

**SECRETARY-GENERAL'S PEACEBUILDING FUND
PROJECT DOCUMENT TEMPLATE**



United Nations
Peacebuilding

PBF PROJECT DOCUMENT

Country(ies): Sri Lanka	
Project Title: Protecting the Rights Space to Foster Peace in Sri Lanka	
Project Number from MPTF-O Gateway (if existing project): 00125636	
PBF project modality: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IRF <input type="checkbox"/> PRF	If funding is disbursed into a national or regional trust fund (instead of into individual recipient agency accounts): <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 by type of organization (UN, CSO etc.): United Nations Office for Project Services - UNOPS - Convening Agency United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime - UNODC	
List additional implementing partners, specify the type of organization (Government, INGO, local CSO): United Nations : technical guidance from the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) Non-Government : Local grassroots community based organisations and non-governmental organisations: Women's Resource Centre, Rajarata Kendaraya, Social Action Centre, Centre for Women Development, Affected Women Forum, Muslim Women Forum Research and Action, Muslim Women Development Trust, Fokus Women, Janakaraliya Foundation, Ratnapura Art Collective, The Bar Association of Sri Lanka and its regional branches. Government -The Legal Aid Commission, Sri Lanka (implementing partner) -District and Divisional Secretariats of selected project areas -The Wayamba, Uva Wellassa, South-Eastern, Sabaragamuwa, Rajarata, Jaffna and Eastern Universities and the Colombo Visual Art Faculty (coordinating partner)	
Project duration in months¹: 18 months	
Geographic zones (within the country) for project implementation: Island wide with specific interventions in Jaffna, Kilinochchi, Mullaitivu, Mannar, Anuradhapura, Kurunegala, Batticaloa, Ampara, Hambantota, Matara, Galle, Badulla, Ratnapura.	
Does the project fall under one or more of the specific PBF priority windows below: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gender promotion initiative ²	

¹ Maximum project duration for IRF projects is 18 months, for PRF projects – 36 months.

² Check this box only if the project was approved under PBF's special call for proposals, the Gender Promotion Initiative

- Youth promotion initiative³
- Transition from UN or regional peacekeeping or special political missions
- Cross-border or regional project

Total PBF approved project budget* (by recipient organization):

UNOPS: \$1,150,000

UNODC: \$350,000

Total: \$ \$1,500,000

**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. For payment of second and subsequent tranches the Coordinating agency needs to demonstrate expenditure/commitment of at least 75% of the previous tranche and provision of any PBF reports due in the period elapsed.*

Any other existing funding for the project (amount and source):

PBF 1st tranche (35%):

UNOPS: \$805,000

UNODC : \$245,000

Total: \$1,150,000

PBF 2nd tranche*

(35%):

UNOPS: \$245,000

UNODC: \$105,000

Total: \$350,000

PBF 3rd tranche*

(30%):

UNOPS: \$345,000

UNODC: \$105,000

Total: \$450,000

Provide a brief project description (describe the main project goal; do not list outcomes and outputs):

This project aims to contribute towards the protection and resilience building of the civil society in Sri Lanka within a rapidly shrinking operating space. The project targets especially women grassroots organisations, human rights defenders, artists and activists at the forefront of conflict prevention with the help of government allies. It intends to do so through an integrated support programme platform contributing to address their protection, financial, legal, skills and creative concerns to increase their capacity to pursue their work by improving their coping and resilience mechanisms.

This project aims to take an innovative integrated approach to conflict mitigation by addressing the civil society's capacity, performance and compliance as a vehicle to enable their sustainability and self-resilience, which will contribute to their protection and sustainability during challenging times. The approach which consists in establishing a support platform led by the UN through UNOPS and UNODC implementing directly services dedicated to and for the civil society actors - as opposed to the traditional schema of the civil society implementing for the UN - is a new area of intervention in Sri Lanka, particularly when working for and with women led groups, networks and human rights defenders.

These dedicated sets of tools, skills and equipment will contribute to the safety, quality and compliance of their work, which will enable them not only to pursue their work in assisting communities including women but also contribute to the viability of these women groups in the long run to achieve gender empowerment and equality.

³ Check this box only if the project was approved under PBF's special call for proposals, the Youth Promotion Initiative

This initiative is developed at a critical time when Sri Lanka is experiencing a drastic shift in its political context due to a change of Government further compounded by the socio-economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, both contributing to reverse major gains made through the recent peacebuilding efforts. It aspires to contribute to address the resumption of fear among civil society actors by establishing an innovative UN led dedicated support platform implementing and providing services for civil society actors. By investing in civil society performance, skills development and coping mechanisms, this project aims to achieve a catalytic impact on the preservation of civic spaces, actors, and ultimately national ownership of their self-reliance and self-care.

Summarize the in-country project consultation process prior to submission to PBSO, including with the PBF Steering Committee, civil society (including any women and youth organizations) and stakeholder communities (including women, youth and marginalized groups):

This project was designed on the basis of close consultations and discussions with a wide range of representatives from community based organisations, civil society actors, artists and representatives from the justice and legal sector in Sri Lanka predominantly women who provided feedback and inputs into the proposed platform support mechanisms and services. Restrictions on travels and physical meetings due to Covid-19 pandemic were overcome through digital and phone engagement with representatives from Jaffna, Kilinochchi, Mannar, Batticaloa, Ampara, Kandy, Matara, Badulla, Ratnapura and Monaragala districts. Potential recipients shared inputs on the proposed integrated support platform while the Legal Aid Commission was also closely engaged and endorses this project. This project will be coordinated with the Resident Coordinator Office and the Senior Human Rights Advisor team of OHCHR.

Project Gender Marker score⁴: 3

Specify % and \$ of total project budget allocated to activities in pursuit of gender equality and women's empowerment:

80% / \$ 1,202,314

Briefly explain through which major intervention(s) the project will contribute to gender equality and women's empowerment⁵:

This project will contribute to empower women grassroot groups, human rights defenders, including journalists, lawyers and artists to pursue their critical work by providing them with the necessary technical skills, financial support and protection mechanisms as their operating space becomes challenging. UNOPS will design and implement dedicated sets of tools to equip them with the required skills, knowledge and equipment to improve the safety, quality and compliance of their work, which will enable them not only to pursue their work in assisting communities including women but also contribute to the viability of these women groups in the long run to achieve gender empowerment and equality.

⁴ **Score 3** for projects that have gender equality as a principal objective and allocate at least 80% of the total project budget to Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE)

Score 2 for projects that have gender equality as a significant objective and allocate between 30 and 79% of the total project budget to GEWE

Score 1 for projects that contribute in some way to gender equality, but not significantly (less than 30% of the total budget for GEWE)

⁵ Please consult the **PBF Guidance Note on Gender Marker Calculations and Gender-responsive Peacebuilding**

Project Risk Marker score⁶: 1	
<p>Select PBF Focus Areas which best summarizes the focus of the project (<i>select ONLY one</i>)⁷: 2.3. Conflict prevention and management</p> <p>If applicable, SDCF/UNDAF outcome(s) to which the project contributes: Driver 3. Human security and socio-economic resilience. Human Rights, Gender, Youth and conflict sensitivity are cross cutting themes on all UNSDF outcomes for Sri Lanka. UNSDF Sri Lanka (2018-2022) Driver 2 on ‘Strengthened innovative public institutions and engagement towards a lasting peace’</p> <p>Sustainable Development Goal(s) and Target(s) to which the project contributes: SDG 5 on Gender Equality SDG 16 Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions UPR 2017 : GoSL supported the following position recommendation : 116.105 Ensure a safe and enabling environment for civil society and human rights defenders (Norway) - A/HRC/37/17 - Para. 116</p>	
<p>Type of submission:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> New project</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Project amendment</p>	<p>If it is a project amendment, select all changes that apply and provide a brief justification:</p> <p>Extension of duration: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Additional duration in months (number of months and new end date): 4 months until 5th June 2023</p> <p>Change of project outcome/ scope: <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Change of budget allocation between outcomes or budget categories of more than 15%: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Additional PBF budget: <input type="checkbox"/> Additional amount by recipient organization: USD XXXXX</p> <p>Brief justification for amendment: This project requires a second and last no-cost extension of four months until 5th June 2023 for the completion of the initially planned activities following the delayed receipt of the final tranche of funds in February 2023.</p> <p>1. Pending Activities to be delivered between 5th February and 5th June</p> <p>The main activities pending finalisation and completion includes :</p>

⁶ Risk marker 0 = low risk to achieving outcomes

Risk marker 1 = medium risk to achieving outcomes

Risk marker 2 = high risk to achieving outcomes

⁷ PBF Focus Areas are:

(1.1) SSR, (1.2) Rule of Law; (1.3) DDR; (1.4) Political Dialogue;

(2.1) National reconciliation; (2.2) Democratic Governance; (2.3) Conflict prevention/management;

(3.1) Employment; (3.2) Equitable access to social services

(4.1) Strengthening of essential national state capacity; (4.2) extension of state authority/local administration; (4.3) Governance of peacebuilding resources (including PBF Secretariats)

- For UNODC :
 - Training relevant authorities and CBOs on protection from violation of rights and opportunities for reaching out to available services;
 - Creating networks of agencies providing protection and assistance to victims whose rights are violated

UNODC will finalise the implementation of the last planned trainings as they take a greater dimension and ultimately impact on the human rights defenders, journalists and members of the civil society organisations. Whilst the context remains challenging, no disturbance is expected in the existing relationships with national and local authorities except for delays due to the current prevailing situation - they have been and continue to be supportive of the project interventions.

- For UNOPS :
 - Completion of procurement process i.e. pending payments following receipt of the financial tranche of suppliers for procured services and goods ; to be completed within February 2023 for pending payments of delivered services
 - Delivery of procured equipment to civil society organisations : to be completed within March 2023
 - Completion of grants selection processes for artists and transfer of grants funds to selected recipients by early March 2023
 - Final round of protection training - March 2023
- Planning, procurement and implementation of the external evaluation : The terms of reference of the external evaluation have been shared with the DPA and the UN Human Rights team in Sri Lanka for inputs and contribution before proceeding with the procurement and implementation of this service. Both agencies have budgeted a total of US\$30,000 for the implementation of this final activity.

2. Overall Progress Update

The Vriddhi network has now expanded to work with 219 civil society organisations across Sri Lanka of which 112 are women focused and 44 Women based. Additionally, 97 artists and collectives of artists have also registered with the network.

- The platform has provided a combination of 127 interventions to strengthen capacities, protection and services dedicated for civil

society organisations, human rights defenders and women peacebuilders

- 85 civil society organisations participated in our trainings and workshops in protection across the island during 4 rounds of training
- 21 financial grants have been provided and delivered to 15 organisations and 4 artists
- 18 partners have been provided with ICT equipment
- 25 CSOs were supported with financial services to prepare financial statements whilst 6 were supported financial audit services
- 41 partners were trained in Project Management and 21 attended trainings in project management certification courses.
- The implementation of our partners grants have contributed to reach 983 women representing 41 active women groups with protection mechanisms training and 839 women with information on access to justice and legal remedies.
- 125 lawyers and members of the Sri Lanka Bar Association received training in litigation skills in Criminal Law

11 workshops were organised by UNODC as follows :

- o Protection of rights for junior lawyers of the Sri Lanka Bar Association : with 150 female participants
- o Protection of fundamental rights to legal offices of the the Legal Aid Commission

Commissions including 100 female officers

- o Protection of rights to CSO women peacebuilders including 40 female representatives.
- o Access to justice to state officials including 300 female representatives to protect fundamental rights
- o Victim and witnesses protection focusing on fundamental right to lawyers including 40 female representatives of BASL and LAC

This request for time extension for 4 months will not impact on the majority of the planned targets of the M&E framework - as many of them have already been achieved or reached, UNOPS and UNODC is confident in the achievement of the said targets.

3. Budget realignment

The budget requires an adjustment and realignment of some of its lines for the following reasons :


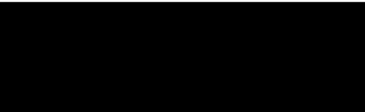
- This is a project which was planned and budgeted initially for 18 months and will be running for 29 months for the following reasons : This project started in February 2021 and experienced

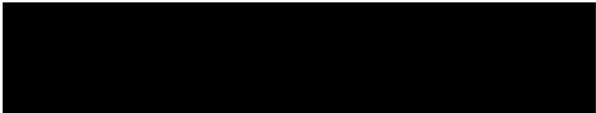
significant delays as the country had only four full months without such disruption that year- delays due to covid 19 pandemics followed by half a year of civil unrest and socio political crisis with physical challenges hampering the delivery of the project. Additionally, the final tranche of the funds was received after the initial project end date which required timeline adjustments to deliver the final activities. This had an impact primarily on the duration of our operating costs, transportation and commodities payment.

- The nature of this project - capacity , protection and development of civil society network requires by essence personnel and a larger proportion of human resources - in this case, the provision of knowledge and skills has also be implemented through the recruitment of dedicated team members as well as external consultants to deliver and implement the workshops, trainings (financial services, project management, ICT etc etc) - these were initially budgeted under contractual services with the assumption that only private suppliers would deliver these - overtime, we had to shift strategy and hire such competences and profiles directly as external consultants especially in protection to be able to implement and deliver these services. Additional personnel (internal and external) costs amounted to \$182,200 and have been reflected in the revised budget submitted for this NCE.
- Sri Lanka is facing a significant financial crisis since 2022 combined with the global food and energy prices, depreciation of its currency and increase of its money supplies leading to significant inflation : the Colombo consumer index increased by 57.2% with food prices increasing by 64.4% and transportation/fuel costs accounting for most of the inflationary pressure. This has led to the UN Office of Human Resources to announce 6 special measures on non pensionable bonuses during 2022-2023 on net salaries which were not accounted for at the time of the project submission and previous NCE revision and has now been reflected.

The project currently shows a total expenditure of US\$1,329,019 (88.6%).

PROJECT SIGNATURES:

<p>Recipient Organization(s)¹ UNOPS <i>Name of Representative</i> Charles CALLANAN</p> <div style="text-align: center; margin: 10px 0;">  </div> <p><i>Signature</i></p> <p><i>Name of Agency</i> : <u>UNOPS</u></p> <p><i>Date & Seal</i> 6 June 2023</p>	<p>Representative of National Authorities</p> <p><i>Name of Government Counterpart</i> : Sri Lanka Legal Aid Commission</p> <p><i>Signature</i> <i>Title</i> <i>Date & Seal</i> :</p>
<p>Recipient Organization(s)² UNODC <i>Name of Representative</i></p> <p><i>Signature</i> <i>Name of Agency</i> <i>Date & Seal</i>:</p>	
<p>Head of UN Country Team</p> <p><i>Hanaa Singer</i></p> <p><i>Signature</i> <i>UN Resident Coordinator; Resident Coordinator's Office in Sri Lanka</i></p> <p><i>Date & Seal</i></p>	<p>Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO)</p> <p><i>Elizabeth Speha</i> for </p> <p><i>Signature</i> Assistant Secretary-General, Peacebuilding Support Office</p> <p><i>Date & Seal</i> 16 May 2023</p>



Christian Skoog
 UN Resident Coordinator a.i.
 Resident Coordinator's Office

Date : 16.05.2023

¹ Please include a separate signature block for each direct recipient organization under this project.
² Please include a separate signature block for each direct recipient organization under this project.

PROJECT SIGNATURES:

<p>Recipient Organization(s)⁸ UNOPS <i>Name of Representative</i> Sudhir Muralidharan</p> <p><i>Signature</i> <i>Name of Agency</i> :UNOPS</p> <p><i>Date & Seal</i>:.....</p>	<p>Representative of National Authorities</p> <p><i>Name of Government Counterpart</i> : Sri Lanka Legal Aid Commission</p> <p><i>Signature</i> </p> <p><i>Title</i></p> <p><i>Date &</i></p>
<p>Recipient Organization(s)⁹ UNODC</p> <p><i>Name of Representative</i> Dr. Suruchi Pant Deputy Representative</p> <p><i>Signature</i></p> <p><i>Name of Agency</i> </p> <p><i>Date & Seal</i>: </p>	<div style="text-align: center;"> </div>
<p>Head of UN Country Team</p> <p><i>Hanaa Singer</i></p> <p><i>Signature</i> UN Resident Coordinator, Resident Coordinator's Office in Sri Lanka</p> <p><i>Date & Seal</i></p>	<p>Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO)</p> <p><i>Oscar Fernandez-Taranco</i></p> <p><i>Signature</i> Assistant Secretary-General, Peacebuilding Support Office</p> <p><i>Date & Seal</i></p>

Peacebuilding Context and Rationale for PBF support (4 pages max)

- a) A brief summary of **conflict analysis findings** as they relate to this project, focusing on the driving factors of tensions/conflict that the project aims to address and an analysis of the main actors/ stakeholders that have an impact on or are impacted by the driving factors, which the project will aim to engage. This analysis must be gender- and age-responsive.

Sri Lanka is at the crossroads with major political shifts changing the political space to build long-term peace. The November 2019 Presidential and August 2020 Parliamentary elections led to a decisive victory for the Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna party led by the Rajapaksa family. Having secured the requisite two-third parliamentary majority, the new government is set to bring fundamental political and institutional changes to the country through constitutional reforms that

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Sri Lanka is at the crossroads with major political shifts changing the political space to build long-term peace. The November 2019 Presidential and August 2020 Parliamentary elections led to a decisive victory for the Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna party led by the Rajapaksa family. Having secured the requisite two-third parliamentary majority, the new government is set to bring fundamental political and institutional changes to the country through constitutional reforms that are likely to be fast-tracked. The changes will undo much of the checks and balances introduced in 2015 on executive power, including independent appointments to key commissions such as the national human rights commission, elections commission, the judiciary and Transitional Justice (TJ) mechanisms.

These shifts come soon after the new government also announced its intention to ‘withdraw’ from commitments made through co-sponsorship of Human Rights Council (HRC) resolutions on Sri Lanka, directly altering the space for UN engagement on reconciliation and transitional justice at a time when the independent future of these institutions come into question. Directly affected by these shifts are Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) and CSOs that robustly engaged with such institutions and the broader democratic and reconciliation issues during the previous political cycle. With both the UN’s space for engagement shrinking and key allied institutions within the state structure facing uncertainty, the first half of this new governing cycle will be critical for shifting focus to support CSOs that can help embed or retain some of the positive gains made in the previous cycle, and to address protection concerns to support CSOs and HRDs that will continue to champion these reforms in an increasingly closed political environment.

Even as securing justice, truth, and non-recurrence becomes increasingly elusive for victims of the thirty year long conflict, the post-war period has given rise to new dimensions of conflict and additional threats to the protection and promotion of human rights and the civic space in Sri Lanka. Despite a hopeful political alternance in 2015 which enabled some peacebuilding opportunities, elements of the Sinhalese majority perceived those as a threat to their national identity and sovereignty and rejected attempts for transitional justice processes and accountability. As such, since 2009, there has been a gradual increase in intolerance as evidenced through various attacks and hate campaigns directed at minorities - predominantly the Muslim communities - and deliberate silencing or dismissal of dissenting views, particularly those of women.

An exclusivist ideology have become increasingly extreme inciting hate and violence towards a ‘new enemy’ in the form of Muslim minorities which led to riots in 2018 in Ampara and Kandy causing wide scale destruction of properties and several deaths. A constitutional crisis though peacefully resolved through the Supreme Court, which demonstrated greater resilience under a more independent framework introduced since 2015, further increased majority community frustrations towards the balance of power between the President and the Cabinet. The 2019 Easter bombing attacks led by a an ISIS inspired local terrorist cell shocked the nation and paved the way to reinstate a political regime favoring increased securitisation through rapid militarization of the civilian spaces and the use of contested legal instruments such as the Prevention of Terrorism Act and the Emergency Regulations. Since the new government was elected late last year, increasing centralization and militarization have been largely accepted or even welcomed by the majority electorate on the grounds of effective national security and

COVID-19 response. However, the proposed constitutional changes indicate that the patterns of centralization could become entrenched.

Voices of dissent and opposition have also continued to weaken in this landscape. The defeat of political opposition across parties spectrum especially those adhering to a more liberal, pluralist and tolerant vision of the country and increased scrutiny of civil society activist and lawyers, including the arrest and subsequent detention of a prominent lawyer without charges have had a chilling effect on dissenting voices especially as it was relayed largely in public and private pro-government media.

In addition, a looming financial crisis further compounded by the impact of the pandemic, with large foreign debts amounting to billions of dollars in loan payment, fiscal deficits and complete halt in tourism, domestic workers remittances, and exports constitute further aggravating triggers towards a breaking point.

This shift in power further signals a clear pattern of rejection of liberal values and embedded pluralist traditions in the country.

Tamil and Muslim minorities experienced increasing vulnerabilities following a range of new regulations threatening their lands in the North and East through remilitarisation, construction and alleged archeological preservation of buddhist places of faith, while Muslim religious marriage and education laws are being regulated in an attempt to curb violent extremism and bring alignment with other national laws. There have also been setbacks for the rule of law and independence of the judiciary with high profile investigation cases into corruption, murder and abductions stopped via the transfer of public servants, intimidations by police and military over human rights defenders and growing fear of repression on the civil society.

This bears particular risks for the work of the civil society, human right defenders (HRDs), journalists, artists, and their operating space. This is particularly true for women organisations and prominent women HRDs who are routinely targets of disproportionate verbal attacks and face harassment, and eventually can face arbitrary arrests, torture or other human rights violations. In addition, as women, they continue to face cultural barriers and discrimination which intersect and compound discrimination faced based on ethno-religious, socio-economic and sexual identity. In turn, their self-censorship may contribute to erode the vital space for the promotion of civic and human rights in Sri Lanka and silencing of women's voices. This fact also holds true in the digital sphere where women face hate speech - including highly personal and gendered threats - dissuading them from actively engaging.

In addition, civil society actors in Sri Lanka are also at a generational crossroads. Many prominent Human Rights Defenders and organisation members, including victim group members are aging and passing. Capturing and preserving their testimonies, narratives and documentary evidence is critical to the protection of human rights and preserving the collective memory of human rights related struggles led by these women leaders in Sri Lanka for future generations of actors. In addition, during our consultations, many recently established groups and members of the civil society have shared their inexperience in facing ongoing threats and intimidations having been established and worked during the post 2015 enabling environment. As they witness

some of the journalists, activists and civil society members having to leave the country, arrested or victims of intimidation, they shared their urgent and pressing need to be supported in rethinking the way they operate, equipped with the right tools and resources, connect with senior/experienced members of the civil society to regain confidence, learn from them to enable their critical work to be pursued.

The current situation impacts on the work of women led organisations and women HRDs who feel increasingly isolated and threatened by increased scrutiny from law enforcement authorities preventing them from fully engaging with vulnerable and marginalized groups they are supporting and assisting. This is particularly true for women groups in the North and East of the country supporting the families of the disappeared, former combatants or former victims of sexual bribery by military, law enforcement and local authorities. Since then, a majority of civil society actors have shared having received these visits aimed at collecting information (on funding sources, activities, staff numbers, etc) and sending a clear intimidation message. This has now also targeted civil society actors and human rights defenders who participated and advocated in the UN Human Rights Council procedures during and after their travel to Geneva. The High Commissioner for Human Rights Global Update to the Human Rights Council in September 2020 and the UN Secretary General's Annual report on "Cooperation with the United Nations, its representatives and mechanisms in the field of human rights" note with concern this trend of "intimidating visits", surveillance and complaints of harassment and reprisals.

Some partners have also reported the loss of access to their banking systems as a direct result of the transfer of the NGO secretariat under the Ministry of Defence and increasing scrutiny particularly with regards to CSOs financial compliance requirements. With over 1,620 NGOs and community based organisation registered in 2018, CSO sustainability indicators for Sri Lanka clearly highlight the pressing needs for sustained efforts to build a stronger civil society in the island: currently ranked 77 globally by a USAID Index, Sri Lanka CSO sustainability ra is only 4.5 (on a scale of 1-7, 1 strongest, 7 weakest) in 2018 with very low scores in legal environment (4.4), organisational capacity (4.4), financial visibility (5.3) and service provisions (4.4). These constitute negative performance scores that could be used by the government to justify further crackdown and closure of these vital actors for lack of compliance and performance to state regulations.

Furthermore, few have reported threats targeting recent victims of gender based violence attacks during the COVID-19 related curfew imposed island wide. This includes members of the lesbian and transgender community in rural and peri-urban areas of the island whose supportive network and emergency sheltering and protection mechanisms were compromised by the pandemic along with their access to medicine to retain their gender identity during a prolonged period, further raising their vulnerability through increased instances of intimations and attacks.

Journalists including young female reporters and media editors from print, radio and digital media have also faced increasing scrutiny and witnessed their work hampered with intimidations to reveal community based sources particularly women sources and witnesses of incidents of violence, and shared their growing concerns in safeguarding anonymity as well as privacy of their information in a safe manner. Consultations with moderate members of interfaith forums

and committees - including female buddhist clergy - have confirmed that while these structures are still operating in the districts under local authorities, the possibility to discuss pluralism and express a diverse and/or dissenting opinions is progressively being reduced directly strengthening the vary space for these dialogues to happen. Similarly, college and university female representatives, predominantly from the South and Sinhalese majority areas have shared confidentially the fear to share and raise different opinions in an ever growing hegemonic and nationalistic landscape which labels traitors and enemies very reactively and incite hate and violence on the digital medium to take action in the real world.

While these online threats date back as early as 2015 in Sri Lanka, the lack of moderation and citizen responsible engagement are still lacking from the 6.4M users of social media platforms which are exponentially increasing (+ 8,3% users for the sole 2019-2020 year). Successive reports have identified a clear pattern of speech that is sexist, objectified, harassing or targeting women and members of the LBT community including non consensual dissemination of intimate videos, photos, information with dedicated pages specific to this type of content. These practices illustrate an acceptance of sexist and degrading commentary leading to clear patterns of escalating violence against women and members of the LBT communities both offline and online with a majority of users being predominantly male on most platforms (average 67%).

These particular drivers of conflict are arising as women in Sri Lanka continue to face a very strong patriarchal culture where their active participation and decision making in public and political spheres keep being seen as anomalies and exceptions despite representing 52% of the population. Political representation of women in the recent parliamentary elections brought only 11 female MPs to be elected, decreasing female representation to 4.8% only. However, the end of the conflict and subsequent recent years brought over 1M women heads of households to the forefront of the public arena thereby contributing to significantly change the perception of their roles in Sri Lanka society, daring to be breadwinners, requesting access to basic services and reclaiming their rights.

In a context of state increased surveillance and distrust toward NGOs and civil society activists, it has become vital to revitalise alliances with supportive State institutions such as the Office for the Missing Persons, the National Human Rights Commission and in the justice sector the Legal Aid Commission. This is important to address direct threats such as physical arrests, attacks on individuals or organisations as women groups and HRDs often lack the necessary means and information to defend themselves and access justice mechanisms or even contribute safely to judicial proceedings.

Finally, the need to carve out innovative spaces to promote, foster and safeguard such narratives of protection and women empowerment is resurrecting in the arts scene too. While this medium has been used over the recent years to promote inter-ethnic and inter-religious reconciliation and understanding, those initiatives have remained very centric on such specific themes and with clear intention to be seen and engaged by public audiences. Reports from several collective of artists across the island consulted in this process are now indicating worrying trends of increased scrutiny of the performing arts too, raising concerns on the artists freedom to create safely in the future. Young female artists have also shared their desire to pursue their art despite stringent economic realities and create private artistic pieces that would transcend art genres, themes and

generations with the sole purpose of nurturing and maintaining creative processes, reflection and collaborations enabling them to engage or pursue activism. Female artists shared also that gender discrimination is still prevalent in Sri Lankan art culture often relegating them to accepted and niche forms. Some of these artists have expressed the wish to explore the use of Sinhalese classical art forms as a medium to reclaim ownership on reshaping Sri Lankan identity discourse from the prevalent nationalist discourse, one that would - as per its initial tradition - embrace diversity, pluralism and compassion.

As Sri Lanka is entering a major political transition affecting long term peace prospects, civil society actors are facing increasing threats to conduct their work, especially women groups and human rights defenders. With limited options to actively pursue the peacebuilding work initiated in recent years including in government public institutions, it is becoming increasingly and urgently necessary to protect, support and assist these actors by using the UN traditional capacity building and empowerment role as a driver to protect and sustain the space for them to operate.

Key Stakeholders

Women groups and women led Community Based Organisations

They play a significant role in supporting and assisting some of the most vulnerable and marginalized groups, influencing local authorities, community leaders and political representatives. They play a key role in mitigating violence and are essential peace engineers running supportive networks and ensuring protection and self-care.

Local Government Authorities

As the lowest elected public body, Local authorities have to ensure access to basic services and constitute a key entry points for women access to these services - Recent female representation quotas has led to an increasing number of women represented in local authorities offices (25%) and should be used as potential supportive entry points to endorse women empowerment activities and gender equality.

Public Institutions

These are the entry points for service and assistance to access basic services including safety, security, assistance when seeking for a missing person, requesting legal assistance or submitting official information requested by them. In this case, civil society organisations have to work closely with local authorities but also public institutions sometime to support victims and vulnerable communities. These public institutions also expect these civil societies to adhere to an increasing number of regulations and regulatory frameworks ruling the conduct of their activities, reporting

- b) A brief description of how the project aligns with/ supports **existing** Governmental and UN **strategic frameworks**¹⁰, how it ensures **national ownership**. If this project is designed in a PRF country, describe how the main objective advances a relevant strategic objective identified through the Eligibility Process

¹⁰ Including national gender and youth strategies and commitments, such as a National Action Plan on 1325, a National Youth Policy etc.

This project is aligned and contributes to numerous UN strategic framework as follows :

- [2020 - UN SG Call to Action on Human Rights](#) - *The Highest Aspiration* specific recommendations on the necessity to put protection at the centrality of UN actions as well as emphasize prevention, protection and human rights in UN decision making and programming following up on the Human Rights Upfront initiative and the Rosenthal Report.
- SDG 16 Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions - Target 16-3 on the promotion of the Rule of Law and ensure equal access to justice
- [2019 -Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of Women Human Rights Defenders \(A/HRC/40/60\)](#) : Recommendations to ensure that women defenders enjoy a safe and enabling environment to exercise their rights, considering their specific and diverse needs, prioritize the protection of women defenders in online spaces and, **ensuring that they are supported to respond meaningfully to issues in a sustainable manner;**
- [2018 : Report of the SG on peacebuilding and sustaining peace](#) outlines the importance of community level engagement to sustain peace and **‘the importance of the United Nations engagement in with civil society organisations including building capacity, sharing good practices, developing practical tools, fostering a conducive environment for robust civil society, and active engagement in analysis, planning, programming and monitoring and evaluation’.**
- Sri Lanka Peacebuilding Priority Plan Outcome 2 on Reconciliation and Outcome 1 on supporting Transitional Justice.
- UN Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security and their role in preventing, resolving conflicts and related SG 7 Point Action Plan on Women’s Participation in Peacebuilding

National Ownership

The Legal Aid Commission aims to provide equal access to justice for all in Sri Lanka - especially vulnerable groups - under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Justice for the good administration of justice. The recent expansion of its local centres over the years from 11 to 84 across the country demonstrates a clear national priority to achieve this goal. Consultations with the Legal Aid Commissions in the framework of this project confirmed a strong interest in collaborating to operationalise these centres with adequate support to outreach local civil society organisations, including women groups, human rights defenders and marginalised groups including member of the LGBT community in accessing legal assistance, representation and legal council when facing legal proceedings.

Similarly, the Office of the Missing Persons and the National Human Rights Commission constitute two strong allies who have strengthened their collaboration with the civil society including women groups and women human rights defenders, journalists over the recent years etc. The current National Human Rights Commission 4 years strategy plan has a clear objective 4 of strengthening civil society and emphasizing the need to work closely with the civil society to enhance the work, research and advocacy role of the Commission. Finally, the Office for the Missing Persons currently fulfills an essential mandate of assisting relatives of missing persons in their search and tracing of their loved ones, and protecting the rights and interests of these missing persons. They work very closely with women grassroots organisations, families of the disappeared groups and will continue to be a critical public institution whose work needs to be supported.

- c) A brief explanation of how the project fills any strategic gaps and complements any other relevant interventions, PBF funded or otherwise. Also provide a brief **summary of existing interventions** in the proposal's sector by filling out the table below.

Project name (duration)	Donor and budget	Project focus	Difference from/ complementarity to current proposal
IRF-138: Support to Sri Lanka to design transitional justice	PBF/ USD1M	Transitional Justice	Compliments the interventions to advance HR in-country under the PPP.
IRF-154: Empowering women for an inclusive and sustainable transitional justice and reconciliation process in Sri Lanka	PBF/ USD 675,000	Transitional justice and reconciliation	Compliments the interventions to advance HR in-country under the PPP.
PRF/A-1: Support to strengthen capacities to undertake reforms to advance peacebuilding and transitional justice processes in Sri Lanka	PBF/ USD 4.4M	Transitional justice and reconciliation	Compliments the interventions to advance HR in-country under the PPP.
Joint Peace Programme	Pool Fund USD XM	Transitional Justice, Resettlement	

I. Project content, strategic justification and implementation strategy (4 pages max Plus Results Framework Annex)

- a) A brief **description of the project** focus and approach – describe the project’s overarching goal, the implementation strategy, and how it addresses the conflict causes or factors outlined in Section I (must be gender- and age- responsive).

Project Description

Implementation Strategy

This proposed initiative will implement an integrated approach in contributing to improve civil society resilience through the women led and women supportive groups and organisations to engage in conflict mitigation and through them, active collaboration and participation in proposed support mechanisms including those of the public institutions such as the legal assistance, among Sri Lanka civil society actors are facing renewed challenges to maintain a viable operational space to exercise their critical role and implement meaningful work in support of the people and communities of Sri Lanka. Assumptions made at concept note stage have been now confirmed and this initiative has now become even more critical and timely to address the recent and continued pressure on the civil society members, including on local women and women led groups and networks - following the recent political changes in the country’s ruling government.

This project will take an innovative integrated approach to conflict mitigation by addressing the civil society's lack of capacity, performance and compliance as a vehicle to enable their sustainability and self-resilience, which will contribute to their protection and sustainability during challenging times . The approach which consists in establishing a support platform led by the UN through UNOPS and UNDOC implementing services directly dedicated to and for the civil society actors - as opposed to the traditional schema of the civil society implementing for the UN - is a new area of intervention in Sri Lanka, particularly when working for and with women led groups, networks and human rights defenders.

This initiative specifically focuses on the needs directly expressed by the consulted members of the civil society who contributed to design this project. **UNOPS and UNODC will not implement any direct programmatic activities in the areas of conflict mitigation, peacebuilding or human rights.** Neither will we require selected partners to implement new activities in the framework of this intervention. Instead, we will focus on establishing a support platform providing and equipping the targeted partners with relevant tools, knowledge and equipment so they are able to pursue their critical work in these sectors as well as in other streams, including in creative artistic content. The intention is to set up a neutral assistance platform tackling objectively structural issues of these community based organisations linked to their performance, provision of services, financial management, communications, project and grant management.

In doing so, UNOPS in partnership with UNODC and a selected number of partners with proven expertise and experience in these fields¹¹, will aim to support and empower civil society groups, including women’s groups and women supportive groups through the provision of five core

¹¹ Partners have expressed the wish not to be mentioned for do no harm reasons

pillars of assistance:

- Skills development in project and financial management (UNOPS with relevant partners)
- Financial assistance (UNOPS) :
- Provision of services and equipment (UNOPS)
- Protection, access to justice and legal assistance (UNOPS/UNODC with relevant local and State partners)
- Support to artistic content creation (UNOPS with relevant partners)

The project will focus predominantly on women's groups and women supportive groups as catalysts to support conflict prevention in a context of intolerance due to their known engagement and responsiveness to communities concerns and their proven cooperation across ethno-religious differences or political party lines. As they are often under-represented in decision making forums, their skills and lack of experience is often overlooked. Consultations during the design of the project provided further evidence of the need to provide such assistance to remote/isolated or specialised groups - those without internet access or located in rural low profile areas or covering a specific type of marginalised communities - and use existing networks to rally further participants to expand the proposed assistance. Many Colombo based larger and prominent civil society organisations have agreed to relay this initiative to their regional partners but also highlighted the importance of providing such assistance in Sinhala and Tamil language exclusively and develop regional networks of support instead of the typical Colombo - field type of modus operandi.

Furthermore, the project will contribute to women victims access to justice mechanisms through legal assistance and witness protection as an empowering driver to address women peacebuilders rights to legal representation and fair trial. Consistent with article 14 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the UN Principles and Guidelines, Sri Lanka has Legal Aid Law No. 27 of 1978 and established a Legal Aid Commission (LAC). The main objective of the LAC is to provide legal aid to 'deserving persons' in Sri Lanka and it guarantees the right to free legal representation for poor and vulnerable persons. However, there are many reasons that contribute to slowness or ineffectiveness in the process due to limited resources and an insufficient number of legal aid providers, who frequently lack training on how to deliver effective legal aid services. This situation is aggravated by lack of knowledge among the citizens of their right to legal aid. Women and girls, who are accessing legal aid are particularly affected by this situation due to the lack of strategies, policies, legislative and administrative framework, as well as financial and human resources. The beneficiaries would comprise of diverse groups including women defenders as well as deserving persons whose need legal representation.

UNODC's experience in supporting access to legal aid confirms the continuing need and demand for legal aid, whether as victims and survivors, or as alleged offenders and prisoners. This project will focus on empowering grass root women by strengthening their capacity to obtain legal aid to defend their rights including access to justice when conducting critical work; it will also explore how civil society actors can support communities in cases of denial of justice and human rights violations. Conducting baseline assessment and consultations to identify capacity of the women's groups in informal and formal justice would provide the background to understand the capacity building needs and requirements of the sector.

Awareness dialogues on violence and hate speech in digital spheres will be implemented in the regional courts for targeted judicial officers and lawyers. Significance of addressing this aspect is justified by the need of the hour. In Sri Lanka, online social media and web based platforms, accessed increasingly over smartphones and tablets, provide an important, necessary vent for critical dissent, in a context where mainstream media does not and cannot afford the space for questioning or content that holds the government accountable for heinous crimes and outrageous corruption. The growth of content creation and consumption online, wider and deeper than any other media in the country and at an accelerated pace, has also resulted in low risk, low cost and high impact online spaces to spread hate, harm and hurt against specific communities, individuals or ideas.

This project will also provide increased protection to women victims during prosecution through improved treatment, respectful interaction during prosecution and trial proceedings taking into consideration the needs of the victims and witnesses. The Assistance to and Protection of Victims of Crime and Witnesses Act, No.04 of 2015 provides for the establishment of the National Authority for the Protection of Victims of Crime and Witnesses (NAPVCW) in order to protect the victims of crime and witnesses. The objective of this Act is to strengthen the course of administration of justice by identifying a proper legal framework to protect the rights of the victims of crime and witnesses. According to the NAPVCW, many citizens are unaware of the protection and privileges offered to victims and witnesses by law and do not report crimes nor step forward as a witness. These activities shall contribute to empower women peacebuilders and victims to have the confidence to take informed action in challenging the court's decisions through appeals or review proceedings.

As crimes go unreported due to fear of stigmatization, cultural perceptions, social alienation, and lack of faith in law enforcement and the judiciary, the impact of crime on the people affected can be profound. Victims may suffer from physical, mental, emotional and financial harm, from which some may never recover. Injuries may be threatened or inflicted upon victims, witnesses or their families, and threats may even be made against their lives. Victims and witnesses may be reluctant to give information and evidence because of perceived or actual intimidation or threats against themselves or members of their family. This concern may be exacerbated where people who come into contact with the criminal justice system are particularly vulnerable. Victims who receive appropriate and adequate care and support are more likely to cooperate with the criminal justice system in bringing perpetrators of crime to justice. However, inadequacies of criminal justice systems may mean that victims are not able to access the services they need and may even be re-victimized by the criminal justice system itself.

1.Enhancing civil society targeted members performance and resilience

The primary strategy in preserving and sustaining an active and safer civil society in Sri Lanka is to invest durably and comprehensively in enhancing their performance, compliance and quality of the work delivered thereby protecting them from the consequences of potential sanctions, repression or restrictions in their work. As such, this project will establish a thorough compliance management framework with specialised dedicated teams based on updated and new Government policies and regulations working to support the civil society partners to achieve

higher compliance and improved project, financial and overall grant management results and contribute to increased sustainability performance.

As Sri Lanka is currently ranked 77 on the Global Index of CSO Sustainability in 2018, this action will contribute to assist a higher number of actors to be compliant thereby reducing legitimate criticism of underperformance and mismanagement feeding current anti-ngo narratives especially towards smaller grassroots organisations and groups. This intervention will be implemented through a thorough capacity assessment of recipient organisations and pay attention to inter-generational as well as inter-regional knowledge management practices between younger and more experienced actors. Ultimately, and with time and continued advisory services and support, this initiative could help some of recipient members of the civil society to be recognised as more reliable and strong partners opening them opportunities to expand their programme and actions which they are currently ineligible for.

2. Contributing to safer operating environment

Secondly, this project will strategically build the technical capacities of female members and female supportive members of grassroot groups, human rights defenders, activists and artists in expanding, preserving and securing their operating environment to enable the pursuit of their vital work. This will be done through the provision of technical assistance, equipment and training on self protection, protection of data, safer working modalities and practices including in the digital space, stress management, self care, legal counselling and support. Conflict sensitivity awareness will be a major area of capacity building to preserve civil society safety and security especially for younger and newly established members of the civil society who did not operate during conflict times and are unequipped to cope with related challenges. Similarly, creative content will be nurtured solely with the objective of supporting creating processes and transferring knowledge and less with an objective of public viewing or exposure.

3. Localized, targeted and practical approach

Finally, this intervention will seek to provide the most localized, hands on, and practical solutions possible to the growing and evolving needs and challenges of civil society as the situation evolves, within the limits of do no harm principles and putting the centrality of protection at the core of this intervention. This will be done through two UN field based support offices located in Sinhala and Tamil majority areas and through a network of existing locations run by the civil society when and where possible exclusively in Sinhalese and Tamil languages and with the ambition of strengthening or initiating regional support networks and systems, independent and self sustainable from the limited Colombo supporting mechanism and networks.

- b) **project-level ‘theory of change’** – explain the assumptions about why you expect the project interventions to lead to changes in the conflict factors identified in the conflict analysis. What are the assumptions that the theory is based on? Note, this is not a summary statement of your project’s outcomes.

IF women groups, organisations and Human Rights Defenders across ethnic and religious lines have greater skills, knowledge and tools to navigate a fast changing political, security and global

health context through a supportive platform providing them the much needed support to increase their compliance and protection mechanisms,

AND IF regional solidarity and support networks inclusive of civil society peers, government allies and legal aid and justice service providers are actively strengthened and mobilised in key locations,

THEN they will be empowered to pursue their critical work, will contribute to diffuse emerging and localised new tensions and conflicts by building resilience and tolerance, thereby achieving meaningful participation as members of a dynamic and active civil society community

BECAUSE supporting civil society engagement through women empowerment and contribution to peacebuilding and human rights is a fundamental foundation to prevent conflict, protect and assist vulnerable individuals and communities and achieve sustainable peace dividends.

- c) **Provide a narrative description of key project components** (outcomes and outputs), ensuring sufficient attention to gender, age and other key differences that should influence the project approach. In describing the project elements, be sure to indicate important considerations related to sequencing of activities.

This project will aim to achieve the following outcomes and outputs : (full detail in Annex C)

- **Outcome 1 : Women peacebuilders have greater means to operate safely**
 - **Output 1 Sri Lankan women led and women supportive networks and organisations have increased knowledge and practices of essential management tools and processes (UNOPS)**
 - Individuals from the targeted women groups, networks, human rights defenders, journalists and artists will build their project management, financial management and audit, communications, grants management and reporting skills and receive continued guidance and coaching to practice and implement those during the project duration to achieve compliance with the requirements from public authorities and international donors
 - **Output 2 - Women groups, community based organisations, human rights defenders, journalists and artists have increased financial means to pursue their critical work (UNOPS)**
 - Selected number of women organisations, networks, human rights defenders, journalists and artists will be selected through competitive processes and direct grants to support small grant facilities to financially support their critical work.

- **Output 3 - Targeted women organisations are supported with the provision of technical services and equipment (UNOPS)**
- Targeted partner organisations have the opportunity to access equipment, machinery and services related to IT, communications, technical services such as translations, archiving, graphic design, online support services etc...
- **Output 4 - Access to protection mechanisms (UNOPS/UNODC in consultation with OHCHR and with partners)**
- This project will also facilitate the organisation of training in protection, safety and security, safer working modalities and practices including stress management, referrals to existing psychosocial services and self care adapted and tailored to women and women human rights defenders audiences
- Women led organisations, groups, networks, human rights defenders, journalists and artists will also be trained in access to justice mechanisms including formal and informal justice, legal aid, petition rights, denial of justice witness protection services.
- **Output 5 - Preservation of creative and artistic expressions (UNOPS with partners)**
- Artists and creatives including young women will be supported to pursue their art, receive guidance and mentorship and build wider regional support networks in preserving the process and role of creation.
- **Outcome 2 - State authorities have greater means to protect and provide assistance to vulnerable and marginalised victims**
- **Output 1 - Support to judicial systems practitioners and authorities (UNODC)**
- Strengthening of legal aid provision, awareness programme on digital violence to judicial officers and lawyers, establishment of victim protection agencies and training of state authorities
- d) **Project targeting** – provide a justification for geographic zones, criteria for beneficiary selection, expected number and type of stakeholders/beneficiaries (must be disaggregated by sex and age). Indicate whether stakeholders have been consulted in the design of this proposal. Do not repeat all outputs and activities from the Results Framework.

The beneficiaries of this proposed project will be mainly constituted of women and women supportive members of the Sri Lankan civil society including journalists and local reporters, human rights defenders, artists, members of the LGBT community, lawyers, environmental activists, social workers, unionists, community leaders including faith representatives predominantly based in the following areas of Sri Lanka : Jaffna, Kilinochchi, Mullaitivu, Mannar, Anuradhapura, Kurunegala, Batticaloa, Ampara, Hambantota, Matara, Galle, Badulla and Ratnapura. These locations were selected on the basis of the findings of our consultations

and preliminary assessments as having overlapping factors of representation of civil society actors whether Sinhalese, Tamil or Muslim eligible for the proposed platform services, experienced occurrences of violence or tensions, high number of women led organisation/representation including communities with significant caseload of conflict affected returnees, previously displaced communities and/or war/military widows or female headed households. Most of these selected locations also have bar association regional representations, legal aid centres, and first instance and district courts. along with the Human Rights commission and the OMP regional offices gathering thus a strong foundation for pre-existing supportive local networks that can be further strengthened . As such, beneficiaries also include representatives from local authorities (OMP, HRC, Local judicial authorities from targeted areas).

UNOPS and UNODC have identified a number of interested members of the civil society and women leaders during project design phase, the project expects to benefit to :

- 20 civil society organisations, groups, members of networks across 13 districts
- 3,000 individual female activists, human rights defenders and journalists
- 50 individuals from the local and state legal and judicial authorities
- 20 artists

The project will be further informed on the basis of a stakeholder mapping of relevant members of the civil society, and a baseline and gender specific survey and conflict analysis in targeted locations conducted by UNOPS which will be then monitored against future information collected from findings in upcoming dialogues, engagements and capacity assessments. UNODC will also conduct a similar KAP survey on formal, informal justice and witness protection among targeted civil society and authorities of the justice system.

Project Sequencing

The activities of this project will be implemented through a phased approach prioritizing the most urgent and pressing needs first and will retain flexibility to adjust the proposed workplan as the situation evolves and challenges faced by the civil society arise. While UNOPS and UNODC will initially prioritise baseline surveys and local conflict analysis, a digital capacity assessment tool of the women led and women supportive groups and networks will be designed to assess and capture specific support needed which would then connect to the future support platform of services which will be generated and grow as more and more actors apply for such services. That particular platform of services with relevant pillars/package of support will then be deployed either remotely through online services or at field level via the field offices of UNOPS and its partners. Priority will be given to urgently provide conflict sensitivity related protection mechanisms and skills buildings in financial compliance as immediate mitigating measures before rolling out remaining activities, assistance and services of support.

This sensitive project will also require a tremendous engagement effort and trust building between all recipient partners, UNOPS and UNODC, one that is particularly challenged by the current mistrust of most civil society actors towards the UN system following the end of the conflict poor bilateral engagement and peacebuilding dividends most of them and their communities received from the UN particularly Tamil communities in areas such as transitional

justice. The result and outcomes of this project will also very much be linked to the context evolution and the ability of the civil society actors to build and maintain their resilience and confidence in pursuing their work. Civil society actors empowerment requires prolonged and continued engagement, close collaboration as the enabling environment is likely to deteriorate and further shrink. The project team hopes to start with identified individuals, groups and human rights defenders who have expressed interest in the project approach during its design phase to outreach rally other members of the civil society to the proposed platform.

The proposed results framework both address the challenges experienced by the Sri Lankan civil society and particularly its females representatives and leaders. While the first outcome will enable these women and women supporters to pursue their work by contributing to build resilience, protection and survival mechanisms, the second Outcome aims to further support the remaining allies within the government (the Legal Aid Commission, the Office on Missing Persons and the Human Rights Commission under the Ministry of Justice) so their work to support the targeted civil society and communities is also protected and ensured. These two outcomes aim to contribute to the strategic empowerment of female civil society leaders to ensure their work and voices contribute to support vulnerable communities and diffuse and de-escalate conflict triggers to ethno-religious tensions in Sri Lanka.

II. Project management and coordination (4 pages max)

- a) Recipient organizations and implementing partners** – list all direct recipient organizations and their implementing partners (international and local), specifying the Convening Organization, which will coordinate the project, and providing a brief justification for the choices, based on mandate, experience, local knowledge and existing capacity.

UNOPS

UNOPS is an operational arm of the United Nations, helping Governments, the United Nations system, public and private partners in delivering over \$1.4 billion worth of peace, security, humanitarian and development projects every year. Our partners rely on our proven expertise to increase the speed, cost-effectiveness and sustainability of around 1,000 projects in more than 80 countries, often in the most challenging environments. UNOPS has supported Sri Lanka's development since 1998, expanding operations in 2005 to support the post-tsunami and conflict related humanitarian and reconstruction response. Within the organization's mandate in project management, infrastructure and procurement, UNOPS Sri Lanka implements customized socio-economic development projects that benefit vulnerable people and develop national capacities.

Specific to peacebuilding, governance and rule of law, UNOPS has been delivering similar support to civil society and Human Rights Defenders projects for over ten years in former Yugoslavia, Iraq and Myanmar. UNOPS is also involved in the implementation of conflict related sensitive operations in Syria, Yemen, and Somalia working closely with government counterparts, UN systems and communities to ensure increased ownership and sustainability of the projects we manage.

In Sri Lanka, UNOPS is the second largest recipient of the Joint Peace Programme supporting the UN Resident Coordinator Office and the Office for the High Commissioner for Human Rights since 2019 to deliver similar activities supporting as well as currently the Office for the Missing Persons and the national Human Rights Commission.

UNODC

UNODC ROSA's Regional Programme for South Asia (2018-2021) was endorsed by Sri Lanka in March 2018. Key areas under the programme, recently and currently being implemented are Global Maritime Crime Programme (GMCP), Trafficking in Persons' project, Container Control Programme/Aircargo, Regional Drug Law Enforcement project, SARICC-TOC Project (Countries of South Asian region have common concerns regarding Illicit Drugs and transnational - organised crimes (TOC)), Anti-money laundering activities, Countering Violent Extremism project, Drug-use Prevention project and Promoting Non-Custodial Measures project.

Thematic areas of UNODC have a direct relationship to rule of law and governance, and for most of the project implementation activities are collaborated with justice sector institutions. In addition, UNODC is working very closely with the law enforcement sector providing technical assistance building capacities.

Agency	Total budget in previous calendar year	Key sources of budget (which donors etc.)	Location of in-country offices	No. of existing staff, of which in project zones	Highlight any existing expert staff of relevance to project
Convening Organization: UNOPS	2020 US\$26.1M	UNPBF, Govt of Japan, MPTF, KOICA, IsDB, World Bank,	Colombo, Matara, Puttalam	38	Programme Manager who designed the existing PBF project and currently responsible for the UNOPS Joint Peace Programme will be the Programme Manager. UNOPS also has regional Gender empowerment specialists.
Implementing partners: Direct implementation					

Recipient Organization:					
Implementing partners:					
Recipient Organization: UNODC	USD 8.42 Million	EU, Government of Japan, Government of Germany, UK and British High Commission in Sri Lanka,	Colombo	13	National Program Officer who is responsible for Trafficking in Persons, Non-Custodial Measures, Drug use Prevention Program and other diverse criminal justice components will be the Program Manager for this and has more than 20 years experience working with legal aid sector and access to justice programs. UNODC also has a gender expert attached to Sri Lanka Project Office and Regional Office.
Implementing partners: Direct implementation					

b) **Project management and coordination** – Indicate the project implementation team, including positions and roles and explanation of which positions are to be funded by the project (to which percentage). Explicitly indicate how the project implementation team will ensure sufficient gender or youth expertise. Explain project coordination and oversight arrangements and ensure link with PBF Secretariat if it exists. Fill out project implementation readiness checklist in **Annex A.1** and attach key staff TORs.

UNOPS as lead agency will closely coordinate through the Project Review Committee composed of 1 representative from the RCO, UNOPS, UNODC and OHCHR to ensure close coordination and communication Quarterly meetings will be held and convened by UNOPS to discuss project progress, timely coordination and engagement with all partners. This is particularly important in light of the RC office's recent engagement with the civil society actors and recent policy decisions on Sri Lanka taken by the Executive Committee on Sri Lanka.

UNOPS will be the lead agency responsible for the implementation of this project in close coordination with selected partners. UNOPS will also be responsible for all required representation, communication and reporting required with the PBF secretariat. UNODC and its partners will be responsible for its designated activities and both agencies will have joint work plans and establish coordination mechanisms to integrate their respective activities as per the result framework, including simultaneous delivery of some activities in common locations to increase ownership and mobilisation of the targeted women groups and judicial actors.

UNOPS will be accountable for the overall outcomes of the programme. Where necessary and on a need basis, the OHCHR team in Sri Lanka will provide recommendations and advisory on the request of UNOPS - for example representation on the panel reviewing financial grants, referral regarding sensitive protection and human rights case management etc...

The UNOPS management team will be supported by internal PBF programme focal point, regional governance, peacebuilding advisors and exchange knowledge and practices with project operations teams implementing similar interventions in other regions and conflict contexts.

The UNOPS team composition will reflect the strong capacity building empowerment of this project and consist of a Programme Manager, Field Coordinators (one for North/East and one for South with dedicated vernacular languages), financial officer/ associates, monitoring and evaluation officer, research analyst and two drivers to cover the intended project locations. It will be further supported by UNOPS support team in Finance, Procurement, Budget Management, IT based out of the existing Colombo office and with consultants on retainer modality in specialised sectors (provision of trainings, protection components via specialised partners and artistic experts). Strong considerations will be given to having female team members given the focus of the project on female peacebuilders and gender empowerment. UNOPS is currently attempting to reach gender parity in its team by end of 2020 globally through an exceptional human resources global corporate policy aiming to increase and prioritizing female representations in recruitments.

- c) **Risk management** – Identify project-specific risks and how they will be managed, including the approach to updating risks and making project adjustments. Include a Do No Harm approach and risk mitigation strategy.

Project specific risk	Risk level (low, medium, high)	Mitigation strategy (including Do No Harm considerations)
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<p>Increasing restrictions on civil society imposed by the GoSL</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>UNOPS will monitor the context closely and in discussion with the partner capture these restrictions by adjusting the curriculum provided in skills development particularly in areas of compliance. Lessons learnt and mitigation practices will be shared widely with members of the civil society beyond this project. UNOPS will support civil society to develop business continuity scenarios and plans to support them in managing the delivery, suspension and resumption of activities/operations based on situation.</p>
<p>Government institutions and key public officials are made made redundant/discontinued</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>Flexibility has been built in the project and with other programme framework to adjust the support required by the Office for the Missing Persons and the Human Rights Commission to enable tailored support is pursued or discontinued based on Government new priorities. UNOPS is also supporting the wider UN system and such public authorities to preserve and safeguard their work.</p>
<p>Fear of engaging with the proposed platform of support</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>This project will be based on the core principles of Do No Harm and centrality of protection - as such, strong efforts will be done to ensure anonymity of such partners is ensured when requested by them and support will be given only based on their informed</p>

		choice and knowledge of risks.
Physical implementation of some of the activities due to Covid 19 restrictions	Medium-Medium Low	The project has attempted to build alternative delivery of services where possibly using digital and remote medium such as online coaching, training etc...

- d) **Monitoring and evaluation** – Describe the M&E approach for the project, including M&E expertise in the project team and main means and timing of collecting data? Include: a budget break-down for both monitoring and evaluation activities, including collection of baseline and end line data and an independent evaluation, and an approximate M&E timeline. Fund recipients are obligated to reserve at least 5-7% of the project budget for M&E activities, including sufficient funds for a quality, independent evaluation.

The project team from UNOPS and UNDOC will develop a joint Monitoring and Evaluation plan along with a mid-term review every 6 months to reassess the situation and feasibility to make necessary operational adjustments. This will also capture discussions from the Project Review Committee. The M&E Timeline will include initial baseline surveys, capacity and KAP assessments in the initial months to further adjust the quarterly targets in discussion between UNOPS, UNODC and respective implementing partners before being shared in progress reports and meetings. This framework will serve as the basis for the reporting requirement updated to the context/situation and emerging risks and mitigation strategies.

A final evaluation conducted by an independent third party will be done to measure the impact of the project and its overall performance. This final evaluation will be contracted by UNOPS to an independent evaluation team or institution jointly selected with UNODC.

UNOPS has Monitoring and Evaluation built in in its Project Management internal requirements - as such, the M&E tools will include quantitative and qualitative aspects including data collection, analysis, surveys, focus group discussions, training evaluation forms. Implementing partners will be included in the design process, train on these and request to adhere to basic conflict sensitivity and ethical considerations. UNOPS and UNODC will ensure that data is not identifiable and secured.

Similarly, UNOPS has an internal knowledge management requirement with institutional tools, products to capture learning during project implementations. Progress and final reports will capture essential information while respecting the identification of partners who do not wish to be named. An estimated \$76,184 will be allocated for the monitoring and evaluation requirement, and an estimated US\$20,000 for the final evaluation.

- e) **Project exit strategy/ sustainability** – Briefly explain the project’s exit strategy to ensure that the project can be wrapped up at the end of the project duration, either through sustainability measures, agreements with other donors for follow-up funding or end of activities which do not need further support. If support from other donors is expected, explain what the project will do concretely and proactively to try to ensure this support from the start. Consider possible partnerships with other donors or IFIs.

The ultimate ambition of this project is to improve the resilience and sustainability of the civil society in Sri Lanka and of its female leaders across the country as a primary protection measure but also with the aim to achieve their self reliance and self-care.

Previously, most of the experienced and trained actors of the civil society, often based in Colombo have gone through similar transitions and transformations during the final phase of the Sri Lankan conflict and are nowadays leading civil society platforms, advocacy and demonstrated their ability to secure funding and deliver high quality projects and interventions. Some of their representatives have gone also to advise and share their knowledge of conflict and human rights in other regions and are being recognised and respected for that. They are the one who paved the way for critical peacebuilding reforms and programming when possible post 2015 which led to establish institutions such as the Office for the Missing Persons and are still leading - albeit as a small minority - the advocacy and legal proceedings against recent political and constitutional reforms. Such visible models at the forefront of activism in Sri Lanka should enable to create inspiration for regional actors and women in particular to ensure regional relays and increased confidence to pursue critical work in support of the people and communities of Sri Lanka.

This project has predominantly engaged with grassroots CSOs and women groups - as such, it aspires to nurture existing seeds and young female leaders to pursue the work they themselves chose to commit to and as such will only strengthen existing organisations/networks to continue to engage with increased means of protection and management. The key implementing partners are already recipients of similar funding including PBF, UN, EU, GIZ etc... as such they have already a solid foundation to grow and expand through targeted mechanisms of support proposed by the platform. They would be used as peace engineers or catalysts to rally a wider network of civil society actors to engage in similar compliance, project management and protection building processes to acquire the necessary certifications, audited accounts, protection skills, confidence and institutional resilience to face a challenging environment.

Investing in allies within the Government authorities have also proven to be effective when given the space to build and deliver critical public services. Investing in such allies and like minded public servants at local and regional levels to be the primary point of contact and entry point to support the civil society is key to establish and activate those supporting networks to provide the expected services be in legal assistance, enforced disappearances or human rights violations.

The total budget of this project is estimated to be US\$5M and was hence presented to a number of donors in Sri Lanka who are supporting the peacebuilding process to explore additional funding. It has received overall positive feedback and support due to its innovative approach

and direct implementation by UN agencies in support of civil society's own work. Efforts were made to trigger a longer implementation framework covering the entire duration of the current government mandate for 5 years.

III. Project budget

Provide brief additional information on projects costs, highlighting any specific choices that have underpinned the budget preparation, especially for personnel, travel or other indirect project support, to demonstrate value for money for the project. Proposed budget for all projects must include sufficient funds for an independent evaluation. Proposed budget for projects involving non-UN direct recipients must include funds for independent audit. Fill out **Annex A.2** on project value for money.

Please note that in nearly all cases, the Peacebuilding Fund transfers project funds in a series of performance-based tranches. PBF's standard approach is to transfer project funds in two tranches for UN recipients and three tranches for non-UN recipients, releasing second and third tranches upon demonstration that performance benchmarks have been met. All projects include the following two standard performance benchmarks: 1) at least 75% of funds from the first tranche have been committed, and 2) all project reporting obligations have been met. In addition to these standard benchmarks and depending on the risk rating or other context-specific factors, additional benchmarks may be indicated for the release of second and third tranches.

Please specify below any context-specific factors that may be relevant for the release of second and third tranches. These may include the successful conduct of elections, passage of key legislation, the standing up of key counterpart units or offices, or other performance indicators that are necessary before project implementation may advance. Within your response, please reflect how performance-based tranches affect project sequencing considerations.

UNOPS and UNODC will be requesting two tranches of funding of 70% and 30%. Our internal engagement, implementation and financial systems and regulations enable the commitment of funds in our systems. Financial statements can be provided to the PBF secretariat along with progress reports to demonstrate status of expenditures, commitments and budget forecasts along with progress results through the monitoring and evaluation framework. UNOPS and UNODC are confident in the possibility of committing and delivering these amounts despite a challenging context. Mitigating measures have been built in the project and project workplan and sequencing is focusing most of the pressing urgent needs during the initial phase of the project while the last tranche will enable complete geographic coverage, targeting of the beneficiaries and hopefully roll out of a system which has demonstrated results under phase/tranche 1.

UNOPS and UNODC have opted for a direct implementation approach to ensure almost all activities are benefitting or geared towards the civil society capacity building and empowerment and in particular women groups and women peacebuilders with the exception of the component related to State Authorities (Outcome 2). The main rationale for this approach lies in facilitating

the achievement of concrete hands-on processes by UNOPS (trainings, procurement etc...) to ensure selected partners will benefit from it and will also be able to focus on more critical work they may not have the means or the space to do while the rest of the services is provided through the portal. Given the capacity enhancement and advisory service nature of the project, the cost in personnel and operational costs is higher to ensure continued in-depth knowledge and skills are practiced beyond basic training and enforced on a day to day basis with the partners applying to the support platform.

The applicant agencies estimate that this project has a high value for money aspect as an average 82% of the funds are going for partners directly through grants/subgrants or indirectly through the packages of support and assistance which were jointly designed for the platform namely training and capacity building, protection, provision of equipment, services and supplies.

The provision of support services (trainings, procurement of equipment, protection, grants etc...) will be done digitally and remotely where and when possible or necessary - however to ensure a sense of protection by presence and hands on day to day training and continued support and coaching in financial management, audit, compliance and project management, the project will also roll out this support through two small satellite offices - one in the North East and one in the South to ensure partners have a field helpdesk counter to access the services and do follow up in case of any questions/issues. UNOPS and UNODC have integrated their activities to support women groups under Outcome 1 and UNODC will support State Authorities and identified government allies in Outcome 2. Both agencies have built their personnel costs within the outputs/activities. Procurement services will be done through UNOPS procurement rules and regulations.

Fill out two tables in the Excel budget **Annex D**.

In the first Excel budget table in Annex D, please include the percentage towards Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) for every activity. Also provide a clear justification for every GEWE allocation (e.g. training will have a session on gender equality, specific efforts will be made to ensure equal representation of women etc.).

Annex A.1: Checklist of project implementation readiness

Annex A.2: Checklist for project value for money

Annex B.1: Project Administrative arrangements for UN Recipient Organizations

(This section uses standard wording – please do not remove)

The UNDP MPTF Office serves as the Administrative Agent (AA) of the PBF and is responsible for the receipt of donor contributions, the transfer of funds to Recipient UN Organizations, the consolidation of narrative and financial reports and the submission of these to the PBSO and the PBF donors. As the Administrative Agent of the PBF, MPTF Office transfers funds to RUNOS on the basis of the signed Memorandum of Understanding between each RUNO and the MPTF Office.

AA Functions

On behalf of the Recipient Organizations, and in accordance with the UNDG-approved “Protocol on the Administrative Agent for Multi Donor Trust Funds and Joint Programmes, and One UN funds” (2008), the MPTF Office as the AA of the PBF will:

- Disburse funds to each of the RUNO in accordance with instructions from the PBSO. The AA will normally make each disbursement within three (3) to five (5) business days after having received instructions from the PBSO along with the relevant Submission form and Project document signed by all participants concerned;
- Consolidate the financial statements (Annual and Final), based on submissions provided to the AA by RUNOS and provide the PBF annual consolidated progress reports to the donors and the PBSO;
- Proceed with the operational and financial closure of the project in the MPTF Office system once the completion is completed by the RUNO. A project will be considered as operationally closed upon submission of a joint final narrative report. In order for the MPTF Office to financially closed a project, each RUNO must refund unspent balance of over 250 USD, indirect cost (GMS) should not exceed 7% and submission of a certified final financial statement by the recipient organizations’ headquarters);
- Disburse funds to any RUNO for any cost extension that the PBSO may decide in accordance with the PBF rules & regulations.

Accountability, transparency and reporting of the Recipient United Nations Organizations

Recipient United Nations Organizations will assume full programmatic and financial accountability for the funds disbursed to them by the Administrative Agent. Such funds will be administered by each RUNO in accordance with its own regulations, rules, directives and procedures.

Each RUNO shall establish a separate ledger account for the receipt and administration of the funds disbursed to it by the Administrative Agent from the PBF account. This separate ledger account shall be administered by each RUNO in accordance with its own regulations, rules, directives and procedures, including those relating to interest. The separate ledger account shall be subject exclusively to the internal and external auditing procedures laid down in the financial regulations, rules, directives and procedures applicable to the RUNO.

Each RUNO will provide the Administrative Agent and the PBSO (for narrative reports only) with:

Type of report	Due when	Submitted by
Semi-annual project progress report	15 June	Convening Agency on behalf of all implementing organizations and in consultation with/ quality assurance by PBF Secretariats, where they exist
Annual project progress report	15 November	Convening Agency on behalf of all implementing organizations and in consultation with/ quality assurance by PBF Secretariats, where they exist
End of project report covering entire project duration	Within three months from the operational project closure (it can be submitted instead of an annual report if timing coincides)	Convening Agency on behalf of all implementing organizations and in consultation with/ quality assurance by PBF Secretariats, where they exist
Annual strategic peacebuilding and PBF progress report (for PRF allocations only), which may contain a request for additional PBF allocation if the context requires it	1 December	PBF Secretariat on behalf of the PBF Steering Committee, where it exists or Head of UN Country Team where it does not.

Financial reporting and timeline

Timeline	Event
30 April	Annual reporting – Report Q4 expenses (Jan. to Dec. of previous year)
<i>Certified final financial report to be provided by 30 June of the calendar year after project closure</i>	

UNEX also opens for voluntary financial reporting for UN recipient organizations the following dates

31 July	Voluntary Q2 expenses (January to June)
31 October	Voluntary Q3 expenses (January to September)

Unspent Balance exceeding USD 250, at the closure of the project would have to be refunded and a notification sent to the MPTF Office, no later than six months (30 June) of the year following the completion of the activities.

Ownership of Equipment, Supplies and Other Property

Ownership of equipment, supplies and other property financed from the PBF shall vest in the RUNO undertaking the activities. Matters relating to the transfer of ownership by the RUNO shall be determined in accordance with its own applicable policies and procedures.

Public Disclosure

The PBSO and Administrative Agent will ensure that operations of the PBF are publicly disclosed on the PBF website (www.un.org/peacebuilding/fund) and the Administrative Agent’s website (www.mptf.undp.org).

Annex B.2: Project Administrative arrangements for Non-UN Recipient Organizations

(This section uses standard wording – please do not remove)

Accountability, transparency and reporting of the Recipient Non-United Nations Organization:

The Recipient Non-United Nations Organization will assume full programmatic and financial accountability for the funds disbursed to them by the Administrative Agent. Such funds will be administered by each recipient in accordance with its own regulations, rules, directives and procedures.

The Recipient Non-United Nations Organization will have full responsibility for ensuring that the Activity is implemented in accordance with the signed Project Document;

In the event of a financial review, audit or evaluation recommended by PBSO, the cost of such activity should be included in the project budget;

Ensure professional management of the Activity, including performance monitoring and reporting activities in accordance with PBSO guidelines.

Ensure compliance with the Financing Agreement and relevant applicable clauses in the Fund MOU.

Reporting:

Each Receipt will provide the Administrative Agent and the PBSO (for narrative reports only) with:

Type of report	Due when	Submitted by
Bi-annual project progress report	15 June	Convening Agency on behalf of all implementing organizations and in consultation with/ quality assurance by PBF Secretariats, where they exist
Annual project progress report	15 November	Convening Agency on behalf of all implementing organizations and in consultation with/ quality assurance by PBF Secretariats, where they exist

End of project report covering entire project duration	Within three months from the operational project closure (it can be submitted instead of an annual report if timing coincides)	Convening Agency on behalf of all implementing organizations and in consultation with/ quality assurance by PBF Secretariats, where they exist
Annual strategic peacebuilding and PBF progress report (for PRF allocations only), which may contain a request for additional PBF allocation if the context requires it	1 December	PBF Secretariat on behalf of the PBF Steering Committee, where it exists or Head of UN Country Team where it does not.

Financial reports and timeline

Timeline	Event
28 February	Annual reporting – Report Q4 expenses (Jan. to Dec. of previous year)
30 April	Report Q1 expenses (January to March)
31 July	Report Q2 expenses (January to June)
31 October	Report Q3 expenses (January to September)
<i>Certified final financial report to be provided at the quarter following the project financial closure</i>	

Unspent Balance exceeding USD 250 at the closure of the project would have to be refunded and a notification sent to the Administrative Agent, no later than three months (31 March) of the year following the completion of the activities.

Ownership of Equipment, Supplies and Other Property

Matters relating to the transfer of ownership by the Recipient Non-UN Recipient Organization will be determined in accordance with applicable policies and procedures defined by the PBSO.

Public Disclosure

The PBSO and Administrative Agent will ensure that operations of the PBF are publicly disclosed on the PBF website (www.un.org/peacebuilding/fund) and the Administrative Agent website (www.mptf.undp.org).

Final Project Audit for non-UN recipient organization projects

An independent project audit will be requested by the end of the project. The audit report needs to be attached to the final narrative project report. The cost of such activity must be included in the project budget.

Special Provisions regarding Financing of Terrorism

Consistent with UN Security Council Resolutions relating to terrorism, including UN Security Council Resolution 1373 (2001) and 1267 (1999) and related resolutions, the Participants are firmly committed to the international fight against terrorism, and in particular, against the financing of terrorism. Similarly, all Recipient Organizations recognize their obligation to comply with any applicable sanctions imposed by the UN Security Council. Each of the Recipient Organizations will use all reasonable efforts to ensure that the funds transferred to it in accordance with this agreement are not used to provide support or assistance to individuals or entities associated with terrorism as designated by any UN Security Council sanctions regime. If, during the term of this agreement, a Recipient Organization determines that there are credible allegations that funds transferred to it in accordance with this agreement have been used to provide support or assistance to individuals or entities associated with terrorism as designated by any UN Security Council sanctions regime it will as soon as it becomes aware of it inform the head of PBSO, the Administrative Agent and the donor(s) and, in consultation with the donors as appropriate, determine an appropriate response.

Non-UN recipient organization (NUNO) eligibility:

In order to be declared eligible to receive PBF funds directly, NUNOs must be assessed as technically, financially and legally sound by the PBF and its agent, the Multi Partner Trust Fund Office (MPTFO). Prior to submitting a finalized project document, it is the responsibility of each NUNO to liaise with PBSO and MPTFO and provide all the necessary documents (see below) to demonstrate that all the criteria have been fulfilled and to be declared as eligible for direct PBF funds.

The NUNO must provide (in a timely fashion, ensuring PBSO and MPTFO have sufficient time to review the package) the documentation demonstrating that the NUNO:

- Has previously received funding from the UN, the PBF, or any of the contributors to the PBF, in the country of project implementation.
- Has a current valid registration as a non-profit, tax exempt organization with a social based mission in both the country where headquarter is located and in country of project implementation for the duration of the proposed grant. (**NOTE:** If registration is done on an annual basis in the country, the organization must have the current registration and obtain renewals for the duration of the project, in order to receive subsequent funding tranches).
- Produces an annual report that includes the proposed country for the grant.
- Commissions audited financial statements, available for the last two years, including the auditor opinion letter. The financial statements should include the legal organization that will sign the agreement (and oversee the country of implementation, if applicable) as well as the activities of the country of implementation. (**NOTE:** If these are not available for the country of proposed project implementation, the CSO will also need to provide the latest two audit reports for a program or project-based audit in country.) The letter from the auditor should also state whether the auditor firm is part of the nationally qualified audit firms.

- Demonstrates an annual budget in the country of proposed project implementation for the previous two calendar years, which is at least twice the annualized budget sought from PBF for the project.¹²
- Demonstrates at least 3 years of experience in the country where grant is sought.
- Provides a clear explanation of the CSO's legal structure, including the specific entity which will enter into the legal agreement with the MPTF-O for the PBF grant.

¹² Annualized PBF project budget is obtained by dividing the PBF project budget by the number of project duration months and multiplying by 12.