

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



**PBF PROJECT PROGRESS REPORT
COUNTRY: ALBANIA
ANNUAL OR FINAL
DATE OF REPORT: 15/11/2019**

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

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

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

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

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

How many tranches have been received so far: 1

Report preparation:

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

Project report approved by:

Did PBF Secretariat clear the report:

Any comments from PBF Secretariat on the report:

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

NOTES FOR COMPLETING THE REPORT:

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

PART 1: RESULTS PROGRESS

1.1 Overall project progress to date

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

This is the annual report of the project covering the period October 2018 - 15 November 2019. After the set-up of implementation mechanisms work has progressed as briefly outlined below in the following directions:

- UNICEF developed a mapping of best practices in the region with regard to school-based peace building initiatives which served as a basis for the development of a teacher training methodology on intercultural dialogue, peacebuilding, constructive remembrance and reconciliation in the Western Balkans. In parallel, UNICEF is supporting schools to implement this methodology and also carry out fundraising activities through the development of two materials, a school guide and a training manual on fundraising.
- UNFPA has been working on the adaptation of the y-peer methodology on peacebuilding. WB6 contracting party contexts are being analyzed parallel to developing the outline of the training manual, based on youth peer to peer methodology. The training manual outline will be widely consulted at the beginning of December 2019 while the manual itself will be finalized in early 2020, followed by the process of contextualization to the specifics of each of the contracting parties.
- RYCO almost concluded the recruitment processes of its central office staff as well as of its local branch offices in WB6 contracting parties and hired 10/11 staff funded under UNPBF. The only project funded position which remains incomplete is the one of the M&E Coordinator, given the specific expertise required under its ToRs, which is not very common. The project priority is now the enhancement of RYCO's staff and institutional capacities, informed by the recommendations of the micro-assessment report carried out by UNDP in August 2019. Through its sub-granting scheme, RYCO is supporting schools and NGOs to implement cross border projects on intercultural learning and dialogue, dealing with the past and youth participation. Through its second Call for Proposals opened in 2018, RYCO has received support in consolidating the small grant facility, and the learning from that round of open calls, was implemented in RYCO's third open Call for Proposals in 2019. Within the 2nd Open call, which is co-funded under the PBF grant, RYCO has already selected 44 projects coming from NGOs and schools across the region and most of the projects are starting implementation on 1 December 2019,
- An inception workshop bringing together RYCO, UN agencies, researchers, CSO and youth from the WB 6 took place in early October 2019, to receive collective inputs for the design of the methodology and thematic areas of the regional research on young people's perceptions on peace and security, as well as discuss the questions of inclusive, youth-led research and advocacy. An international consultant has been contracted to help design the research and trainings for youth. The survey methodology and trainings outline will be drafted and consulted among UN agencies, RYCO

and other relevant stakeholders by the end of the year/early 2020 and will be finalized in early 2020, followed by the fieldwork, validation consultations with youth and dialogue events.

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

Certain delays were highlighted during the first reporting phase. During the last months, the implementation has intensified, largely due to the fact that staffing process is nearing completion (both in RYCO, UNDP and with regards to contracting key international consultants). Distinctive progress is noted in first output and in the third output considering small grants facility. Furthermore, following a series of consultations between PBF, RYCO and UN agencies, a new output on youth-led research, dialogues and advocacy on peace and security has been added and approved in October, and implementation of this output has started with an inception workshop and designing of the research.

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

The project supports peacebuilding efforts in Western Balkans through the strengthening of RYCO as a unique institutional structure. RYCO has a particular nature, given that it is established as a joint intergovernmental institution created by the Governments of all six contracting parties in the Western Balkans, to promote the spirit of reconciliation and cooperation between the youth in the region. Being a new institution and operating in a volatile environment, RYCO is being supported to strengthen its internal capacities to achieve its mission. Considering that one of RYCO's main tools to achieve its mission is through financial support to regional youth projects and initiatives, its grant facility system is being designed with increased outreach and inclusiveness. RYCO will be equipped with effective tools to introduce Monitoring and Evaluation system for RYCO as an institution, enabling it to keep track on challenges it faces and impact its interventions produce. Finally, RYCO will be supported with an increase of human resources, especially in view of its Monitoring and Evaluation activities.

To ensure that RYCO and other peacebuilding efforts are based on solid and regionally comparative evidence on young people's perceptions, research will be conducted across the WB 6 through a participatory process, and peacebuilding/advocacy trainings will further empower young activists to lead in cross-border policy discussions and conduct dialogue with peers and decision-makers on national and regional level. The project has a distinct cross-border character with extensive interaction of UN agencies present in the WB6 and RYCO local branch offices as well as partners - governments, civil society and youth groups. It has to be noted that particular attention has been paid to coordination and synergies with other PBSO funded projects in WB in order to maximize results and elevate the potential impact. As the contracting parties (WB6) that are in various degrees of conflict have collectively agreed and supported creation of a reconciliation youth-exchange office, the fact that RYCO grants require joint-proposals that aim to bridge community lines is also an innovative way of supporting peacebuilding in Western Balkans.

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

During the reporting phase the project has moved forward with a number of activities which are starting to produce initial results. UNICEF's mapping of best practices and the teachers' toolkit on educational initiatives for intercultural dialogue, peacebuilding and reconciliation can already be used for public communications and advocacy. UNFPA's training of trainers' manual on peer education on youth peacebuilding will also be ready in early 2020.

44 regional projects supported by RYCO and UNPBF will engage a total of 140 CSOs and secondary schools across WB6. The project will be starting the implementation by December 2019, with most projects expecting to finish not later than September 2020. Approximately 84% of all awarded grants is implementing projects in the specific objectives of intercultural learning and dialogue and dealing with the past, which demonstrates the commitment of the region to increase peacebuilding efforts and also confirms the further need for RYCO's small grant facility.

Youth participation, as one of the elements underpinning the efforts for promoting intercultural dialogue and peacebuilding in schools, is promoted by making use of U-Report tool that UNICEF employs to encourage children/young people' participation in decision making, advocacy and promotion of their rights. To that end the U- report poll designed and used in July 2019, collected the opinions of more than 4,500 young people from Albania, Kosovo and Bosnia, on how they would like intercultural dialogue among schools to work and what they would like to see happen in school practices and as part of a methodology for peacebuilding.

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

During the reporting phase the project has moved forward with a number of activities which soon will enable us to measure impact on peacebuilding progress. Especially the RYCO grants and support to schools and NGOs across the WB6 contracting parties will provide good grounds for human stories. The research, dialogue and advocacy component will capture the voices of young people and impact the way the public, decision-makers and young people themselves understand and work towards the peace and security situation in the WB 6. However, as activities have just started (project duration varies from 4 – 9 months) concrete examples will be gathered and presented in 2020. Due to its specific structure and set-up RYCO gathers individuals from all WB6 working together in the Head Office in Tirana, ensuring adequate cross-national representation in the RYCO Secretariat and overall RYCO. Additionally, RYCO's Open call grants are awarded paying attention both to the strategic relevance to RYCO, project quality and the adequate contracting party representation within the final grants list.

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

During the reporting phase the project has moved forward with a number of activities, which soon will enable us to measure impact on peacebuilding progress. The inception phase brought into our attention that regional projects have a very slow start time, and significant time is required to bring a variety of stakeholders in six different settings, across UNCTs and with a partner organization, onto the same page. In addition, the implementation of peacebuilding projects is influenced by the political agenda of the governments in contracting parties where the project is implemented and therefore, this has its implications in implementation. Furthermore, as RYCO is a newly established institution it has taken longer than anticipated to assess their administrative capacities and negotiate means by which they can be directly supported while still ensuring accountability.

The project team and RYCO will shortly review the existing project activity plan and amend it according to the remaining timeline for project implementation. The planning workshop for year 2020 will take place at the beginning of December 2019.

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

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

- ANNEX 1: Summary Note of Podgorica coordination meeting 28-29 January 2019
- ANNEX 2: Steering Committee Meeting Minutes, 16. 04.2019
- ANNEX 3: A Mapping of Educational Initiatives for Intercultural Dialogue, Peacebuilding and Reconciliation among Young People in the Western Balkans 6 (UNICEF)
- ANNEX 4: Intercultural Dialogue, Peacebuilding, Constructive Remembrance and Reconciliation: A Toolkit for Teachers in the Western Balkans (UNICEF)
- ANNEX 5: “Fundraising made possible: A guide for the future”, Fundraising guide for schools (UNICEF)
- ANNEX 6: “Fundraising made possible: Raising funds together”, Training manual for schools (UNICEF)
- ANNEX 7: Inception Workshop, 2-4 Oct 2019, Summary Report: Youth Perceptions and Advocacy on Priorities for Sustaining Peace in the Western Balkans (UNDP)
- ANNEX 8: ToR for International Consultant for research on peace and security and trainings design (UNDP)
- ANNEX 9: ToRs for International Consultant to adapt y-peer manual to peacebuilding (UNFPA)
- ANNEX 10: ToRs for National Consultants to adapt y-peer manual to peacebuilding (UNFPA)
- ANNEX 11: Outline of the y-peer training manual on peace building (UNFPA)
- ANNEX 12: TORs – International expert on monitoring and evaluation (UNDP)
- ANNEX 13: List of 44 RYCO cross-border subgrantees and description of funded projects (RYCO)
- ANNEX 14: Analysis of the 2nd Open Call, co-funded by UNPBF (RYCO)
- ANNEX 15: Concept Note study visit in Kosovo (UNICEF)
- ANNEX 16: Concept note outcome 4 (UNDP)

1.2 Result progress by project outcome

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

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

Rate the current status of the outcome progress:

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

Output 1

In line with the project proposal approved from the Peace Building Fund, UNICEF Albania has advanced towards preparing a methodology for teachers to address peacebuilding in school settings. An international consultant who was assigned to conduct the mapping on the best practices in the region with regard to intercultural learning and peacebuilding started to work in April 2019. As of today, a mapping of best practices has been developed and comments from various partners have been consolidated into the final document.

In parallel, in close cooperation with RYCO staff, UNICEF has also worked on the development of the Peacebuilding methodology, which is also finalized, and is due for validation in a workshop planned to be held in December 2019.

The methodology is designed in the form of a toolkit for teachers, so they can engage students in intercultural learning, open and respectful dialogue, help students in discussing safely and effectively the controversial issues, particularly those related to the past and current causes of conflict in the region and to treat classroom as a safe space, while at the meantime students explore issues of their concern freely and safely. The toolkit will also support teachers 'professional competences in nurturing students' understanding of the foundations of sustainable peace. Additional information on emerging threats to security and peace such as violent extremism is also being addressed as part of the information developed for schools. Once finalized, the toolkit will also be shared as an open source online training package. The schools which will receive training on peace building methodology have been selected by RYCO and the first training is scheduled for December 2019.

Youth participation is one of the elements underpinning the efforts for promoting intercultural dialogue and peacebuilding. As such, even the development of the methodology for Peacebuilding in schools is designed in such a way as to allow for the opinions of youth in the region. To that end a U- report poll has been designed and the opinions of more than 4,500 young people from Albania, Kosovo and Bosnia, were received in July 2019, namely on how young people would like intercultural dialogue among schools to work and what they would like to see happen in school practices and as part of a methodology for peacebuilding.

RESULTS OF U-REPORT POLL

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

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

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

⁶ <https://bih.ureport.in/poll/1194/>

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

An International consultant was engaged to design the methodology for school financial management and fundraising, by holding extensive consultations with different stakeholders. UNICEF has finalized the guide and the training manual, respectively titled “Fundraising made possible: A guide for the future” and the “Fundraising made possible: Raising funds together”, for school fundraising with a focus on peace building and intercultural learning for schools in WB6 contracting parties. The training manual will be used for teacher training on fundraising at school level. Both documents will be shared during an activity that will be organized in December 2019, with schools in WB6 contracting parties, while mentoring activities will follow next year.

UNICEF has also prepared the Concept note for a study visit which will serve RYCO and Government representatives to design and develop ideas, services and models to address social issues they identify as problems in their communities and beyond and co-create solutions that foster positive relationships and intercultural dialogue within their communities and cross- countries in the region based on the model of UPSHIFT which UNICEF is using successfully in many countries. The study visit was initially scheduled to take place in Kosovo, during October 2019. Given that during the last two months prior to scheduled date RYCO office was conducting the recruitment process for the PBF project’ staff, the internal capacities of RYCO office to organize the study visit on the scheduled period were quite limited. As such, the study visit is now postponed to early 2020.

Output 2

UNFPA Albania is progressing with the adaptation of the y-peer methodology for peacebuilding. Y-peer manual is one of the UNFPA niche elements in working with out of school young people, especially the most vulnerable. UNFPA in the region has a long-standing partnership with the International Institute for Youth Development (PETRI) based in Sofia, Bulgaria to develop and advise on utilization of the Y-peer manual with youth groups. This project will leverage the reach out by adapting the current manual to peacebuilding. Such partnership and adaptation process was launched through a workshop in June 2019⁸.

⁸ PETRI– Sofia is a knowledge hub and regional resource centre at the National Centre of Public Health and Analyses (NCPHA), Sofia, Bulgaria that supports youth empowerment in the areas of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), gender equality and peacebuilding in the region of Eastern Europe and Central Asia and beyond. PETRI – Sofia Centre combines peer-to-peer education using alternative methods of education (such as theatre-based techniques, role games, simulations, etc.); experience and enthusiasm of fellows from

It was agreed to utilize PETRI's expertise under the UNFPA regional workplan 2019, by having this institution as an Implementing Partner. The workplan and contract has been signed.

Following the above rationale, an international consultant was officially engaged in October 2019 to design the y-peer training manual for peacebuilding. In parallel, UNFPA COs have developed ToRs for the local consultants and started the process of their recruitment, with some COs having finalized the recruitment. With the support of local consultants, RYCO local branch offices and UNFPA COs, the international consultant will analyze the WB6 context and develop the training manual, with the view of adapting the youth peer to peer methodology, to the young people's personal development aspects, their experiences and to the WB6 context. The outline and methodology of the manual will be due for consultation with project partners, at the beginning of December 2019. The consultation will aim to develop afterwards, a well-accepted y-peer peacebuilding training manual for all potential users and that is relevant to the context of each of the WB6 contracting parties.

Alongside with the process of training manual' development, UNFPA COs in WB6 have developed and submitted to UNFPA Albania CO their workplans, relevant for the implementation of component 2 of the project during 2019. The workshop of December 2019 will be the opportunity to discuss also the implementation plans for 2020.

Output 3

This component aims at directly strengthening the capacities of RYCO as a new institution which is operating in a volatile environment. As such, building its institutional capacities is key, not only to sustain the structure, but also to support it in achieving its mission. During the reporting period, UNDP has progressed with its plans to support RYCO's office to strengthen its internal capacities and systems, and with providing support to RYCO to upgrade and strengthen its grant facility system. The latter is one of the main tools employed by RYCO office to achieve its mission, through financial support to regional projects and initiatives.

In the scope of this project, RYCO will be equipped with effective tools to create and start implementing its Monitoring and Evaluation system, making it possible for it to measure the impact of its interventions, including the impact of the grant facility system. As such, in the process of development of its M&E system, an international consultant is recently recruited to provide support advice to RYCO on its M&E system. The consultant will provide a methodology, elements and guidelines for the establishment of an M&E unit and system, in charge, among the other tasks, of data collection on reconciliation. Data will be collected in the areas of intervention of RYCO, in order to compare and measure the impact of RYCO's action.

Monitoring system will cover the implementation of the project's activities, by adapting online and offline tools to track delivery of inputs and its outputs. Given the small size and frequent nature of the activities delivered, a post-treatment approach will be preferred, in the form of evaluation test provided to the participants. Such information will then be then compared with data collected at the outcome level. In addition, monitoring of outcomes will also be performed, in terms of development and behavioral changes, with the purpose to provide evidence of the RYCOs influence and success in changing the dynamics of sustained reconciliation. RYCO's annual planning workshop, which is planned to take place at the beginning of December 2019, will be an opportunity for M&E advisor to assist RYCO in developing its M&E system.

the International network of young volunteers in 52 countries on 4 continents; expertise in the field of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) education and consultation; and partnership with government institutions.

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

Accordingly, in line with UNDP rules and procedures, a capacity assessment was conducted by KPMG in August 2019, with the aim of paving the way for the financial disbursement of funds to RYCO. The capacity assessment report is leading to a reflection process between RYCO office and UNDP in Albania, as well as in taking informed decisions and actions with regard to strengthening RYCO's internal capacities. An action plan, indicating RYCO's capacity building needs will be soon finalized and UNDP will be supporting RYCO in the implementation of such plan with provision of technical expertise.

In the meantime, during September 2019, RYCO has concluded the recruitment process for 10 out of 11 staff across the WB6 contracting parties as per the project provisions. Entire project staff participated in a 4-day intensive on-boarding event, while different project staff members have already been receiving inputs relevant to their project role. The onboarding event served as the core event aimed at achieving understanding of RYCO - its Strategic and Action Plan, General and Financial Guidelines, Organogram and also served as the venue for activity planning by the end of 2019. Project Leader has participated in the Capacity Building training for grantees of RYCO's 2nd Open Call (co-funded under this project), in the validation workshop for Output 4 and was engaged in the Selection Committee of the 3rd Open Call (not funded under this project but providing invaluable input about the granting process which is of relevance for the implementation of 2nd Open Call, and also witnessing the improvements implemented as part of the consolidation of RYCO grant facility conducted under this project). Financial assistant and Local Branch Office Assistants (LBOAs) have received a three-day intensive training on financial and procurement guidelines and procedures, which provided them with know-how for conducting on the spot checks for projects. In the following period, LBOAs and project staff will receive internal training for thematic and programmatic support and monitoring of projects, in order to ensure their impact.

As per the provisions of the project document, RYCO launched the second Open Call for Proposals on 3 December 2018. This Open Call is co-funded under this project, and the deadline to apply was 25 January 2019, with projects shortlisted and decision on funding made in June 2019. The Call was dedicated to applications from consortiums of CSOs and schools, under Priority area 1: Regional youth cooperation, mobility and exchange and Priority area 2: Enabling environment for regional youth cooperation. Selection process has been completed in July but contracting the selected applicants was delayed by the Micro assessment and signing of PCA between RYCO and UNDP Albania. Budget clearance was completed, original Contract template and Financial guidelines were amended as per recommendation from the Micro assessment and Procurement guidelines for projects were created. The projects are being contracted, and most of them will start implementation in December 2019. Three projects started implementation in June and September due to the sensitivity of their timelines. Given that they are not eligible under UNDP financial support⁹, they are financially supported by RYCO itself.

The analysis of the 2nd Open Call showed that there were 278 applications, 232 passed administrative check, and 188 eligibility check, and 44 are being granted, all coming from civil society organizations and secondary schools to implement activities in two priority areas divided in five Specific Objectives (SOs). Approximately 70% of applications responded to Priority Area 1: Regional Youth Cooperation, Mobility

⁹ The PCA between RYCO and UNDP was signed on 19 September 2019, while the implementation of the three projects started earlier.

and Exchange (68.71%) which include intercultural learning and dialogue and dealing with the past, while almost 30% responded to Priority Area 2: Enabling Environment for Regional Youth Cooperation (27.34%).

The Final list consists of 44 applications (23.40% of the eligible applications) supposed to be implemented by 140 civil society organizations and secondary schools (public and private), i.e. 44 applicants and 96 partners across the WB6 contracting parties. Looking at RYCO Contracting Parties, the origin of the applications on the list of grantees follows RYCO's overall balance in contracting parties' representation.

Worth mentioning is that, in the evaluation of the projects, a specific focus was put on monitoring the gender equality and engaging of marginalized and hard to reach youth.

Output 4

After consultations with RYCO and UN agencies, the additional element on regional evidence base on peace and security and youth-led dialogues and advocacy was incorporated in the amended project document which was formally approved by PBF on 30 September 2019.

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

For this purpose, UN agencies, RYCO, research experts and youth are working to define the scope and implementation of the research element and how this can serve as a springboard for enhanced programmatic and policy efforts by RYCO, UN agencies and other stakeholders, as well as strengthened dialogue among peers and with decisionmakers, and advocacy on peacebuilding and reconciliation in the region. Expertise will be provided through UNDP IRH in Istanbul to support the research, dialogue and advocacy activities in technical terms, support coordination among different PBF and other peacebuilding initiatives, and provide strategic guidance in terms of linking this output and the RYCO project to global and regional agenda on youth and peacebuilding.

Following the preparation phase, an inception workshop took place in early October 2019, bringing together RYCO, UN agencies, researchers, civil society and youth representatives from the region. The workshop resulted in collective inputs to the methodology, approach and topics of the regional research, looking at both the regional level and specific contexts in WB 6, as well as established potential partnerships with researchers, youth activists and youth-led organizations that can be consulted across the implementation of output 4. The workshop also solidified collaboration among UNDP country offices, facilitating tighter collaboration with DFF and Kosovo projects. Alongside the completion of the inception workshop, an international consultant has been recruited to design the research methodology and develop training materials for youth in the WB 6 on peacebuilding, conflict analysis, gender equality and gender-sensitive peacebuilding and advocacy. The draft methodology of the regional study and training materials are expected to be ready by end of December 2019. The content and structure of the study will be consulted with RYCO, UN agencies and youth representatives and finalized early 2020, followed by the roll-out phase of the research. These efforts will go towards youth-led conflict analysis that will serve as a basis for advocacy and dialogue efforts.

1.3 Cross-cutting issues

<p><u>National ownership:</u> How has the national government demonstrated ownership/ commitment to the project results and activities? Give specific examples. (1500 character limit)</p>	<p>RYCO is an institutional mechanism established by the governments of the six territories in the region. Its governing board is uniquely composed of representatives from those six governments and six youth representatives. In Albania, where RYCO is based, the organization enjoys full diplomatic recognition and support from the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs. The Steering Committee meeting that took place in April was attended by the Deputy Minister of Education, Sport & Youth of Albania.</p>
<p><u>Monitoring:</u> Is the project M&E plan on track? What monitoring methods and sources of evidence are being/ have been used? Please attach any monitoring-related reports for the reporting period. (1500 character limit)?</p>	<p>An M&E expert is engaged to support RYCO's office in building the M&E system. Alongside with this assignment, the expert will provide advice to the UN Albania project staff to revise the project M&E plan, and methodology and tools to be employed, for baseline data collection.</p>
<p><u>Evaluation:</u> Provide an update on the preparations for the external evaluation for the project, especially if within last 6 months of implementation or final report. Confirm available budget for evaluation. (1500 character limit)</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p><u>Catalytic effects (financial):</u> Did the project lead to any specific non-PBF funding commitments? If yes, from whom and how much? If not, have any specific attempts been made to attract additional financial contributions to the project and beyond? (1500 character limit)</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p><u>Catalytic effects (non-financial):</u> Did the project create favourable conditions for additional peacebuilding activities by Government/ other donors? If yes, please specify. (1500 character limit)</p>	<p>Although it is too early for any catalytic effects, earlier this year RYCO faced difficulties to hold a required Board meeting due to conflicts between contracting parties. Alongside pressure from European states, RYCO's ability to point to expectations from the UN as a partner helped advocate for a resolution. Sweden through SIDA, has also decided to invest in RYCO, and it is likely that UN's advocacy for the organization was a contributing factor.</p>
<p><u>Exit strategy/ sustainability:</u> What steps have been taken to prepare for end of project and help ensure sustainability of the project results beyond PBF support for this project? (1500 character limit)</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p><u>Risk taking:</u> Describe how the project has responded to risks that threatened the achievement of results. Identify any new</p>	<p>No particular unknown risk has been noted. Some political debates have affected the governing board and delays in their decision-making, which caused delays in project staff recruitment.</p>

<p>risks that have emerged since the last report. (1500 character limit)</p>	
<p>Gender equality: In the reporting period, which activities have taken place with a specific focus on addressing issues of gender equality or women's empowerment? (1500 character limit)</p>	<p>Gender aspect and gender mainstreaming has always been considered when developing ToRs, designing workplans, identifying potential partners and youth groups. Gender perspective has also been strongly considered in consultation processes of various project activities, including but not limited to, developing the training materials for youth and school students, mapping the best peacebuilding practices, as well as in the consultation and workshop to define the scope and methodology of the regional research, which included youth representatives of women's and LGBTI organizations.</p> <p>The peacebuilding methodology prepared by UNICEF, provides for knowledge and skill acquisition from school students, based on the principles of fighting against stereotypes, prejudice, discrimination and promoting inclusiveness in their schools and communities. In addition, UNFPA training manual will build on promotion of gender equality to peacebuilding, as one of its three key objectives. It includes fight against gender-based violence, against any gender-based discrimination with special focus on inclusion of equal participation and representation of young girls and women, vulnerable and marginalized youth from LGBTI, Roma and other grassroots hard to reach rural, poor youth. Moreover, in the evaluation of the projects, under RYCO's sub-granting schema, a specific focus is put on monitoring the gender equality and engaging of marginalized and hard to reach youth.</p>
<p>Other: Are there any other issues concerning project implementation that you want to share, including any capacity needs of the recipient organizations? (1500 character limit)</p>	<p>RYCO is still building its own capacities as a brand-new organization. Its programmatic capacities are limited, and the organization hired additional staff to deal with the implementation of project activities. As such, the entire project, and more particularly the component 3, is dedicated to identifying the RYCO's capacity building needs and in supporting the completion of such needs.</p>

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

An M&E consultant is engaged, who among others, will support the project team to define the methodology for baseline data collection as well as for measuring the success through project indicators at later stages of project implementation. As such, in the forthcoming report, the suggestions of the M&E consultant will be reflected in the below table, as relates to M&E system and methodology for data collection.

	Performance Indicators	Indicator Baseline	End of project Indicator Target	Current indicator progress	Reasons for Variance/ Delay (if any)	Adjustment of target (if any)
Outcome 1 Social Cohesion and Reconciliation – as measured by increasing embracing of	Indicator 1.1 Percentage of youth (male and female) that indicate positive attitudes towards other ethnic groups in the region.	xxx % (to be measured at baseline survey)	20 percentage points increase by end of project	Too early to report on outcome progress		

diversity, attitudes of tolerance and reduced prejudice and discrimination by youth is enhanced across the Western Balkans.	Indicator 1.2 Percentage of youth (male and female) that have been the object of discriminatory behaviour in the past 4 months.	xxx % (to be measured at baseline survey)	20 percentage points decrease by end of project	Too early to report on outcome progress		
Output 1.1 Capacities of targeted schools to organize/undertake intercultural dialogue in the WB6, are strengthened	Indicator 1.1.1 % of targeted schools which initiated at least 1 new initiative to foster intercultural dialogue by end of the project	N/A	50%	N/A	Baseline will be filled after the training with the schools is conducted	
Output 1.2 Capacities of youth groups and grassroots organizations to access and use RYCOs resources to engage in	Indicator 1.2.1 % of targeted grassroots youth groups that are awarded through RYCO and other peacebuilding regional initiatives	0	50%	Progressing with some delay	The International Consultant to work on adaptation of ypeer manual to peacebuilding in process of being hired; The PETRI – UNFPA implementing partner who has produced and owns the ypeer manual is on board and prepared respective workplan. The WB6 have submitted respective workplans including hiring local consultants and ToT preparation within 2019.	

peacebuilding and social cohesion activities in the WB6, are strengthened.	Indicator 1.2.2 % of new self-initiatives initiated by the targeted grassroots youth groups in WB6 by end of project	0	25%	Progressing with some delay	Preparatory work on track, draft workplans prepared, however this particular intervention will happen after the manual is adapted and ToRs completed. Hence implementation planned for 2020.	
	Indicator 1.2.3 Number of youth in WB6 reached through Peer to Peer approach (ToT) for peacebuilding	0	600 (end of project)			
Output 1.3 RYCOs institutional capacities to enhance sustainable regional cooperation, peacebuilding and reconciliation amongst youth, through the small grants facility, are strengthened.	Indicator 1.3.1 % of youth, youth organizations and schools in WB stating that RYCO is successful in achieving its mission.	to be defined upon project commencement	increase of 20%	N/A	baseline needs to be defined	
	Indicator 1.3.2 Time to review and approve the proposals (from launch – contract award) within the CFP is decreased	7 months (during 1st CFP)	Reduced by 20%	Progressing with some delay	the call for application for grants has been issued, evaluation has been completed and data will be available once all contracts will be signed	
	Indicator 1.3.3 Number of grants' monitoring visits	1 monitoring visit per grant	at least 2 monitoring	Not started yet		

	taking place during the implementation time -frame increased		visits per each grant			
Output 1.4 Opportunities for youth from diverse backgrounds to identify common peace and security priorities through action research and enter in constructive dialogue with their peers across divides will be created, confidence in and dialogue with decision-makers will be enhanced, and youth	Indicator 1.4.1 Number of regional youth perceptions surveys on sustaining peace	0	1	No progress yet	Project amendment approved 30 Sep and output implementation started early October	
	Indicator 1.4.2 Number of trainings and consultations with young civic actors in the region	0 trainings, 0 consultations	6 local trainings (1 per WB6), 1 regional training, 2 regional consultations	No progress yet	Project amendment approved 30 Sep and output implementation started early October	
	Indicator 1.4.2 Number of young civic actors (disaggregated by age, gender, geography, ethnicity) from WB6 with increased knowledge and skills for peacebuilding, advocacy, constructive	N/A	70	No progress yet	Project amendment approved 30 Sep and output implementation started early October	

capacities to become actors for change will be strengthened.	dialogue and conflict and gender-sensitive analysis					
	Indicator 1.4.3 Number of advocacy tools and products	0	2	No progress yet	Project amendment approved 30 Sep and output implementation started early October	
	Indicator 1.4.3 Number of regional consultations bringing together youth to identify common messages and to create advocacy tools for policy and programming impact.	0	1	No progress yet	Project amendment approved 30 Sep and output implementation started early October	
	Indicator 1.4.3 Number of regional, national or sub-national meetings and consultations with young people and political parties/policy-makers/decision-makers to discuss	0	7	No progress yet	Project amendment approved 30 Sep and output implementation started early October	

	policy recommendations					
	Indicator 1.4.3 Total number of young people (disaggregated by age, gender, geography, ethnicity) from the WB6 meaningfully engage in and contribute to identification of peace and security priorities and policy messages for the region through project activities.	N/A	600	No progress yet	Project amendment approved 30 Sep and output implementation started early October	
	Indicator 1.4.3 Number of follow-up activities across borders or fault lines for advocacy on sustaining peace	0	6	No progress yet	Project amendment approved 30 Sep and output implementation started early October	

PART 2: INDICATIVE PROJECT FINANCIAL PROGRESS

2.1 Comments on the overall state of financial expenditures

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

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

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

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

TOTAL EXPENDITURE – 1, 206, 932 USD.

This figure includes actual expenditures and the committed funds under the four project components. With regards to component three, as per the PCA signed between RYCO and UNDP signed on 19 September 2019, the total of USD 876 600, is reflected in the financial report, given that this amount is a commitment while is yet to be reflected in the financial system.

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

As indicated in the previous sections, the start-up phase has faced challenges in implementation which produced some delays. UN in Albania is learning from this project experience, that:

- regional projects have a very slow start time, and significant time is required to bring a variety of stakeholders in six different settings, across UNCTs and with a partner organization, onto the same page;
- the implementation of peacebuilding projects is influenced by the political agenda of the governments in contracting parties where the project is implemented and therefore, this has its implications in implementation;
- as RYCO is a newly established institution it has taken longer than anticipated to assess their administrative capacities and negotiate means by which they can be directly supported while still ensuring accountability.

The above form also the rationale of the delays produced. Regardless, after having overcome the initial challenges, the project team is speeding up the implementation and most key activities have already started.

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

To date the expenditures as regards the gender equality of the project has been at the amount of USD 339, 755.

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