and Gambian Dalasi (GMD) 1 million for the fund from The Gambia Diaspora in the US and some European countries. These resources were used to provide interim reparations to victims over the years, including through access to medical treatment.

The PBF has supported the establishment of the NHRC, a key permanent state body to address human rights violations, effectively increasing the state's legitimacy in addressing human rights violations. Since its creation, NHRC has taken an active role in monitoring, investigating, and submitting human rights violations. Between 2020 and 2021, the NHRC has notably received over 108 complaints related to human rights violations from the public, of which 96 were resolved, i.e., were investigated and for which recommendations were forwarded to the appropriate institutions for implementation and redress. In 2022, the NHRC received 104 complaints, 87 of which were resolved within the year.<sup>23</sup> The NHRC has also provided recommendations related to human rights issues in prisons and detention centers.

Beyond this, project documents indicate the PBF has also supported reparations directly, largely targeting medical and psychological needs, with limited interventions related to the economic empowerment of victims. A lot of this work has focused on service provision, community engagement, and knowledge sharing and learning. The PBF has notably renovated One Stop Centres (OSC) in Bundung, Brikama and Basse and the Shelter in Bakoteh, all of which provide services to SGBV victims, and support subsequent referral to these centers. The PBF has also built the capacity of social and health workers as well as CSOs on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Services (MHPSS), and providing psychosocial support for victims of human rights abuses and violations (see **Box 3**).

### Box 3: Examples of Key Activities and Results for Victim Support

- The PBF directly supported victims, including 144 victims (111 men and 33 women) with medical treatment (7 of which received support overseas).
- The PBF directly supported 85 SGBV survivors, who received MHPSS and GBV services.
- 76 children received scholarships.
- 490 people received COVID-19 aid (377 men and 113 women).

Source: Key Results of PBF Projects

<sup>22</sup> Various types of community dialogues have been facilitated by the PBF, including community reconciliation dialogues involving religious leaders, victim-perpetrators reconciliation gatherings, community healing cycle sessions on MHPSS, intergenerational dialogue sessions, and community-led peace talks.

<sup>23</sup> NHRC (2023) Annual Activity Report. Available at: <https://www.gm-nhrc.org/download-file/d8d993fa-da36-11ed-965f-02a8a26af761>

The PBF has made an important contribution to the **prevention** of future human rights abuses. This was first achieved through the establishment of the NHRC, which fulfills a function in regard to public education and awareness raising on human rights and supporting the formulation of policies and laws to guarantee human rights. In this regard, the NHRC has contributed to a review of the curriculum of basic, secondary, higher education and vocational training to identify entry points for human rights education. The Commission has also organized training on human rights-based approaches to election processes and on the effective protection and monitoring of these rights during elections for CSOs, the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), youth groups, law enforcement and the media. The PBF is also currently supporting the establishment of the PRC, as per TRRC Recommendations. The PRC is expected to be gender-sensitive and composed of a decentralized structure to support conflict prevention at all levels of society.

The PBF has also contributed to several key reforms, essential to the prevention of human rights abuses and for trust building between institutions and communities. Most notable are the reforms in the security sector, both at the national and the community level ([Appendix I](#)). At the national level, the PBF has supported the establishment of the Office of National Security (ONS), which remains operational as well, as the drafting of the National Security Policy, which has been approved by the President. Also, PBF has successfully improved the capacity of local police to respond to community needs, and improved The Gambia Police Force to implement the new community policing approach.

Nevertheless, implementation of security sector reform remains challenging. The SSR Project final evaluation (PBF/IRF-173) recognized that for true outcomes and impacts down the line to be felt, follow-up support was required, beyond the project's lifetime. COVID-19 was deemed a threat to this as resources were re-allocated to different areas during this time. More recently, a joint UN-ECOWAS-AU technical assessment mission on SSR in July 2022 (to assess the government's support needs in this area) recommended enhanced support to implement the government's SSR strategy; it pointed to persisting challenges.

Project documents indicated increased trust in the security sector is apparent in the country. The Rule of Law Project (PBF/GMB/A-3) Progress Report notably indicates "the perception of the police has been more favorable due to limited cases of human right abuse and arbitrary arrest compared to the previous regime. The population now has more trust for and works closely with the police following the implementation of the community policing philosophy."<sup>24</sup> This increase in trust has translated into increased use of the judicial instruments, indicating victims believe they can come forward and report abuse. In this regard, the Evaluation Report indicates a 96.6% increase in in the number of victims of human right violation in the previous 12 months who had reported their victimization to the legal aid clinics in project targeted areas (including 1,070 adults and 99 children) compared to the baseline at project inception.<sup>25</sup>

Perceptual and behavioral changes are also noted, indicating a stronger trust and belief that institutions can protect basic human rights. Behavior changes are noted in relation to freedom of speech, where Gambians now publicly express their views and question public authorities. As highlighted in the TJHR Evaluation, an example of this was seen in Ya Kumba Jaiteh's reaction in 2019 when she challenged President Adama Barrow's decision to revoke her nomination to the National Assembly before the Supreme Court, which in turn repealed the

<sup>24</sup> Ngwa, S.N. (2022). Strengthening Community Access to Justice, Community Policing and Effective SGBV Response. PBF Project Progress Report.

<sup>25</sup> Case International Consultants (2023a). Draft report: Terminal evaluation for the rule of law, access to justice and security (2019-2022).

presidential order in January 2020. Similarly, upon President Barrow’s return from an emergency meeting of ECOWAS Heads of State where the President conveyed the country’s backing to reinstate the Bazoum administration in Niger using force, if necessary, political figures and high ranking (current and former) members of The Gambia’s armed forces openly expressed both support and disapproval over sending Gambian armed forces there.

A Victim’s Perception Survey Commissioned following the issuance of the Government White Paper also found a high degree of trust of institutions working on TRRC processes. As such, 92% of respondents reported trusting Victim Led Organizations and the TRRC, followed by Media (88%), Faith Based Organizations (87%) and civil society (87%), the President (71%) and the National Assembly (64%).

Consulted stakeholders did however express some concern with the pace at which the TRRC recommendations were being implemented, with many expressing that implementation was far too slow. While the Government of The Gambia published the TRRC White Paper in May 2022 in response to the TRRC recommendations, NHRC’s first status report on the implementation of the government’s White Paper on the TRRC recommendations reports that only 6 recommendations had been fully implemented, 165 were undergoing implementation while 91 remained unimplemented. In July 2023, at the ECOWAS summit, heads of state highlighted the “urgent need to enhance the on-going Defense and Security Sector Reform (DSSR) efforts and the implementation of the recommendations of the Truth, Reconciliation and Reparation Commission (TRRC).”<sup>26</sup>

The PBF also begun delivering support geared towards the implementation of these recommendation, including through the recent Post-TRRC Project (PBF/GMB/A-4) which the evaluation team deems uses sound and promising entry points to support the implementation of the TRRC recommendations. Project outcomes focus on the adoption of effective measures and processes by government to enable the implementation of TRRC recommendations, increased capacity and commitment of the justice sector to prosecute cases as well as capacity building of the NHRC and CSOs to monitor, report and support the implementation of TRRC recommendations. This intervention has strong potential to further contribute to the transitional justice process and respect of human rights in the country, in line with concerns heard on the ground.<sup>27</sup>

### **Greater Involvement of Youth and Women in Peacebuilding**

Benefits for women and youth stakeholders achieved through PBF interventions have been mostly concentrated in the area of political participation, in alignment with PBF’s Strategic Area of Support 2 – Greater Involvement of Youth and Women in Peacebuilding. Interviews with Agencies and implementing partners conveyed that women’s participation reflects an ongoing conversation in The Gambia, offering the potential for synergies between various Agencies’ implementation on women’s political participation and leadership.

PBF interventions have been the most effective in contributing to increased engagement and participation with decentralized structures at local and community levels, with less representation rolling up the political hierarchy. PBF interventions in The Gambia have contributed to initial increases in women’s participation in various conflict

<sup>26</sup> Mc Carthy, P. (2023c). UN The Gambia. PDA Report The Gambia (July 2023).

<sup>27</sup> While implementation was in the very early stages at the time of writing, several activities were reported to be underway following the evaluation cutoff date – including the establishment of a partnership platform between government, CSOs and the private sector to ensure coordinated and effective implementation of these recommendations and the establishment of a Multi-Stakeholder Support Monitoring Committee by the NHRC to actively oversee the implementation of the TRRC recommendations.

resolution, reconciliation and peacebuilding platforms and community mobilization fora, consolidating inclusion with more women holding positions in local committees.

For example, there are some encouraging early results of PBF projects focused on women’s political participation in The Gambia – which have contributed to doubling women’s representation in local councils from 7% to 15% according to latest data available.<sup>28</sup> While numbers remain low, these figures indicate important progressive steps, which have begun to create space and open the door for women and youth to discuss issues of concern directly with local authorities for improved social accountability and transparency in governance, and the promotion of responsible civic engagement for sustainable peace.

Interviews with government representatives noted an increase in gender representation in Village Development Committees (VDCs), and highlighted VDCs and Ward Development Committees (WDC)s as critical entry points for grassroots engagement in communities to promote women and youth participation in community leadership, with PBF projects promoting the involvement of young men and women at the community and ward level.<sup>29</sup> This has been producing intended benefits, as explained by a government representation, “The gender representation in the VDC has increased”.

PBF activities in The Gambia also focused on women and young people’s participation in other decision-making fora, engaging women and young people in different conflict resolution, monitoring, and response plans (e.g. with police, cross-border issues, COVID-19 efforts). In response to a key national priority and focus in The Gambia, PBF projects contributed to women’s participation in the TRRC (e.g., with 235 of the 1,200 statements received from women, and 54 of the 219 witnesses were women), which was noted by the New York Times as being “the most accessible truth commission in history.”<sup>30</sup> The TJHR Project (PBF/IRF-172) supported the Ministry of Justice to engage women and young people as Commissioners (4 of the 11 were women, 2 of which were young women) and Directors (3 of the 7 were women plus the former Deputy Executive Chair) in transitional justice and human rights mechanisms.

To adapt to evolving circumstances, PBF initiatives involved women and youth in responding to concerns affecting women and children (e.g., lockdowns/quarantine isolations and school closures introducing new vulnerabilities such as GBV and Violence Against Children [VAC]) related to the COVID-19 pandemic, engaging with local governments to enhance community mapping for social protection interventions and the distribution of relief to households most in need, and mobilizing women and youth to sensitize communities on COVID prevention and social cohesion. Young people were also engaged through the U-report platform and community radio talk shows for information-sharing that was considered instrumental for COVID communication and messaging.<sup>31</sup>

While important achievements are noted in advancing women and young people’s participation, numbers still remain low and challenges remain in achieving adequate representation of women and youth in decision-making and peacebuilding processes, and for that representation to increase their economic and political power.

<sup>28</sup> Mc Carthy, P. (2023a). UN The Gambia. PDA Report The Gambia (January-March 2023).

<sup>29</sup> Women and Youth Project (PBF/GMB/D-1); Women Political Leadership Project (PBF/GMB/A-5).

<sup>30</sup> Africa Label Group Inc. (2021). External terminal evaluation of the Transitional justice and Human Rights Project.

<sup>31</sup> No Author. (2021b). Increased Women and Youth participation in decision-making processes and as agents of community conflict prevention. PBF Project Progress Report.

Evidence reveals that participation has increased, such that women and youth are more engaged in politics.<sup>32</sup> Yet, a majority of women tend to play more of a supportive than leading role (e.g., as voters, party organizers, mobilizers) and are not adequately represented in all echelons of elected governance in The Gambia. Participation has barely been translated into effective representation of women and youth in higher-level decision-making structures.

According to a UN The Gambia Press Release from August 2022, “Women make up more than half of The Gambia’s population and a full 57 percent of its registered electorate. And yet, in the April 2022 legislative elections, only 8 percent of candidates were women.” Indeed, of the total of 19 women who stood for office, only three were elected (two as independent candidates and only one representing a political party), which reflects some persistence with similar or worse numbers reported in the legislative elections of 2017.<sup>33</sup> Three of the 22 Ministers (13.6%) in the Cabinet are women, which represents a decrease from the 21% reported for the previous Cabinet, and currently only five women sit in the 58-seat National Assembly (8.62%), again marking a decrease from the previous National Assembly where 10.3% of seats were occupied by women.<sup>34</sup>

This was further confirmed by stakeholders, attesting that government institutions are largely “led by men”, and that among parliamentary secretaries/state-owned enterprises (SOEs), etc., “none are headed by women,” with “board membership... still male dominant”. As a minimum standard, several PBF activities across the portfolio have evidently fallen short of reaching gender-balanced targets for participation. For example, the Conflict LNR project (PBF/GMB/B-1) reported that “the 40 percent target was ambitious for some of the activities”, the Cross-Border Project (PBF/IRF-430) included only men in Migration Information and Data Analysis System (MIDAS) training, and the DSDP project which reported that on three of 17 staff were women. Additionally, interviews and documents reviewed highlighted challenges with the retention of women and youth engaged, and sustaining women and youth participation achieved, in part due to short-term mandates and staff turnover.<sup>35</sup> Moreover, it is important to consider intersectionality, as it has been reported that women who do participate in decision-making platforms tend to be over 40 years of age, with younger women even less represented in positions of leadership.<sup>36</sup>

The issue of women’s representation is twofold: (1) women are not receiving the votes for elected positions, and (2) women are not being selected for government appointed positions.<sup>37</sup> For the lack of representation in elected positions, women were either not able to run for office (e.g., due to the financial costs of the processes or the social costs of running for office), or when running, were not being elected. In both cases, ‘sticky’ gender norms

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<sup>32</sup> A previous UNDP project on voter educated documented an increase in the total number of registered voters from 886,578 in 2016 to 962,157.

<sup>33</sup> UN (2022) A Conversation on the Political Empowerment of Women in The Gambia. Press Release.

<sup>34</sup> No Author. (2022h). Strengthening women’s political participation and leadership through reformed legislation, community-level leadership, and political parties’ engagement in The Gambia. PBF Project Document Project.; The Gambia National Assembly Website. <https://assembly.gm/>; IPU Parline website. The Gambia: National Assembly. [https://data.ipu.org/parliament/gm?chamber\\_id=13400](https://data.ipu.org/parliament/gm?chamber_id=13400)

<sup>35</sup> No Author. (2021i). Support the capacity of the Government and national stakeholders to establish credible transitional justice processes and mechanisms that promote reconciliation and sustainable peace in The Gambia. – Phase II (focus on operationalization of Transitional Justice processes and Human Rights protection). PBF Project Progress Report.

<sup>36</sup> No Author. (2022h). Strengthening women’s political participation and leadership through reformed legislation, community-level leadership, and political parties’ engagement in The Gambia. PBF Project Document Project.

<sup>37</sup> Of note, some activities as part of the newer Women Political Leadership project (PBF/GMB/A-5) commenced in 2023 are underway to identify barriers to women’s representation in governance and better understand how to address these gaps.



contribute to stigma against women and youth leadership, acting as persisting barriers that limit the full achievement of the Portfolio's objectives for women and youth in peacebuilding.

Available data on attitudes towards gender equality and women's participation sheds light on the negative social consequences associated with women's leadership, as nearly three-quarters (74%) of Gambians believe women should have equal chances as men for being elected into public office, but 60% believed there was a high likelihood for these women to be criticized or harassed by others in the community, and 40% felt she is likely to face problems with her family as a result.<sup>38</sup> Project evaluation evidence suggests that "it's not only men that discourage women but women themselves discourage each other."<sup>39</sup>

Lack of representation in governance is also hindered by legal gaps on setting requirements for the selection of women; there is an absence of any provisions or quota system requiring a minimum level of women's representation in elected and appointed office. The PBF portfolio in The Gambia and the effectiveness of strategies employed for the realization of intended results for women and youth is limited by project logical frameworks that are deeply hinged to the achievement of a nation-wide quota system that would require a longer implementation timeline.<sup>40</sup> The PBF has made efforts to build on momentum where possible in The Gambia, such as in supporting the IPC with its plans to introduce a policy at a quarterly breakfast meeting of political party leaders that would encourage (but not enforce under law) parties to set higher targets for the meaningful inclusion of traditionally marginalized groups.<sup>41</sup> The implications of women not being represented in management and leadership can limit the full reach of the PBF portfolio's benefits for women (see [Appendix I](#), which highlights how this has played out in the Conflict LNR project (PBF/GMB/B-1)). Thus, while achievements have been made towards the PBF's targets in The Gambia of greater involvement of youth and women in peacebuilding, less can be reported in terms of the projects' contributing significantly to meaningful representation. Clearly, outcomes in this respect will also require important shifts across Gambian society, over years if not decades.

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<sup>38</sup> Mc Carthy, P. (2023c). UN The Gambia. PDA Report The Gambia (July 2023).

<sup>39</sup> UNFPA The Gambia (2022). End of project evaluation: Young women and men as stakeholders in ensuring peaceful democratic processes and advocates for the prevention of violence and hate speech.

<sup>40</sup> While the new draft constitution included provisions for a quota system, this failed to pass the National Assembly in 2020. The Bill was presented late, at the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> National Assembly's tenure and National Assembly Members preoccupied by re-elections, and lacked sufficient advocacy leading up to it. It was noted that the bill also lacked ownership by the government. These provisions were subsequently included into a private members bill (the Women's Representation Bill) which again faltered in the National Assembly (February 2022) as it failed to achieve minimum consensus, with continued efforts underway to reintroduce the Bill in the National Assembly. The Chairperson of the National Assembly Select Committee on Gender, Children and Social Welfare, Ms. Fatoumatta Njai introduced a previous version of the Bill, then known as the Constitution (Amendment) Bill, in 2021 as a private member's bill during her first term in the Assembly. Ms. Njai retained her seat in April 2022 and was selected as the Chair of the Gender Committee, and plans to reintroduce the Bill not as a private member's Bill but instead coming from the Gender Committee (PBA Report The Gambia, Jan-March 2023)

<sup>41</sup> Mc Carthy, P. (2023a). UN The Gambia. PDA Report The Gambia (January-March 2023).

**Box 4: PBF Project Contributions to Women & Youth Participation**

- **Women and Youth Project (PBF/GMB/D-1):** 900 women and 100 youth-led COVID-19 response initiatives; 90 women and 100 youth contributed to community mapping for social protection interventions and relief; 11,000 registered youth members (52% female, 48% male reporters) of U-Report; 150 youth engaged in mentorship programs through VDC & WDCs in target regions (3x the target); 660 women and youth participated in legal and transitional reforms.
- **TJHR Project (PBF/IRF-172):** Supported women and youth participation in the TRRC process (four of the 11 Commissioners were women, two of which are young people, three of the seven Directors were women, three of the four Legal Department members were women) and within the NHRC (one of four Commissioners is a woman, two of the four Directors are women, and the Deputy Executive Secretary is also a woman). Community outreach activities that engaged 27 women from all regions and 119 youth leaders (54 of which were women) through Youth Leadership Forums.
- **Governance and Accountability Project (PBF/GMB/A-2):** women and youth leaders invited to participate in sessions with 70 of the total 384 participants (18%) women and 27 (7%) youth; included 105 women (52.5%) and 45 youth community leaders in review meetings of citizens demand charters; Anti-Corruption champions in high schools included 120 girls (60%).
- **Youth Project (PBF/GMB/D-2):** Increase in the percentage of executive positions in parties held by young men and women.
- **SSR Project (PBF/IRF-173):** Less gender imbalance in the Gambian police force.
- **Conflict LNR Project (PBF/GMB/B-1):** Increased participation of women in forest management (e.g., women treasurers in Committees), but lack of representation of women in Water Management Committees.
- **Cross-Border Project (PBF/IRF-430):** Border post includes two women PBF officers to address women and children's issues, with one trained for secondary inspection (but not as a trainer).
- **Reintegration of Returnees Project (PBF/GMB/A-1):** 1,175 (725 women and 132 returnees) community members benefitted from mobile health services in six communities across 5 regions.

**Peaceful Reintegration and Psychosocial Support**

The Gambia has grappled with the issue of migration for many years. To begin with, over 35,000 Gambians migrated to Europe through irregular means between 2014 and 2018 alone.<sup>42</sup> It is reported that in recent years, Gambians have emigrated at a higher per capita rate than other nations in Africa.<sup>43</sup> The weight of emigration is evident in the country's economy, with the IOM reporting that the overseas remittance of Gambians living abroad accounts for over 20% of the country's gross domestic product (GDP).<sup>44</sup> Emigration is typically driven by economic aspiration, fueled by high unemployment rates and poverty experienced by youth in The Gambia.

The return of emigrants has been recognized in The Gambia CDA as a destabilizing factor in the country, particularly as the country's infrastructure is unable to absorb and reintegrate the large influx of returnees. Risks

<sup>42</sup> IOM Website. The Gambia. <https://rodakar.iom.int/gambia>

<sup>43</sup> No Author. (2020f). Strengthening sustainable and holistic reintegration of returnees in The Gambia. PBF NCE.

<sup>44</sup> IOM Website. The Gambia. <https://rodakar.iom.int/gambia>



of both an economic and psychosocial nature are reported for migrants returning, both voluntarily and forcibly. Psychological suffering endured during illegal migrations, shame experienced upon return and stigmatization experienced from family and community following “failure” of returnees and/or theft prior to departure, as well as the economic position – often worse than prior to emigration – are factors significantly impeding on the reintegration of returnees.

A review of documents revealed that PBF interventions in this sphere have been limited, with support largely delivered through the Reintegration of Migrants Project (PBF/GMB/A-1), as well as the Cross-Border Project (PBF/IRF-430) (although to a much lesser extent). Interventions in this regard have largely focused on reintegration of returnees rather than prevention of migration. Reintegration support has targeted both socio-economic and psychosocial challenges experienced.

Project documents indicate that the first phase of the Reintegration of Migrants Project (PBF/GMB/A-1) largely focused on better understanding the issue of migration and return, setting the foundation for subsequent PBF work in this area. The PBF then sought to address irregular migration and the reintegration of returnees on three fronts: changing the perception and attitudes of communities towards returnees, strengthening the government capacity to address migration issues, and strengthening service delivery for migrants, coupled with the delivery of direct support to migrants.

In regard to **changing the perception and attitudes of communities**, the PBF has increased community linkages by creating opportunities for migrants to engage with community members, effectively reducing stigma and discrimination, with efforts noted at both the community level and national level. This is first seen through community-based reintegration initiatives – e.g., the Bakery project where migrants deliver food directly to community members – as well as events creating opportunities for returnees to share their stories on their experiences (e.g. moonlight storytelling sessions, inter-generational dialogue, etc.) (Box 5). Positive outcomes from these initiatives were reported, evident both in project evaluations and through stakeholder consultation. The Reintegration of Migrants evaluation (PBF/GMB/A-1) reported these interventions led to changes in the perception of community members, reduced stigmatisation of returnees and improvement in returnees’ engagement in community decision making processes, fostering social cohesion and peaceful coexistence. Stakeholders consulted as part of the Portfolio Evaluation reported similar impacts, particularly noting changes in community perception and decreases in stigma experienced by returnees involved in interventions.

At the National level, the PBF also financed the development of a multi-stakeholder communications platform, led by the Ministry of Information and Communication Infrastructure to coordinate messages related to irregular migration. The PBF has also enabled

#### Box 5: Examples of Benefits of Support Provided

- 4,600 community members, including returnees, were engaged in dialogues and shared learning sessions in five regions, on irregular migration and reintegration.
- 3,300 community members, including returnees, engaged through 24 social events (e.g., regional football tournaments, inter-regional cultural art fair, and peace concerts).
- 510 young men and women in 17 communities engaged through moonlight story-telling in five regions in The Gambia.

*Source: Key Result of PBF Projects.*

the development of the National Communication Strategy (NCS), which included the implementation of the first government TV and radio programs, contributing to awareness-raising on return and reintegration.<sup>45</sup>

In regard to **strengthening the government's capacity to address migration issues**, project documents show the PBF focused on both strengthening coordination of migration issues and response, as well as border management. Most notably, the PBF supported the establishment and operationalization of the National Coordination Mechanisms on Migration (NCM) and its eight Thematic Working Groups (TWGs). The NCM is a government-led, inter-agency platform that aims to ensure a whole-of-government approach to migration governance through a comprehensive and coordinated management of migration issues. The NCM has been able to advance important frameworks in the country including the Migration Governance indicators (MGIs), the National Migration Policy 2020-2030, and the previously mentioned NCS. PBF support has also led to the launch of the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), which is collecting population mobility data within and outside of The Gambia on an ongoing, regular basis at Flow Monitoring Points (FMPs) in Barra, Basse, Brikama, and Farafenni. The PBF has also supported The Gambia's first National Mental Health Strategic Framework (2020-2025) for Assisting Migrants with Mental Health needs.

In terms of border management, the PBF has financed the construction of a new border post, the installation of MIDAS in at least two border posts, the delivery of related training (including training of trainers), as well as the establishment of an Inter-agency Border Coordination Committee (IABCC) for enhanced coordination with Senegalese counterparts. While stakeholders reported a greater coordination underway with Senegalese counterparts, persistent technical challenges experienced in the sustained operation of the MIDAS system, particularly the lack of reliable or sufficient electricity to operate the system, limited the extent to which movement of the population at border posts have been recorded and shared through a centralized database. Unintended results and the need for more community sensitization on the MIDAS system is also noted given pushback from the communities who do not understand the utility of the MIDAS System and why biometric data is being collected.

Finally, in regard to the **strengthening service delivery for migrants and the delivery of direct support to migrants**, triangulated analysis shows the PBF has delivered support both addressing psychosocial and economic needs of migrants. The PBF has notably contributed to the strengthening of MHPSS practices through the development and implementation of practice frameworks, guidelines, protocols and training curricula. Such support was reported as having "radically improved the way MHPSS is treated in the country."<sup>46</sup> The PBF has also deployed important training, including to 725 (392 male, 352 female) community health nurses, social workers and caregivers to deliver services to migrants and non-migrants. It has also increased access to psychosocial support through the training of community volunteers on Psychological First Aid (PFA), the deployment of mobile health teams, the creation of Migrant Peer Support Groups, the refurbishing of Youth Centers (which are used as an outreach point for the MHPSS outcomes teams, among other things), and the refurbishment and construction of a new wing at the Tanka-Tanka psychiatric hospital. Through the deployment of mobile health teams, the PBF has enabled 1,718 (1031 female, 687 male) community members to benefit from medical and psychosocial assistance.

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<sup>45</sup> Leotti, P. (2022). Strengthening Holistic and Sustainable Reintegration of Returnees in The Gambia. External Evaluation for the Project.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

Economic support has been strengthened through the establishment of a national referral platform and capacity building for three staff of the Department of Labor, housed in the Public Employment Service (PES) located in Banjul. The PES provides services to connect returnees with job opportunities, career guidance and counselling, advisory services, access to computer and preparatory support such as the preparation of CVs and cover letters. While returnees have been supported by these services, challenges remain in providing nation-wide support. Limited resources for programming have however limited the outreach and activities undertaken by the PES team, while the sole Banjul location has limited the reach of the center. The PES team has found themselves dependent on other initiatives to tag along and provide services outside of the Banjul area. It should however be noted that work with the National Youth Council (NYC) is underway to create a similar center in Basse.

The PBF financed community-based reintegration economic initiatives, with a dual objective of increasing community links (as previously noted) and the economic empowerment and development of returnees. The PBF financed over seven such projects, ranging from the establishment of a bakery to husbandry initiatives. Mixed results are noted depending on the income-generating activity pursued, with some activities noting technical challenges, which have limited the extent to which income can be generated, while others have been highly successful. Success is noted in the financing of a bakery, one of the community-based reintegration initiatives, which has been both sustainable and profitable. The bakery notably still employs returnees and has been able to provide income and give back to communities (see [Section 8](#)). Another initiative entailed the strengthening of a local youth center in Kiang Kwinella, including training on livelihood initiatives (e.g., soap making, tie and die, and English literacy) to returnees, widows and community members. A total of 65 people attended sessions and 35 people completed the program – including a majority (32) of women.

The projects also experienced some important challenges. With respect to the livelihoods initiative at the local youth center, while several reported earnings from their products, the number of participants actively using skills gained decreased<sup>47</sup> as reported in the Final Evaluation Report published in 2022. Many of those that remained active also operated from their homes, with little reported use of the local youth center. The husbandry initiative in North Bank Region where training and advice was delivered on animals to be acquired and their care saw considerable technical issues which affected its success. The Reintegration of Migrants Project Final Evaluation (PBF/GMB/A-1) reports that the selection of animals from Mauritania, who were used to a different climate and feed, led to slow fattening and high mortality (with nine out of 35 deaths). Similar challenges were experienced in Essau, where rams were used, of which 24 died and 12 were sick at the time of the final evaluation.

Such community-based reintegration initiatives, as in the case of the Bakery Project, report successfully contributing to the reintegration of returnees and a reduction in the stigma and discrimination experienced. Interviewees attributed this decrease in stigmatization and discrimination to the interaction between returnees and communities during the delivery of goods. Also, the economic development of returnees serves both to decrease stigma against them and to increase their sense of self-worth, as described by interviewed stakeholders including beneficiaries. Of course, the scale of economic empowerment and development of youth required to tackle the issues significantly, and the broader issue of irregular migration in all its complexity, are beyond the scope of the PBF, while also constraining its effectiveness in this strategic area.

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<sup>47</sup> The evaluation notes that “At the end of the training period, some participants claimed the earnings from their products sold to the implementing organization, but it was unclear if there had been any agreement on that matter. Despite the provision of the seed capital, the number of persons still active drastically reduced (8-10).”

## Strengthening Natural Resource and Land Management and Dispute Resolution

LNRs are a significant source of conflict in The Gambia. These conflicts are fueled by a surge in land value and real estate speculation, conflicting practices and transitions (land-buying vs. land-borrowing), nefarious and unlicensed practices by commercial enterprise on land, in some cases linked to environmental degradation, reliance on natural resources for livelihood and income generation, the lack of data and mapping for land demarcation and communal ownership boundaries, and complexity and limited knowledge of the LNR related frameworks and dispute resolution mechanisms.

Adding fuel to fire, climate change risks further exacerbate these challenges – posing a wider threat to food security and social cohesion – as climate effects have impacts on growing seasons, compromising livelihoods, human security, and promoting economic hardship, rendering rural areas more vulnerable, and adding to further densification and intensifying life in urban spaces. Women face particular challenges related to LNR – including low representation in decision making and challenges in securing and enforcing land tenure rights. Land-related decision making is heavily based on customary law rather than statutory law, with decisions often being made in favor of men. Moreover, heritage of land follows a patrilineal property system; resulting in women land ownership often being mediated by social and marital status.<sup>48</sup>

A triangulated analysis shows the PBF advanced this strategic area largely through three projects, the Conflict LNR Project (PBF/GMB/B-1), the Climate Induced Conflict Project (PBF/IRF-342) and the Cross-Border Project (PBF/IRF-430). While the PBF has provided support both at the national and local levels, results have mainly been achieved at the local level. These results are seen both in terms of conflict resolution and conflict prevention.

At the national level, through PBF support, ActionAid conducted an assessment of the Grievance Redress Mechanisms (GRM) in LNR. The assessment identified weaknesses and gaps in the LNR governance system and formal and informal conflict resolution mechanisms. While the aim of the project included the revisions to the laws and regulations, the project was unable to complete these activities due to delays in recruitment and COVID-19. As such, while the assessment was undertaken, no review or drafting of the legal framework had taken place. Nonetheless, the assessment was instrumental in designing training on land administration and land dispute resolution.

At the local level, the PBF effectively supported sensitization and training of local governance structures and members on land administration and land dispute resolution. Notably, sensitization and training in land administration for local government staff who, despite being integral to land administration, had little knowledge of the laws that govern land administration in the country, have had impact on the conflict resolution, with the LNR Conflict Project's final evaluation (PBF/GMB/B-1) indicating improvement in alignment between decisions and the provisions of the law; although deviations from the formal law are still found.<sup>49</sup> Impacts on LNR related conflict resulting from these interventions were also reported by stakeholders consulted.

Awareness raising and training to address climate induced conflict and increase resiliency at the local level was also supported, as reported in project documents. This was notably supported through activities such as dialogues, four film shows, trainings, the organization of a football minicamp and cookout sessions. These

<sup>48</sup> Monterroso, I., Enokenwa, O., and Paez-Valencia, A.M. (2021). Women's Land Rights in The Gambia. Securing Women's Resource Rights Through Gender Transformative Approaches.

<sup>49</sup> Cherogony, M., Baldeh, N.Y., Assaf, J. and Owens, A.C. (2022). Draft Terminal Evaluation of the Project Addressing Conflict over Land and Natural Resources in The Gambia. UNJP/GAM/041/PBF Draft Report for comments.

activities effectively supported an increased understanding of climate induced vulnerabilities (e.g., impact on agriculture production, trade and development) and conflict triggers as well as knowledge of mitigation strategies, as reported in the Climate Induced Conflict Final Evaluation (PBF/IRF-342). These gains were further reported as having reduced climate-related conflict in all 12 communities, with the Final Evaluation reporting that all conflicts in these communities were resolved.

In addition to this, community resiliency was built through initiatives providing required skills in communities to minimize their dependency on natural resources and diversify their income sources, as well as through capacity building on enhanced natural resource management techniques and the provision of essential materials. Training for income diversification notably touched on gender-sensitive climate smart entrepreneurship, including improving rice and groundnut production and related soil management and water harvesting, beekeeping, honey production, soap and cream making, washable reusable menstrual pads, among others. Communities were also supported to reclaim land, communities were connected to markets, and tricycles and stalls were provided to increase market access. Project documents report that these interventions supported income diversification and improved economic opportunities for women, ultimately enhancing social cohesion and peace while reducing inequalities within communities. The generation of additional income was already observed at the time of the Climate Induced Conflict Project Final Evaluation (PBF/IRF-342), with 5,200 women and 6,000 men reporting increased income as a result of project interventions.<sup>50</sup> The PBF is continuing to provide support in this area through the Cross-Border Project (PBF/IRF-430), indicating further gains in this area are likely.

The PBF-supported climate mitigation and strengthened community bonds through tree planting initiatives. Through the Climate Induced Conflict Project (PBF/IRF-342), the PBF supported the planting of over 44,000 trees in 10 communities to mitigate the effects of climate change and increase the resilience of communities to climate shocks. Approximately 15,000 seedlings were also replanted along the southern border. Considering the role of illegal logging, forest depletion and high value of the tree resources of the Casamance Forest, reforestation has strong potential to mitigate conflict.

Reestablished peace in communities where conflict had already erupted has also successfully been achieved thanks in part to PBF supported efforts. The Climate Induced Conflict Final Evaluation (PBF/IRF-342) highlights the project's effectiveness in reducing conflict and restoring peace among communities, through afforestation and skills training, noting the "project successful restored peace among communities that were in land conflicts for more than a decade."<sup>51</sup> This was recognized by stakeholders engaged as part of this evaluation with stakeholders engaged in community discussions noting the project's effectiveness in reducing conflict and

#### Box 6: Selected LNR-related activities

- Engaged 3,500 young men and women, 419 farmers, 12 communities, and 150 community monitors, traditional leaders, trained on climate change induced vulnerabilities, advocacy and mitigation strategies.
- Set-up a 19 female farmer network through the MoGCSW and its members, trained on advocacy dialogue on climate-induced conflict.

*Source: Key Result of PBF Projects.*

<sup>50</sup> Fanneh, M.M., Ayeni, R.K., Sawaneh, M., Kantara, F.K., Fye, S.O. and Badjie, F. (2022). Climate Conflict Strengthening the Coping Mechanisms against Risks of Climate Induced Conflicts and to Minimize Gender Related Vulnerabilities and Tensions in The Gambia Final Evaluation Report. The WFP, ITC, UNFPA and the University of The Gambia.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

promoting peace across communities. Data collected through document review, key stakeholder interviews and community consultations also point to PBF-support project effectiveness in transforming community-level conflicts. Notable achievements in this respect were seen through PBF-supported community, village and ward-level dialogues and other processes, that led to the construction of community-managed boreholes and solar installations for the water pumps. This produced multiple complementary benefits. First, this created greater access to water in the communities. Second, this reduced the movement of cattle across agricultural land effectively eliminating conflict between herders and farmers in two communities. Third, the project led to broader community benefits related to health and quality of life (see [Section 8.1](#)). And finally, this contributed to greater community ownership over land and water resource management. Of note, technical challenges were identified, with the borehole design making it inaccessible to calves and smaller livestock. Communities have therefore needed to adopt practices to make the water accessible to these smaller animals, including by filling containers of water and placing them next to the boreholes.

The evaluation team however deems there was limited effectiveness in supporting border posts to address cross-border conflict drivers, such as cattle theft and illegal logging. This stems from a lack of material for border post staff mobility (e.g., bikes, motorcycles/scooters, trucks) which has impacts on the extent to which the border officials are able to effectively patrol and secure the borders' surrounding area. Safety concerns for border officials and on-foot patrol were reported by stakeholders as having limited the areas being patrolled. A need for reliable mobility means was noted by the evaluation team in both border post visited. Moreover, the border posts were also observed as not having adequate facilities to detain apprehended criminals. An important consideration particularly for border posts located at several kilometers from the nearest police station. There is some indication that work is underway to address challenges in at least one of the border posts, with ongoing discussions related to the provision of transportation and increased police presence.

## 5.2 Effectiveness of Targeting Strategies

**Finding 7: Targeting strategies were generally sound and effective. There is evidence of collaborative approaches adopted to identify targeted areas in projects, including consultation with government as well as decentralized structures. These approaches have supported effective targeting in PBF projects. However, budgetary considerations were noted as having an impact on targeting, with instances where targeted areas had to be reduced, thereby affecting the effectiveness of interventions.**

Targeting strategies are considered by the evaluation team to have been sound and effective, considering key elements such as vulnerabilities, presence of conflict, ongoing initiatives and previous support, as well as sustainability and ownership of outcomes. The use of collaborative approaches and stakeholder engagement, as well as drawing on decentralized structures across various regions and communities were important in achieving sound and effective targeting. Stakeholder consultation indicated that engagement with The Gambia Immigration Department representatives at project design had supported effective targeting of communities in the Cross-Border Projects (PBF/IRF-430) based on their vulnerability and level of need – as per the presence of border posts and/or high conflict areas – as well as ongoing initiatives in the country, so as to not duplicate work. Similarly, engagement with the Inspector General of Police and his team informed the selection of the community for which a new police station was to be built, ultimately based on the high crime rate in the area.



Decentralized structures play a particularly valuable role in monitoring emerging needs on the ground and changing local dynamics and situations. Several CSOs consulted reported that communities in which they deployed activities financed by the PBF were selected following consultation with decentralized structures across the country to identify communities with particularly strong vulnerabilities to conflict and/or where conflict had already erupted.

Engagement with project beneficiaries has also been critical in ensuring projects are meeting community needs in line with local realities, while fostering buy-in and ensuring sustainability and ownership of initiatives. This was notably the case in some interventions under the Reintegration of Migrants Project (PBF/GMB/A-1), whereby communities were engaged to identify suitable income-generating activities. While the identification of income-generating activities was effective in several cases, in others, poor design led to implementation and sustainability challenges. Effective targeting is also seen in the Conflict LNR Project (PBF/GMB/B-1), whereby communities played an active role in determining the location of boreholes. Such consultation is considered particularly important as it built strong community ownership – which was palpable during community discussions held as part of this evaluation – and had positive incidence on the project’s sustainability.

Where challenges have emerged has been in relation to budgetary limitations. Such limitations were noted by stakeholders consulted as having impacts on project targeting, whereby available budgets limited the reach of interventions and required teams to remove certain targeted communities from activities – ultimately having incidence on the impact. These challenges were observed on two fronts, first associated with project design approaches, whereby non-UN Agency implementing partners were asked to design activities with no knowledge of budgets. This led to the design of overambitious projects and activities, which were subsequently scaled down upon review by the Agencies. Second, these were associated with an overly ambitious project design and underestimation of cost by the Agencies themselves. This was particularly noted in the Conflict LNR Project (PBF/GMB/B-1), where the scope of the project needed to be significantly reduced, with the construction of boreholes being delivered in two rather than 10 communities.

## 6. Gender and Youth

### 6.1 Gender- and Youth- Sensitivity/Responsiveness

**Finding 8:** PBF's approach to increasing women and youth participation in The Gambia portfolio has been pursued primarily through three complementary approaches, namely increasing community awareness and sensitization, building the capacities of women and youth leaders, and institutional strengthening. Overall, the approach has given rise to growing acceptance of women and youth leadership, with progressive change evident primarily at community and local levels.

As noted earlier in finding 6, the PBF portfolio in The Gambia has enabled greater involvement of women and youth in decision-making and peacebuilding processes, particularly in decentralized structures at local and community levels. This is evident in the observed increases in participation in various conflict resolution, reconciliation and peacebuilding platforms and processes, sensitization forums, and community mobilization efforts for social cohesion. However, despite some encouraging early results, the evaluation has determined that this has not yet fully translated into balanced or effective representation in governance, particularly further up political echelons.

Through different individual PBF-funded projects, the PBF has integrated a gender and youth-sensitive approach by recognizing and supporting the identification of the different needs, priorities, challenges and inequalities experienced by men, women, boys, and girls. The PBF portfolio has also made efforts to adopt a gender and youth-responsive approach in addressing structural causes that underpin inequality by supporting different projects that work across the spectrum of inequality.

Across the portfolio, the effectiveness of women and youth participation is understood to have been buoyed by three different strategies. First, PBF projects have pursued the building of community awareness and sensitization towards the growing acceptance and recognition of women and youth's role in leadership and decision-making. Second, projects have aimed at reinforcing the capacities, knowledge, skills and confidence of women and young people to be effective advocates, leaders, and champions of change. Third, this has been complemented by institutional strengthening to create enabling environments for engagement and dialogue. While these distinct strategies are complementary, and have contributed to the results discussed in [Section 5.1](#) of the report, synergies between them remain under-developed.

#### 6.1.1 Building Community Awareness & Sensitization

A number of PBF activities were focused on sensitization targeting different community actors, local authorities, and other key influencers. They have sought to enable growing acceptance of women and youth in leadership, raising awareness on the importance and value-addition of women and young people in peacebuilding and political decision-making (See [Appendix I](#) for a project-level snapshot across the portfolio). In locations where PBF project activities were implemented, local leaders such as the Chairpersons of Area Councils, National Assembly Members, Councilors, Chiefs and Alkalo have participated in engagement processes on the rights of



women and young people to participate in decision-making processes, and have expressed some commitment to increasing the participation and representation of women and youth.<sup>52</sup>

Trainings on effective youth participation and representation in leadership, including youth's role at the grassroots level to target the development of communities and at the ward level, were conducted with local structures such as VDCs and WDCs. Final progress reporting shared that "training enhanced understanding and recognition of the importance and value of women and youth's role in peacebuilding and the decentralization process"<sup>53</sup>, with interviews across stakeholder types affirming their significance as well. According to interviews, regional sensitization teams were established and trained under the IPC (by West Africa Network for Peacebuilding [WANEP]) and then rolled out across the country to educate militants from different political parties on monitoring and responding to intra- or inter-party conflicts through dialogue.

Trainings also more broadly covered increasing awareness of gender issues and gender mainstreaming. Quite varied, these included a learning exercise within the NHRC with a gender expert on gender mainstreaming work; capacity enhancement with appointed gender focal persons, with training on gender for streamlining gender issues in the SRR process<sup>54</sup>; and The Gambia Police Force training and curriculum integrating gender issues through close collaboration with the Network Against GBV. It was also noted that complementary activities conducted under other projects have reinforced PBF gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) objectives, such as the two-day training on gender-sensitive reporting for Gambian transitional justice processes and 'Training of Trainers' for the Gender Action Platform on Transitional Justice (October 2018) conducted by OHCHR.<sup>55</sup> The UNDP Resident Representative has also reportedly advocated for women's empowerment as part of IPC activities – where gender mainstreaming has become a key consideration in the formation of sub-committees and IPC interventions – including raising the importance of the inclusion of women in political processes.<sup>56</sup>

Civil dialogue sessions on peacebuilding were conducted with national and regional political parties and were considered as a valuable site of interaction with influential political party leaders.<sup>57</sup> This was supported by awareness raising activities on human rights, including women and youth rights to political participation. Empowerment modules for sensitization sessions were disseminated across the country and included the engagement of men and boys.<sup>58</sup> There is some early evidence that these efforts have begun to challenge the status quo and to modestly contribute to a (re)shaping of public perceptions of women and youth in leadership and decision-making. For example, focus group discussion (FGD) evidence reported in project reporting points

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<sup>52</sup> Cherogony, M., Baldeh, N.Y., Assaf, J. and Owens, A.C. (2022). Draft Terminal Evaluation of the Project Addressing Conflict over Land and Natural Resources in The Gambia. UNJP/GAM/041/PBF Draft Report for comments.

<sup>53</sup> No Author. (2021b). Increased Women and Youth participation in decision-making processes and as agents of community conflict prevention. PBF Project Progress Report.

<sup>54</sup> SSR Project (PBF/IRF-173).

<sup>55</sup> No Author. (2019e). Support the capacity of the Government and national stakeholders to establish credible transitional justice processes and mechanisms that promote reconciliation and sustainable peace in The Gambia. PBF Project Document.

<sup>56</sup> No Author. (2022f). Strengthening Community Access to Justice, Community Policing and Effective SGBV Response. PBF Project Progress Report.

<sup>57</sup> Darboe, S.N. & Jallow, K. (2021). PBF End of Project Evaluation - Increased Women and Youth participation in decision-making processes and as agents of community conflict prevention.

<sup>58</sup> No Author. (2021e). Strengthening community access to justice, community policing and effective SGBV response. PBF Project Document.

to the fact that some PBF-funded activities have in select instances influenced the views of older generations towards young women and men.<sup>59</sup>

However, changing attitudes on women and youth participation and leadership remains constrained by deep-rooted and long-term traditional norms and sociocultural practices. Evaluation analysis suggests that the full range of benefits of PBF projects and the achievement of gender and youth outcomes has been curbed by rigid norms, persisting harmful attitudes, stigmatization, and stereotyping that reifies the position of men as leaders and hinders women from pursuing leadership positions (see [Box 7](#) for examples of contributing factors).

Overall, the PBF is not positioned to systematically tackle long-term societal, norm change. However, PBF funding offers catalytic potential for planting seeds of change in communities, which it has been doing through its work with Agencies and implementing partners.

#### **Box 7. Gambian Cultural Factors Limiting Women's Representation in Leadership**

- Misconceptions and prejudice around women's leadership
- Limited self-confidence of women and young people to assert themselves in society
- Affiliations of female leadership with conflict and hate speech
- Perceptions of female leadership as a waste of time for women
- Undermining the level of expertise of young people
- Resistance to power-sharing or distributing benefits of power and authority

### **6.1.2 Building Capacities of Women & Youth Leaders**

PBF-funded capacity building activities have also targeted women and youth to facilitate knowledge-sharing, training (including training of trainers), and mentorship. This has equipped women and youth participants with the tools to be effective leaders and agents of peace, while strengthening their capacities to proactively participate in transitional justice processes. (See [Appendix I](#) for a detailed project-level snapshot of capacity building activities for women and youth across the portfolio.)

Capacity building activities have targeted aspiring female candidates as a way to help prepare them to stand in parliamentary and local government elections, with PBF funding supporting voter education for women and youth.<sup>60</sup> For instance, training was provided to the youth wing of the IPC. PBF-supported activities reportedly equipped young people with conflict/dispute resolutions and peacebuilding skills to further realize their roles as agents of peace. IPC capacity trainings for young men and women, including youth with disabilities, provided key guidance and tools on policy formulation and policy processes, which contributed to strengthened policy advocacy.<sup>61</sup> Capacity building also targeted women and youth as peacebuilders and communicators, equipping women with new conflict resolution tools and guidance.

PBF projects, as in the case of the Women and Youth Project (PBF/GMB/D-1), supported current and former female National Assembly Members to provide mentorship and build a nationwide network of women

<sup>59</sup> Darboe, S.N. & Jallow, K. (2021). PBF End of Project Evaluation – Increased Women and Youth participation in decision-making processes and as agents of community conflict prevention.

<sup>60</sup> However, evidence presented in this evaluation has already indicated that the number of women nominated remains low.

<sup>61</sup> Darboe, S.N. & Jallow, K. (2021). PBF End of Project Evaluation - Increased Women and Youth participation in decision-making processes and as agents of community conflict prevention.

supporting each other in their candidacy.<sup>62</sup> PBF activities also served to connect women and youth in mobilized networks for magnified advocacy, for example with sensitized youth participants coming together to coordinate advocacy for peaceful elections in their schools and successfully influencing community/religious leaders to include advocacy for peaceful elections in their platforms, and consequentially contributing to a decrease in incidences of hate speech and violence.<sup>63</sup> Other examples include sensitized youth participants mobilizing amongst themselves to form WhatsApp groups as ‘ambassadors for peace and tolerance’ in their communities, with regular exchanges among peers and community leaders.<sup>64</sup>

There has also been a concentration of efforts focused on increasing women and youth’s awareness of their rights, with evidence of consequent greater understanding of the rights of women and youth in communities where PBF projects were implemented.<sup>65</sup> For example, among Mothers’ Club<sup>66</sup> members, women’s awareness of their land rights has reportedly increased, which has in turn contributed to their advocacy as representatives to the Alkalo and VDCs. Overall, PBF sensitization activities have contributed to increasing women and youth awareness of their rights, and consequentially their demand for these rights. The recognition and realization of such rights and a broader societal transformation also requires a wider strengthening of the accountability of duty-bearers.

### 6.1.3 Institutional Strengthening

A review of available evidence of project results reported, triangulated where possible with key stakeholder interviews data also reveals that PBF-supported projects have made some progress in building women- and youth-sensitive institutional capacity. In particular, this has supported the operationalization of more robust mechanisms for enabling greater participation of women and youth in decision-making. PBF in The Gambia has financed the development of a few key institutions and invested in strengthening existing structures and mechanisms for women and youth engagement in political processes; a few examples are highlighted below, with further details on other supplementary institutions provided in [Appendix I](#).

- The Women’s Branch of the IPC (WOBIPC) and Youth Branch: The PBF has contributed to strengthening both the Women’s Branch and the Youth Branch of the IPC, with greater successes reported on the latter. According to interviews, there was a high degree of involvement of youth for the IPC, with many consultations and youth dialogues with palpable youth engagement in legal reform and political processes, such as for constitutional review. It was noted that these consultations urged the subsequent establishment of the Reparation Committee and the need for the TRRC to have a gender unit. Interviews highlighted that while the Women’s Branch has been formed, it was yet to be fully operational, with capacity-related challenges in evidence. While stakeholders expressed a desire to see the Women’s Branch active across the country’s regions, it was active only at the national level at the time of writing.

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<sup>62</sup> No Author. (2021b). Increased Women and Youth participation in decision-making processes and as agents of community conflict prevention. PBF Project Progress Report.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid

<sup>64</sup> Ibid

<sup>65</sup> Ibid

<sup>66</sup> <https://www.gamco.org>

- The Ministry for Gender, Children and Social Welfare (MOGCSW), and related gender policies and strategy: Project documents report that the PBF supported the MOGCSW with the formulation of the government’s recent Gender and Women Empowerment Policy 2023-2033 to follow the 2010-2020 Policy, and the accompanying Gender and Women Empowerment Strategic Plan (2021-2025). Of interest, news publications reveal that the Ministry has been working on revising the Gender and Women Empowerment Policy 2023-2033 and National Children’s Policy to include SGBV and child marriage, an important development in the policy landscape.
- The Children’s National Assembly of the Gambia (CNA): PBF activities have also supported the CNA (56 girls and 49 boys) in conducting community sensitization and awareness raising of children’s rights issues (particularly the promotion of girls’ education). Activities have fed into a CNA regional assembly that included children in decision-making on child welfare services, juvenile justice, children in conflict with the law, and children on the move, with regional authorities such as the technical advisory committee.
- Gender and Youth Desks: PBF in The Gambia supported the establishment of gender and youth desks at the regional level, located in the Women’s Bureau of the Governors’ Offices.
- The Peace Hub: This was established by a former PBF Training of Trainers youth beneficiary in 2020 to provide a network for peacebuilding and social cohesion, and a platform for youth to discuss concerns.

In part through PBF-funded activities, considerable success has been achieved in mobilizing youth and even children into organized platforms and decision-making mechanisms. Ultimately, these various platforms have created dynamic interfaces that open up space and foster opportunities to build bridges for the government to better engage with its citizens in a way that is more inclusive of women and youth.

Inclusive spaces such as these have allowed for a greater diversity of voices to be heard. And while it is not always evident the degree to which views and concerns expressed are listened to, given due weight, and most importantly acted upon and undertaken by authorities, there are a few positive documented examples of note. The Peace Clubs in Bundung Basic Cycle school engaged community decision-makers on issues of concern for children, such as child marriage and balancing education with social and economic activities. Such spaces are considered instrumental in having enabled the expression of priorities that came to be reflected in the revised Gender and Women Empowerment Policy 2023-2033 and National Children’s Policy.<sup>67</sup> Establishment of these mechanism have also contributed to their being dedicated personnel in national institutions committed to the management of gender and youth issues.

Of course, the existence of spaces for voicing opinions and concerns does not guarantee that these voices will be heard or acted upon in informing decision-making. Though these efforts contribute to a political environment that is increasingly in favor of participation, the effectiveness of such mechanisms for engagement are constrained by persisting barriers that hinder women and young people’s participation on the ground. As former Vice President of The Gambia, Honorable Isatou Touray attested, The Gambia has achieved “formal gender equality” on paper with the drafting and signing of various national and regional policies and strategies, “but that the situation on the ground looked a lot different.”<sup>68</sup>

<sup>67</sup> Case international Consultants (2023b) Strengthening inclusive citizen engagement for more accountable governance in The Gambia: Final report.

<sup>68</sup> UN (2022) A Conversation on the Political Empowerment of Women in The Gambia. Press Release.

## 6.2 Mainstreaming Gender and Youth Across the Portfolio

**Finding 9:** The majority of projects across the portfolio consider gender equality as a significant objective (i.e., Gender Marker score 2). However, there is a vast range in the extent to which these projects integrated gender in design, monitoring and implementation. Given the added risks and concerns for women and girls in contexts of transitional justice, there is a low proportion of projects in the portfolio where gender equality is the principal objective (i.e., Gender Marker score 3), and insufficient mainstreaming of gender to capture potential gender dimensions of projects where GEWE is not the key focus.

According to the UN Gender Marker (GM) scoring system<sup>69</sup> that is used as a proxy to measure gender-mainstreaming<sup>70</sup>, there are a number of different PBF projects that contain a significant focus on gender, which has steadily increased overtime across the review period (see Figure 6.1). Indeed, the vast majority of projects in The Gambia are classified as GM2, indicating that gender equality is considered a significant objective (i.e., between 30-79% of total budget is allocated to GEWE).

This growing focus has been advanced in The Gambia through special windows such as the Gender and Youth Promotion Initiative (GYPI) calls for proposals implemented across the country<sup>71,72</sup> that were motivated by calls for action as part of the wider global women, peace and security agenda<sup>73</sup>, and UN targets set for 15% of funds managed in conflict settings to be dedicated to projects that contribute to Gender Equality. There is the shared perception that PBF's establishment of gender and youth initiatives are intended to contribute to reaching these targets. This initiative is also informed by the priorities and gaps identified through the PBF Thematic Review on Gender-Responsive Peacebuilding.<sup>74</sup>

<sup>69</sup>[https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/pbf\\_guidance\\_note\\_on\\_gender\\_marker\\_scoring\\_2019.pdf](https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/pbf_guidance_note_on_gender_marker_scoring_2019.pdf)

<sup>70</sup> Though assessment of the Gender Marker system is outside the scope of the evaluation, it is important to note that it has been recognized across other contexts (see for example the Evaluation of the PBF Portfolio in the Central African Republic) to have the limitation of over-relying on financial measures (i.e., % of total budget allocated to GEWE) as a proxy for gender-mainstreaming. Thus, there is the tendency to falsely assume that 50% of total funding for a workshop that targeted 50% female participants implies a 50% contribution to GEWE, when gender-balanced targeting is a minimum standard for gender equality. Financial measures as a proxy for contributions to GEWE is often perceived to be more of a 'tick box exercise' in The Gambia and beyond.

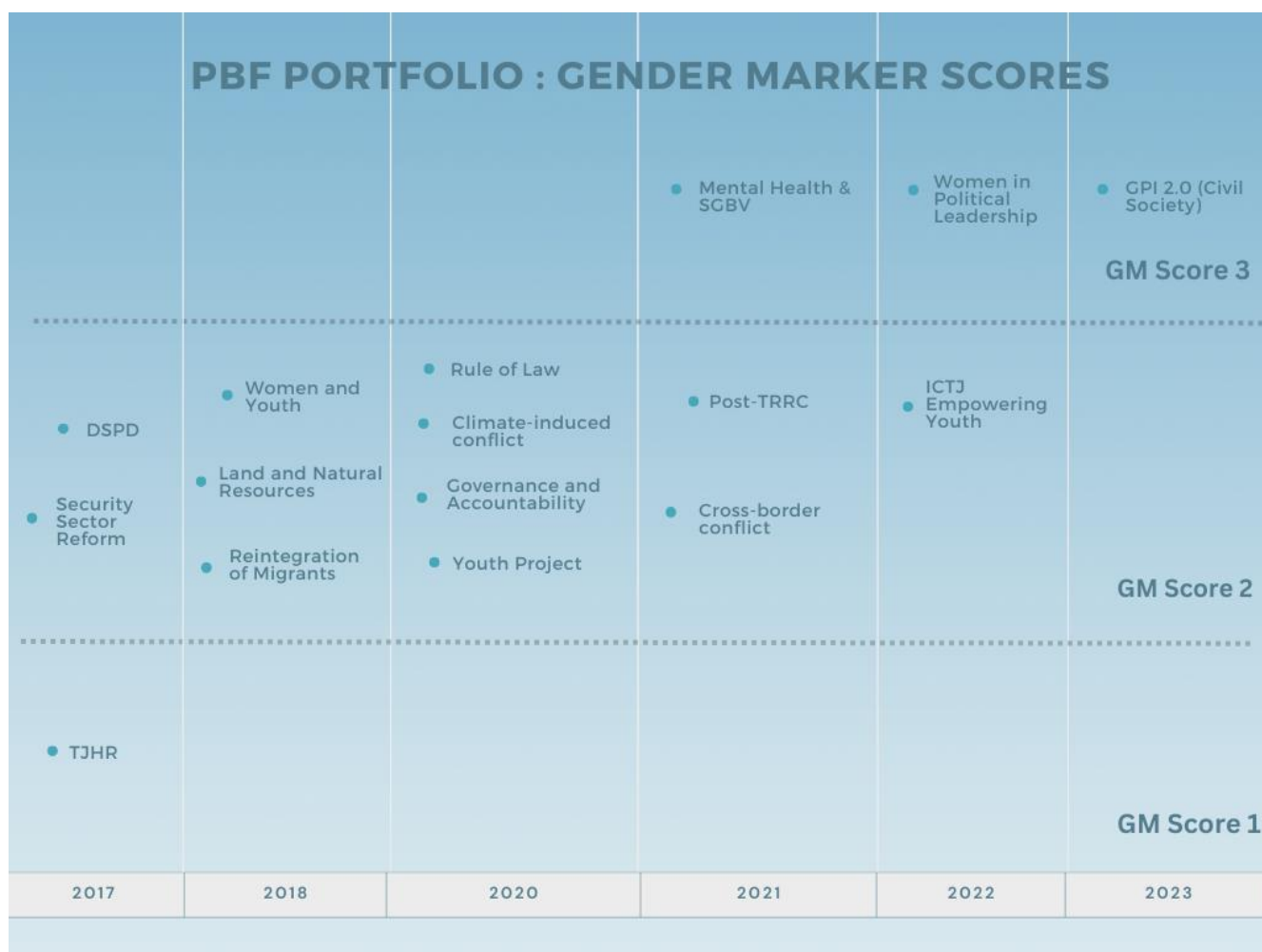
<sup>71</sup> The evaluation included the following in its portfolio review: (1) GYPI: Young women and men as stakeholders; (2) GYPI: Social Cohesion and SGBV; (3) Youth Promotion Initiative (YPI): ICTJ Empowering Youth project (PBF/IRF- 517). Also noting the commencement of Gender Promotion Initiative (GPI) 2.0 and Women Political Leadership projects in 2023 (PBF/GMB/A-5), and thus outside of the evaluation scope.

<sup>72</sup> It is also noteworthy that The Gambia represents one of four countries selected to pilot this new approach in leveraging CSOs with GPI 2.0 project (PBF/GMB/B-4) (commencing in April 2023).

<sup>73</sup> See Action Plan for Peacebuilding, Security Council Resolutions.

<sup>74</sup> <https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/content/gender-responsive-peacebuilding-2021>

Figure 6.1 Trends in Gender Marker Scores



Source: Produced by the evaluation team based on Prodocs of PBF Funded Projects

However, a more detailed, critical analysis of projects scored as GM2 was undertaken, revealing a vast range in the extent to which and how gender was integrated in project design, monitoring and implementation.<sup>75</sup> There is considerable variability in GM2 projects: some have been designed with gender-balanced targeting in ways that are limited to the *participation* of women and girls, while others have included outputs and activities that contribute more *directly* to gender equality and women’s empowerment.<sup>76</sup> For example, the SSR project (PBF/IRF-173) (GM2) does not include gender analysis to inform the design, and contains minimal integration of

<sup>75</sup> Specifically, there was variability in the extent to which different GM2 projects considered: seeking the perspectives of women and girls; responding to the needs and priorities of women and girls; collecting disaggregated data; including gender-balanced targeting; benefitting from a gender specialist or dedicated gender expertise; appointing women in project decision-making positions; designing relevant interventions that appropriately address gender issues; adopting a survivor-centered approach; utilizing gender-sensitive tools and approaches; drawing on inclusive partnerships with women-led CSOs; mitigating risks for women and girls; or considering the differential effects and barriers that hinder young women from safely participating or becoming effective leaders, among other considerations raised by stakeholders.

gender in project outputs and activities that is limited to the participation of women in select activities, with budget documentation indicating that only USD 17,000 was budgeted for outputs with direct action on gender equality (for a project having a budget of more than USD 1.4 million). Whereas other projects with a similar scoring of GM2 have up to 70% of the total budget dedicated to direct action on GEWE, such as the Women and Youth project (PBF/GMB/D-1).

The concentration of GM2 projects in the portfolio and the variability within GM scores has contributed to a concentration of benefits for women and youth among select individual projects and inconsistencies with how gender mainstreaming is understood and achieved across the entire portfolio. Moreover, it is similarly critical to consider potential gender dimensions that are latent in projects where GEWE is not the focus (e.g., differential impacts or potential added risks for different vulnerable groups). Also, while the evaluation notes some steps taken to improve mainstreaming gender over time in response to global guidance,<sup>77</sup> as newer PBF project templates have included additional requests for information on gender to encourage a more gendered lens, challenges remain in operationalization, with project teams less equipped with the specialized capacities required to do so.

Finally, there are very few GM3 projects across the portfolio where gender equality is the principal objective (i.e., minimum of 80% of total budget allocated to GEWE). This is a particular concern given the nature of contextual and ongoing challenges in The Gambia stemming from transitional justice processes that have introduced added risks and concerns for vulnerable populations, particularly women and girls. A low proportion of projects in The Gambia portfolio with a GM3 score, seeing gender equality and women's empowerment stand as the *principal* project objective, raises concerns about the extent to which the portfolio, currently and going forward, adequately addresses the specific added vulnerabilities of women and girls.

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<sup>77</sup> For example the Gender Thematic Review and Gender Marker Guidance Note.



## 7. Sustainability

**Finding 10:** The extent to which PBF interventions have or are likely to produce sustainable results is variable. There is undoubtedly strong commitment to moving the peacebuilding agenda in the country forward, with notable contributions to the creation and strengthening of key national institutions. However, the extent to which physical assets, capacities built, and institutions established/strengthened are sustainable without further planning and/or support varies. There are also indications of more robust and comprehensive project exit strategies being developed at design stage in more recent projects. Yet, there is only partially shared understanding of these strategies among UN Agencies, implementing partners and beneficiaries.

Peace and peacebuilding are clear and shared priorities and commitments of government, CSOs and a range of donors. Reflecting this, in interviews stakeholders expressed a desire to continue engaging in peacebuilding with the PBF, while taking responsibility for moving this agenda forward. Of particular interest, government commitment is evident in national policies, and particularly in the NDP 2018-2021, which articulates the government goal as delivering good governance and accountability, social cohesion, national reconciliation, and a revitalized and transformed economy for the wellbeing of all Gambians. The first of eight strategic priorities outlined in the NDP also indicates the country's intention to move such work forward, with the government "restoring good governance, respect for human rights, the rule of law, and empowering citizens through decentralization and local governance". The more recent NDP 2023-2027 also has a strong focus on conflict prevention and sustainable peace. While important progress has been made, and this with the support the PBF, important barriers persist to the sustainable realization of these commitments.

### Sustainability of Institutions Established

An important component of the PBF support delivered has been the strengthening of national institutions, capacities and operations; first at the government level, where several institutions, departments and units were established or revitalized with PBF support; and second at the CSO and non-government level, where the PBF has supported the strengthening of existing CSOs as well as the establishment of key organizations. The evaluation deems that the strengthening of the institutional landscape has been strategic, seeking to establish strong institutions to address and progress on critical issues in the country – such as human rights, transitional justice, governance reforms, and the fight against corruption. The very fact of working in support of, and through national institutions, both governmental and at civil society level, has been a major contributing factor of sustainability of project results. An important success story in this respect has been the NHRC, which was established in 2017 thanks to support provided through the TJHR (see [Box 8](#)).

While the sustainability of newly established government institutions is considered by several stakeholders to have progressed significantly if not achieved, given core costs are now in many cases covered by government budget lines, the extent to which these institutions have been able to fulfil their mandates following project closure varies. Financial constraints for programmatic delivery have been significant and persisting obstacles. For example, such constraints have hindered the PES's ability to develop and implement programming and ensure

access to service across the country. Indeed, government budget lines provided were reported as solely covering operational cost, with no additional budget to deploy activities included in their workplan.

Staff turnover was also reported by government representatives, whereby institutions lost staff following project closures. Some consulted government representatives attributed the departure of their colleagues to decreases in salaries following project closure. One government representative noted that “they get paid high salaries when they are working during the project and the salaries go down when the project ends and people leave”. It should be noted that changes in salaries are discussed from the onset of projects, with the Agencies providing higher salaries to attract suitable staff during project implementation, and the government covering salary costs following project closure, but using government scales – resulting in pay cuts.<sup>78</sup> Losing staff results in lost experience and capacity, and thus momentum, altogether a threat to the sustainability of results.

Pronounced sustainability challenges are observed in CSOs established and/or strengthened by the PBF. Many of these organizations reported being reliant on the donor community to cover all costs, both programmatic and operational. Some reported a reliance on soft grants from the donor community to cover operational costs, while others reported relying on the administration portion of project grants to cover all operational costs – including salaries, rent, internet access, computers, etc. – and others remained in part operational thanks to volunteer support.

In working with development actors, CSOs are required to assume a significant risk at multiple levels, including by investing in project development without funding and no guarantee of subsequent funding being secured, participating in project meetings with only out-of-pocket expenses supported, and a limited

#### Box 8: National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) Success Story

The NHRC is an important success story illustrating the impact and sustainability that can be achieved through PBF projects. The PBF has provided early financial support for its establishment, covering operational costs such as rent, attracting staff, providing technical support, and supported the drafting of its Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan includes an operational and resource mobilization strategy, which includes key elements to inform the Commission approach to sustainability – including financial projection, current and potential sources of revenue, responsibility for resource mobilization within the NHRC – as well as an implementation plan, with identified key moments to increase visibility of the NHRC in the donor community.

The NHRC is now fully functional with an established secretariat, and two regional offices in the North Bank and Central River regions, which also service the Lower- and Upper-River regions. The NHRC has been able to attract government financing, as well as from other institutions – including UNDP, OHCHR, Network of African National Human Rights Institutions (NANHRI), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the British High Commission in The Gambia. The Commission has also been involved in other projects as an implementing partner, providing additional resources. In 2022, the NHRC Annual Report indicated a 164% increase in non-government funding compared to the previous year. Institutional growth is also noted, passing from five commissioners to now having an additional 40 staff.

<sup>78</sup> Under the DSPD Project, the Final Evaluation recognized this factor as a challenge to sustainability, when moving DSPD staff from the special salary scale supported by UNDP to the lower government salary.

involvement in project decision-making. While these organizations have been able to secure project grants to move the agenda forward in the country, sustainability is not guaranteed, such that they are vulnerable to shifting donor community priorities. While presenting a risk to sustainability, these challenges are not unique to The Gambia, of course, as a reality for many CSOs globally. Nonetheless, this indicates that engaging with the PBF does not necessarily contribute significantly to the sustainability of these organizations, in the current operational model.

### Sustainability of Policy Environment

The PBF has supported several national processes and reforms essential to peacebuilding in the country. While the several processes have successfully taken place (e.g., TRRC) and critical strategies and frameworks have been developed, slow implementation has is evident on several fronts, including in the security sector and implementation of TRRC recommendations. In this regard, the final evaluation of the SSR Project (PBF/IRF-173) noted that “the government’s political will needs to be displayed beyond mere confessions to practical measures backed by national resource allocation to undertake the reforms”. This was further recognized in interviews with stakeholders reporting the need for more political will to move this work forward significantly. Competing priorities and limited resources have also been reported as an important factor to slow implementation, indicating the need for support beyond the drafting and launch of key frameworks, to securing resources for enabling implementation of these frameworks. Securing the support from other donors, as in the case of the EU on SSR in The Gambia, has been a major contributing factor to the continued work in this field, building on the earlier PBF-supported policy and planning outcomes.

### Sustainability of Physical Assets

A triangulated analysis shows that the establishment of strong local structures and/or leveraging and partnering with already well-established local structures, as well as establishing revenue generating schemes have been effective means of sustaining physical assets. Doing so early on in project cycles is an important factor of sustainability. This is notable in the Conflict LNR Project (PBF/GMB/B-1), as witnessed by the evaluation team, where the involvement of community-level beneficiaries, including members of VDCs, in the design of interventions involving the construction of boreholes has led to a strong sense of ownership within a community that is now actively maintaining the infrastructure. The establishment of management committees and revenue generation schemes, through charges for the use of the watering hole, have provided the financial means for the communities to maintain and repair infrastructure as needed (see [Box 9](#)).

Beyond the maintenance of physical assets, limited capacity building pertaining to the operation of essential physical assets threatened sustainability in some cases. This was observed by the evaluation team in the Cross-Border Project (PBF/IRF-430), where limited capacity building on the operation of the computer servers created dependence on the handful of individuals trained for their operation (two per border posts), with sustainability being compromised if there is staff turnover. During one of the field visits, the border-post computer server was found to be inoperative, as all staff that had been trained was not on site. While the training of trainers pursued on the MIDAS system was considered to be effective and sustainable, by interviewees, it is clear that training is not enough, and must be supplemented by adequate planning and staffing.

Technical challenges are also noted as affecting sustainability, including insufficient power generation which limits the use of some equipment, and poor design choices which require the daily involvement of beneficiaries

### Box 9: Borehole Management Committees Success Story

Under the Conflict LNR Project (PBF/GMB/B-1), the PBF financed the construction of two boreholes to provide an alternative source of water to cattle and minimize conflict between herders and farmers. Historically, livestock in the area found themselves traveling several kilometers to find water sources, and damaging farmland along the way, and in some instances, falling victim to theft, all of which gave rise to conflict between communities (and at times, cross-border communities). To ensure the sustainability of boreholes and the newfound peace between communities, management committees composed of community members, were established in communities where boreholes were constructed. These committees play a critical role in the maintenance of the infrastructure. Committee members have notably received training on operation, maintenance and monitoring of the boreholes, pumps and other critical infrastructure to their operation. Management committees are also tasked with ensuring the collection of fees from livestock farmers for the use of boreholes. These fees are subsequently used for maintenance of the infrastructure as needed. These committees still remain operational three years after the closure of the project and have already proven effective in fulfilling their roles, with issues with the infrastructure having been successfully identified and resolved since the project's closure.

to maintain systems that were expected to be functioning with minimal supervision. On the Cross-Border Project (PBF/IRF-430), stakeholders notably reported, and the evaluation team witnessed that inadequate access to suitable electrical power at one border post did not allow for the server and AC unit to run at the same time, despite the need for simultaneous use to avoid overheating. Technical challenges were also noted in the construction of borehole watering points, where the ledge of water points was reported as being too high and inaccessible to smaller animals, requiring community members to provide water for smaller animals in containers next to the watering points. This indicates that while appropriate consultation may take place and foster strong ownership, sustainability challenges may still be noted as technical elements may only later reveal themselves, such that ongoing vigilance and adaptations may be required as projects progress and then beyond their closure.

### Development of Exit Strategies

Project documents provide evidence of exit strategies being developed during design stage, and this for a majority of projects.<sup>79</sup> The evaluation team observed that these exit strategies are developed to varying degrees, with some providing clear action to ensure sustainability, while others include vague actions to be taken with few details (See [Appendix I](#) for more information on these strategies). The evaluation team notes an evolution in exit strategies, with more robust and comprehensive thinking evident at the design stage in more recent projects. The evaluation team specifically observed the following, as of projects approved in 2020:

- Exit strategies are more likely to include considerations and actions specific to scaling or sustained financing of project outputs – including early identification of scaling opportunities, activities related to engagement with the donor communities and/or to increase visibility of the project within the donor community, and thinking related to resource mobilization strategies.

<sup>79</sup> An exit strategy was identified in 14 project documents, with no exist strategy identified for the SSR project (PBF/IRF-173) and the Conflict LNR project (PBF/GMB/B-1).

- Greater diversity in avenues and mechanisms to foster sustainability, as well as a greater level of detail/more advanced thinking on their operationalization.
- Six projects indicate intent to develop sustainability and/or exit plans (although the team was not able to review these strategies or confirm whether these were indeed developed).<sup>80</sup>

Despite the presence of exit strategies, engagement with stakeholders points to inadequate communication of these strategies from Agencies to implementing partners and then onward to beneficiaries. Interviews indicated project beneficiaries and implementing partners were not consistently well informed of the institutional, financial, human, and technical requirements or arrangements for a smooth continuation of activities and/or benefits following project closure. The lack of appropriate knowledge of exit strategies has meant that in some cases, measures that should have been adopted by beneficiaries and implementing partners were not adopted (e.g., early planning for financial sustainability of operations). The involvement of key stakeholders (government, CSOs, communities, etc.) early in discussions related to the sustainability of projects and/or their benefits could notably help identify barriers to sustainability and the adoption of mitigative measures.

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<sup>80</sup> Sustainability plans were noted as planned in project documents for the Governance and Accountability Project (PBF/GMB/A-2), the Youth Project (PBF/GMB/D-2), the Rule of Law Project (PBF/GMB/A-3), the Post-TRRC Project (PBF/GMB/A-4), Cross-Border Projects (PBF/IRF-430), and the Women Political Leadership Project (PBF/GMB/A-5).

## 8. Catalytic Effect

**Finding 11:** PBF investments in The Gambia have been catalytic, both financially and non-financially. The PBF has notably provided foundations for political processes and reforms as well as for the operation of collaborative mechanisms and opportunities for national/community level dialogues. PBF interventions have also informed subsequent investments and resulted in the inclusion of human rights & conflict sensitivity considerations into other projects and programs. By contributing to the establishment and strengthening of institutions, PBF has also enabled these institutions to move peacebuilding work forward and become catalytic agents themselves, while raising their profile and supporting the creation of new partnerships. There is evidence of PBF interventions attracting funding in the country, as well as more limited evidence of scaling and replication of piloting approaches. Finally, PBF interventions have supported improved living conditions in communities, beyond peacebuilding and conflict resolution outcomes.

The PBF was designed to be a catalytic fund, which the Fund defines as being reflected in the ability “to fill strategic financing gaps where other resources are not readily available and catalyze vital peacebuilding processes and/or financial resources by supporting new initiatives or testing innovative or high-risk approaches that other partners cannot yet support”.<sup>81</sup> The catalytic effect of the Fund is sought at both a non-financial and financial (direct and indirect) levels. These effects can be understood as follows:

- **Non-financial effect:** catalyzing political processes, facilitating institutional reforms, and establishing sustainable partnerships, among others.
- **Financial – direct:** funds that have been catalyzed to scale up or extend a specific PBF-funded project.
- **Financial – indirect:** donors’ contributions to the same sector, theme or approach after the PBF-funded project.

The evaluation team assessed the extent to which the PBF portfolio has been catalytic following this framework, noting that both non-financial and financial catalytic effects are in some instances linked, even if discussed once.

### 8.1 Non-Financial

The PBF has undoubtedly been a catalytic fund in The Gambia. Triangulated analysis shows the non-Financial catalytic effect of the Fund and its projects manifests in several ways:

- Providing foundation for political processes and reforms as well as for the operation of collaborative mechanisms and opportunities for national/community level dialogues.
- Informing investments and/or PBF project outputs used by subsequent investments.

<sup>81</sup> DPPA (2023) Localization & Catalytic Effect. Secretary-General’s PBF Community of Practice Quarterly Meeting.

- Establishing and strengthening institutions for advancing peacebuilding and becoming catalytic agents.
- Creating of new partnerships and connecting stakeholders, enabling more holistic approaches.
- Resulting in improved living conditions in communities, and thus peace dividends.

Through interventions such as the TJHR Project (PBF/IRF-172), the SSR Project (PBF/IRF-173), the Rule of Law Project (PBF/GMB/A-3), the Cross-Border Project (PBF/IRF-430) and the Governance and Accountability Project (PBF/GMB/A-2), PBF has provided foundation for political processes and reforms as well as for the operation of collaborative mechanisms and opportunities for dialogues. Processes such as the TRRC have been pivotal in Gambian society, kick-starting a national dialogue on atrocities expressed during the prior 22 years and supporting greater social cohesion and unity in The Gambia. By bringing to light the issues faced, this represented a foundational first step in identifying ways forward and in the planned launch (and early action) of Institutional Reforms, the establishment of a Judicial Reform Commission, and a Public Civil Service Reform as well as the drafting of the Victims Reparations Bill and the Peace and Reconciliation Commission Bill – ultimately paving the way for a peaceful democratic transition. While the implementation of recommendations has been considered slow, the effect of the processes on the broader society and in bringing to light the importance of peacebuilding and transitional justice must be recognized. As the TRRC hearings came to an end, and the recommendations were published in 2021, the catalytic effect of the TJHR is expected to become further evident and observable in the coming years.

Both document review and interviews point to the PBF as having created opportunities for dialogue at the community level, particularly between decision-makers and communities, as well as among communities. Interventions have provided the space for dialogue to take place, initiated dialogue processes, and built awareness of community level stakeholders of their rights and decision-making structures – particularly in the optic of identifying demands that are actionable and feasible. This type of catalytic effect was evident in the Governance and Accountability Project (PBF/GMB/A-2) which focused on the dynamics between duty-bearers and rights holders, with interventions at all levels listed above. As part of the Reintegration of Migrants Project (PBF/GMB/A-1), the refurbishment of youth centers has allowed community members and returnees to conduct meetings, exchange ideas and discuss ways forward on issues relevant to strengthening peaceful communities and development.<sup>82</sup>

A triangulated analysis also indicates collaboration has been furthered through both formal and informal means. Evidence of this is noted at various levels, from the establishment of management structures at community levels to cross-border collaboration. The Cross-Border Project (PBF/IRF-430) has notably strengthened cross-border cooperation through the establishment of two IABCCs and has further done so informally through combined training of Gambian and Senegalese border officials. While the project remains ongoing, consulted stakeholders reported the project had clear impacts in enhancing cross-border collaboration. Given governments' priorities on border security, the likelihood of project outcome sustainability is relatively high.

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<sup>82</sup> The Reintegration of Migrants Final Evaluation (PBF/GMB/A-1) reports that “After their refurbishment, [...] [the refurbished centers] have organized activities like: symposiums of youth leaders, training on volunteer and volunteering, on Policy Document and Sexual Harassment (all of them organised by YAIM), consultation meetings with Councillors, youth meetings, social ceremonies for community initiatives, orientation of community volunteers on Community Based Surveillance (CBS) and rumour detection in communities in relation to COVID 19 pandemic.”



Both documents and interviews also provide evidence of the PBF interventions and related outputs informing subsequent investments, and this even internationally. This was notably the case with the Conflict LNR Project (PBF/GMB/B-1); while not having achieved the level of impact initially hoped at the national level (see [Section 5.1](#)), its project outputs have been used by other institutions, namely WANEP and Activista to advocate for the legal and legislative review of the framework regulating land and natural resources, as reported in project documents. Similarly, the Governance and Accountability Project (PBF/GMB/A-2) saw research findings on mitigation of election violence used in other projects to promote peace ahead of national assembly elections. Finally, the IPC work and the advancement of successful peaceful elections have been recognized as an important success in the region. Stakeholders consulted reported that the IPC has notably been used as a case study for best practices in Sierra Leone. While the team was unable to identify whether this had led to concrete impacts on the ground, it has been a source of inspiration for actors beyond The Gambia.

Documents and interviews also show the PBF has established and strengthened institutions key to moving peacebuilding work forward and becoming themselves catalytic agent. Notwithstanding key sustainability issues and challenges experienced by several of these institutions (see [Section 7](#)), institutions have been able to move key agendas forward in the country, conduct essential advocacy work and increase the visibility and awareness of peacebuilding in the country. The NHRC success story is an example where the catalytic effect of the PBF support has been clear. Annual Reports show the Commission notably undertakes education and awareness work, as well as research, investigation and monitoring. Since its creation, it has received a total of 104 complaints of alleged human rights violations, and conducted investigations and provided recommendations for redress in 87 cases. The Commission also pursued capacity strengthening of duty-bearers for respecting and promoting human rights and monitoring elections, among other things<sup>83</sup> (see [Box 9](#) in [Section 7](#)).

CSOs strengthened and established have also undertaken advocacy and awareness raising activities, while recognizing they would like to do more. Three CSOs reported engagement with the PBF has increased their “credibility” and has enabled them to work with more donors and players in the peacebuilding space. These CSOs noted that following interventions with the PBF, they were approached by other UN and non-UN Agencies to work together. By successfully completing activities as part of PBF projects, CSOs have been able to raise their profile and expand their partnerships. In this regard, one stakeholder noted that, “[w]e are able to have a lot of partnership. Not necessarily funding opportunity but the PBF gave [us] the recognition to get partnerships.”

In this respect, PBF projects were reported as having supported the creation of new partnerships and as having connected different stakeholders, enabling the adoption of more holistic approaches. Agencies consulted reported now engaging with a broader range of government partners and Ministries – including Ministries that historically have rarely collaborated and who now work together on key development and peacebuilding interventions.

Finally, stakeholder consultation also provided important examples of PBF projects improving living conditions of communities, and thus producing peace dividends.

- The Conflict LNR Project (PBF/GMB/B-1) sought to address LNR related conflicts by building boreholes to provide water to animals and prevent their movement on farmland, effectively reducing conflict between herders and farmers. The boreholes have not only provided a water source for the animals but also a water

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<sup>83</sup> NHRC Annual Report offer a range of examples of the important work they have undertaken since their creation, which was supported by the PBF. These are available online on their website: <https://www.gm-nhrc.org/annual-reports>

source for the individuals in surrounding communities. This has been particularly beneficial for women who no longer need to walk several kilometers each day to fetch water. It has also enabled the planting of gardens in one community, which reported better nutrition intake and increased overall health in the community.

- The establishment of the bakery through the Reintegration of Migrants Project (PBF/GMB/A-1) has had downstream impacts on living conditions of communities, beyond supporting the reintegration of returnees. The project has provided food to nearby communities, minimizing their need to travel to Basse and has been greatly appreciated, particularly during Ramadan. The bakery has also generated sufficient profits and has financed the installation of lights in a nearby community that reportedly increased security at night.

## 8.2 Financial

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The catalytic effect of the PBF has also manifested financially, both directly and indirectly. This is evident in terms of:

- Inclusion of human rights & conflict sensitivity considerations into other projects and programs.
- Attracting funding in specific sectors and themes of PBF interventions.
- Piloting approaches for proof of concept and for subsequent scaling or replication.

The PBF was reported by stakeholders as having increased awareness of the importance of peacebuilding in the country, effectively resulting in the inclusion of human rights & conflict sensitivity considerations into other projects and programs. This was notably reported by stakeholders consulted, who reported now including peacebuilding in their programs – whether through the establishment of specific peacebuilding programming, or through added considerations for peacebuilding in programming in other areas. In this regard, one stakeholder noted that the PBF has opened their eyes to the importance of considering peacebuilding dimensions in all interventions, noting that the PBF “reinforced that Peacebuilding is key: your programs might not work if you don’t have peacebuilding.” Beyond their own programming, stakeholders recognized the raised profile of peacebuilding in interventions in the country, with a stakeholder noting that donors “were around but there was no peacebuilding. They are now all trying to include some peacebuilding elements.”

Evidence points to PBF interventions attracting more donor investments in the country. Consulted stakeholders reported having received subsequent financing from other funders following PBF support, including from the EU, ECOWAS, Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), World Bank, as well as Agencies. Several stakeholders, including from UNDP itself, reported that UNDP had notably been able to leverage € 9 million in financing for post TTRC support, particularly for activities around reforms, the judiciary system and local government. Other examples are noted among institutions that were established or strengthened by PBF who reported receiving subsequent operational financing. Such evidence is also found across PBF project documents, including progress reports and evaluations. Key examples include:

- TJHR Project (PBF/IRF-172) has led to other donors now supporting the transitional justice process, including *inter alia*, Irish Aid, International IDEA and the African Transitional Justice Legacy Fund (ATJLF).<sup>84</sup> Additionally, the government signed a USD 3 million grant agreement with the Qatar Government in 2018 to support the TRRC process, the EU pledged € 2 million every three years to support the TRRC, the Constitutional Review Commission (CRC) and the NHRC.<sup>85</sup>
- The Women and Youth Project (PBF/GMB/D-1) has enabled UNICEF to leverage USD 2 million from the Italian International Development Cooperation and an additional € 820,000 for UNFPA to support the project ‘Youth empowerment and demographic dividend’.<sup>86</sup>
- The Reintegration of Migrants Project (PBF/GMB/A-1) indirectly leveraged USD 200,000 from the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) Foundation for Children.<sup>87</sup>
- The Rule of Law Project (PBF/GMB/A-3) was successful in leveraging funds from three additional grants/donors, notably the UNDP (through Trac Fund), UNDP (through the Rule of Law Global Focal Point COVID Response Fund), and the UNICEF Resident Representative. The Progress Report also states the project had effectively attracted others such as GIZ to complement Community Policing and Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance (DCAF) across the country.<sup>88</sup>

It should be recognized that the financial catalytic effect is not always achieved. This is for example the case of the Conflict LNR project (PBF/GMB/B-1), where the final evaluation report states “the project was not able to attract any additional or catalytic funding as a result of its activities.” Similarly, challenges were noted in the SSR project (PBF/IRF-173), with little progress on the implementation of outputs, which has led to discussions of PBF reengaging in this space, and eventually the EU as well. This illustrates inherent risks faced by catalytic and risk-tolerant funds such as the PBF, whereby catalytic effect is not always achieved, or within anticipated timeframes.

Finally, there is some evidence of scaling and replication of PBF activities. This was notably the case of the Kick for Trade initiative which was piloted by ITC under the Climate Induced Conflict Project (PBF/IRF-342), and subsequently replicated in other interventions. Another intervention under the Reintegration of Migrants Project (PBF/GMB/A-1) included the introduction of the electric tuk tuk in Banjul, and stakeholders reported discussions were underway with the EU to provide financing for the scaling of this, as part of a tourism intervention.

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<sup>84</sup> Africa Label Group Inc. (2021). External terminal evaluation of the Transitional justice and Human Rights Project.

<sup>85</sup> No Author. (2019e). Support the capacity of the Government and national stakeholders to establish credible transitional justice processes and mechanisms that promote reconciliation and sustainable peace in The Gambia. PBF Project Document.

<sup>86</sup> Sana M. Darboe & Khadijatou Jallow (2021). PBF End of Project Evaluation – Increased Women and Youth participation in decision-making processes and as agents of community conflict prevention Implemented by UNFPA and UNICEF.

<sup>87</sup> IOM, ITC, UNFPA and WHO (2021). Strengthening Sustainable and Holistic Reintegration of Returnees in The Gambia Mid-term Monitoring & Evaluation PBF Project Report.

<sup>88</sup> Ngwa, S.N. (2022). Strengthening Community Access to Justice, Community Policing and Effective SGBV Response. PBF Project Progress Report.

## 9. Efficiency

### 9.1 Efficiency of Implementation

**Finding 12:** The approach to portfolio development has improved with the creation of the PBF Secretariat, leading to a more transparent process. Agencies have, for the most part, good working relationships with partners to implement PBF projects. However, budgets are not consistently appropriately matched with project expectations, across the portfolio. Also, delays in disbursements from Agencies to implementing partners have created challenges for implementing partners, particularly CSOs. Despite delays, projects have tended to roll out within reasonable timeframes, with reference to the country's eligibility period.

#### Approach to Portfolio Development

From the outset of its presence in The Gambia, the PBF made financial resources available to the country through its IRF modality. These were provided quickly and without heavy administrative processes. Subsequent to the country's successful eligibility process, for its selection of projects, the PBF has balanced peacebuilding expertise, UN institutional priorities, and collaborative practices with key actors, resulting in an approach that has ensured a high degree of project relevance, and thus a good use of financial resources for these purposes. Such funding support was delivered through the Peacebuilding and Recovery Facility (PRF) for a period of five years (2017-2022).

During this period, the project cycle in The Gambia allowed for both a comprehensive *articulation* of priorities and a targeted and efficient *deployment* of financial resources. Peacebuilding priorities for The Gambia were articulated in an analysis of the PDA and in dialogue with key actors and Agencies. These identified key trends and desirable areas of support for the subsequent 12-24 months, and this by the end of each calendar year. Next, the Resident Coordinator (RC), PDA and wider PBF Secretariat team identified some three or four key priorities for the country, which were then shared with the PBSO in New York, to ensure alignment in areas that could be supported. The RC, PDA and wider PBF Secretariat team then entered into a dialogue with UN Agencies in the development of Concept Notes responding to these priorities, with articulation of key results to be achieved over 2-3 year projects. With agreement on Concept Notes, Agencies then developed projects, informed significantly by the PDA at design stage.

Consulted UN Agency stakeholders describe ongoing improvements in the development of projects and the matching with Agencies for taking them forward, both with the creation of the Secretariat and over time. What was formerly somewhat "opaque", according to several consulted Agencies, is now a more "transparent" process, which has resulted in a better matching of Agencies with projects. This is evident in the continuity of Agencies, as discussed in [Section 4.2](#), whereby Agencies are selected to implement project based on their comparative advantage and in line with their niche area. In The Gambia, every project was approved by the RC.

## Approach to Portfolio Implementation

The PBF in The Gambia has required that all projects are managed by at least two, and usually three, UN Agencies. PBF funds were provided to UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes, and CSOs to support the government and other implementing partners in the delivery of projects. The implementing partners in The Gambia have for the most part been well networked entities, able to draw on existing capital for the cost-effective deployment of projects. Specifically, the involvement of national government entities has afforded projects a vast institutional landscape of support (e.g., VDCs, WDCs, Local Governance Councils, Community Development Assistants, etc.). TANGO, in particular, has brought to bear a vast network of NGOs and CSOs, while WANEP has leveraged its network of peacebuilding experts.

UN Agencies consulted for this evaluation report that financial resources from the PBF have been provided without much complication or delay. However, many project implementing partners in The Gambia point to country level UN Agency procurement processes as more complicated and slower than desired. This has reportedly delayed the delivery of projects on the ground, occasionally strained relations between Agencies and implementing partners, and lengthened project delivery. Given that each Agency has its own procurement, management and financial arrangements, implementing partners have identified some they perceived as more cumbersome than others (e.g., UNDP and the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations [FAO]); a matter which merits review so that best practices are implemented.

Overall, UN Agencies have pursued good working relationship with implementing partners, which range from government institutions to CSOs in The Gambia. Given the range of implementing partners, there is compelling evidence pointing to the PBF and UN Agencies working least well with CSOs. While PBF has a business model that is formally suitable for working with implementing partners that are financed and supported by Agencies to implement projects, the model is strained at the point of contact and expectation between Agencies and CSO in particular (see [Section 9.2](#)).

Also, there is evidence of clarity sometimes lacking in the distribution of responsibilities for project management, including tension in the roll out of the Direct Implementation Modality (DIM) and National Implementation Modality (NIM). For example, according to project documentation of the DSPD project (PBF/IRF-237), although it was a DIM project (UNDP as the implementing institution), DSPD wanted to act and lead things on their own; this led to tensions due to misunderstanding of implementation modalities and not fully abiding by them.<sup>89</sup>

Early projects indicate some coordination challenges between Agencies, stemming from a lack of clarity on roles and responsibilities and a focus on implementing their own activities. Moreover, some UN Agencies have not had adequate human and financial resources in place to deploy projects without seeking additional non-project support, including at FAO and UNDP; this kind of cushion is certainly an advantage of having UN Agencies managing PBF projects, though doing so is at the expense of another priority.

Poignantly, it is widely reported by CSOs that budgets are unrealistic and not appropriately matched with project expectations, across the portfolio. They describe budget lines for activities as being incommensurate with real costs (e.g., of transport), which discourages further engagement. Several implementing partners across a diversity of projects identify the timeliness of financial disbursements as problematic. As catalytic projects, the

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<sup>89</sup> The Government of The Gambia, UNDP and UN Secretary-General's PBF (2020). Report on the Terminal Evaluation of the Department of Strategic Policy and Delivery (DSPD) Support to the Office of the President Final Report.

timelines were very short for implementation, about two years or so. So, delays in disbursement by UN Agencies negatively affected project activities and outcomes. Slow disbursements from Agencies to implementing partners have reportedly delayed the timely early development of project activities, according to UN Agencies and implementing partners.

During several different interviews, stakeholders mentioned how this issue of late disbursement of funds and then pressure from Agencies to report on activities quickly leads to compromises on the quality and impact of work given that implementing partners are then forced to rush activity implementation. Late disbursements were also negatively affected by inflationary trends affecting the cost of project materials in the country. In other interviews, government stakeholders describe lengthy waiting periods for tranche disbursements from Agencies after all project activities have closed.

Of note, CSOs are more affected than government actors, given they do not have the same institutional backing and are thus more vulnerable to promised resources, particularly when implementing activities, expecting to be paid against deliverables – even small delays in disbursements have had real implications for organizations and their staff. CSOs also widely indicate that they have often been asked to decrease their budgets through revisions, and to alter their planning in ways that further curtail their ability to deliver meaningful, effective, catalytic and timely work. They suggest that UN Agencies do not adequately understand the challenges facing CSOs implementing UN PBF projects.

### Timeliness of Portfolio Implementation

The PBF portfolio was implemented in the years leading up to, and during the COVID-19 pandemic. Based on document review of the six sampled projects for this evaluation, all were subject to an extension, most as no-cost extensions (NCE), one with a request for additional financial support, and one with both.

- Project 1. TJHR Project (PBF/IRF-172) (NCO/cost-extension [CE]): The Transition Justice Project requested both, on the premise of increasing the delivery of project results.
- Project 2. SSR Project (PBF/IRF-173) (NCE): To continue and expand delivery of the project.
- Project 4. Conflict LNR Project (PBF/GMB/B-1) (NCE): To account for delays in recruitment, addressing capacity issues of implementing partner, and to respond to scarcity of suitable and qualified contractors.
- Project 8. Governance and Accountability Project (PBF/GMB/A-2) (NCE): To account for COVID-19 delays, the presidential election, general implementation challenges, and delays of implementing partner.
- Project 6. Reintegration of Migrants Project (PBF/GMB/A-1) (CE): To diversify project beneficiaries, and supporting government and community structures and establishing coordination mechanisms.
- Project 12. Cross-Border Project (PBF/IRF-430): Requested.

Nevertheless, despite delays, projects have tended to roll out within reasonable timeframes given the eligibility period.

## 9.2 Localization and CSO Engagement

**Finding 13:** The PBF has been able to adequately and meaningfully engage with local partners in The Gambia, and this at the design and implementation stage, and particularly with government stakeholders. Some challenges are noted in engagement with local CSOs and NGOs, with a need for a more strategic engagement and mobilization of civil society actors in transformative dynamics.

The PBF defines localization as meaningful engagement with and provision of financing (both directly or indirectly through Agencies) to local partners, particularly national and local CSOs. The PBF seeks strong and meaningful engagement with local partners throughout the project cycle, ranging from design processes to implementation. Engagement of local partners is particularly important for effective implementation, to build ownership and buy-in from key national actors as well as for the sustainability of projects.

### Localization at Design

Engagement with national stakeholders begins at the very beginning of the strategic cycle, with engagement taking place to inform the development of the PDA Report, which outlines the current country situation and emerging needs. As previously mentioned, this report is the basis for the identification of strategic areas, priorities and budget allocations for the next 12-24 months.

At the project level, national stakeholders – including CSOs/NGOs, government, and private sector (although to lesser extent) – are typically brought into the project design process once priorities are set by the PBSO, PBF Team and PDA. Deep Dive projects indicate extensive consultation with government and CSOs, and to a lesser extent with communities, youth and women organizations. Engagement with national stakeholders informs the design of specific activities to address identified priorities. It notably provides the space to delve into the selected issues more deeply – including conducting an analysis of the issue at hand, mapping of work currently undertaken, identification of gaps in the area and potential entry points. This consultative process then informs the development of 55 concept note and subsequent project proposal, which are co-signed by the RC and the government.

While government stakeholders generally felt engagement has been adequate, variation in adequacy of engagement is noted among CSO/NGO stakeholders, with some indicating a desire for a more meaningful engagement at the design stage. Indeed, while some consulted CSOs felt they were “central” actors from the planning changes, others noted being more involved at implementation rather than design, calling for engagement to be strengthened.

There is evidence of the PBF engaging with women, youth, beneficiaries, and communities – including chiefs, Alkalos, villages, VDCs, etc. to inform project design, implementation as well as involving them in management structures for sustainability. Beneficiaries consulted felt adequately consulted, with evidence of these consultations leading to design changes in projects. Such changes include the relocation of boreholes built under the Conflict LNR Project (PBF/GMB/B-1) following consultation with the community. Several examples of community level management structures developed under PBF projects are also noted, including management committees under the Conflict LNR Project (PBF/GMB/B-1) and forest management committees under the Cross-Border Project (PBF/IRF-430).



Challenges are however noted in quality engagement with women and youth, given the customary practices, whereby men are often at the forefront. Stakeholders reported that while women and youth may be present at consultation, there is not always strong, active participation in exchanges. Separate consultations for women and men were reported as having taken place to improve quality engagement with women. The high level of illiteracy in the country has also created some challenges in Agencies engaging with local populations given many do not speak English. The PBF has reportedly used interpreters to increase participation among these populations. This was a challenge experienced by the evaluation team, who required the use of an interpreter to engage with community level beneficiaries.

### Localization at Implementation

The PBF relies on national actors to implement some of the activities on the ground, including government agencies, CSOs, and others. A review of project documents indicates that nearly all PBF projects rely on at least one government ministry/department as an implementing partner. Government officials have also been represented in project steering committee and oversight bodies, with consulted officials reported they were satisfied with the level of involvement during implementation.

The localization approach of the PBF pays particular attention to engagement with CSOs. The UN PBF supports CSOs through Agencies, with the agreement of the RCO, based on a favorable Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT) micro-assessment framework and then cleared by the UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office (MPTFO).<sup>90</sup> Provisions can be provided for smaller organizations, through smaller forms of support, smaller tranches, capacity building along the way, often at the discretion of UN Agencies. Support can also be provided through the GYPI, that provides funding to CSOs for thematically focused activities based on a global competitive call. In this way, a diversity of CSO types could be drawn in for implementing projects, for which risks associated with working with CSOs were well managed.

Where implementing partners have been identified by several UN Agencies as exhibiting challenges in project implementation and reporting, Agencies like UNICEF have provided capacity-building support to CSOs, as has the PBF Secretariat. **Table 9.1** below provides estimated figures on the sampled project budget percentage that has been allocated to capacity building, reflective of a strong commitment to working with and building the capacities of CSOs, through activities including mentoring, training, study tours, and more.

**Table 9.1 Budget Support for Capacity Building**

	TJHR PROJECT	SSR PROJECT	CONFLICT LNR PROJECT	REINTEGRATION	GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY PROJECT	CROSS- BORDER PROJECT
Capacity Building Component Budget	\$483,280	\$196,500	\$155,000	\$107,768	\$293,400	\$782,924
Total Project Budget	\$4,699,999	\$1,400,000	\$1,100,000	\$700,000	\$1,649,996	\$3,800,000
Percentage of Budget Towards Capacity Building	10%	14%	14%	15%	18%	21%

<sup>90</sup> UN (2023) Revised Partnership Capacity: Micro Assessment.

Nonetheless, evidence points to the PBF through the UN Agencies working least well with CSOs, of all implementing partners. The PBF has been pursued in a projectized orientation with CSOs, who themselves are key actors in national peacebuilding processes, and are also trying to engage more holistically in national transformation. This working approach with the CSO community, which is project-based and not programmatic, and based on short-term projects of two years or so, has hindered a more strategic engagement and mobilization of civil society actors in transformative dynamics. Further, the CSO community has often indicated that they perceive themselves not to be considered as full participants in peacebuilding projects and describe being rushed to complete activities that were late in kicking off, which they say is based on little understanding of how CSOs work and the added-value they could bring. Finally, both CSOs and Agencies reported a need for more flexibility in direct access criteria, to further empower and build CSO capacity to implement projects.

### 9.3 Value-for-Money

**Finding 14: Comprising a small team operating on a modest budget, the PBF Secretariat provides high value-for-money. Also, the portfolio of projects provides high-to-moderate value for money. Yet, the limited communication and visibility of the PBF's overarching purpose and value-add is such that it is misunderstood by a significant proportion of implementing partners, with expectations inadequately calibrated with the Fund's purpose and design.**

The 2017-2022 PBF Portfolio in The Gambia amounted to USD 31 million (USD 33.9 million, if including the PBF Secretariat project), of which USD 28 million was disbursed, for a suite of 16 projects, of which 10 are closed and six (from that period) are still ongoing at the time of writing.

When PBF support started in The Gambia, there was no Secretariat, but only a PDA. Early on, the PBF operated in The Gambia with only a PDA, as has been the case in many other countries. The Secretariat was an outcome under the TJHR Project (PBF/IRF-172), the first PBF funded project in The Gambia, and saw its capacities further strengthened through this project's extension in 2019.<sup>91</sup> For this period of the evaluation, the PBF Secretariat included three staff members: a Programme Coordinator, a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) officer, and a driver.

When created in June 2018<sup>92</sup>, the PBF Secretariat in The Gambia was originally co-hosted in the Office of the President, where it still maintains an office in the DSPD. Now in UN House, the Secretariat is comprised of a small number of people who provide a great deal of support to the UN Agencies with which they work, providing project development support, coordination, information sharing, advisory support during implementation, technical peacebuilding support, quality assurance and M&E. Operating with an annual budget of USD 361,600<sup>93</sup>, covering staff costs, and all support outlined above, the Secretariat is highly valued by UN Agencies and implementing partners, who share the perception that the Secretariat provides high value-for-money.

<sup>91</sup> No Author. (2019e). Support the capacity of the Government and national stakeholders to establish credible transitional justice processes and mechanisms that promote reconciliation and sustainable peace in The Gambia. PBF Project Document.

<sup>92</sup> Note that the date of creation refers to the start date of the first staff member of the Secretariat, the PBF Programme Coordinator.

<sup>93</sup> This refers to the 2022/2023 budget which supported 4 staff members, including Programme Coordinator, a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) officer, and an administration assistant. It is important to note though that the administration assistant had resigned and only served from January-April.

In a small country like The Gambia, the UN Agencies themselves are highly present, well connected (with five UN Agencies located in the same building at UN House), accessible and supportive, in the context of the projects they are implementing. Work on the ground relies on implementing partners, including government agencies, CSOs, and others. These types of partners both bring immense value to the projects, given their relationships with relevant international, national and local actors, and also draw immense value from the support they are provided to advance meaningful and impactful work.

Of the six sampled projects for this portfolio evaluation, the five final project evaluations available for the completed projects point to three projects with high and two projects with moderate value-for-money, and none scoring low in this regard. A few examples from sampled projects are noteworthy, across the value-for-money landscape.

- With modest resources, the PBF supported the creation of the NHRC, which was supported from the ground up with PBF support and is now a key and thriving national institution. Given that resources were efficiently used, TRRC Commissioners were paid for two additional years with residual salary funds from the project. Project resources were used both for budgetary purposes and also beyond, for non-budgetary purposes.
- The project focusing on the reintegration of migrants (PBF/GMB/A-1) used PBF resources in ways that have had significant impact on both the experience of return and the societal perception of returnees. This project has been identified in the final external evaluation as being both cost-efficient and effective, delivering results with high value-for-money.
- The Office of National Security (ONS) received foundational support, which despite some steering committee members' reportedly low commitment<sup>94</sup>, is now, according to a key stakeholder, moving towards a more dynamic engagement and enhanced coordination with the UN, and with renewed support from the EU. The DIM pursued by UNDP (with 98.2% of the budget spent directly through this UN Agency's systems) and outcome-based budgeting were identified as major factors in the project's enhanced efficiency. However, the DIM was also identified as less empowering than the NIM modality, which is generally more cost-effective at building national capacity.
- The Governance and Accountability Project (PBF/GMB/A-2) was slow to start due to the COVID pandemic, and there was a need for implementation to be rushed in the end, with poor planning and resource management indicated in the terminal project evaluation and mentioned by stakeholders. Nevertheless, this project is also recognized as having delivered moderate value for money, given the outcomes produced such as improvements towards transparency and accountability between government and the population, towards political parties being more inclusive of women and youth and towards capacity-building of young people and governance systems. It was generally noted by key stakeholders that more could have resulted had operational and management matters been better handled.

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<sup>94</sup> Nuwakora, C.B. (2020). Terminal Evaluation of The UNDP Security Sector Reform (SSR).

- Of all projects sampled, the Conflict LNR Project (PBF/GMB/B-1) provided the lowest value-for-money given poor project design, which led to a quite less than optimal use of financial resources<sup>95</sup> and implementation issues leading to an NCE. Furthermore, the project had to return a portion of its financial resources to the PBF. However, the project was still identified as moderately good in the terminal evaluation and did some very interesting, innovative, and impactful work that could be scaled up at a later date, despite having delivered much less than planned.

In terms of communications and visibility, there is a generalized belief that the work of the PBF is not widely known or understood in The Gambia, even among stakeholders from whom one would expect familiarity (e.g., government entities and CSOs). There are three reasons that have emerged for this. One, there is little clarity on the extent to which the PBF should become a known and branded entity in the country, as distinct from the UN more broadly. Secondly, there was little capacity at the PBF Secretariat for communicating the work of the PBF, during the evaluation period. Finally, UN Agencies have variable communications capacity such that their work is not being consistently and effectively communicated.

In some instances, confusion was noted among stakeholders who were unable to differentiate between PBF funded work and work undertaken by Agencies through their own funding. Further to this, there is a mistaken assumption that “the UN is the UN”, and that the PBF gets rolled in there; such that the specific short-term, catalytic nature of the PBF is not consistently understood by implementing partners, so that their expectations are inadequately calibrated with the purpose and design of the Fund. This was evident in stakeholders interviews, whereby an expectation and desire for longer-term, sustained support was reported by stakeholders. This has important implementation for the sustainability of achievements (see [Section 7](#)).

## 9.4 Monitoring and Evaluation Processes

**Finding 15: M&E has been an important feature of PBF work in The Gambia from the outset of its engagement, with increased support and focus as the national Secretariat expanded. The M&E work of the PBF Secretariat at the project level has been adequate and improving steadily. Gaps remain in the monitoring and reporting of portfolio level results.**

M&E has been an important feature of PBF work in The Gambia from the outset of its engagement, with increased support and focus as the PBF Secretariat expanded. An M&E Officer was recruited in October 2019. The M&E work of the PBF Secretariat has been adequate and improving steadily, having been targeted by the PBSO for further technical assistance through a technical support mission to The Gambia in 2022 to improve the value of its work.

The PBF Secretariat has provided early and ongoing support to UN Agencies and implementing partners in the development of projects and their results frameworks, indicators and targets. This has often been informed by the high-level input of the PDA, who has helped identify key project outcomes. This has also been informed by

<sup>95</sup> The initial budget for 10 planned boreholes was of USD 237,837, while engineer estimates for the construction of two boreholes already reached USD 179,000. The substantial underestimation of the cost associated with the construction of boreholes, in part associated with the need to import materials, led to only two boreholes being constructed. Moreover, some of the infrastructure planned as part of the project design, including cattle tracks, throughs and solar pumped, were not included in the cost estimates.

the M&E Officer at the PBF Secretariat, who has helped refine indicators in project proposals. There is widespread UN Agency agreement that the project logframe tool has been valuable for project development and M&E practices; it includes designated outcomes, outputs, indicators, and means of verification.

The UN PBF's Evaluation Policy (2022-2024)<sup>96</sup> requires that all funded projects with budgets greater than USD 1.5 million conduct a terminal evaluation. In The Gambia, this policy has indeed been respected, with all PBF projects completed having been evaluated, and they have fed into the current portfolio evaluation, also mandated by the Evaluation Policy.

PBF-supported UN Agencies are required to submit semi-annual and annual reports. These are submitted to the Secretariat and DSPD for feedback and review, and then also to PBSO, intent on generating substantive reporting. Unless building on previous ones, projects are required to produce baselines and endline/terminal evaluations, with support and guidance from the PBF Secretariat, and then PBSO feedback. The feedback and revision process, particularly from the PBF Secretariat, has reportedly improved the quality and consistency of the reporting from Agencies on projects. Human interest stories are also produced along the way, on PBF projects, to share experience beyond project proponents. At the end of the five-year eligibility cycle, the current portfolio evaluation is conducted, to inform the re-eligibility application of The Gambia.

A key concern that was flagged by key informants, referring particularly to the COVID-19 pandemic, was the need for a yet more robust approach to M&E at portfolio level that integrates systematic and comprehensive community level data. Only a portion of projects have conducted baseline/perception surveys, including the Conflict LNR Project (PBF/GMB/B-1), the Governance and Accountability Project (PBF/GMB/A-2) and the Cross-Border Project (PBF/IRF-430). Making some but only modest progress in capturing community level data, the M&E Officer engaged in field-based monitoring interventions, speaking to beneficiaries. Implementing partners on the ground have been participating in project monitoring visits and activities, from CSOs right through to government institutions. Where they occurred, these activities have frequently been done with DSPD, to ensure an alignment in priorities, and for verification in project progress and to address critical issues that will have been identified in annual or semi-annual reports. Such joint monitoring exercises are just kicking off, and are widely perceived as providing outstanding insights across the UN Agency landscape (and sometimes with implementing partners), so that everyone knows what everyone is doing, and duplication is avoided.

Project monitoring has been undertaken in real time, allowing for the disbursement of funds in tranches, against activities and deliverables. This is widely appreciated by interviewed stakeholders from Agencies and implementing partners as an important way to track progress, to feed into project activities, inform adjustments, in addition to more traditional formative and summative evaluative practices. This has also allowed project proponents to identify and address challenges in a timely way. It must be noted that such project monitoring approaches are not consistently practiced by all UN Agencies, and are more common with UNICEF than with UNDP or UNFPA, as examples.

Projects typically allocate 5-7% of budgets for M&E activities, which is considered standard in the field of development evaluation. [Table 9.2](#) provides insight into the quality of monitoring of different projects, and some of the key strengths and limitations of note, from most to least robust. This is based on a detailed review of M&E project-based reporting.

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<sup>96</sup> PBF. (2023d). PBF Evaluation Policy (2022-2024).

**Table 9.2** Quality of Project Monitoring

Highly Robust	Good	Poor
<p><b>TJHR Project (PBF/IRF-172):</b> This project has pursued excellent M&amp;E practices and is noted for the quality of its data collection, which has enabled robust reporting.</p>	<p><b>SSR Project (PBF/IRF-173):</b> This project has pursued sound monitoring based on an approach that has favoured a simple and clear tracking of and reporting project activities. The main limitation of this project is that outcomes are not clearly tied to some national priorities for the sector, and there are not strong benchmarks or indicators in place.</p> <p><b>Reintegration of Migrants Project (PBF/GMB/A-1):</b> A good monitoring system was put in place, that integrated gender-disaggregated data collection and reporting. The system evolved from the first to the second phase of the project, to account for and involve greater diversity of stakeholders (e.g., national authorities, etc.).</p> <p><b>Governance and Accountability Project (PBF/GMB/A-2):</b> This project's M&amp;E system was recognised as having a good baseline, valued participation of young men and women in the end of project evaluation, and with a good use of a perception survey for data collection.</p> <p><b>Cross-Border Project (PBF/IRF-430):</b> An M&amp;E workplan was developed. A baseline assessment was conducted in project areas.</p>	<p><b>Conflict LNR Project (PBF/GMB/B-1):</b> The M&amp;E system disaggregated data and reporting by gender and age. However, it did not comprehensively track the key indicator on number of disputes resolved through the traditional system. The targets defined for this project were not realistic, as the project was too ambitious, and the timelines were also not realistic. The M&amp;E system was not well designed overall and did not serve its intended purposes.</p>

In terms of Portfolio level results monitoring, PBSO national level M&E design requirements have changed overtime, moving from the detailed measurement of portfolio level progress to the advancement more generally of thematic priorities. This has brought a rethink of the approach, more recently, towards the development of a middle ground between the two going forward, with the recent introduction of an SRF and portfolio level data generation and reporting. This reflects a balanced approach intent on generating usable data and knowledge, from a diversity of stakeholders, with an appropriate investment in human and financial resources.

However, as The Gambia is now reaching the end of its eligibility period, these changes have not yet been introduced in the country. A gap in the Fund's ability to measure and track portfolio-level results in The Gambia is noted. While efforts were evident with the development of a results framework and M&E strategy, the timing of these activities has meant that no portfolio level reporting has yet taken place. Country-level peacebuilding progress reporting is found in the PDA Annual Report, which captures progress along five outcomes, on an annual basis, with expected results up until 2023. However, the PDA report captures peacebuilding process beyond the PBF, while flagging the Fund's contribution throughout.

# 10. Conflict-Sensitivity, Risk Management and Risk Tolerance

## 10.1 Conflict Sensitivity

**Finding 16:** Conflict sensitivity was systematically integrated into project design and to a lesser extent in implementation across the PBF portfolio in The Gambia. There are strong indications of an evidence-based approach to various conflict drivers being considered in project design. Across the portfolio, PBF-approved and financed projects in The Gambia were informed by contributions from conflict experts and comprehensive conflict analyses prior to implementation. These conflict analyses identify main conflict drivers in The Gambia to inform PBF interventions and identify priority areas. Projects also received technical support and advice from conflict experts at the design stage, ensuring a conflict sensitive approach from the outset.

### Drawing on Conflict Expertise

PBF-funded projects have strategically drawn on expertise from across the UN system to ensure conflict-sensitivity in project design. Within the UN system, PBF projects benefit from advice and technical expertise from conflict experts in the design of projects to ensure conflict-sensitivity and alignment with PBF's strategic objectives. There is also moderate evidence of projects benefiting from the continued presence and engagement of such expertise throughout project implementation.

For example, the UN PDA, through the Joint UNDP-DPPA Program on Building National Capacities for Conflict Prevention, collaborated closely with the PBF Secretariat and country team in conducting conflict analyses. The PDA assisted in the development of concept notes submitted to the PBF for approval. The PDA was also involved in convening the PBF Secretariat and relevant Agencies in project design workshops, bringing analytic conflict sensitivity to bear on their design.

There is evidence that input from the PDA and other technical experts have informed a conflict and context-sensitive approach to programming and risk management across the project portfolio. For example, PBF-funded projects include an explicit conflict-sensitive approach to risk management, as seen in key planning and design documents.<sup>97</sup>

### Evidence-based Approach to Project Design

All investments in The Gambia are informed by comprehensive conflict analyses and conflict sensitivity assessments conducted prior to implementation, in coordination with the PDA, the PBF Secretariat, and the PBSO. These conflict analyses informed project design, guiding the identification of partners and implementing partners, and demonstrating a comprehensive, nuanced approach to main conflict drivers in The Gambia. In addition, conflict analyses demonstrated keen attention to local contexts pertinent to the thematic focus areas

<sup>97</sup> See, for example, risk mitigation matrices in project documents across the portfolio, available in project documents.



covered by each project (gender, youth, rule of law, land reform, among others). There is clear evidence that these analyses went on to inform a conflict-sensitive approach to project design and to a lesser extent, implementation.

Within the evaluation sample, worth noting are the **Conflict LNR Project** (PBF/GMB/B-1) and the **SSR Project** (PBF/IRF-173). The LNR conflict assessment, financed through the PBF, provides a comprehensive analysis of The Gambia's land tenure system and key conflict drivers, including challenges surrounding land governance and land dispute resolution mechanisms. In methodological design, the assessment demonstrated attention to cross-cutting issues in the selection of survey respondents in ways sensitive to potential conflict drivers stemming from differences according to region, gender, ethnicity, education and literacy rates, and income.

The pre-implementation conflict analysis also identified main local conflict drivers including competition over access to water, feeding grounds, and cattle tracks as the source of long-running tensions between farmers and cattle herders. In line with the observations made in the conflict analysis, ways in which the project subsequently tried to address disputes between livestock owners and farmers demonstrate sensitivity to local context. Local communities, for example, were directly consulted to inform project design and were called upon to collaboratively demarcate Forest Park boundaries and cattle tracks. This was done with the goal of ensuring local adherence and buy in, demonstrating a clear, conflict sensitive approach. According to progress reports, this established clear boundaries and rules between both communities that eased economic pressures on cattle herders who are sometimes forced to sell their livestock as a result of the conflict. Nevertheless, the project still faced important hurdles over the course of implementation, especially with regard to the development of a national land use policy – a key objective – due to inadequate consideration for the historical and political complexities surrounding land tenure arrangements and the property rights system in The Gambia.

PBF support to the SSR process is another key example that demonstrates conflict sensitivity in project design. PBF provided funding to support the government's assessment (Outcome 1 – Activity 2) of defense and security institutions. The assessment explicitly integrated a conflict sensitive and gender-responsive approach. Data in the assessment, for example, was disaggregated by sex, age, and geographic region, with particular attention to the security needs and perceptions of women, girls and children in addition to different ethnic groups. There is some evidence that the SSR process would see national authorities adopting a proactive approach to sustaining security sector reforms. In the case of the **SSR Project** (PBF/IRF-173), government stakeholders realized the need to better communicate the objectives of security sector reforms to combat misperceptions of the process and to secure buy-in from the wider public. Security services have consequently developed outreach and communications strategies to foster public trust, thereby preventing misunderstanding of the reform process and to avert future tensions.

Based on interviews conducted with PBF project teams and the PDA, there is evidence of keen attention paid to local and relevant global contexts and conflict drivers in project design and implementation. Sensitivity to international tensions was evident, for example, in the **Cross-Border Project** (PBF/IRF-430) where project implementation staff remained mindful of the border demarcation tensions between Senegal and The Gambia by ensuring the infrastructure financed did not require the identification of the national border. The project worked with both Gambian and Senegalese authorities to develop mutual understanding and facilitate partnerships, for example, through mutual training sessions. According to national authorities involved in the Cross-Border Project (PBF/IRF-430), the project has built capacity in various national institutions and has enabled partnerships to jointly address issues like cross-border crime. However, it is important to recognize that PDAs

are not involved during actual project implementation, and thereby do not contribute directly to conflict-sensitive outcomes.

### Conflict Sensitive Approaches in Implementation

Across the portfolio, project planning and design documents require Agencies and other implementing partners **to adopt a gender and conflict-sensitive approach in project implementation**, in line with prevailing UN standards. A review of project design documents across the portfolio points to their systematically including a risk management matrix and risk mitigation strategies for Agencies that integrate elements of conflict sensitivity. They include assessments of the extent to which, for example, social or political instability can compromise the effective implementation of a project. Project design documents require Agencies and implementing partners to ensure that all interventions uphold key human rights-based principles of “Leave No one Behind” and pursue a “Do no Harm” approach. For example, SSR Project (PBF/IRF-173) design provides a detailed overview of project management and coordination protocols as well as risk mitigation measures for UNDP. The UNDP country office recruited a PDA to provide technical assistance (TA) and advisory support during project implementation.

**Implementing partners also undergo a rigorous process of selection** prior to approval of a grant in coordination with the PBF Secretariat. While Agencies were selected in line with their respective areas of strength and expertise (e.g., FAO on land use management; UNDP) for each PBF-funded project, it remains, however, unclear the extent to which the capacity of Agencies to deal with challenges in conflict situations, in particular, was adequately assessed or whether context monitoring mechanisms were used in a systematic way.

Having said this, Agencies and implementing partners demonstrated some internal capacity for ensuring an ongoing conflict-sensitive approach. In general, Agencies interviewed considered their engagements to have been anchored in a conflict-sensitive approach. Further, they report that PBF project objectives are broadly aligned with relevant international conventions such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child that highlight the needs of women and children and vulnerable communities.

On the matter of implementation, there were **established and on-going context monitoring systems and/or activities to capture** unintended impacts of interventions for a number of projects. In the case of the Conflict LNR Project (PBF/GMB/B-1), conflict context monitoring demonstrated sensitivity to local context, engaging with community leaders such as the Alkalo. Also, PBF and Agency administrative practices related to project timelines and disbursements have allowed for a certain flexibility and sustained engagement in ways sensitive to changing local context. For example, a number of projects across the portfolio received no-cost extensions in light of implementation delays due to political risks or contextual factors (see [Section 10.2](#) below for further discussion).

### Local Ownership and Civil Society Engagement

There is evidence of implementing partners adopting innovative and conflict-sensitive approaches to implementation as well. **Local and traditional conflict resolution mechanisms** were used in various projects. Such traditional approaches to peacebuilding are less expensive, readily available and accessible and when enlisted into a peace infrastructure can serve as durable and sustained peacebuilding mechanisms.

In the context of the **Conflict LNR Project** (PBF/GMB/B-1), implementing partners drew on regional, local, community and traditional institutions in the implementation of projects. Project design documents demonstrate efforts to consult local community members and leaders, including the Alkalo, in the design and selection of beneficiaries in the lead up to implementation. Capacity building meetings were organised with local and regional authorities and community leaders to raise awareness around conflict issues and possible resolution

approaches, with the aim of collectively pursuing alternative and locally-relevant mechanisms to address tensions between farmers and herders. As these were indeed pursued, such a consultative and community-led approach was more time-consuming, contributing to implementation delays. For instance, coordination between local community leaders over the demarcation of agricultural and pastoral tracks required an important investment in time. As a result of such delays, the PBF consequently granted a no-cost extension to the project to complete activities.<sup>98</sup> Doing so was certainly a conflict sensitive practice, in the sense of recognizing conflict issues, programming around them, and adapting project approaches to conflict dynamics.

There are examples to be drawn from across the PBF portfolio among sampled projects, with the **SSR Project** (PBF/IRF-173) further highlighted. Here, PBF-funded interventions, implemented by UNDP and OHCHR, have sought to enhance security sector accountability and develop independent oversight mechanisms involving civil society. Ensuring national ownership and leadership over security sector reforms has been a key objective of the project from the outset, while fostering public trust in the reform process to mitigate political risks. Towards this end, the project pursued the following:

- Supported media campaigns and public communications initiatives on the SSR process with a focus on the intersections between human rights and security issues.
- Provided technical advisory support to security institutions to address accountability and human rights issues.
- Implemented confidence-building measures through national information campaigns and dialogue platforms involving CSOs.
- Involved CSOs in national consultations, dialogue, platforms, and training workshops conducted in partnership with the NHRC.

There are indications that such efforts have persisted through 2022 and 2023, towards deepening civil society engagement in SSR, towards fostering public trust and confidence in the SSR process.<sup>99</sup> While the climate of distrust persists, posing political risks to the overall sustainability of reform efforts, the continued attention and sustained UN engagement with the SSR processes confirms the sensitivity to conflict context of this project, intent on supporting the long-term commitment and political will of national authorities.

## 10.2 Risk Management

**Finding 17: PBF interventions reviewed across the portfolio demonstrate adequate attention to risk at both design and implementation stages. Detailed risk assessments were conducted in the lead up to implementation. There is also evidence that implementing partners for the most part developed and adopted appropriate risk mitigation measures in response to diverse political and contextual risks.**

### Understanding of Risk at Design Stage

Risk assessments were carried out before the start of each project, and risk mitigation mechanisms were developed by Agencies. **These pre-project implementation risk assessments** demonstrate some degree of

<sup>98</sup> Cherogony, M., Baldeh, N.Y., Assaf, J. and Owens, A.C. (2022). Draft Terminal Evaluation of the Project Addressing Conflict over Land and Natural Resources in The Gambia. UNJP/GAM/041/PBF Draft Report for comments, p.36, Par. 142.

<sup>99</sup> Mc Carthy, P. (2023a). UN The Gambia. PDA Report The Gambia (January-March 2023).

analysis of cross-cutting factors, including buy-in from government partners and other national counterparts as well as awareness of political risks potentially affecting effective implementation.

These risk assessments clearly informed project design. Across the portfolio, design and planning documents provide a detailed breakdown and ranking of potential risks to implementation (high, medium, low) including likelihood of occurrence and likelihood of impact of these risks. Each project is assigned a **risk marker score** to assess the degrees of risk to achieving outcomes. The majority of projects are considered as carrying medium risk to the achievement of results, with 11 projects reporting a medium risk (risk marker score of 1), followed by three projects exhibiting high risk (risk marker score of 2) and two considered as having low risk (risk marker score of 0). Interventions that were considered as exhibiting the highest level of risk include the SSR Project (PBF/IRF-173), the Reintegration of Migrants Project (PBF/GMB/A-1) and the Post-TRRC Project (PBF/GMB/A-4).<sup>100</sup> On the other hand, the Conflict LNR Project (PBF/GMB/B-1), and the ICTJ Empower Youth Project (PBF/IRF-517) were both considered as exhibiting the lowest level of risk.

In the case of the SSR process, a project marked as particularly high risk, a risk assessment was conducted prior to project implementation with the support of West Africa Regional Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR-WARO) and the Rule of Law, Justice, Security and HR Specialist/RCO, with a risk mitigation strategy developed with particular attention to UN Human Rights Due Diligence Policy (HRDDP).<sup>101</sup> A separate CDA was also conducted to inform the SSR intervention and to allow for a flexible approach to changing dynamics on the ground, especially in-terms of engaging with government stakeholders and tracking any changing dynamics as far as the security terrain was concerned.

Projects in the evaluation sample reviewed systematically integrated a risk management matrix in design documents. These matrices include detailed attention to political and other contextual risk factors to project implementation and recommended concrete mitigation measures to address them (See [Appendix I](#) for an example of risk management matrix).

### Implementation Risks and Mitigation

Across the portfolio, stakeholders underscored political factors and the level of commitment of government stakeholders as key risks to sustaining project outcomes over the long term.

**Political risks.** Stakeholders mentioned risks surrounding the integrity and sustained commitment of government stakeholders. Corruption and political influence were key issues flagged in the SSR Project (PBF/IRF-173), with some stakeholders<sup>102</sup> mentioning the instrumentalization of the process by government stakeholders and expressing concerns that providing any core SSR support could end up reinforcing vested interests.<sup>103</sup>

Ensuring sustained political and public support for reform efforts continues to be a challenge. At least two stakeholders involved in implementation in addition to independent evaluation reports note the risk that government-led policy and legal reforms be used opportunistically by government counterparts in a way that

<sup>100</sup> Based on the risk marker scores in risk management matrices in project documents across the portfolio.

<sup>101</sup> No Author. (2020c). Strategic Support of the National SSR Process in The Gambia Towards an Effective, Responsive and Accountable Security Sector. PBF Project Document; No Author. (2020d). Strategic Advice and Support to the Security Sector Reform and Governance in The Gambia. PBF Project Progress Report.

<sup>102</sup> Interviews with stakeholders involved in project implementation and pre-implementation conflict analysis.

<sup>103</sup> Nuwakora, C.B. (2020). Terminal Evaluation of The UNDP Security Sector Reform (SSR); No Author. (2020d). Strategic Advice and Support to the Security Sector Reform and Governance in The Gambia. PBF Project Progress Report.

could undermine reform efforts. The risk mitigation matrix for Phase 2, Activity 3 (Support the implementation of a resource mobilization strategy for the security sector) also integrates a risk mitigation matrix that highlights political risks.

The SSR process, enabled by PBF support, may also have created high expectations and sustaining this will be a challenge for the government.

**Risks to sustainability.** Inadequate exit strategies and/or of their implementation, and consequent financial dependency on the PBF were mentioned by certain stakeholders as important risks to sustainability. Most notably in the case of the TJHR (PBF/IRF-172), Conflict LNR Conflict (PBF/GMB/B-1), and SSR Projects (PBF/IRF-173), government partners are not seen to have the adequate capacity or commitment to push through with reforms and prevent backsliding (see [Section 7](#)).

In the TJHR Project (PBF/IRF-172), Agencies and implementing partners mentioned that the possibility of unexpected political risks encountered over the course of implementation had not been fully taken into account in the design phase. For instance, government actors sometimes felt inadequately consulted or excluded from the process, or report not having been sufficiently consulted, leading some to refuse to continue participating in the process or resulting in a duplication of activities.

Similarly, staff turn-over in government administrations affected implementation of the DSPD Project (PBF/IRF-237): i.e., administrative staff at the Office of the President changed frequently, leading to sometimes contradictory perceptions and levels of understanding of the project. Close engagement, sensitization and ongoing dialogue with government counterparts at every stage of the process have been underscored as key factors to ensure sustained buy-in.

There is nevertheless strong evidence that PBF funding has helped ensure **strong government ownership over reform efforts** while demonstrating awareness of potential risks surrounding the commitment or capacity of national implementing partners or government stakeholders. The PBF approach to involving government actors from design to implementation is considered good practice to avoid and mitigate conflicts of this nature. Across various projects, there is evidence of Agencies and implementing partners adapting their approaches to mitigate political risks, to ensure quality, sustained engagement with stakeholders. Within the evaluation sample of six projects the SSR (PBF/IRF-173) and TJHR Projects (PBF/IRF-172) are exemplary in this respect.

**Risk Mitigation.** Across the portfolio, project planning and design documents integrate **risk mitigation measures for both UN and non-UN-recipient organizations**, requiring them to adopt a gender and conflict-sensitive approach in project implementation, in line with prevailing UN standards. Project design documents and contracts also stipulate administrative arrangements that include requirements around accountability, transparency, legal and reporting obligations incumbent on recipient organizations (administrative agencies, coordinating agencies, etc.) of PBF funds.

In the implementation of PBF-funded projects, there is also evidence of adequate coordination between the PBF Secretariat, Agencies and implementing actors. The **convening role played by the PBF Secretariat** in bringing together these actors has been mentioned as critical in risk mitigation, allowing for problems to be addressed collectively. In some cases (e.g., the SSR Project (PBF/IRF-173)), project managers, with support of the Human Rights Advisor and PDA, monitor project implementation and potential risks in accordance with the HRDDP. It is, however, unclear to what extent such mechanisms to **monitor or track such risks** were deployed or used in a systematic way across the portfolio.

Final and mid-term independent evaluations of at least three projects reviewed (Conflict LNR [PBF/GMB/B-1], SSR (PBF/IRF-173), TRRC [PBF/GMB/A-4]) reported that **coordination and communication mechanisms** were not always structured in ways favorable to sustained engagement with government stakeholders. This sometimes led to delays in implementation or lack of trust between implementing partners and government counterparts, as in the case of the Conflict LNR (PBF/GMB/B-1) and TRRC projects (PBF/GMB/A-4) for a time.

### 10.3 Risk Tolerance and Innovativeness

**Finding 18:** Projects across the PBF portfolio have demonstrated a relatively high degree of risk tolerance, by default, given the difficult operational context characteristic of The Gambia’s political transition. Innovation is happening to varying extents across the portfolio, with evidence of engagement of civil society and non-traditional partners, including local community actors and the local media ecosystem, implementation of innovative activities and tools, and support for innovative work at the peacebuilding-development nexus. Innovative approaches were found to yield good results and, in some instances, as having generated important catalytic effects.

The PBF Strategy (2020-2024) reiterates the risk-tolerant nature of the Fund and the importance of a holistic approach to programming with a view toward mitigating risks of return to conflict. Risk tolerance is framed as one of the PBF’s six principles. This risk tolerance is further exhibited in the Fund’s intent to increasingly support new approaches in high-risk environments. Moreover, beyond a catalytic fund, there are inherent risks related to the sustainability of interventions, as sustainability is strongly dependent on national capacity and national and international commitments.

In interviews, stakeholders reported being satisfied with the level of risk and innovativeness of the Fund. Agencies and government representatives reported the PBF enabled them to work in innovative ways, including through engagement with non-traditional partners, implementing innovative activities and tools, and working in high-risk and politically sensitive areas.

Agencies reported having been able to work with non-traditional partners and bring on board stakeholders who might not typically be involved in peacebuilding processes supported by a catalytic fund. Across the portfolio, there were explicit efforts to engage with local community stakeholders, civil society, and media actors. For example, the **Conflict LNR Project** (PBF/GMB/B-1), was able to engage non-traditional stakeholders beyond traditional partners like the Ministry of Agriculture, Environment, and Fisheries, to include implementing partners like WANEP and Alternative Dispute Resolution Secretariat (ADRS) to conduct conflict resolution processes and trainings, while working with more traditional community actors. In other cases, non-traditional actors were brought on board when working in higher-risk political sensitive areas like Foni where support for the former president remains high.

The PBF has also financed innovative, community level activities, which go beyond traditional peacebuilding. Interventions have brought together communities through sports, arts, and economic means, to strengthen ties and dialogue. In the **Reintegration of Migrants Project** (PBF/GMB/A-1), the project sought to increase contact between returnees and non-migrants through economic activities, including the preparation and delivery of baked goods. Another example is found in the Climate Induced Conflict Project (PBF/IRF-342), which included a



three-day football minicamp and solidarity match, as well as four film shows and cookout sessions. Beyond being innovative, these activities were reported as being effective in reducing conflict and, in the case of the Reintegration of Migrants Project (PBF/GMB/A-1), as contributing to the reduction of stigma towards returnees.

Innovative approaches also included mobilizing the media sector and developing communications strategies to foster citizen engagement and build trust in reform efforts. It is worth recognizing the strategic use of The Gambia's national media ecosystem – identified in the CDA as a key driver of peace and stability – to reach communities. Media training and outreach to journalists was a key part of the Governance and Accountability Project (PBF/GMB/A-2), which involved the training of community radio station managers and the organization of townhall meetings with media professionals to raise awareness on access to information with the aim of promoting political transparency and trust in public institutions.

Awareness-raising efforts enabled through partnerships between UNDP, The Gambia Press Union, and other implementing partners helped encourage dialogue around the Access to Information Bill eventually passed in 2021.<sup>104</sup> Civil society organizations were also trained in the use of social media platforms to promote citizenship engagement on transparency and accountability issues, while promoting better understanding of public policies and reform efforts, especially in the context of the TRRC process.<sup>105</sup> Along similar lines, a communications strategist was hired to support government institutions reach out to media and journalists<sup>106</sup> to promote better understanding of the government-led SSR process and mitigate risks of public backlash or distrust as identified in project design documents.

Finally, of the six sampled projects, the Conflict LNR (PBF/GMB/B-1) and Reintegration of Migrants Projects (PBF/GMB/A-1) were situated at the peacebuilding-development nexus, which is considered innovative and is in line with growing UN concern and intent for nexus-based interventions. This approach resonates with consulted stakeholders, who highlighted the interconnectivity of peacebuilding and development in the country, emphasizing that without development, long-term sustained peace could not be realized. The inclusion of economic empowerment and revenue generation components in these projects is recognized as having been particularly effective in building peace while producing non-financial catalytic effect in communities – particularly related to improved community well-being and quality of life (see [Section 8](#)).

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<sup>104</sup> The Gambia Press Union (2021). Strengthening Community Access to Justice, Community Policing and Effective SGBV Response. Activity Report, September 2018-September 2021, pp. 26-27.

<sup>105</sup> Case international Consultants (2023b) Strengthening inclusive citizen engagement for more accountable governance in The Gambia: Final report.

<sup>106</sup> Office of National Security (2023). Media Briefing on Security Sector Reform Process in The Gambia; Nuwakora, C.B. (2020). Terminal Evaluation of The UNDP Security Sector Reform (SSR), p. 47



# 11. Conclusion and Recommendations

PBF support in The Gambia has been of critical and timely importance to the country's transition from dictatorship to democratic rule. The recommendations provided below speak to both the PBF's work in The Gambia and more broadly on the PBF itself. They are intended to heighten the internal coherence of the project portfolio and thus develop a yet more programmatic approach in The Gambia and perhaps elsewhere. They draw attention to possible ways of furthering the UN's commitment to localization and on matters of gender and youth, with a focus on sustainability considerations. Recommendations are also provided on improving monitoring and reporting, capacity strengthening, and learning. They are rooted in acknowledgment of the outstanding and beneficial work of the PBF in The Gambia, while aiming to support the PBF as it strives for global and contextually relevant excellence.

## On Complementarity, Coordination and Synergies

**Recommendation 1:** The PBF Secretariat should pursue existing, and introduce additional, mechanisms for developing complementarities and strengthening both coordination and synergies across the portfolio.

In The Gambia (and perhaps elsewhere), an important and ongoing challenge for the PBF arises from the need to ensure strong complementarity, coordination and synergies at portfolio level, across a range of many, sometimes diverse, and often complementary projects, while working with overlapping partners engaged in PBF and related external initiatives. Thus, PBF needs to continue and further systematically pursue a range of mechanisms and activities for ensuring such complementarity and coordination internally, and synergies with external initiatives. To do this, PBF should increase opportunities for cross-project interactions, at design and implementation.

At the design stage, before project design is finalised, lead project Agencies should present draft designs to other Agencies, and then selectively to (potential) implementing partners, to explore opportunities for synergies, avoid overlaps, and ensure an appropriate final selection of implementing partners. During implementation, the PBF Secretariat should increase the regularity and frequency of cross-project synergy meetings, involving a range of actors from Agencies through to key implementing partners. Given that projects in (post-)conflict contexts confront challenges and changes, doing so would allow for provision of project updates, and experience sharing across Agencies on adaptation mechanisms. The pursuit of greater synergies will ensure that implementing partners are not working on multiple projects in isolation of one another, and are able to plan their engagement more strategically, effectively and efficiently, taking advantage of PBF and external opportunities as they arise.

*Linked to Findings 3 and 4.*

## On Localization

**Recommendation 2:** The PBF Secretariat should further improve modalities for working with CSOs and other local partners at country level, notably by developing aspirational guidance for their participation in project design, implementation, and reporting; with such guidance to be followed by Agencies in country.

CSOs and other local partners are key stakeholders in the peacebuilding landscape of The Gambia, seeking to be yet more actively involved in PBF-supported projects and activities, as early as possible in the project cycle. The PBF (and the UN more broadly) highly value working with CSOs and local partners, but without adequately

prescribing the type, level and quality of engagement. CSOs and other local actors seek greater agency, responsibility, impact, and sustainability in their work with PBF-supported Agencies, without having to carry all of the risk in doing so. CSOs and other local actors seek greater operational predictability, opportunity for strategically planning their overall activities and contributions to peacebuilding and development outcomes. Toward this end, the PBF Secretariat should develop greater guidance for UN Agencies to follow, towards ensuring that select CSOs and local partners are more involved in project design, budgeting, implementation and reporting, as a complement to the leadership and responsibilities of Agencies. Specifically, project development materials could include a section for Agencies to indicate the nature and extent of CSO and other local partner input into project development processes. Concretely, this would provide important contextual and operational knowledge, better adapted and realistic budgeting, shared clarity on expectations, financial management and disbursement planning, and results monitoring and outcome reporting. Towards this end, an aspirational guidance note for engaging with CSOs and local partners would be beneficial.

*Linked to Findings 10, 13 and 17.*

### On Gender and Youth Responsiveness

**Recommendation 3:** The PBF Secretariat, with UN Agencies following its lead, should invest focused attention on improving the gender and youth responsiveness and mainstreaming of its work and portfolio in The Gambia.

While there are important gender-related results reported from projects in The Gambia, the overall approach to gender contains limitations that have resulted in missed opportunities on achieving the full range of potential benefits for vulnerable populations, particularly women and girls. Critically, efforts are required to develop clearer and shared gender mainstreaming goals across projects, and also consistent gender mainstreaming across the project portfolio, including in projects where gender equality is not considered a significant objective.

The context of transitional justice and the added vulnerabilities for women and girls in particular warrants additional investments, to build on initial progress and further integrate gender and youth as priority areas to be mainstreamed across the entire portfolio. It also warrants a higher proportion of projects where GEWE is the principal objective (i.e., Gender Marker 3) to foster more gender intentional work to adequately address these issues. For this to be realised, training and capacity-building will be required to support greater consistency across design, implementation, monitoring and reporting in mainstreaming gender across the portfolio to identify and address potential differential impacts and/or added risks for women and girls.

*Linked to Findings 5, 6, 8 and 9*

### On Sustainability

**Recommendation 4:** The PBF Secretariat should play a more active role in ensuring the effective development and implementation of contextually adapted sustainability strategies by Agencies and implementing partners.

The development of sustainability strategies is foundational to the successful realization of PBF's purpose, which is rooted in provision of strategically planned and also innovative, timely, and catalytic support for peacebuilding. Agencies and implementing partners are fundamentally responsible for developing and then implementing sustainability strategies, with appropriate forward planning that is rooted in an understanding of the value-add of PBF support. To begin with, the very purpose of the Fund needs to be more widely socialised across Agencies

and implementing partners, to ensure a shared and consistent understanding. Thus, the PBF Secretariat should deploy clear communication about the *catalytic* nature of the Fund, to ensure that expectations and sustainability planning at country level are aligned with its purpose and modalities. Building on this, project sustainability strategies should be designed, starting with early and timely discussions including Agencies, implementing partners and even beneficiaries, to identify the institutional, financial, human and technical requirements for ensuring the sustainability of projects and/or their benefits. Also, sustainability strategies would likely include further building the fiduciary, budgeting and revenue generation capacity of implementing partners – particularly of CSOs and other local partners – and even beneficiaries, to support the sustainability of achievements and ensure they have the capacity to move work forward following project closure well in advance. The development of such strategies by Agencies and implementing partners should be overseen and monitored by the PBF Secretariat.

***Linked to Findings 10, 13 and 14.***

### **On Capacity Strengthening**

**Recommendation 5: The PBF Secretariat should strengthen and systematise its commitments to strengthening the capacity of national implementing partners, given positive dividends produced thus far.**

The PBF Secretariat should work with UN Agencies and implementing partners to identify the next stage of capacity strengthening needs among government, civil society and private sector partners, based on the type of interventions being planned and implemented, and wider priorities already identified (e.g., on gender and youth). It should then provide financial and non-financial (e.g. professional, institutional and other) resources for implementing the capacity strengthening planned, while encouraging the identification of additional external resources.

***Linked to Findings 10 and 13.***

### **On Monitoring and Reporting**

**Recommendation 6: The PBF Secretariat should operationalize its' dormant strategy for portfolio-level monitoring and reporting on the community-level peacebuilding and development outcomes from its interventions.**

Outcome monitoring and reporting at community-level remains elusive at portfolio level, and should be addressed. The PBF Secretariat should revive its dormant strategy for doing so, which was itself developed and then put on hold during the COVID-19 pandemic. It will also need to develop a suite of tools and mechanisms for doing so. Further, the approach will need to take into consideration and integrate the community-level monitoring being undertaken by Agencies and implementing partners. The overall aim is to produce timely data on outputs and more importantly outcomes, as they unfold and are realised, to feed back into project activities as well as programmatic planning. Doing so would also include the monitoring of unintended results, as a way to manage risks arising during implementation. If need be, this could be undertaken with the participation of key development partners, who can bring technical expertise and financial support.

***Linked to Findings 13 and 15.***

## On Learning

**Recommendation 7:** The PBF Secretariat should expand its efforts to more intentionally and systematically pursue South-South knowledge exchange and learning across countries and contexts facing similar challenges.

Consulted stakeholders for this evaluation valued opportunities for national, regional and international South-South knowledge exchange and learning, as they considered possible project-based approaches to addressing post-dictatorship challenges in The Gambia. Thus, going forward, such opportunities should bring together select UN, government, civil society and private sector actors, to share and seed ideas and approaches that can inform and accelerate responses to like challenges. Doing so will also further strengthen capacities and leadership, and develop relationships among like-minded actors, institutions and organizations.

*Linked to Findings 2, 4, 8, 13 and 18.*

# Appendix I Supportive Analysis

## Section 3: Relevance

### Overview of the Country Context

In 2017, The Gambia emerged from 22 years of dictatorship, following the election win of current President Adama Barrow over former President Yahya Abdul-Aziz Jemus Junkung Jammeh. President Jammeh came into power in 1994 following a coup that overthrew the government of Sir Dawda Jawara. He ruled the country through an authoritarian regime, which was marked by a flagrant disregard for democratic values and human rights principles, a centralization of power, the manipulation of justice institutions, and an absence of freedom of expression and the harassment, detainment, torture, murder, disappearance and exile of several public figures, journalists, civil society activists, students and broader critics of his regime. In 2017, he left behind a country with a legacy of anti-democratic practices and human rights abuses, as well as public mistrust for national institutions, high unemployment rates and poverty, growing identity-based tensions, and conflict over natural resources management.

Since entering power in 2017, the post-authoritarian President Adama Barrow's government expressed its commitment to respecting, protecting and upholding the fundamental rights of citizens of The Gambia. When elected in 2016, President Barrow expressed his intention to set the country on a new course, as follows:

*"We could now become the architects of a Democratic Republic that is built on the pillars of Good Governance, Rule of Law and Respect for Fundamental Rights and Freedoms. My government will implement comprehensive reforms. These include constitutional, institutional and legal reforms to expand the democratic gains we have made."<sup>107</sup>*

These commitments were then made evident in new national frameworks, including the National Development Plan (NDP) for the period 2018 to 2021, which states:

*"Restoring good governance, rebuilding, and restoring public confidence in key institutions, upholding human rights and strengthening access to justice, in the context of transitional justice are urgent priorities in the NDP. In this regard, government aims to enhance and improve human rights, access to justice and good governance for all."<sup>108</sup>*

The Secretary General's Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) acted as one of the first responders in the country, providing USD 3.1 million in 2017 for transition needs.<sup>109</sup> This support was provided through the Immediate Response Facility (IRF) with, for objective, to support key state institutions and mechanisms in addressing the most immediate threats to the peace and stability of the country notably transitional justice, reform strategy for security institutions, and capacity building for the Policy, Planning and Management Unit in the Office of the President. In 2018, the Eligibility package for The Gambia was submitted and approved. In this document, the

<sup>107</sup> The Point (2017) President Adama Barrow's Inaugural Speech.

<sup>108</sup> The Government of The Gambia (2017) The Gambia National Development Plan (2018-2021).

<sup>109</sup> Secretary-General's PBF. (2020b). The Secretary-General's PBF: The Gambia; Secretary-General's PBF & UNDP (2023). Tip Sheet on Hate Speech Prevention Programming.

PBF identified the following four strategic areas: Transitional Justice and Human Rights; Greater Involvement of Youth and Women; Peaceful Reintegration and Psychosocial Support; and Strengthening Natural Resources and Land Management, and Dispute Resolution. Since then, the PBF has provided around USD 31 million in financing through 16 projects – with a latest project approved in April 2023.

The 2018 Eligibility Package encloses a letter signed by President Barrow, in which the President recognizes the relevance of the strategic areas to the country's priorities, stating:

*“In addition to the current support, the continued support of the Peace Building Fund will be critical to sustain peace, strengthen social cohesion and for state building. I endorse the areas of priority stipulated in the “Eligibility Request” prepared by the United Nations system in The Gambia in collaboration with government.”<sup>110</sup>*

## Alignment with UN Priorities in the Gambia

Table I. i The PBF Portfolio and the SDGs

Strategic Result	Outcome	PBF Portfolio Alignment	Example of PBF projects
<b>Strategic Result 1: governance, economic management and human rights</b>	Outcome 1.2 on Governance and Human Rights: Institutional reforms implemented to ensure rule of law and guarantee people their human rights, such as access to justice, gender equality, basic social services and democratic participation in decision-making processes.	The PBF has provided support to increase access to legal aid and strengthened the capacity of the legal system, while also supporting a range of initiatives seeking enhanced participation, particularly of women and youth, in decision making processes.	Women and Youth Project <b>(PBF/GMB/D-1)</b> Rule of Law Project <b>(PBF/GMB/A-3)</b> Youth Project <b>(PBF/GMB/D-2)</b> Women Political Leadership Project <b>(PBF/GMB/A-5)</b>
<b>Strategic Result 2: human capital development</b>	Outcome 2.5 on Youth and Gender: Women and youth empowerment promoted to reduce gender disparities, gender-based violence, access to decent employment opportunities and ensure effective participation in national development.	The PBF has provided support for women and youth empowerment through a range of activities including the Women and Youth Project <b>(PBF/GMB/D-1)</b> , the Governance and Accountability Project <b>(PBF/GMB/A-2)</b> , the Reintegration of Migrants Project <b>(PBF/GMB/A-1)</b> , the Youth Project <b>(PBF/GMB/D-2)</b> and the Women Political Leadership Project <b>(PBF/GMB/A-5)</b> .	Women and Youth Project <b>(PBF/GMB/D-1)</b> Governance and Accountability Project <b>(PBF/GMB/A-2)</b> Reintegration of Migrants Project <b>(PBF/GMB/A-1)</b> Youth Project <b>(PBF/GMB/D-2)</b> Women Political Leadership Project <b>(PBF/GMB/A-5)</b> .

<sup>110</sup> Letter signed by Adama Barrow, President of The Gambia, as included in the 2018 Eligibility Package.

<p><b>Strategic Result 3: sustainable agriculture, natural resources, environment and climate change management</b></p>	<p>Outcome 3.1 on Agriculture and Food Security: Sustainable agricultural production and productivity increased for enhanced food security, nutrition and income generation for all in rural and urban areas.</p>	<p>The PBF has notably provided support for the construction of boreholes to address conflict between farmers and herders particularly arising from damage to agricultural land. The PBF interventions have also included natural resources management components as well as climate-related awareness raising and the development of climate-resilience initiatives</p>	<p>Conflict LNR Project <b>(PBF/GMB/B-1)</b> Cross-Border Project <b>(PBF/IRF-430)</b></p>
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Source: UNDAF 2017-2021 for the Gambia, and triangulate analysis of project documents and stakeholder interviews.

### Relevance to the SDGs

The table below provides more detail on the alignment of the PBF Portfolio to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), beyond SDG 16 (for which greater detail are provided in the main report).

**Table I. ii Alignment of the PBF Portfolio and the SDGs**

<p><b>SDG 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.</b></p>	<p>The PBF has financed projects targeting accessibility and quality of psychological and health support. This is notably in the Reintegration of Migrants Project <b>(PBF/GMB/A-1)</b> where the PBF supported the deployment of mobile health team and the refurbishment of the Tanka-Tanka Psychiatric hospital.</p>
<p><b>SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.</b></p>	<p>The PBF has financed projects seeking to empower women and girl, while also including a range of activities seeking to shift the public perspective of women. The recent project on women in political leadership notably includes activities such as awareness campaigns, political advocacy work, capacity building, among others, geared towards increased representation in political leadership positions.</p>
<p><b>SDG 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.</b></p>	<p>The PBF has sought to support increased access to drinking water through the Conflict LNR Project <b>(PBF/GMB/B-1)</b> where it financed the establishment of boreholes in several communities.</p>
<p><b>SDG 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.</b></p>	<p>Through the Reintegration of Migrants Project <b>(PBF/GMB/A-1)</b>, the PBF has financed activities seeking to increase employment access for both returnees and non-migrants. For example, this is seen in the financing of livelihoods and revenue generating activities – such as bakeries – to provide employment; as well as the revitalization of youth centers providing services such as employment referral, support to draft CVs and cover letters, among others.</p>



<p><b>SDG 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.</b></p>	<p>The PBF has financed the Climate Induced Conflict Project (<b>PBF/IRF-342</b>), which seeks to raise awareness of enhanced land, water and woodland management technics, support the development of climate-resilience initiatives at the community level and support income diversification and climate-friendly solutions.</p>
<p><b>SDG 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss</b></p>	<p>Through its Cross-Border Project (<b>PBF/IRF-430</b>), the PBF seeks to realize cross-border natural resource management and the utilization of forest resources in a sustainable manner. This includes the development of local agreements to address the continued deforestation and forest degradations, the establishment of compliance mechanisms to address illegal logging, technical capacity building for law environment agents, among others.</p>

Source: The table was developed by the evaluation team based on information collected from PBF project documents and stakeholder interviews.

## Section 4: Coherence and Complementarity

### Continuity in Agencies Leading Implementation of PBF Projects and Activities

The PBF has engaged with a range of Agencies, including the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) (12 projects), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) (7 projects) and United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) (4 projects), International Trade Center (ITC) (3 projects), Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO), International Organization for Migration (IOM) and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (all with 2 projects) and World Food Programme (WFP) (1 project). A review of PBF projects and implementing Agencies show continuity between Agencies, whereby the same Agencies are involved in PBF projects touching on specific topics, from transitional justice to natural resource management, to gender inclusion, to youth inclusion, and migration. A mapping of projects and implementing Agencies notably shows the following.

- UNDP and OHCHR were the two Agencies that implemented in the first transitional justice process, through which the Truth and Reconciliation and Reparations Commission (TRRC) was established, and truth and reconciliation process was launched. These were subsequently the Agencies selected in the PBF project on the implementation and monitoring of TRRC recommendation implementation.
- FAO implemented components in both the Conflict LNR Project (PBF/GMB/B-1) and the Cross-Border Project (PBF/IRF-430), particularly on components related to natural resources management, in line with the Agencies mandate.
- UNFPA has implemented components in nearly all projects with a strong gender component, including the Women and Youth Project (PBF/GMB/D-1), the Rule of Law Project (PBF/GMB/A-3), the Youth Project (PBF/GMB/D-2), the Mental Health and SGBV Project (PBF/IRF-456) and the Women Political Leadership Project (PBF/GMB/A-5). Where a gap is noted is in the Governance and Accountability Project (PBF/GMB/A-2) which includes range of activities seeking to increase the representation of women in the political sphere. The project does, however, include UNICEF as a lead Agency - an Agency which also seeks

to empower women, particularly girls and young women. The inclusion of UNICEF as a lead Agency is well suited considering the project's strong focus on youth and UNICEF's youth focused mandate.

- UNICEF has implemented components in nearly all projects with a strong youth component, including the Women and Youth Project (PBF/GMB/D-1), the Governance and Accountability Project (PBF/GMB/A-2), the Rule of Law Project (PBF/GMB/A-3), and the Women Political Leadership Project (PBF/GMB/A-5). Where a gap is noted is in the Youth Project (PBF/GMB/D-2), which includes a range of activities to increase youth participation in decision-making, governance and community mediation. The project does, however, include UNFPA as a lead Agency – an Agency which also has a strong youth focused mandate.
- The IOM implemented components in all projects with a strong international component/focus, including the Reintegration of Migrants (PBF/GMB/A-1) and the Cross-Border Project (PBF/IRF-430), which is aligned with their mandate as well as other interventions the IOM is leading with the European Union (EU).

### Stakeholder Consultation at Design

[Table I. iii](#) below indicates strong stakeholder consultation at the design phase of PBF projects. However, this consultation largely engages national and local stakeholders – such as government and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) – with little consultation with other international donors or development partners.

*Table I. iii Stakeholder Consultation at Design Phase*

DESIGN PHASE CONSULTATION	
DEEP DIVE PROJECTS	STAKEHOLDERS CONSULTATED
<b>TJHR Project (PBF/IRF-172)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government: the Ministry of Justice</li> <li>• Civil Society Organizations (CSOs): the International Center for Transitional Justice, the Gambia Center for Victims of Human Rights, The Association of Non-Governmental Organizations in The Gambia (TANGO), and Justice Rapid Response.</li> <li>• Agencies: UNICEF</li> <li>• Other national stakeholders: the TRRC Executive Secretary</li> <li>• Other international donors or development partners: N/A</li> </ul>
<b>SSR Project (PBF/IRF-173)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The consultation process at design is not described in the project document.</li> </ul>
<b>Conflict LNR Project (PBF/GMB/B-1)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The project document reports consultation with local and national stakeholders, including community members and government authorities.</li> </ul>
<b>Reintegration of Migrants Project (PBF/GMB/A-1)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government: the Office of the vice President, the Ministry of Interior, and the Ministry of Health.</li> <li>• CSO: National Youth Council (youth coordinator and regional representatives)</li> <li>• Agencies: N/A</li> <li>• Other national stakeholders: N/A</li> <li>• Other international donors or development partners: N/A</li> </ul>

<p><b>Governance and Accountability Project (PBF/GMB/A-2)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government: the Office of the President (e.g. Department of Strategic Policy and Delivery (DSPD)), the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare, the Department of Community Development, and the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education.</li> <li>• CSO: TANGO, Action Aid International, Anti-Corruption Coalition, Gambia Press Union, the National Youth Council (NYC).</li> <li>• Agencies: N/A</li> <li>• Other national stakeholders: the Inter-Party Committee (IPC), and the National Council for Civic Education (NCCE).</li> <li>• Other international donors or development partners: N/A</li> </ul>
<p><b>Cross-Border Project (PBF/IRF-430)<sup>111</sup></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government: the Ministry of Interior, the Gambia Immigration Department, the local government authorities (Alkalos), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Environment, the Ministry of Fisheries and Water Resources, the Department of Livestock, the Office of the President (e.g. DSPD), the Ministry of Lands and Regional Government, the Senegalo-Gambia Permanent Secretariat, the Gambia's National Coordination Mechanism on Migration (NVM) Thematic Working Groupe (TWG) on Border Management.</li> <li>• CSO/NGOs: cross-border women associations, and other CSOs (not specified)</li> <li>• Agencies: RC, IOM and FAO.</li> <li>• Other national stakeholders: border communities (Giboro, Darsilami and Misera), border officials, youth leaders, and the village development committee.</li> <li>• Other international donors or development partners:</li> </ul>

Source: Project document for all deep dive projects.

## Section 5: Effectiveness

### Transitional Justice and Human Rights

Transitional Justice is defined by the OHCHR as “the full range of processes and mechanisms associated with a society’s attempt to come to terms with a legacy of large-scale past conflict, repression, violations and abuses, in order to ensure accountability, serve justice and achieve reconciliation”.<sup>112</sup> It is typically composed of four pillars, namely:

- **Truth-seeking:** processes to bring atrocities to light, including through the opening of archives or the establishment of a truth commission.
- **Prosecution:** judicial investigations of those having committed human rights violations.
- **Reparation:** initiatives to contribute to the reparation of the wrongs experienced by victims.

<sup>111</sup> Only consultation in The Gambia were included here. Note that consultation in Senegal were also held with Government, CSOs/NGOs and other national stakeholders.

<sup>112</sup> OHCHR Website. Transitional Justice. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/transitional-justice>

- **Prevention:** initiatives or mechanisms – including reforms and memorialization efforts – to protect individuals from further or new human rights transgressions.

### ***PBF Contribution: Prosecution***

Through the truth, reconciliation and reparation process, the PBF has helped bring to light atrocities experience and opened the door to prosecution, independent from its support. Beyond this, the PBF has approved several subsequent projects, which have contributed to paving the ground for the prosecution of human rights abuse cases. The PBF has supported prosecution on two fronts: increasing capacity of the judicial system and increasing access to the judicial system (notably through legal aid access). This was largely achieved through the Rule of Law Project (PBF/GMB/A-3) where key actors (including judges, prosecutors and states counsel) were capacitated to prosecute cases arising from the TRRC recommendations and to prosecute Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) offences using a survivor centered approach. These were also trained in the Children’s Act and Child-friendly Justice and on data management for child protection and child justice. In some instances, this capacity building entailed the development of training manuals and guidelines, including one on SGBV and one on child justice. The PBF has also supported the establishment of Mobile Legal Aid Clinics (MLACS) to provide free legal, mediation and social services across the country. These clinics have provided services to 376 people (113 female and 215 male) including 73 children.

Ongoing projects are also actively seeking to support prosecution, although results are yet to be reported. Current interventions largely focus on the strengthening of the judicial system. These interventions include the Mental Health and SGBV project (PBF/IRF-456), which is providing supporting the Sexual Offenses Amendment Bill being developed through collaboration between the Ministry of Gender and the Ministry of Justice. The Bill will notably include the establishment of GBV Special Courts, in order to increase access to services and justice for survivors; as well as the Post-TRRC Project (PBF/GMB/A-4), which seeks to support the Judiciary system, the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Interior (Police) to ensure the prosecution of cases arising from TRRC recommendations. At the time of writing, only one activity is reported as completed,<sup>113</sup> an activity which involves the induction of new judges. Other activities planned include the establishment and operationalization of a national witness protection mechanism, the provision of technical support to the ministry of Justice on the development of prosecutorial prioritization strategy, the establishment of a hybrid court to prosecute serious crimes, and the enhancement of capacities of justice sector actors, including the investigation and prosecution of SGBV cases, among others. These interventions are deemed highly important by consulted stakeholders who reported persisting challenges in access justice for SGBV survivors largely due to the slow justice system. The long time between the filing of a case and its prosecution was considered by one stakeholder as endangering women who experience outrage from their community. While recognizing that building judicial capacity is a

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<sup>113</sup> A progress report submitted in November 2023 indicates several activities have taken place following the evaluation’s data cut-off date. These include a Stakeholder Conference and Donor Roundtable to discuss the implementation of TRRC recommendations and the establishment of a partnership platform between government, CSOs and the private sector to ensure coordinated and effective implementation of these recommendations. A retreat was also held for the National Assembly Standing Committee which led to the passing of the Victims Reparations Bill, the Ban from Public Office (TRRC) Bill and the Former Presidents Bill. Two posts were also established under the Ministry of Justice (currently in the recruitment phase) to boost the capacity of the ministry to implement TRRC Recommendations and a proposal was submitted for the establishment of a Special Criminal Division to support the prosecution of domestic crimes in the Gambia. Induction training for newly appointed judicial officers was also provided to instill and nurture value of judicial ethics, attitudes and sensitize participants to social issues.

timely process, this indicates the need for further, sustained support for the judicial system to ensure cases brought forward can be prosecuted in a timely manner.

### ***PBF Contribution: Prevention***

The PBF has also contributed to several key reforms, essential to the prevention of human rights abuses and for trust building between institutions and communities. Most notable are the reforms in the security sector, both at the national and the community level. Through the SSR Project (PBF/IRF-173), the PBF has supported the drafting of the National Security Policy, the Security Sector Reform Strategy and the National Security Strategy and SSR (Security Sector Reform) Communication Strategy, as well as the establishment of the DP's technical Working Groups, the SSR International Advisory Group and the Female Police Network. While challenges remain in implementing the security sector reform, the Office of National Security, established under the SRR Project (PBF/IRF-173) remains operational, as the National Security Policy has been approved by the President. Sector security support delivered by the PBF also targeted the local level, through the Rule of Law Project (PBF/GMB/A-3) whereby the PBF supported improved community policing as well as professionalization and rehabilitation of policing structure in The Gambia (all while aiming to build trust between police and communities). Through this project, the PBF notably supported the development and endorsement of new strategies and legislative frameworks (e.g., Community Policing Strategy and Implementation Plan, the Sexual Offenses Act, Evidence Act and Legal Practitioners Act), training material (e.g., the CP Training Manual) and the establishment of new systems (e.g., the Mobile App and Case Management system). The Project's evaluation reported that these interventions have led to noted improvement in the capacity of local police to respond to community needs, as well as improved the Gambia Police Force to implement the new community policing approach.

The implementation of the security sector reform however remains challenging. The SSR Project final evaluation (PBF/IRF-173) recognized that for true outcomes and impacts down the line to be felt, follow-up support was required, beyond the project's lifetime and that COVID-19 was a threat to this as resources were re-allocated to different areas. More recently, a joint UN-ECOWAS-AU technical assessment mission on SSR in July 2022 to assess the government's support needs in this area recommended enhanced support to implement the government's SSR strategy; it indicated challenges are persisting. Nonetheless, increased trust in the security sector is apparent in the country. In this regard, the Rule of Law Project (PBF/GMB/A-3) Progress Report notes "the perception of the police has been more favorable due to limited cases of human right abuse and arbitrary arrest compared to the previous regime. The population now has more trust for and works closely with the police following the implementation of the community policing philosophy."<sup>114</sup> This increase in trust has translated into increased use of the judicial instruments, indicating victims feel they can come forward and report abuse. In this regard, the Evaluation Report indicates a 96.6% increase in the number of victims of human right violation in the previous 12 months who reported their victimization to the legal aid clinics in project targeted areas (including 1,070 adults and 99 children) compared to the baseline at project inception.<sup>115</sup>

<sup>114</sup> Ngwa, S.N. (2022). Strengthening Community Access to Justice, Community Policing and Effective SGBV Response. PBF Project Progress Report.

<sup>115</sup> Case International Consultants (2023a). Draft report: Terminal evaluation for the rule of law, access to justice and security (2019-2022).

### **Implementation of TRRC Recommendations**

Consulted stakeholders expressed some concerns with the pace at which the TRRC recommendations were being implemented, with many expressing that implementation was far too slow. Similar public sentiment was expressed following the publication of the TRRC Recommendations in 2021 with growing frustration and citizen complaints. In response to the TRRC recommendations, the Government of the Gambia published the TRRC White Paper in May 2022. In July 2023, at the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) summit, heads of states highlighted the “urgent need to enhance the on-going Defense and Security Sector Reform (DSSR) efforts and the implementation of the recommendations of the TRRC.”<sup>116</sup> In 2023, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) also submitted its first status report on the implementation of the government’s White Paper on the TRRC recommendations, and found that 6 recommendations had been fully implemented, 165 were undergoing implementation while 91 remain unimplemented. The PBF also begun delivering support geared towards the implementation of these recommendation, including through the recent Post-TRRC Project (PBF/GMB/A-4) which the evaluation team deems uses sound and promising entry points to support the implementation of the TRRC recommendations. Project outcomes focus on the adoption of effective measures and processes by government to enable the implementation of TRRC recommendations, increased capacity and commitment of the justice sector to prosecute cases as well as capacity building of the NHRC and CSOs to monitor, report and support the implementation of TRRC recommendations. This intervention has strong potential to further contribute to the transition justice process and respect of human rights in the country, in line with concerns heard on the ground.<sup>117</sup>

### **Greater Involvement of Youth and Women in Peacebuilding**

#### ***Lack of Female Leadership in the Conflict LNR Project (PBF/GMB/B-1)***

The implications of women not being represented in management and leadership is illustrated in the case of the Conflict LNR project (PBF/GMB/B-1), which had reduced benefits for women as a result. Interviews and documents reviewed highlighted a gap in addressing the needs of women when not provided the space to share their views and concerns to inform decision-making, specifically in realizing women’s land rights in the Conflict LNR project (PBF/GMB/B-1) which struggled with engaging women in management. Focus groups confirmed that Water Management Committees across seven villages were comprised of all men, with women not selected as representatives but some youth selected, and it was reported that women’s participation in highest levels of decision-making of the Local Government Authorities (i.e., main custodians of Land Governance at the regional level) is very low. It was added that they were informed by PBF project implementers that committees need to be composed of both men and women, which they deferred to the Village Development Committees (VDCs) who each contain one man and one woman. While the addition of watering boreholes has been a very welcomed addition that has benefited women in particular by lessening burdens for women, consultations with stakeholders underscore an interest to catalyze these further with additional access points to enable home

<sup>116</sup> Mc Carthy, P. (2023c). UN The Gambia. PDA Report The Gambia (July 2023).

<sup>117</sup> While implementation was in very early stages at the time of writing, the undertaking of several activities was reported following the cutoff date – including the establishment of a partnership platform between government, CSOs and the private sector to ensure coordinated and effective implementation of these recommendations; the creation of positions within the Ministry of Justice (currently at recruitment stage), capacity building and the submission of a proposal to create a new Division to increase the capacity of justice sector; as well as the establishment of a Multi-Stakeholder Support Monitoring Committee by the NHRC to actively oversee the implementation of the TRRC recommendations.



gardens to produce vegetable products and work further with the Ministry to secure women’s tenure rights for community gardens. Moreover, despite being flagged as a persisting issue<sup>118</sup> with land disputes presenting as a significant source of conflict with particular disparities for women and (orphaned) youth,<sup>119</sup> progress was not achieved in addressing women’s access to land ownership and there is a need to go beyond women’s groups owning land to individual tenureship for women. As of 2023, only half (50%) of Gambian citizens say women in fact enjoy equal rights when it comes to land ownership.<sup>120</sup> In particular, supporting women’s land rights is critical in achieving Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment (GEWE) in the Gambia, as interviews explained that gender is a strong determinant of whether an individual will be able to purchase or inherit Land, with Gambian women greatly disadvantaged due to customary law in The Gambia rooted in patriarchal inheritance of land through the male.

### **Other PBF Benefits for Women and Youth: SGBV Response & Economic Empowerment**

Outside of political participation, it is worth noting a few select individual projects (namely the Mental Health and SGBV Project (PBF/IRF-456) and Rule of Law Project (PBF/GMB/A-3)) have contributed to the achievement of some progress in addressing SGBV, with sporadic livelihood activities for enhanced economic empowerment (through the Returnees project), albeit to much less concerted extent. In particular, the evaluation highlights that the area of economic empowerment of women and youth is a notable blind spot in the PBF portfolio in The Gambia.

### Sexual and Gender-Based Violence

PBF interventions have supported a Network Against Gender Based Violence and the Advocacy Survivors’ Network for more comprehensive response through One Stop Centres (OSCs) and MLACs, in developing and validating a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the centers and strengthening referral pathways with capacity building<sup>121</sup> of social workers and paralegals. Through the Mental Health and SGBV Project (PBF/IRF-456), training has “increased the capacity of the health and social workers, promoted positive attitudinal change, and strengthened service delivery and quality of care for SGBV survivors, especially in OSCs.”<sup>122</sup> PBF funding has provided safe spaces for survivors of SGBV and the provision of psychosocial support, and overall contributed to raising the profile, understanding, and prioritization of SGBV (e.g., through community-led peace talks, intergenerational dialogue sessions, community healing circles in the target communities, as well as recreational activities such as football tournament).<sup>123</sup>

*“PBF funds helped them to do something... This was highly appreciated... They do not want to come out and tell people, and we create a safe space for these stories to be told and for them to get the confidence to tell their stories.” – Civil Society Actor*

<sup>118</sup> Assessment was conducted as part of previous Conflict LNR project (PBF/GMB/B-1) that highlighted these issues.

<sup>119</sup> UNDP, FAO, WANEP The Government of the Gambia (2019). The Assessment of Land and Natural Resources-related Disputes in West Coast Region, Lower River Region, Central River Region and Upper River Region Final Report.

<sup>120</sup> Mc Carthy, P. (2023c). UN The Gambia. PDA Report The Gambia (July 2023).

<sup>121</sup> For example, Training material on MHPSS have been developed under this project, to support service providers at the grassroots level, and at the national level. These include a handbook on understanding and supported those affected by SGBV, a guide on discussing MHPSS in communities in The Gambia with local service providers, and a presentation on SGBV and its mental health impacts.

<sup>122</sup> Persson, I. (2022a). Promoting Peace and Social Cohesion through Provision of Mental Health Services and Psychosocial Well-Being of SGBV Survivors in The Gambia. PBF Project Progress Report. PBF Project Progress Report.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.



*“When the SGBV processes were underway, there were prevailing norms that inhibited women’s participation. But organizations on the ground made it possible for safe disclosure of stories, and the TRRC helped tell stories.” – Government Representative (Ministry of Justice, TRRC Project)*

A few select PBF interventions have also aimed to address issues identified with excessive backlog by digitizing platforms, which improved access to information, tracking of case files, and enhanced data management.<sup>124</sup> The Mental Health and SGBV Project (PBF/IRF-456) also supported the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Welfare to develop the sexual offenses amendment bill in collaboration with the Ministry of Justice to include the establishment of GBV special courts to facilitate access to justice services for survivors.<sup>125</sup> A follow-up intervention provided further capacity building for the MoJ SGBV unit for greater awareness, and sharing of concerns and best practices to ensure the safety of survivors.<sup>126</sup> MLACs were also considered effective in providing more accessible legal counsel outside of formal courts.<sup>127</sup> Combined, these have partly contributed to strengthened judicial capacities to respond, coordinate and monitor SGBV related cases.

Recent project evaluation reporting documents improved access to justice services and increases in the use of legal aid services particularly for women and children, with improved quality of integrated services for SGBV survivors.<sup>128</sup> However, it has been noted that the justice system is still ill equipped to adequately respond to the increasing volume of GBV cases, with legal aid support considered insufficient and “the institutions cannot sustain them” (interview with government stakeholder). Project documents examining rates of adjudication for GBV cases have emphasized that the pace of increasing demand outstrips the capacity to respond.

The evaluation unveils important concerns in encouraging GBV disclosure and mobilizing victims to speak up without the necessary systems-strengthening first or adequately in place to ensure a robust judiciary system to appropriately respond. Interviews explained that it is repeatedly reported that despite the support of paralegals “the justice system is too slow” in responding to reported cases of SGBV, with the danger in risking further harm to SGBV survivors who may be encouraged to speak up and risk facing stigma and ostracization to then “leave them hanging” without adequate supports or mechanisms in place to respond. PBF projects have identified SGBV as a key entry point to building confidence with the justice sector, with more work remaining to be done.<sup>129</sup>

*“if you support it halfway you put the women at risk... if you don’t go through with it, you put them in danger... you need to be careful what you start.” – Government Representative*

PBF projects have recognized the importance of contributing to a more proactive approach to policing violence, shifting from demand-driven approaches that respond to individual requests or calls for service.<sup>130</sup> This is particularly important from a gender perspective in addressing SGBV, which is gravely underreported due to

<sup>124</sup> Ngwa, S.N. (2022). Strengthening Community Access to Justice, Community Policing and Effective SGBV Response. PBF Project Progress Report; Case International Consultants (2023a). Draft report: Terminal evaluation for the rule of law, access to justice and security (2019-2022).

<sup>125</sup> It remains unclear what the current status is for this sexual offenses amendment bill.

<sup>126</sup> Intervention that followed up on the TJHR project (PBF/IRF-172).

<sup>127</sup> Case International Consultants (2023a). Draft report: Terminal evaluation for the rule of law, access to justice and security (2019-2022).

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> See for example: No Author. (2021e). Strengthening community access to justice, community policing and effective SGBV response. PBF Project Document.

<sup>130</sup> Ngwa, S.N. (2022). Strengthening Community Access to Justice, Community Policing and Effective SGBV Response. PBF Project Progress Report.

stigma and fear to speak up, and given the weakness in the adjudication of GBV cases. In doing so, there have been some notable, though minimal, efforts to engage men and boys as key community influencers (e.g., as traditional and religious authorities) to advocate for the prevention of SGBV at the community-level.<sup>131</sup>

### Economic Empowerment

Additionally, there have been a few piecemeal livelihood-oriented activities across projects that have contributed to the economic empowerment of women and young people. For example, the Reintegration of Migrants Project (PBF/GMB/A-1) included an economic empowerment initiative (soap making activity) with the NGO Starfish International that conducted a training program on livelihood initiatives (35 total completing the program, 3 men and 32 women), which reportedly increased participants' earnings from products sold and allowed for exchanging of ideas and coping skills for issues faced in their daily lives.<sup>132</sup> These activities contributed to the economic empowerment of young returnees with improved job placement through the job placement system, exceeding more than double the initial target with 56 of 152 total participants employed, and 31.2% of these were women returnees.<sup>133</sup> However, effectiveness was undermined by a mismatch in the needs and priorities of young people and the allocation of resources, with local youth centers that were established largely going unused as young people explained they preferred to run activities from home. It was also raised in field monitoring reports that there are challenges in sustaining these benefits post-training, with participants beginning to grapple with investing their revenues from soap making activity into buying ingredients needed to produce the next batch of products. This further underscores the importance of continuous engagement and consultations with women and young people to identify needs and priorities to inform the design, implementation and monitoring of interventions.

In connection with supporting SGBV survivors, there was one documented case of livelihood training for survivors' economic empowerment, with 10 survivors (2 men, 8 women) completing the program with livelihood skills for income generating activities. These activities supported the reintegration of women survivors back into society while focusing on their resilience by enhancing economic empowerment.<sup>134</sup>

Beyond the two selected cases above, the economic empowerment of women and youth appear to be a blind spot in the PBF the Gambia portfolio. There are some indications that PBF in The Gambia is investing further in the area of economic empowerment, for example with the Women Political Leadership project (2023) (PBF/GMB/A-5) and the establishment of resource centers that provide training and skilling combined with income generating activities to help finance women candidates' campaigning. However, based on documents reviewed there appears to be questions on the selection of modality for the income generating activity (e.g., sanitary pad production or community gardens), relying on best practices identified in other contexts instead of consulting with targeted women directly on the most useful and appropriate way for them to build social capital.

<sup>131</sup> Rule of Law project (PBF/GMB/A-3).

<sup>132</sup> Reintegration of Migrants Project (PBF/GMB/A-1).

<sup>133</sup> Reintegration of Migrants Project (PBF/GMB/A-1).

<sup>134</sup> Persson, I. (2022a). Promoting Peace and Social Cohesion through Provision of Mental Health Services and Psychosocial Well-Being of SGBV Survivors in The Gambia. PBF Project Progress Report. PBF Project Progress Report.

## Section 6: Gender and Youth

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Specific details on project-level results reported in the areas of community sensitization and capacity-building are provided below.

### ***PBF Project Contributions to Sensitization***

- Women and Youth Project (PBF/GMB/D-1): Over 300 VDC and Ward Development Committee (WDC) members were trained in all project locations, sensitizing 570 community members, 42 community dialogue sessions, and mobilizing 755 local leaders to recognize and accept the importance of the role of women and youth in decentralization processes; 275 national leaders (less than target) sensitized on the inclusion of women and youth in legal and transitional reform process.
- TJHR Project (PBF/IRF-172): 66 religious leaders and 27 women sensitized on role of women and youth in reconciliation initiative; increased awareness of sexual harassment in the workplace and need for policy.
- Cross-Border Project (PBF/IRF-430): Sensitization on gender and children's issues to ensure the protection of women and youth crossing the border.
- Governance and Accountability Project (PBF/GMB/A-2): Community dialogue sessions for raising awareness on role of women and youth.
- SSR Project (PBF/IRF-173): Integrated gender issues into Gambia Police Force training and curriculum, with gender unit among armed forces.

### ***PBF Project Contributions to Building Capacities of Women & Youth Leaders***

- Women and Youth Project (PBF/GMB/D-1): capacity building of 50 aspiring female candidates; skilling of 350 young men and women politicians on grassroots political decision-making; early warning training of trainers of 25 national trainers (10 women, 15 men) to provide knowledge and guidance; 13 women and youth trained to serve as community monitors for early warning; 38 mothers clubs participated in national discussions on children's rights, building capacities of 1,125 members to monitor conflict in community and schools; 77 youth (4x the goal) and 111 women trained on decision-making processes.
- TJHR Project (PBF/IRF-172): capacity building with women and youth groups to participate in transitional justice processes.
- Youth Project (PBF/GMB/D-2): Sensitized young people mobilized themselves into WhatsApp groups for advocacy.
- Conflict LNR Project (PBF/GMB/B-1): Trained 180 women in all regions to prepare women leaders for election cycles.
- Reintegration of Migrants Project (PBF/GMB/A-1): Trained 152 community change agents (85 women) on mental health and psychosocial support to enhance quality of services.
- Governance and Accountability Project (PBF/GMB/A-2): Capacity building to traditional communicators (especially women) with conflict resolution tools.

### ***Additional examples of Institutions that PBF has Supported Establishing and Strengthened***

- The Children’s National Assembly of the Gambia (CNA): PBF project activities contributed to the CNA, comprised of 56 girls and 49 boys, which sits in biannual chambers of the National Assembly and lead community sensitization and awareness raising of children’s rights issues (particularly the promotion of girls’ education). For example, the CNA delivered a declaration to the honorable minister of women, children and social welfare on child and adolescent issues as part of regional consultations, and a CNA regional assembly included children in decision-making on child welfare services, juvenile justice, and children in conflict with the law, and children on the move, with regional authorities such as the technical advisory committee.
- The National Youth Council (NYC): Allows for dialogue between youth and local government or area council on child protection issues and budgeting. According to interviews, a majority of PBF partners when working with youth do so through the NYC, which has facilitated collaboration on children’s issues across different institutions. The NYC contributed to the Voluntary National Review (VNR) and the national/regional consultations with women and youth to gather and include women and youth voices in the VNR.
- The National Working Group on Women, Youth, Peace and Security in West Africa and The Sahel: This regional Working Group of young men and women represents thirteen countries including The Gambia, and included a women and youth solidarity mission to the Gambia (28-31 March 2017) with an accompanying Declaration of the Solidarity Mission of the Working Group (31 March 2017).
- Town Halls also provided important spaces for young men and women, with opportunities for networking and interaction with elected representatives on effective representation. However, it is unclear to what extent these Town Halls have continued, how regularly they are conducted and in what frequency.

## Section 7: Sustainability

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### ***PBF Project Exit Strategies***

An analysis of exit strategies outlined in project documents reveals some commonalities in avenues to foster sustainability. PBF interventions have notably included the following range of actions:

- Building ownership of interventions by engaging with government, local actors and beneficiaries, throughout the project cycle.
- Identifying financial responsibility and/or potential funding streams following project closure.
- Institutionalization of outcomes and/or leveraging established structures and investments.
- Establishing new structures to move work forward, if none exist to fulfill the required functions.
- Early identification of upcoming or ongoing initiatives which can build on PBF activities.
- Engagement of potential donors to create interest, raise awareness and ultimately favor investment and scale up of interventions.
- Developing policies and other frameworks.
- Drafting sustainability plans.

## Section 10: Conflict Sensitivity, Risk Management and Risk Tolerance

Table I. iv below provides an example risk management matrix, as per the design document of the Climate Induced Conflict Project (PBF/IRF-342).

Table I. iv Example of Project Risk Management Matrix

CLIMATE INDUCED CONFLICT PROJECT (PBF/IRF-342)	
RISK FACTOR IDENTIFIED (SELECTED)	RISK MITIGATION MEASURE (SELECTED)
Political and civil unrest	Ensuring engagement and consultation with political and religious leaders
Uncoordinated implementation of activities between consortia	Hiring of project coordinator between consortia
Difficulty to find alternative livelihoods	Drawing on private sector; coordination with the ITC
That solutions to salination cannot be found	Selection of final targeting based upon capacity to adopt alternative livelihoods
That communities are very hostile and do not want to work together	Coordination with World Food Program food for assets work
Risk of exclusion of vulnerable groups (women, youth, disability, religion, family, tribes)	Mainstreaming of do no harm approach in engagements with government and local authorities
Increase conflict due to selected intervention/targeted area	Rigorous consultation process at community level, with focus on women
There are more conflict drivers that the scope identified within this project	Conflict sensitivity assessments conducted at various levels + appropriate knowledge management, engagement with communities
Communities are reluctant to diversify away from traditional practices/existing income generating activities	Study visits to be conducted at community level to demonstrate benefits to communities In-depth conflict analysis at start-up with an economic assessment to identify conflict drivers
Duplication/cross-over with other project development activities	Grassroots approach to be taken to ensure complementarity at local level

Source: No Author. (2018a). *Addressing Conflict over Land and Natural Resources (LNR) in The Gambia. PBF Project Document.*

## Appendix II Methodology

### *Overall Approach*

The evaluation employed a **participatory** and **utilization-focused** approach, engaging a wide spectrum of stakeholders, from United Nations (UN) entities to CSOs. This inclusive approach ensured a comprehensive assessment, particularly emphasizing the perspectives of marginalized groups. Additionally, a **conflict-sensitive** and **inclusive** methodology was applied, guided by principles of respect and transparency.

### **Participatory Approach**

The range of PBF key actors and stakeholders at headquarters (HQ) and national level are many, including: UN in-country leadership (especially the Resident Coordinator Office [RCO]), the broader UN system, government counter-parts, CSOs, Peacebuilding Secretariats, PBF Steering Mechanisms or Joint Steering Committees (JSCs), country level development partners, project implementing partners, Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs/PBSO (Peacebuilding Support Office), Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office (MPTF-O), UN Senior Peacebuilding Contact Group (SPG), UN Peacebuilding Contact Group (PCG), and the PBF Advisory Group. The Gambia PBF portfolio had a strong emphasis on inclusion of and sensitivity to women, youth, and other marginalized groups, expanding the pool of stakeholders of PBF support in the country to such beneficiaries.

Thus, the evaluation pursued a **participatory** approach that provided a platform for key stakeholders to share their experiences and give feedback as well as to validate evaluation findings and recommendations. The team worked with most relevant stakeholders to ensure the exercise was appropriately participatory. The participation of key stakeholder representatives ensured that insights and recommendations were useful to all and fostered appropriation and buy-in. Therefore, throughout the mandate, the team:

- Met with PBF HQ and PBF Country Team periodically with scheduled bi-weekly meetings throughout the evaluation period and whose frequency were adjusted as needed;
- Consulted with key stakeholders through semi-structured interviews and a seven-day Field Mission to the Gambia;
- Maintained a flexible approach to ensure utility and quality of work performed;
- Received and incorporated feedback on draft Inception and Evaluation reports and preliminary analysis from PBF HQ, PBF Country Team, Evaluation Reference Group (ERG) team, and other key stakeholders.

Contributions from PBF and other key stakeholders increased the quality of each phase of the evaluation, leading to relevant and useful recommendations. The evaluation team also benefited from PBF's support in terms of staff time and participation throughout the evaluation; provision of access to relevant documentation in a timely manner; help in identifying and facilitating introductions for meetings with PBF/PBSO Staff, implementing partners, government counterparts/representatives, and others; help in planning the travel and logistics for the seven day Field Mission to The Gambia; and provision and consolidation of input to draft reports from the ERG.

### Utilization-Focused Approach

The evaluation was an accountability and learning-oriented exercise that reflected on key achievements of PBF investments and will inform the PBF's next steps in The Gambia as well as the development of key strategic frameworks. As such an exercise, the evaluation team ensured that the assignment used a **utilization-focused** approach and pursued and prioritized the usefulness of the assignment to its intended users. In adopting this approach, the Team heightened the relevance, utility and uptake of findings and lessons learned, towards informing the PBSO Design, Monitoring and evaluation team, other PBF HQ staff, PBF Country staff, and The Gambia's re-eligibility process. This approach allowed the evaluation team to produce relevant and accessible results alongside concrete, forward-looking, and actionable recommendations outlined in [section 11](#) of the report.

Complementary to the **participatory** approach, multiple opportunities for constructive exchanges with stakeholders were pursued on the evaluation design, process, and outputs throughout the assignment as previously outlined above.<sup>1</sup> The evaluation team used moments such as bi-weekly meetings, the Field Mission trip to The Gambia, and other formal and informal learning moments to ensure that the evaluation pursued and prioritized the usefulness of the assignment to its intended users. These learning moments occurred throughout all phases of the evaluation (Inception, Data Collection, Data Analysis and Validation, and Reporting). For example, during the Inception Phase of this assignment, these learning moments helped inform the evaluation team's project sampling and clarified not only the best approaches for successful stakeholder engagement, but also helped identify additional key stakeholders who may not already be on the evaluation team's radar.

More formal learning moments of this assignment included the Field Mission to The Gambia where key stakeholders were interviewed and the submission of the Draft Evaluation Report which the ERG, PBF HQ and Country staff, and other stakeholders provided feedback to further inform the evaluation team's understanding before deliverables were finalized. The submission of the Draft Evaluation Report was a key input into the re-eligibility process as it was delivered in time for a PBF HQ Field Mission to The Gambia, showcasing this utilization approach in action.

### Inclusion & Conflict Sensitivity

The evaluation considered marginalized groups, including women, youth, migrants, and returnees, as well as communities in higher-risk areas. It examined the integration of gender sensitivity, equity, and inclusion in project design. Additionally, a conflict-sensitive methodology was applied, guided by principles of Do No Harm, respect and transparency.

The evaluation team prioritized anonymity during interviews, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the potential impact of questions, while also being mindful to avoid any inadvertent provocation of further violence. For this purpose, the methodology and evaluation matrix were designed to be inclusive and gender-sensitive. This was reflected in the following ways:

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<sup>1</sup> Note that the initial Inception Report noted that the evaluation team would possibly participate in Final/Harmonized Workshop along with authors of other key studies and reports that were also feeding into The Gambia's re-eligibility process. This would have been another opportunity to receive further feedback on the evaluation team's analysis and be aligned with the participatory and utilization-focused approach. However, there were several delays to the re-eligibility process itself and therefore, at the time of writing this Evaluation Report, this Final/Harmonized Workshop has not occurred and will likely not occur.



- The evaluation team ensured that the involvement of stakeholders (civil society, women, youth, adolescents) was addressed in the data collection either via interviews with these stakeholders or through lines of questioning mainstreamed through the Master Interview Protocol.<sup>135</sup>
- The evaluation team examined the integration of gender and youth sensitivity, equity, and inclusion in project designs and implementation through PBF interventions in The Gambia. Relevant indicators/evaluation questions were mainstreamed across the matrix.
- Through the additional non-OECD/DAC evaluation criteria, specifically through evaluation questions assessing to what extent the portfolio was gender-/youth- responsive and sensitive, the evaluation team ensured that these issues would feature and be included prominently in reports.
- To the extent possible, the evaluation team collected and analyzed data in a gender and age disaggregated way. Where disaggregated data was available, the evaluation conducted dedicated analysis to assess progress achieved for women and youth as separate and non-homogenous groups, with an intersectional lens.
- The evaluation team was diverse, gender-balanced and gender-aware, with one gender expert on the team and others who brought strong gender-informed perspectives and experience.
- The evaluation was undertaken in a conflict sensitive manner, noting that the Team Leader was an environmental peacebuilding and conflict sensitivity expert.

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<sup>135</sup> The Master Interview Protocol is the basis of all interviews. Drawing on this protocol, interviewers adapted lines of inquiry and actual interview questions to specific stakeholder types, taking into account such factors as: context, type of stakeholder, amount of time allotted for the interview, whether or not the interviewee has been interviewed before, location, language preferences and more.

## Evaluation Matrix

The evaluation matrix for this assignment is presented below. The matrix is based on questions provided in the Terms of Reference (ToR), with in some instances slight modifications. The matrix was refined and validated during the Inception Phase in collaboration with the client and informed by all information collected as part of Inception Phase activities. The evaluation matrix was the backbone of this assessment, guiding the data collection tools and analysis.

### UN PBF THE GAMBIA PORTFOLIO EVALUATION MATRIX

QUESTION	SUB-QUESTION	INDICATOR	DATA COLLECTION METHODS
<b>Evaluation Criteria: Relevance</b>			
<p><b>To what extent was the PBF strategic justification and vision for investments and its portfolio in The Gambia during the 2017- 2022 period relevant?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Was the PBF portfolio relevant to national peacebuilding needs and priorities at the time of the PBF eligibility design (2018 eligibility package), and remain relevant throughout the eligibility period?</li> <li>To what extent has the portfolio responded to conflict drivers and factors for peace identified in the eligibility conflict analysis?</li> <li>To what extent have portfolio goals, priorities and approaches remained relevant in adapting to any significant contextual shifts (e.g. COVID-19 context)?</li> <li>Was the portfolio well-timed to address specific conflict factors or capitalize on specific</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence of consideration for national peacebuilding priorities and needs during key moments in programming and project cycles.</li> <li>Evidence of conflict situation and other analyses informing PBF strategic direction and investments.</li> <li>Evidence of intentional alignment between the PBF portfolio and conflict drivers and factors for peace in the Country.</li> <li>Evidence of PBF course correction between 2017-2022 to leverage/adapt to contextual shifts and emerging opportunities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document review of: available situation analyses, eligibility conflict analyses, gender analyses, needs assessments, as well as national policies, frameworks, national action plans on women, peace and security, on youth, peace and security, gender policy, transition roadmap</li> <li>Consultations with: PBF Country Team, UNCT, government representatives, implementing partners, civil society actors, and project participants including women and youth leaders.</li> </ul>

	contextual windows of opportunity?		
<p><b>To what extent has the PBF portfolio considered, integrated, and supported existing frameworks and priorities?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent was the PBF portfolio relevant to the UN’s peacebuilding mandate and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 16?</li> <li>• To what extent does the PBF portfolio correspond to UN priorities in The Gambia?</li> <li>• To what extent was the PBF portfolio relevant to national frameworks?</li> <li>• To what extent was the PBF portfolio relevant regional frameworks?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence of PBF intentionality in aligning its portfolio with the SDGs, particularly SDG16 during key moments in programming and project cycles.</li> <li>• Evidence of PBF intentionality in aligning its portfolio with national policies such as the National Development Plan (NDP) of the Gambia (2018-2021), National Youth Policy of the Gambia (2019-2028), Gender Policy, etc.</li> <li>• Evidence of PBF intentionality in aligning its portfolio with regional frameworks such as Convention on the Elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (CEDAW), African Charter on Human and People’s Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, etc.</li> <li>• Evidence of PBF intentionality in aligning its portfolio with UN Priorities in the Country during key moments in programming and project cycles.</li> <li>• Stakeholder perception on alignment of the PBF with SDGs and UN Priorities in The Gambia.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Document review of: international, frameworks, action plans on women, peace and security, on youth, gender policy, transition roadmap, UNDAF, United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel (UNISS), etc. as well as PBF strategic documents in the Gambia and project documents.</li> <li>• Consultations with: PBF Country Team, and UNCT.</li> </ul>

<p><b>To what extent was the PBF portfolio relevant to the needs and priorities of the target groups/beneficiaries?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent were stakeholders (including target groups/ beneficiaries) consulted during the portfolio strategic planning (2018 eligibility package and other portfolio revisions) and the design and implementation of projects?</li> <li>• To what extent have national stakeholders (including civil society, women, youth, and adolescents) been effectively and adequately involved in the management of the PBF portfolio, from design to evaluation, including governance?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence of consultation with stakeholders during key programming and project cycles, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Government representatives</li> <li>- Civil society</li> <li>- Women</li> <li>- Youth and adolescents</li> <li>- Other targeted beneficiaries</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Evidence of opportunities for national stakeholders to engage with PBF processes and throughout project cycles.</li> <li>• Stakeholder perspective on the extent and adequacy of consultation/involvement.</li> <li>• Stakeholder perspective on the relevance of PBF interventions to their needs and priorities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Document review of strategic documents, project documents, etc.</li> <li>• Consultations with: PBF Country Team, UNCT, government representatives, implementing partners, civil society actors, and project participants including women and youth leaders.</li> </ul>
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**Evaluation Criteria: Coherence**

<p><b>To what extent was there internal coherence in the PBF portfolio?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent was there a coherent strategic approach to the development of the PBF portfolio?</li> <li>• To what extent are PBF projects complementary to each other?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence of long-term thinking in the development of the PBF portfolio</li> <li>• Evidence of continuity and complementarity across PBF projects.</li> <li>• Stakeholder perception on the coherence of the PBF portfolio.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Document review of strategic documents and project documents</li> <li>• Consultations with PBF Country Team, UNCT. and implementing partners.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>To what extent did the PBF portfolio and through its individual projects complement the work of different entities, especially with the Gambian government and other UN actors, but also beyond (initiatives supported by bilateral donors, regional organizations, etc.)?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent have PBF projects taken into account and aligned with other programmes and interventions in the country (Gambian government, UN-led and beyond), and this from project design, implementation, monitoring and reporting?</li> <li>• To what extent have PBF projects cooperated and coordinated with other peacebuilding actors in the country?</li> <li>• To what extent did the role of the PBF Secretariat in the oversight of the portfolio contribute to the portfolio’s coherence and cohesion?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence of opportunistic and intentional alignment with other programmes and interventions in the Country during key moment in the programming and project cycles.</li> <li>• Identification and use of appropriate communication/ coordination mechanisms with other peacebuilding actors in the country.</li> <li>• Stakeholder perception of the complementarity with other programmes and interventions in the country.</li> <li>• Identification of the PBF Secretariat's role, level of involvement, impact as appropriate in the oversight of the portfolio.</li> <li>• Stakeholder perception of the impact of the PBF Secretariat on the portfolio’s coherence and cohesion.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Document review of strategic documents and project documents.</li> <li>• Consultations with PBF Country Team, UNCT, government representatives, implementing partners, civil society actors, and other organizations.</li> </ul>
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**Evaluation Criteria: Effectiveness**

<p><b>To what extent did the PBF portfolio achieve its intended objectives and contribute to the 2018 eligibility strategic vision?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What have been the key results and broader transformative peacebuilding impact in each strategic area?</li> <li>• To what extent has the PBF portfolio contributed to a significant peacebuilding related</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification of key results in the four strategic areas outlined in the 2018 eligibility package, namely:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Transitional justice and human rights</li> <li>- Greater Involvement of youth and women in peacebuilding</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Document review of: strategic documents, project documents, monitoring data</li> <li>• Consultations with: PBF Country Team, UNCT, government representatives, implementing partners, civil society actors, and</li> </ul>
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	<p>behavioural or institutional change in each of the priority areas?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To what extent has PBF investment contributed to government led peacebuilding transition processes and reforms?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Peaceful reintegration (of returnees) and psychosocial support</li> <li>Strengthening of natural resource and land management, and related dispute resolution</li> <li>Evidence of policy changes as a result of PBF projects (with contribution and/or attribution).</li> <li>Evidence of institutional changes as a result of PBF projects (with contribution and/or attribution).</li> <li>Evidence of behaviour change of key stakeholders as a result of PBF projects (with contribution and/or attribution).</li> <li>Evidence of government led peacebuilding transition processes and reforms as a result of PBF projects (with contribution and/or attribution).</li> <li>Stakeholder perception or statement of the achievement of results.</li> </ul>	<p>project participants including women and youth leaders.</p>
<p><b>How effective was the PBF portfolio's targeting strategy in terms of geographic and beneficiary focus?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How appropriate and clear was the PBF portfolio's and individual projects' targeting strategy?</li> <li>To what extent have the target groups benefited from the initiatives?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence of clear and strategic targeting within the PBF Portfolio.</li> <li>Identification of benefits experiences by targeted groups.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document review of strategic documents, project documents, and monitoring data.</li> <li>Consultations with PBF Country Team, UNCT, government representatives, implementing partners, civil society actors, and project participants including women and youth leaders.</li> </ul>

<p><b>To what extent did the PBF portfolio contribute to any positive or negative unintended effects?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To what extent was there an ongoing process of context monitoring and a monitoring system that allows for the monitoring of unintended impacts?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identification of mechanisms to track unintended results.</li> <li>Identification of unintended positive results.</li> <li>Identification of unintended negative results.</li> </ul>	<p>Consultation with: PBF Country Team, UNCT, government representatives, implementing partners, civil society actors, and project participants including women and youth leaders.</p>
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**Evaluation Criteria: Sustainability & Ownership**

<p><b>To what extent have the results achieved been sustained or are likely to be sustained?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To what extent did the PBF individual project design include an appropriate sustainability and exit strategy to support positive changes in peacebuilding after the end of the eligibility period?</li> <li>To what extent did the PBF portfolio engage with relevant local, national and international actors in terms of financial transfers and capacity building?</li> <li>How has the PBF portfolio and individual projects enhanced and contributed to the development of national capacity in order to ensure sustainability of efforts and benefits?</li> <li>To what extent did the PBF portfolio contribute to the broader strategic outcomes identified in government led transition plans, the legislative</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence of sustainability and exist strategies being developed/ in place.</li> <li>Evidence of engagement with relevant local, national and international actors in manner favoring sustainability.</li> <li>Evidence of national capacity being developed in manner favoring sustainability.</li> <li>Evidence of the PBF portfolio contributing to broader strategic outcomes.</li> <li>Evidence of PBF support and initiatives being moved forward by national/ international actors following project closure.</li> <li>Stakeholder statement on the commitment of stakeholders in sustainability results of PBF support and continuing initiatives – particularly from Government, bilateral donors and other national stakeholders.</li> <li>Evidence of policy, strategy, planning and/or programming change in The</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document review of: strategic documents, project documents, M&amp;E documents, monitoring data, transition plans, legislative agendas, peacebuilding policies, etc.</li> <li>Consultations with: PBF Country Team, UNCT, government representatives, civil society actors, implementing partners and project participants including women and youth leaders.</li> </ul>
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	<p>agendas and current peacebuilding policies in place?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How strong is the commitment of the Government, bilateral donors, and other stakeholders to sustaining the results of PBF support and continuing initiatives in each of the outlined priority areas (especially in women's participation in decision making processes, gender equality and women's empowerment) supported under the PBF invested portfolio?</li> </ul>	Gambia that reflect the priorities and outcomes of the PBF portfolio.	
<p><b>What was the role and involvement of the PBF Secretariat in the oversight and guidance of the PBF portfolio? To what extent did the PBF Secretariat involvement impact the sustainability of critical initiatives and national ownership?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent did the PBF Secretariat's involvement impact the sustainability of critical initiatives and national ownership?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification of the role and level of involvement of the PBF Secretariat</li> <li>• Evidence of this involvement being appropriate for favouring sustainability and national ownership.</li> <li>• Stakeholder perception of the impact of the PBF Secretariat on sustainability and country ownership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Document review of strategic documents, PBF Secretariat documents, etc.</li> <li>• Consultation with PBF Country Team, UNCT, government representatives, civil society actors.</li> </ul>

#### Evaluation Criteria: Efficiency

<p><b>To what extent was the PBF portfolio implementation approach efficient for the production and realization of intended results?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How efficient was PBF's approach to procurement and related activities?</li> <li>• How well did the project teams communicate with implementing partners, stakeholders and project beneficiaries on its progress?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence of efficiency in the procurement process for Recipient UN Organizations of PBF Funding (RUNOs)</li> <li>• Evidence of efficiency in the procurement process for Recipient Non-UN Organizations of PBF Funding (NUNOs).</li> <li>• Timeliness of procurement process.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Document review of: strategic documents, project documents, monitoring/financial data and documents</li> <li>• Consultations with: PBF Country Team, UNCT, government representatives, and implementing partners.</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent did the different stakeholders (beneficiaries, national counterparts, implementing partners, etc.) work together towards common peacebuilding objectives?</li> <li>• Have project funds and activities been delivered in a timely manner?</li> <li>• What key factors affected effective implementation and timely delivery? And what were their impacts?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriateness of number of fund recipients (RUNOs and NUNOs).</li> <li>• Suitability of channels of communication between project teams and implementation partners, beneficiaries and other key stakeholders.</li> <li>• Stakeholder perception on adequacy of communication.</li> <li>• Evidence of coordination between different stakeholders to enhance efficiency.</li> <li>• Timelapse analysis of fund disbursements and activity implementation.</li> <li>• Identification of most prominent factors affecting implementation, and their impacts on implementation.</li> <li>• Stakeholder perception on timely delivery and factors affecting implementation.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>To what extent have resources been used efficiently?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent have financial and human resources been used efficiently?</li> <li>• How efficient was the overall staffing, planning and coordination within the portfolio?</li> <li>• To what extent did the PBF portfolio provide value-for-money?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cost assessment as compared to budget.</li> <li>• Appropriateness of distribution of programme costs and allocation of resources.</li> <li>• Stakeholder perception of in/adequacy of programme resources for programme planning, implementation, and coordination.</li> <li>• Value of inputs compared/ assessed against value of outputs, as perceived by key stakeholders.</li> <li>• Stakeholder perception on the use of available resources.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Document review of: strategic documents, project documents, monitoring/financial data and documents</li> <li>• Consultations with: PBF Country Team, UNCT, government representatives, and implementing partners.</li> </ul>

<p><b>How efficient and effective was the PBF's approach to M&amp;E?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Was the Secretariat's M&amp;E Strategy and system useful and adequate for the monitoring results?</li> <li>• How well did the portfolio collect and use data to monitor results and manage the portfolio?</li> <li>• Were technical recommendations adopted to improve the monitoring process?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriateness, use and value of M&amp;E strategy and systems, including as it relates to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Project results</li> <li>- Portfolio level results</li> <li>- Peacebuilding at outcome and impact level.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Evidence of M&amp;E data informing design, planning and management.</li> <li>• Evidence of data gaps, for the monitoring of results.</li> <li>• Evidence of appropriately disaggregated data (by gender, age, vulnerable groups, etc.)</li> <li>• Evidence of changes to the monitoring process as a result of technical recommendations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Document review of: strategic documents, project documents, M&amp;E documents, monitoring data.</li> <li>• Consultations with: PBF Country Team, UNCT, government representatives, and implementing partners.</li> </ul>
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**Evaluation Criteria: Non-OECD/DAC Criteria**

<p><b>Conflict-Sensitivity: To what extent did the PBF portfolio have an explicit approach to conflict-sensitivity? How effective was that approach?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent did the PBF adopt an adequate conflict-related risk management approach?</li> <li>• Were RUNOs and NUNOs' internal capacities adequate for ensuring an ongoing conflict-sensitive approach?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence of conflict-sensitive approach at the portfolio and project level.</li> <li>• Evidence of an adequate conflict-related risk management approach adopted at the portfolio level, notably the undertaking of a risk assessment including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identification of conflict related risks</li> <li>- Assessment of impacts of conflict-related risks</li> <li>- Drafting and application of mitigative strategy</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Document review of: strategic documents, project documents, M&amp;E documents, monitoring data</li> <li>• Consultations with: PBF Country Team, UNCT, government representatives, implementing partners, civil society actors, and project participants including women and youth leaders.</li> </ul>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stakeholder statement on the capacity of RUNOs and NUNOs.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Catalytic: To what extent was the PBF portfolio financially and/or programmatically catalytic?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How has PBF funding been used to scale-up other peacebuilding work?</li> <li>How has PBF funding helped to create broader platforms for peacebuilding?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence of interventions being scaled with PBF funding.</li> <li>Evidence of PBF projects leading to:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>scaling of other interventions.</li> <li>replication of interventions.</li> <li>increases in investments.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document review of strategic documents, project documents, monitoring data.</li> <li>Consultations with PBF Country Team, UNCT, government representatives, implementing partners, civil society actors, other organizations, and beneficiaries.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Gender-Responsive/Gender-Sensitive: To what extent did the PBF portfolio as a whole, consider the different challenges, opportunities, constraints and capacities of women and girls and boys in design and implementation processes? To what extent did the PBF portfolio, through its' funded projects, effectively empower not only women and girls but also men and boys to advance Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE)?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To what extent has the PBF portfolio responded to the particular needs of marginalized groups, particularly women?</li> <li>To what extent were the commitments made in the various projects proposals to gender-responsive peacebuilding were realized throughout implementation?</li> <li>To what extent did the PBF portfolio substantively mainstream gender-sensitive programming and support gender-responsive peacebuilding (outside of its own gender related priority)?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence of intentional and opportunistic alignment with the needs of women, and if available, especially for GM 2 and GM 3 projects.</li> <li>Evidence of PBF investments in gender-responsive peacebuilding.</li> <li>Evidence of gender-responsive activities materializing, across the portfolio.</li> <li>Evidence of gender-responsive peacebuilding results, across the portfolio.</li> <li>Evidence of PBF investments in higher risk geographies such as remote rural areas or border regions</li> <li>Evidence of activities in higher risk geographies such as remote rural areas or border regions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document review of strategic documents, project documents, monitoring data.</li> <li>Consultations with PBF Country Team, UNCT, government representatives, implementing partners, civil society actors, other organizations, and beneficiaries.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Youth-Responsive/Youth-Sensitive: To what extent did the PBF portfolio as a whole, consider the different</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To what extent has the PBF portfolio responded to the</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence of intentional and opportunistic alignment with the needs of youth.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document review of strategic documents, project documents, monitoring data.</li> </ul>

<p>challenges, opportunities, constraints and capacities of youth as a group (as well as young women and young men as two different target groups) in design and implementation processes? To what extent did the PBF portfolio, through its' funded projects, effectively empower young people?</p>	<p>particular needs of marginalized groups, particularly youth?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To what extent were the commitments made in the various projects proposals to youth-responsive peacebuilding realized throughout implementation?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence of PBF investments in youth-responsive peacebuilding.</li> <li>Evidence of youth-responsive activities materializing, across the portfolio.</li> <li>Evidence of youth-specific peacebuilding results, across the portfolio.</li> <li>Evidence of any cross cutting analysis that consider youth and other axis of exclusion such as geography, disability status, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consultations with PBF Country Team, UNCT, government representatives, implementing partners, civil society actors, other organizations, and beneficiaries.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Risk-Tolerance and Innovation: (If portfolio/individual projects characterized as “high risk”) To what extent were risks adequately monitored and mitigated? How novel or innovative was the PBF portfolio approach?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can lessons be drawn to inform similar approaches elsewhere?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence of an adequate risk management approach adopted at the portfolio level, notably the undertaking of a risk assessment including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identification of risks</li> <li>Assessment of impacts of risks</li> <li>Drafting and application of mitigative strategy</li> </ul> </li> <li>Identification of innovative approaches in the PBF Portfolio.</li> <li>Identification of lessons that can inform work elsewhere.</li> <li>Stakeholder statement of risk-tolerance and level of innovation of the PBF.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document review of strategic documents, project documents, M&amp;E documents, monitoring data.</li> <li>Consultations with PBF Country Team, UNCT, government representatives, and implementing partners.</li> </ul>

## Methods

The evaluation pursued a mixed method approach to data collection and analysis, which allowed for the triangulation of information, increased the reliability of results, and ensured that the resulting conclusions and recommendations are credible and grounded in the realities of multiple stakeholder groups.

In the initial project plan outlined in the Impact Report, quantitative analysis was envisaged as a crucial component of our evaluation methodology. However, it is essential to note that this approach could not be executed as planned as no quantitative data set on the portfolio was shared with the evaluation team. Unfortunately, the absence of access to relevant data impeded our ability to conduct the intended quantitative analysis. Despite this limitation, we ensured a robust evaluation by focusing on qualitative methods, leveraging available information, and a triangulation of data sources to derive meaningful conclusions and recommendations for the evaluation.

### Light Evaluability Assessment

During the Inception Phase of this mandate, the evaluation team completed a preliminary examination of relevant documents to further familiarize itself with the PBF's work in The Gambia and to develop and refine the relevant evaluation tools, overall approach, methods, and data collection instruments. Also, during this Phase, a series of inception meetings and inception interviews were conducted to further inform such an understanding.

The preliminary examination of relevant documents fed into a light evaluability assessment that the evaluation team conducted to inform the evaluability of the PBF portfolio in The Gambia as a whole. Based on this light evaluability assessment, the evaluation team concluded that there appeared to be sufficiently substantive, available programme and project documentation and good access to relevant stakeholders to allow for a quality evaluation with informed findings. One notable point raised during the light evaluability assessment, however, was that The Gambia Portfolio 2017-2022 had no identifiable overall Theory of Change (ToC). The absence of an overarching ToC created challenges around assessing and evaluating peacebuilding *changes* and the *mechanisms* of change. However, specifically two documents, the 2018 Eligibility package and a document titled "Outcome 1 Indicators: The Gambia" were key in the absence of a Gambia specific ToC. Both these documents presented high-level information on outcomes and expected results to be achieved along with clearly identified four strategic areas for support; however, no proposed steps or clearly laid out assumptions were included. During the evaluation, this challenge was sufficiently mitigated with a triangulation of data across the evaluation matrix questions and sub-questions from these two key documents, from project level documents which layout implementation strategies in their associated project documents, and from interviews.

Throughout the rest of the evaluation, the evaluation team continued to work closely with the PBF Country Team identifying missing key documentation and stakeholder types which either the PBF Country Team or PBSO/PBF HQ team provided access to; all of which informed and aided in the triangulation of data for the subsequent analysis.

### Document Review

The document review process included a thorough examination of pertinent Regional, National, and International Frameworks/Policies as documented in the bibliography. This comprehensive approach ensured that our analysis was anchored in the broader context of established guidelines, regulations, and policies relevant to the Gambia, contributing to a more nuanced and informed assessment.

Detailed review of programmatic documents was also conducted during the Data Collection Phase. After approval of the Inception Report (IR), the evaluation team undertook a more detailed examination and analysis of relevant and available country/project-specific and other relevant documents provided by the PBSO and PBF Country Team. This included annual project evaluation reports, final project progress reports, PBF project documents, project monitoring reports, periodic results synthesis reports, thematic reviews, related internal meeting notes/letters, any documents identified or shared by stakeholders during interviews, etc. This project document review was critical for responding to the evaluation questions in a triangulated manner. It's important to note that the evaluation team, after discussion and agreement with the PBF Country Team, only reviewed the most recent PBF progress reports to inform the portfolio review. While PBF projects report on progress on a semi-annual basis, it was decided and agreed that only the most recent progress reports would be relevant for review for this evaluation.

The table below presents both the total number of documents reviewed, categorized by document type, and the corresponding count of documents reviewed per type and project. It's important to highlight that the number of documents reviewed per project aligns with the total count of documents per project type, as the document type categorization encompasses all the reviewed documents.

**Table II. i Documents Reviewed**

DOCUMENT TYPE	NUMBER OF DOCUMENTS
Project Documents	51
Thematic Reviews and Guidance Notes	14
PBF Portfolio Documents	75
Foundational and Strategic Documents	11
Other Document	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>152</b>

NAME OF PROJECT	NUMBER OF DOCUMENTS
Support the capacity of the government and national stakeholders to establish credible transactional justice processes and mechanisms that promote reconciliation and sustainable peace in The Gambia – Phase II (focus on operationalization of Transactional Justice processes and Human Rights protection) (PBF/IRF-172)	11
Strategic advice and support to the security sector reform and governance in The Gambia (PBF/IRF-173)	15
Support to establish a strategic policy planning and management unit in the Office of the President (PBF/IRF-237)	6
Addressing conflict over Land and Natural Resources (LNR) in The Gambia (PBF/GMB/B-1)	14



Increased Women and Youth participation in decision-making processes and as agents of community conflict prevention (PBF/GMB/D-1)	7
Strengthening sustainable and holistic reintegration of returnees in The Gambia (PBF/GMB/A-1)	19
Climate Conflict: Strengthening community coping mechanisms against risks of climate induced conflicts and to minimize gender related vulnerabilities and tensions in The Gambia (PBF/IRF-342)	5
Strengthening inclusive citizen engagement for more accountable governance in The Gambia (PBF/GMB/A-2)	7
Strengthening Community Access to Justice, Community Policing and Effective SGBV Response (PBF/GMB/A-3)	5
Young women and men as stakeholders in ensuring peaceful democratic processes and advocates for the prevention of violence and hate speech (PBF/GMB/D-2)	7
Support to the implementation and monitoring of the Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Commission (TRRC) recommendations in The Gambia (PBF/GMB/A-4)	8
Supporting cross-border cooperation for increased community resilience and social cohesion in The Gambia and Senegal (PBF/IRF-430)	5
Promoting peace and social cohesion through provision of mental health services and psychosocial well-being of SGBV survivors in The Gambia (PBF/IRF-456)	5
Strengthening the National Infrastructure for Peace to Promote Social Cohesion in The Gambia	2
Strengthening women's political participation and leadership through reformed legislation, community-level leadership, and political parties' engagement in The Gambia	2
Empowering Gambian youth to voice their demands to duty bearers on issues of governance, reconciliation, and prevention	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>152</b>

### Interviews & Community Discussions

The evaluation team undertook semi-structured interviews as well as community discussions for this assignment. Interviewing began during the Inception Phase to ensure the evaluation responds to the needs and priorities of its users.

During the Data Collection Phase, interviews and community discussions were conducted with a wider range of stakeholders, as identified below in [Table II. ii](#) to gather their perspectives and opinions in response to the evaluation questions and matrix. Table II. ii also lists all the stakeholders the evaluation team

interviewed. Stakeholders were specifically identified in collaboration with the PBSO, PBF and/or ERG using a purposive sampling strategy. This was supplemented with additional stakeholders identified through snowball sampling. In total 157 interviews (compared to the initially planned 70 interviews). These variations were mainly due to a higher level of engagement and willingness to participate from the stakeholders, leading to broader and more comprehensive coverage and a high incidence of group interviews during the field mission, in addition to two community discussions with project beneficiaries. The increased number of stakeholders consulted was largely due to numerous group interviews being undertaken at the national level. The evaluation team notably interviews a higher number of Government counterparts/representatives (anticipated 15, actual 26), Project Implementing Agencies (anticipated 12, actual 18), Civil Society Actors (anticipated 12, actual 15), Project participants/beneficiaries (anticipated 10, actual 64).<sup>136</sup> A larger proportion of interviewees focused on the national level given the focus of the evaluation being a country specific portfolio evaluation.

**Table II. ii Stakeholder Sampling Snapshot**

STAKEHOLDER TYPE	GLOBAL STAKEHOLDERS	NUMBER OF CONSULTED STAKEHOLDERS
UN Headquarter Staff	Monitoring and Knowledge Management Officer, Political Affairs Advisor, Senior Advisor, M&E, Monitoring and Evaluation Manager, Associate Programme Officer, Gender Advisor, Chief Financing for Peacebuilding Branch, Programme Officer	9
UN PDA	Peace & Development Advisor	1
UN RCO	Resident Coordinator	1
STAKEHOLDER TYPE	NATIONAL-FIELD MISSION STAKEHOLDERS	NUMBER OF CONSULTED STAKEHOLDERS
UN RCO – The Gambia	UN Resident Coordinator’s Office (UNRCO) - Head of Resident Coordinator Office, Senior Human Rights Advisor (SHRA)	2
UN PDA	Peace and Development Advisor, Previous PDA current Resident Coordinator in Malawi	1
UN PBF Team	PBF Programme Coordinator, M&E Officer	2
UN Regional/Country Staff	Peace and Development Officer	1

<sup>136</sup> Differences between planned and actual figures also include PBSO (anticipated 8, actual 9), UN RCO (anticipated 1 actual 2), Other Stakeholders (anticipated 6, actual 17), UN PBF Team (anticipated 3, actual 2), and UN Regional/Country Staff (anticipated - , actual 1).

<b>Government Counterparts/ Representatives</b>	Office of the President, Office of National Security, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Forestry, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Livestock, Ministry of lands and Local Governance, etc.	26
<b>Project Implementing Agencies</b>	Project Teams and Country Representatives - UNDP, UNFPA, OHCHR, UNICEF, ITC, IOM and FAO.	18
<b>Civil Society Actors</b>	TANGO, West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP), ActionAid International, Peacehub, Activista, and Anti-Corruption Coalition Gambia (ACCG).	15
<b>Project participants/beneficiaries</b>	Darsilami Border Post, Tabandin border post, Tinkinjo, Sinchu Gundo cluster and Bissari Bajonki Cluster.	64
<b>Other Stakeholders</b>	National Youth Council, Inter-Party Committee, National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), etc.	17
<b>Total</b>		157

## Project Sampling

In our comprehensive evaluation process, we not only thoroughly reviewed all project documents encompassing the entire portfolio but also conducted in-depth assessments by interviewing stakeholders directly associated with a sample of six projects out of the 16 operational between 2017 and 2022. This dual approach allowed us to gather insights from both the documented perspectives within the projects and the lived experiences and opinions of the individuals involved, ensuring a more holistic and nuanced understanding of the PBF initiatives and their impacts. These six projects were selected based on various criteria to ensure comprehensive coverage of interventions in the country, including coverage of focus areas, strategic areas, geographic foci, implementing entities, and size while also ensuring newer and older projects were selected, as well as the inclusion of a Cross-Border Project (PBF/IRF-430). Sampled projects included:

- Support the capacity of the government and national stakeholders to establish credible transactional justice processes and mechanisms that promote reconciliation and sustainable peace in The Gambia – Phase II (focus on operationalization of Transactional Justice processes and Human Rights protection) (**TJHR Project**) (PBF/IRF-172).
- Strategic advice and support to the security sector reform and governance in The Gambia (**SSR Project**) (PBF/IRF-173).

- Addressing conflict over Land and Natural Resources (LNR) in The Gambia (**Conflict LNR Project**) (PBF/GMB/B-1).
- Strengthening sustainable and holistic reintegration of returnees in The Gambia (**Reintegration of Migrants Project**) (PBF/GMB/A-1).
- Strengthening inclusive citizen engagement for more accountable governance in The Gambia (**Governance and Accountability Project**) (PBF/GMB/A-2).
- Supporting cross-border cooperation for increased community resilience and social cohesion in The Gambia and Senegal (**Cross-Border Project**) (PBF/IRF-430).

This sampling approach was informed by inception interviews, incorporating guidance from both PBF HQ and Country staff, while also balancing stakeholder priorities, accessibility, security, stakeholder availability, and the quality of available information. Further rationale for the sample is outlined in Table II. iii below. To reiterate, while program documentation for the remaining ten projects was still reviewed, interviews specific to those projects were not conducted as part of this assessment.

**Table II. iii Project Sample**

PROJECT NAME	KEY SELECTION CRITERIA CONSIDERATION
<b>Support the capacity of the Government and national stakeholders to establish credible transitional justice processes and mechanism that promote reconciliation and sustainable peace in the Gambia (PBF/IRF-172)</b>	Proposed in inception interviews. To be explored in combination with the subsequent three projects. <sup>2</sup> Important project in relation to Strategic Area 1.
<b>Strategic advice and support to the security sector reform and governance in The Gambia (PBF/IRF-173)</b>	Proposed in inception interviews. Only project in The Gambia portfolio that covers the SSR Focus Area.
<b>Addressing Conflict over Land and Natural Resources (LNR) In The Gambia (PBF/GMB/B-1)</b>	Only project specific on LNR-related conflict in the proposed sample (Strategic Area 4). Some implementation challenges which could be further explored, and lessons learned to be drawn. Potential for future interest in this area noted in inception interviews.
<b>Strengthening sustainable and holistic reintegration of returnees in The Gambia (PBF/GMB/A-1)</b>	Only project that covers the Peace Dividends (Employment Generation) Focus Area. Only project on returnees (Strategic Area 3).

<sup>2</sup> Subsequent projects include Support to the implementation and monitoring of the TRRC recommendations in The Gambia (2021), Promoting peace and social cohesion through provision of mental health services and psychosocial well-being of sexual and gender-based violence survivors (2022), and Strengthening the National Infrastructure for Peace to Promote Social Cohesion in The Gambia (2022). These projects will be explored in relation to the Transitional Justice project, particularly framed as outcomes of this first project, with some consideration for early results or foreseen results, coherence and complementarity of interventions, relevance and timing of interventions, among other angles.

PROJECT NAME	KEY SELECTION CRITERIA CONSIDERATION
<b>Strengthening Inclusive Citizen Engagement for More Accountable Governance in The Gambia (PBF/GMB/A-2)</b>	Proposed in inception interviews. A project with a strong gender and youth lens, in alignment with Strategic Area 3.
<b>Supporting cross-border cooperation for increased community resilience and social cohesion in The Gambia and Senegal (Gambia) (PBF/IRF-430)</b>	Only project that is cross-border. Potential for future interest in this area noted in inception interviews.

### Mission to The Gambia

A seven-day Field Mission was planned to gather a wide range of perspectives on key projects. The mission was conducted between 28 September 2023 to 4 October 2023. Data collection largely took place in Banjul, where government officials, CSOs and UN Agencies stakeholders were interviewed. The mission also included two days during which the evaluation team traveled to the West Coast Region, the Lower River Region, the Central River Region and the Upper River region to meet with implementing partners and beneficiaries from the six sampled projects. This mission provided in-depth information and insights, as the majority of stakeholder consultation took place in person, during the mission. The evaluation team for this Field Mission consisted of two Universalis consultants from Montreal and three national consultants based in The Gambia. Table II. iv below presents information about the communities/places visited by the evaluation team during the Field Mission.

**Table II. iv** *Communities Visited*

REGION	COMMUNITY/PLACE
<b>West Coast Region</b>	Darsilami (Border Post)
<b>Lower River Region</b>	Bissari Bajonki Cluster
<b>Central River Region</b>	Sinchu Gundo cluster Tabandin (Border Post)
<b>Upper River Region</b>	Tinkinjo
<b>Greater Banjul Area</b>	Banjul District

### Data Management

The evaluation team used a series of online data management tools to ensure that the team was able to manage both the evaluation process and large quantities of data produced in an effective and coherent way. The evaluation team relied on the Dedoose data management software to organize all document review, interviews, and relevant Field Mission data under predefined headings (or codes) that aligned with the evaluation criteria and the key questions and sub-questions under those criteria. This thereby facilitated both the clustering of themes across different data sources and types of informants and the sharing of data across the evaluation team.

## Data Analysis

This evaluation employed a host of complementary analytic methods to appropriately and comprehensively answer Evaluation Matrix questions, and to provide for adequate validation and triangulation. The use of mixed methods and triangulation enhanced the credibility of findings through the convergence and overlap of different methods. Attuned to the various methodological approaches and cross-cutting priorities for this evaluation, the evaluation team pursued and drew on **contextual analysis**, **explanatory analysis**, **interpretive content analysis**, **gender and inclusion analysis**, and other types of analysis identified as relevant for the qualitative dataset and document review dataset. Each approach is described below.

- Contextual Analysis:** A comprehensive examination of the peacebuilding landscape in The Gambia was conducted to contextualize the PBF mandate. This analysis delved into the regional dynamics, priorities, and challenges associated with peacebuilding efforts in The Gambia. It situated the PBF's initiatives within the broader historical context of the country and aligned them with the ongoing efforts of other relevant actors in the field. This contextual analysis was aided by the team structure of the evaluation team which consisted of consultants based in Montreal and three national Gambian consultants who are experts in their field and knowledgeable about the context in the Gambia. This analysis was essential in assessing the relevance, coherence, and effectiveness of PBF's initiatives within the historical and current context.
- Explanatory Analysis:** An examination of PBF's project implementation through progress reports and final evaluation reports was undertaken, to ascertain if, and the extent to which PBF priorities were being delivered effectively, impactfully and coherently. This analysis allowed the evaluation team to make overall statements about performance and any trends observed.
- Interpretive Content Analysis:** Documents and interview notes were analyzed to identify common trends, themes, and patterns as per the indicators and evaluation criteria outlined in the matrix. Interpretive content analysis was also used to flag converging and diverging views. Emerging issues and trends constituted the raw material for crafting preliminary hypotheses and observations, to be further explored and triangulated.
- Gender and Inclusion Analysis:** This evaluation was undertaken with a particular attention to gender, youth and inclusion. It used an inclusive definition of gender that considers the extent to which women, men, and young people are considered in the type of projects and activities delivered and how these activities were monitored and reported. Likewise, the evaluation integrated the principle of inclusion by exploring the extent to which PBF gave due attention to vulnerable groups (likely to include marginalized groups, including women, youth, migrants, and returnees, as well as communities in higher-risk areas). Where disaggregated data was available, the evaluation conducted dedicated analysis to assess progress achieved for women and youth as separate and non-homogenous groups, with an intersectional lens for a comprehensive analysis.
- PBF specific non-OECD/DAC criteria analysis:** As indicated in the terms of reference of this mandate, inclusion of a separate set of evaluation criteria/questions that are PBF specific were included as part of the evaluation matrix. The evaluation of these non-OECD/DAC criteria involved a comprehensive analysis of the PBF portfolio's approach in various dimensions. Firstly, the assessment of conflict-sensitivity scrutinizing the explicit strategies employed and the effectiveness in managing conflicts. The catalytic nature of the PBF portfolio was examined, considering both financial and programmatic aspects, to

determine its role as a catalyst for positive change and development. The gender-responsive/gender-sensitive evaluation delved into how the portfolio addressed the unique challenges, opportunities, constraints, and capacities of women, girls, men, boys, and young people throughout the design and implementation processes. Similarly, the youth-responsive/youth-sensitive criteria focused on the PBF portfolio's consideration of the distinct needs of youth, including young women and young men, and its effectiveness in empowering this demographic. Finally, the risk-tolerance and innovation assessment, particularly for projects labeled as "high risk," scrutinized the portfolio's ability to monitor and mitigate risks and its overall innovative approach in addressing complex issues. The analysis was based on a triangulation of sources, including project design documents across the portfolio, external documents with PBF partners, interviews with stakeholders involved in project implementation, as well as various internal progress reports and independent evaluations.



## Appendix III Consulted Stakeholders

### STAKEHOLDERS CONSULTED

LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	JOB TITLE/POSITION	ORGANIZATION
A. Jarjou	Saidina	Fundraising Manager	ActionAid International
Adda-Dontoh	Rebecca (Becky)	Previous PDA current Resident Coordinator in Malawi	UN
Alaga	Ecoma	Senior Political Affairs Officer	UN
Angula	Markus	Child Justice Officer	UNICEF
B. Cham	Sukai	National Program Officer for the PBF	IOM
B. Drammeh	Muhamadou	Executive Director	Tumana Agency for Development (TAD)
Badjie	Ismaila	Program Manager	National Youth Council (NYC)
Bah	Omar	Peace, Security and Justice Officer	NYC
Bah	Gibbi	Deputy Director	Department of Community Development, Ministry of Lands, Regional Government and Religious Affairs
Bajamba Bojang	Aico	Assistant Immigration Control Officer (AICO)	Gambia Immigration Department
Baldeh	Samba	Co-Chair	IPC
Ballotta	Mariavittoria	Resident Representative	UNICEF
Barrow	Binta	Immediate Assistant	Gambia Immigration Department
Bojang	Salify	Immigration Office (IO)	Gambia Immigration Department
Burdett	Rohan	Unavailable	Office of National Security, The Gambia
C. Haccius	Justin	Project Manager POST-TRRC Project (PBF/GMB/A-4)	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
C. Mendy	Paul	Director of Human Resources	National Human Rights Commission(NHRC)
Camara	Lamin	Assistant Representative	United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
Camara	Ansumana	National Coordinator	Activista
Camara	Bakary	Deputy Executive Secretary	Alternative Dispute Resolution Secretariat
Ceesay	Isatou	Member	Inter-Party Commission (IPC)
Ceesay	Abdou	Director General	Ministry of Agriculture, Department of Livestock Services
Colley	Modou	National Focal Point for Department of Forestry – PBF Project	Department of Forestry, The Gambia

## STAKEHOLDERS CONSULTED

LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	JOB TITLE/POSITION	ORGANIZATION
D. Joof	Emmanuel	Chairperson	NHRC
D. Savage	Ebrine	Executive Secretary	Ministry of Interior
De Nana Chinbuah	Aissata	Former Resident Representative	UNDP
Drammeh	Njundu	Commissioner	NHRC
Faye Colley	Ndella	Executive Director	ActionAid International
Fofana	Kaddy	Project Officer- Mental Health and SGBV Project (PBF/IRF-456)	UNDP
Gassama	Foday	Commissioner	GID
Ghader Khdeim	Abdel	PBF Programme Coordinator	UN
Gibril	Penda	PBF Project Coordinator	FAO
Gomez	Jane	Communications	Center for Victims
Gouray	Muhamadou	Vice President	TAD
Gribaudo	Deborah	Monitoring and Knowledge Management Officer	PBSO, UN
Hadra	Wifag	Political Affairs Advisor	UN
Hassan	Bushra	Senior Advisor, M&E	PBSO, UN
Heine	Tim	Monitoring and Evaluation Manager	PBSO, UN
Jadama	Abdoulie	Executive Director	ACCG / OSPG
Jallon	Idrisa	Principal Planning	Ministry of Interior
Jallow	Adama	National Coordinator	Center for Victims
Jammeh	Isatou	Programs and Documentation	Center for Victims
Janrjou	Ismaila	Chairperson	OSPG
Jarju	Alcie	Executive Director	NYC
Jatta	Lamin	Director, Joint Assessment Team	Office of National Security, The Gambia
Jatta	Malang	Director, Policy and Planning, Security Sector Reform Manager	Office of National Security, The Gambia
Jette	Sanjo	SAS	Ministry of Interior
Jobe	Ebou	Regional Livestock Director Central Rivers Region (CRR)/North, Focal Point on PBF Project	Ministry of Agriculture, Department of Livestock Services
K. Mendy	Abraham	Private Permanent Secretary (PPS)	Ministry of Interior
Lamin Nyassi	Sico	Secondary Immigration Control Officer (SICO)	Gambia Immigration Department

## STAKEHOLDERS CONSULTED

LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	JOB TITLE/POSITION	ORGANIZATION
Lawan	George	Head of the Resident Coordinator Office	RCO
M. Bayo	Alhaji	Acting Administrative	IPC
M. Cessay	Mustapha	Assistant FAO Representative in Charge of Programme	FAO
M. Degen	Mary	State Counsel	Ministry of Justice
Magalage	Stephanie	Associate Programme Officer	PBSO, UN
Mansaray	Yirah	Infrastructure for Peace and Insider Mitigation Project	UNDP
Masarakufa	Yvonne	Senior Human Rights Advisor (SHRA)	UNRCO
Matete	Stephen	Chief of Mission a.i. & Program Coordinator	IOM
Mc Carthy	Patrick	Peace & Development Advisor	UN
Moustafa	Naffisa	Peace and Development Officer	UN
N. Dobe	Mam	Director of Programmes and Resource Mobilisation	NHRC
N. Jeng	Ndey	Project Officer- Mental Health and SGBV Project (PBF/IRF-456)	UNDP
N. Kimaru	Thomas	Women Political Leadership Project	UNDP
Ngoneh Jeng	Ndey	Human Rights Officer	OHCHR
Njie	Salama	National level coordinator	WANEP
Njie	Modou	Assistant Community Development Officer	Department of Community Development, Ministry of Lands, Regional Government and Religious Affairs
Njie Sarr	Tobaski	Women's Right Manager	ActionAid International
Nyamutswa	Mercy	Governance Officer	UNDP
Nyang	Saffiatou	State Counsel	Ministry of Justice
O. Cham	Fafa	Head of Governance and Policy	ActionAid International
Persson	Ida	Former Governance Specialist	UNDP
Rose Sarr	Ndéye	Country Representative	UNFPA
S. Bakurin	Ndey	Executive Director	TANGO
S. Ceesay	Lamin	Inspector, Assistant Station Officer	Gambia Immigration Department (GID)
S. Cham	Achagi	Programme Officer	TANGO
S. Jabbiba	Ba	Secretary	IPC

## STAKEHOLDERS CONSULTED

LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	JOB TITLE/POSITION	ORGANIZATION
S. Jeng	Abubakarr	National Security Adviser	Office of National Security, The Gambia
S. Njie	Mamtoubou	Member	IPC
S. Tamba	Ansuamana	Head of Survey Section	Department of Forestry, The Gambia
S.M. Sylva	Jacquelin	Finance and Administration Manager	NYC
Saine	Maria	Legal Officer	NHRC
Salieu Bah	Mamadou	M&E Officer	United Nations
Sanneh	Sirrah	Senior Coordination Analyst	Office of the President
Sanneh	Ousman	Principal Labour Officer	Department of Labour
Sanneh	Fatumatta	Principal Labour Officer	Department of Labour
Singhateh	Fathma	Principal Policy Analyst	Office of the President
Songo	Ousmane	Principal, Rural Development Institute	Department of Community Development, Ministry of Lands, Regional Government and Religious Affairs
Sonko	Bakary	National Programme Coordinator and Co-Founder	Peace Hub
Sonko	Fatima	Programme Analyst Governance	UNDP
Sowe	Mamtoubou	Director of the Ministry	TANGO
Suleiman	Shaza	Gender Advisor	UN
Tangara	Assan	Permanent Secretary (PS)	Ministry of Interior
Touray	Amie	Research Officer	TANGO
Unavailable	Unavailable	Head of M&E	ActionAid International
Unavailable	Unavailable	Director of the Ministry	Office of the President
Wakana	Seraphine	Resident Coordinator	UN
Williams	Brian J.	Chief Financing for Peacebuilding Branch	UN
Y. Colley	Amadou	Staff Officer	Ministry of Interior
Zelenovic	Jelena	Programme Officer	PBSO, UN

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