

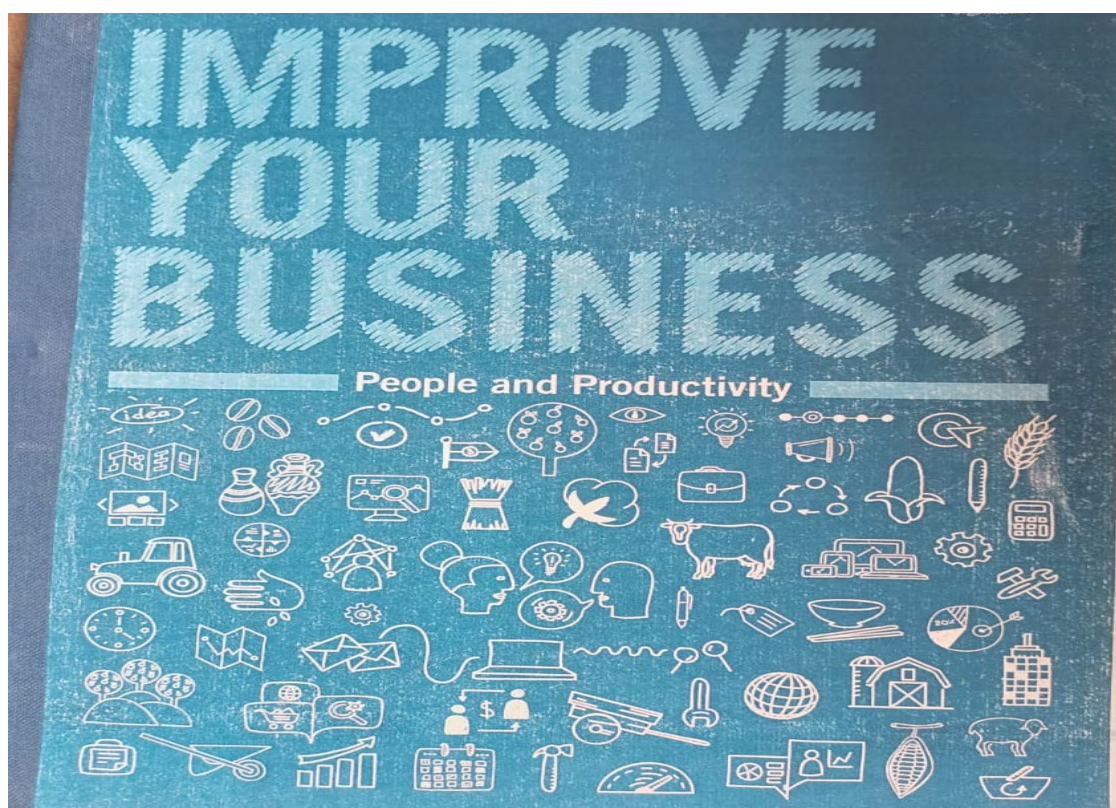


Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
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Peacebuilding
United Nations Peacebuilding Fund

Final Evaluation of Sustaining Peace and Improving Social Cohesion through the Promotion of Rural Employment Opportunities for Youth in Conflict-Prone Areas in Liberia



Final Evaluation Report

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The Evaluation Team

The information contained in this report does not necessarily reflect the views and position of FAO (RAF). The responsibility for the opinions expressed as well as the errors of fact or judgment remains that of the Consultants.

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Acronyms and abbreviations

CSO	: Civil Society Organisation
DAC	: Development Assistance Criteria
EAG	: Evaluation Advisory Group
EM	: Evaluation Manager
EVD	: Ebola Virus Disease
FAO	: Food and Agriculture Organisation
FUN	: National Farmers Union Network
LTO	: Lead Technical Officer
LURD	: Liberians United for Democracy
MA	: Ministry of Agriculture
MIA	: Ministry of Internal Affairs
MOGCSP	: Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection
MYS	: Ministry of Youth & Sports
NPFL	: National Patriotic Front of Liberia
OECD	: Organisation for Economic and Cooperation for Development
OED	: Office of Evaluation Development
PBSO	: Peacebuilding Support Office
PTF	: Project Task Force
TRC	: Truth and Reconciliation Commission
ULIMO-K	: United Liberation Movement
UNDP	: United Nations Development Programme
UNEG	: United Nations Evaluation Group
UNMIL	: United Nations Mission in Liberia
UNSGPBF	: United Nations Secretary General Peacebuilding Fund
UNWOMEN	: United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
WAFC	: West Africa Farmers Cooperatives

Executive summary

Introduction

The “*Sustaining Peace and Improving Social Cohesion through the Promotion of Rural Employment Opportunities for Youth in Conflict-Prone Areas in Liberia*” project was implemented by a consortium of UN agencies namely FAO, ILO, and WFP with funding of \$1,500,000 from the United Nations Peacebuilding fund (PBF).

The evaluation covers the entire implementation period of the project from February 2019 to August 2021 with all project activities in Lofa and Bong Counties. The Terminal Evaluation also considers the pre-conditions and arrangements in place that have contributed to – or hindered - the adequate implementation of the planned activities, including linkages and/or partnerships between the project and other major country initiatives. Key criteria assessed include relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and ownership, coherence, and conflict-sensitivity of the fund disbursed. Special attention was paid to human rights and gender equality, and the key evaluation questions addressed the evaluation purpose and objectives. The main audiences for this evaluation are: the Liberian Government institutions, FAO, ILO and WFP Representation in Liberia and their various regional offices; female and youth groups and other interested Civil Society Organisation (CSO); the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO); Donors’ organizations, and institutions.

The evaluation has the dual purpose of supporting both accountability and learning, by providing an independent assessment of the extent to which planned collective objectives set out have been met, as well as the project’s contribution to its intended peacebuilding objectives; it also aims at drawing lessons and recommendations that could inform future projects. Specific objectives are to: i) Assess the relevance and appropriateness of the project in terms of addressing key drivers of conflict and the most relevant peacebuilding issues and the degree to which the project addressed crosscutting issues such as conflict and gender-sensitivity in Liberia; ii) Assess the effectiveness of the project, including the level of achievement and the quality of the project outcomes and outputs and collect qualitative and quantitative evidence on the results of project activities and any positive or negative changes and change pathways linked to them; iii) Assess the project’s efficiency, including its implementation strategy, institutional arrangements as well as its management and operational systems and value for money; iv) Document good practices, innovations and lessons emerging from the project; and v) Provide actionable recommendations for future programming.

The evaluation used a consultative and participatory approach involving all stakeholders throughout the process. Mixed methods (desk review, semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and field observations) were used to collect information with field visits in Bong and Lofa from 13 to 28 February 2022. Twenty Key Information Interviews (55%male and 45%female) were carried out, and 08 Focus Group Discussions were conducted with 42,5% female and 57,2% male participants. Evidence gathered was triangulated to ensure its validity.

Main findings

The PBF project was relevant to national and international peacebuilding policies such as the national strategic documents (PADP2018-2023). It is well aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals with its contribution towards the implementation of 6 of them. The project was relevant to the needs and priorities of the target groups, and it adopts an explicit Theory of Change to produce the desired change.

The PBF project has reached significant targets for most of its performance indicators at outcome and output levels. It created intended positive change such as in peacebuilding among women and men, in livelihoods’ development to provide alternative source of revenue, and their participation in peacebuilding process.

Furthermore, the project provides access to local conflict resolution mechanisms by participatory engagement of both men and women in the conflict resolution committees of each county. Community members participated in peacebuilding dialogues and worked towards their community-based planning processes. Factors that facilitated these results include the promotion of peace dialogues with the implication of the community and religious leaders, and the partnership among the consortium team on shared roles and resources. But the delays with the installation of the irrigation schemes; delays due to management processes internal to FAO; traditions and local norms that perpetuate male dominance and inequality of women; weak coordination at the implementation stage; absence of a joint monitoring and evaluation for field activities, and reporting; and the covid-19 pandemic have hindered its performance. Gender-responsible peacebuilding with equal participation of women, men and youths was covered in the design and implementation phases.

The PBF project was efficient in achieving its expected results despite some delays recorded in the completion of project activities with no significant impact on the achieved results, and despite the absence of systematic data collection, particularly disaggregated data (which was unavailable). The project provides value for money by applying a strategic approach to efficiently use available resources. Nevertheless, further effectiveness through joint activities, common operations, and joint procurement, sharing of information and responsibilities, and pursuing collective outcomes could have enhanced the project management and deliveries with few additional costs to the project.

The sustainability and exit strategy were helpful to promote local ownership by the group beneficiaries such as young men and women's organisations. Emphasis was placed on job creation through the development of strong capacity development and through achievement of livelihoods components aiming to provide opportunity and to strengthen youth employment in agriculture. Notwithstanding, ownership of the livelihood elements of the project are uneven and even severely limited in certain localities due to a lack of water for crops' irrigation and the lack of equipment in the warehouse built which are key assets for the livelihood development. Furthermore, the project was unable to bring in any other partners such as the financial institution foreseen in its exit strategy. Government ownership is too weak to ensure continuity of the achieved results.

The synergies and complementarity among agencies and the government were limited to the design, implementation, and field level coordination. No evidence was found on how the PBF project has ensured synergies and complementarity within different programmes of FAO, WFP, and ILO or any other implementing organisations, including other donors on the same portfolio. The project design failed to adopt a triple nexus approach¹ to cover the interlinkages between the humanitarian, development, and peace objectives. This was mainly due to the short-term period of the project and to the absence of critical conditions for running a nexus approach in the project design such as a strong government leadership as well as the existence of dedicated laws to deal with protracted humanitarian crises and conflict drivers into national development or peace planning and analysis.

An explicit multi-sectoral and inclusive approach to conflict-sensitivity was adopted by engaging young women and men as agents of changes during the implementation phase in the prevention and resolution of conflicts.

¹ "The HDP or triple nexus is not a new area of work or a particular type of programme, but instead it is a mindset, a systemic way of thinking, and a new way of working. Its main features are about joined-up, multi-partner, flexible and adaptive programming across the three HDP pillars that is anchored in context analysis and evidence, and is people-centered and inclusive" – the project's documentation does not provide evidence of this approach. [Evaluation of FAO's contribution to the humanitarian-development-peace nexus 2014–2020](#)

The project involved large awareness meetings and scaling up strong participation by calling on religious and community leaders to work with youth in conflict prevention and resolution, in peacebuilding structured for decision-making at all levels. But the project was not effective in supporting further partnerships, which might have been helpful to increase political, financial, technical, and logistical support for the work with young peacebuilders. Unintended impacts were anticipated by a needs assessment completed at the onset stage to identify conflict drivers.

Conclusions

Conclusion 1 – The PBF Project was aligned to national policy documents, targeted SDG, and met peacebuilding and livelihoods of selected communities; it's ambitions were curtailed by the short implementation period and vast implementation area, compounded by budget and time constraints which further limited project's actual scope and coverage.

Conclusion 2 – The effectiveness of the project is reflected in its achievement of most outputs and outcomes target indicators despite some negative factors such as the covid-19 pandemic which hindered most field activities just a year after project began.

Conclusion 3 – The efficiency of the project is reflected in its ability to develop strong coordination among agencies which was useful to provide value for money. However, most data were not disaggregated by either gender, beneficiary groups or location due to the lack of a systematic data collection system to inform on progress achieved and to identify existing gaps. Globally, the project also did not provide an opportunity for the adoption of corrective measures such as a mid-term evaluation.

Conclusion 4 – The sustainability and existing exit strategies were useful to promote local ownership and to support positive change in peacebuilding and livelihoods' development at the local level. But ownership at the national level remained very weak given that the government lacked adequate resources to ensure continuity of achieved results. The sustainability strategy was also built on job creation and the established peace committee set up to run conflict resolution: this proved overall successful and sustainable.

Conclusion 5 – The project generates synergies and complementarity among agencies and the government; but it was less effective in promoting synergies and complementarity within different programmes of FAO, ILO, and WFP and any other organisation including donor(s) on the same portfolio. Furthermore, the project was not able to effectively apply a triple nexus approach as the conditions were not met.

Conclusion 6 – The conflict-sensitive nature of the project was achieved through the adoption of an inclusive and multi-sectoral approach. The ability of the project to build new partnership was weak. However, the project was able to avoid any unintended negative impact.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1 – Through an inclusive and participatory approach, the consortium team should engage target stakeholders in all steps of the design phase of future PBF Peacebuilding projects including in the identification of additional sources of livelihood to cope with beneficiaries' needs. Sufficient funds should be allocated under a suitable timeframe.

Recommendation 2 – This PBF project should seek further support through technical cooperation funding specific to peacebuilding and livelihoods' development. For example, the comparative advantage of the consortium team could be useful in seeking substantial contribution from the PBF as well as from other country donor elsewhere to further support peacebuilding and livelihoods' development.

Recommendation 3 – The Consortium team should further contribute to the harmonization of data collection tools and the monitoring process among agencies through a joint M&E framework to strengthen their respective decision-making processes.

Recommendation 4 – The consortium should reinforce partnership development with national and local organisations by inviting other UN agencies and development entities during joint meetings.

Recommendation 5 – Even though the project timeline has ended, the consortium team should complete the sustainability strategy by considering a second phase of the project to sustain the achieved results.

Recommendation 6 - The coordination with the government should be strengthened at the national level to better engage and ensure government ownership of achieved results. To do so, a possible avenue could be to change the leadership of the steering committee and to institute a rotative chair. This would ensure at least periodic ownership and responsibility. Another is to require a focal point to establish and strengthen that link through either incentive or required validation of outputs and reports.

Recommendation 7 – The consortium team should reinforce the synergies and complementarity by adopting a triple nexus approach in the design stage under the leadership of the government from the inception phase of any future project; this will support and strengthen the interlinkages between humanitarian, development, and peace sectors.

I. Introduction

I.1. Purpose of the evaluation

1. As per the Terms of Reference, the evaluation has the dual purpose of supporting accountability and learning. It provides an independent assessment of the extent to which planned collective objectives set out have been met, as well as the project's contribution to its intended peacebuilding objectives. It aims at drawing lessons and recommendations that could inform future projects. The specific objectives of this evaluation are to:

- Assess the relevance and appropriateness of the project in terms of addressing key drivers of conflict and the most relevant peacebuilding issues and the degree to which the project addressed crosscutting issues such as conflict and gender-sensitivity in Liberia.
- Assess the effectiveness of the project, including the level of achievement and the quality of the project outcomes and outputs, and collect qualitative and quantitative evidence on the results of project activities and any positive or negative changes and change pathways linked to them.
- Assess the project's efficiency, including its implementation strategy, institutional arrangements as well as its management and operational systems and value for money.
- Document good practices, innovations and lessons emerging from the project.
- Provide actionable recommendations for future programming.

I.2. Intended users

2. Table I provides a brief description of the main audience and intended users of the evaluation with respect to their individual roles.

Table I: Main audience/users and intended uses of the evaluation

Main audience /Intended users	Uses of the evaluation
Liberian Government institutions (ministries like MYS, MOA, MoGCSP, and MIA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the evaluation findings and conclusions for future advocacy, policy making, planning and investment decisions
FAO, ILO and WFP Representations in Liberia and their various regional offices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the findings and lessons identified in the evaluation to enhance the sustainability of results achieved through various opportunities • Improve the formulation and implementation of similar projects
Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) and the PBF Country Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will use the findings to inform strategic investment decisions in the future
Donors, organizations, and institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other interested in supporting and/or implementing similar projects could equally benefit from the evaluation report
Female and youth groups and other interested Civil Society Organisation (CSO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use evaluation findings for advocacy, planning and improvement of their day-to-day practices

Source: Adapted from the Terms of Reference.

I.3. Scope and objective of the evaluation

3. The chronological scope of this evaluation is the entire implementation period of the project of 32 months, started on February 2019 to August 2021 with a no cost extension until 31 October 2021. The geographical scope of the project and thus of the evaluation covers Lofa and Bong Counties. The Terminal Evaluation also considers the pre-conditions and arrangements in place that have contributed to – or hindered - the adequate implementation of the planned activities, including linkages and/or partnerships between the project and other major country initiatives.

4. This evaluation was summative in nature, looking at the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and ownership, coherence, and conflict-sensitivity of the intervention, following the Development Assistance Criteria of the Organisation for Economic and Cooperation for Development evaluation criteria. Special attention was paid to human rights and gender equality. As per the Terms of reference, these criteria will support greater learning about what works, what does not and why in the context of Liberia.

5. The evaluation team revised both the criteria and the evaluation questions at the inception stage. For example, it was decided and approved that the catalytic effect would be considered as part of the sustainability criteria. Key evaluation questions have been organised around the evaluation criteria, and sub-evaluation questions have been developed into an evaluation matrix indicating data collection methods (Annex 6). In addition, the data collection instruments have been developed by category of actors as shown in Annex 12. Evidence was triangulated by employing mixed methods and multiples sources of information to answer each sub-question and gathering testimonies from more than one source on each theme, in addition to reviewing project documents.

I.4. Methodology

I.4.1. Evaluation approach

6. A theory-based approach consistent with a reconstructed “Theory of Change” to carefully analyze the expected results, activities and contextual factors and their potential to achieve the desired effects was applied to this evaluation. The approach was participatory using a non-experimental research design². The evaluators employed mixed methods (mostly qualitative for primary data collection and quantitative for analysis of secondary data). They adopted a collaborative process with frequent communication and consultation with the consortium organizations (FAO, ILO and WFP), and meetings through interviews and Focus Group Discussions with beneficiaries, to achieve a learning process and evaluation approach that was context-specific and culturally sensitive, given the specific context of Liberia.

7. The evaluation was done in four phases: i) Inception phase; ii) Data collection; iii) Data analysis and reporting, iv) Delivery of final evaluation report to the FAO’s Regional office for Africa. Data was collected explicitly to ensure equitable representation of women and men, by purposively selecting participants for Key Information Interviews and Focus Group Discussions according to their gender. Quantitative data have been generated from secondary sources (PBF documents such as the annual and monitoring reports), and from primary data (Interviews, Focus Group Discussions, and site visits in Bong and LoFa Counties).

² The evaluation team cannot consider the evaluation design to be experimental or quasi-experimental as there is no control group or random assignment of target beneficiaries.

8. Cross-cutting themes such as human rights, gender equality and governance were considered through specific evaluation questions. Disaggregated data have been generated at the different levels of data analysis. An Evaluation Matrix, structured around the six evaluation criteria (Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Sustainability/Ownership, Coherence, and Conflict-sensitivity), was developed using the evaluation questions (appendix 6), and detailing the sources, tools and approaches used to answer each evaluation question. The matrix helped ensure that the methodology (from design to data collection to analysis) was consistent and rigorous, with triangulation across different types of data (qualitative and quantitative) for each category and question. It supported robust comparative analysis across sites, outcomes and outputs areas involving distinctive stakeholders and addressed the full scope of the PBF project at the diverse levels at which it operated (individual, household, community, county, and/or National levels).

9. The Team Leader was assisted by a National Consultant and a field assistant recruited locally to help with interpretation/translation and Focus Group Discussions. Internationally recognized ethical standards for research and evaluation have been applied. To this end, all Interviews and Discussion have been carried out with the prior, informed, and voluntary consent of respondents. Confidentiality of all participants in the evaluation was protected unless their permission was expressly sought to share their insights and attach their name to them in the report or with other stakeholders.

1.4.2. Sampling sources and data collection methods

10. A summary of sampling and data collection methods is available in appendix 7. The evaluation matrix summarizes the sources for data collection which are: i) the PBF and FAO documents and files from online search (compiled in the FAO SharePoint and Google Drive); ii) Key informants; iii) Focus Group Discussions with men, women, and youths (girls and boys) beneficiaries³; iv) Field observations with site visits; and v) Data from debriefing meetings and communication by electronic mails. Appendix 9 summarizes the sampling strategy (for desk review, interviews and discussions), and data sources of this evaluation.

11. Both internal and external documents to the PBF and FAO were reviewed as indicated in the scope of this evaluation and as outlined in the Terms of Reference. Annex 3 provides the list of documents reviewed. Additional documents collected during field missions were included for ease reference. Information from the desk review were organized by the evaluation questions.

12. As per the approved work plan, the evaluators met with 20 Key informants which represent about 95% of expected individuals. These consisted of: 08 representatives from the three UN agencies (62,5% male and 37,5% female), 05 Government officials (40% male and 60% female), 02 representatives from Donors-PBF (50% male and 50% female), and 05 representatives from CSO including Implementing partners and community leaders (60% male and 40% female). However, the evaluators did not meet with the representatives of the District Agriculture Officer Ministry of Agriculture nor with the Administrative & Technical Assistant of the Department of Technical Vocational Education and Training, as these stakeholders were not available at the time of the field mission. Most interviewees met were male (55%) with 45% of them female. About 85% of interviews were done virtually. All Focus Group discussions were held face-to-face. Women discussions were facilitated by the female national consultant while male ones were facilitated by the field assistant. Individual men, women, boys, or girls from each group were free to express their opinions. The sample size for the 08 group discussions conducted constituted of 6 mixed, 01 men/boys, and 01 women/girls' groups (04 in Bong and 04 in Lofa were carried out). Female count for 57,5% (46/80) versus

³ The list of people met for both Key Information Interviews and Focus Group Discussions is available in annex 11.

42,5% of male (34/80). Annex 9.2 provides the actual number of interviews and discussions completed in Bong and Lofa. Apart from Monrovia where field meetings were only partially completed, the evaluators were able to conduct site visits after each group discussion, as expected, in the two counties.

1.4.3. Data analysis

13. All data collection tools were codified to ease the data analysis. All analysis consider gender. Qualitative data were analyzed using thematic and content analysis⁴. Responses from those interviewed were reviewed and coded by question and each of the evaluation criteria. The team designed an analysis rubric to analyze the data and capture the emerging themes, based on pattern analysis (convergent/divergent), and county distribution. Qualitative responses were validated with quantitative information from the PBF reports, community site visits, as well as other available findings/data.

14. Quantitative data and statistics collected were analyzed with more focus on descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution using Excel. An overall estimate of the PBF performance was estimated for both the outputs and outcomes' indicators, given that progress reports on the results achieved were not consistent with the results framework. So, the overall outputs and outcomes' results were obtained by cross-comparison and validation of each achieved indicator alongside of the results' framework to look at the level of achievement as compared to existing targets. Then, a four-point Likert scale was adopted to provide an estimate of the performance level for the outputs and outcomes' indicators, such as: unsatisfactory (less than 25%), less than satisfactory (25 – 50%), satisfactory (50 – 75%), and very satisfactory (more than 75%). The evaluators cannot assure the reliability and validity of these findings as much of them were not disaggregated. Furthermore, the evaluators employed triangulation (between sources, methods, and field information) to confirm or disconfirm findings from primary and secondary data sources. Findings were triangulated to determine the extent to which they converge or diverse. Convergence allows for confidence in the findings.

15. The analysis sought to determine whether the PBF influenced or made important contributions to the observed results and through what drivers. On the management side, the analysis assesses whether the PBF project made a difference and what the preponderance of evidence says about how well the consortium is making a difference, as well as what conditions are needed to make this type of collaboration successful.

1.5. Challenges and mitigation measures

16. The evaluation work plan was followed as expected. The field mission in Liberia was completed favorably and no significant limitations were encountered apart from a short delay at the beginning due to logistics' issue with no significant impact on the field mission. However, the following few challenges, with limited overall incidence on the evaluation were identified and are summarized in table 3.

Table 3: Risks and mitigating measures

Key Challenges	Measures to mitigate the Challenges
Security issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The evaluators relied on security briefs from UN partners such as UNMIL for each target locations. - Fieldwork was guided by any available security information including UN daily data.

⁴ Content analysis is an inductive analysis involves the discovering patterns, themes, and categories in the data. Imas and Rist, Road to Results, page 386.

Data availability and quality of data	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Face-to-face/virtual meeting with specific Key Informants were prioritized as much as possible- Available relevant official documents or data set and information were used- Triangulation of data by source and by method was applied
Staff turnover	The evaluators moved to interviews via skype, Zoom, Teams or by phone to reach staff that had moved away from the project.
Timing of the field work	Interviews with Key Informants with secondary information about operations were carried out, particularly when said operations could not be observed directly; available assessments such as individual ad hoc assessments by implementing partners were also used. When key informants were unavailable, interviews were conducted via phone calls and Teams/Zoom to ensure thorough data collection.
Lack of counterfactuals	With triangulation, the evaluation used perceptions from key informants about the role and effects of project's interventions in combination with a general judgment to assess the performance and level of outcomes achievement.

2. Background and context of the evaluation

2.1. Context of the project

2.1.1. National context

17. Liberia is Africa's oldest independent republic, and remains in transition from dictatorship and civil war to democracy. After more than a decade of crisis spanning 1989-2003, the country held elections in 2006 which brought Africa's first democratically elected woman to the Presidency. After 12 years in power, in 2017, Pres. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was succeeded by the former football star, Mr. George Weah. Liberia has an estimated population of over 4.6 million people. "Over 70 percent of its population falls below the age of 35 years which is the cut-off age for youth⁵. With nearly 53 percent of the population between the ages of 15 and 64, the share of the working age population is slightly larger than the non-working age population (0 to 14; 65 and older). Another 44.5 percent of the population is below the age of 14; the clear majority of whom will enter the labor force over the next decade"⁶.

18. Considered as a Fragility, Conflict and Violence country, Liberia has high levels of poverty and underemployment, combined with low human capital development, which remain significant challenges in the country⁷. In 14 of 15 counties, absolute poverty levels started to decline at the end of the conflict in 2005; but since 2014, after the Ebola Crisis, absolute poverty is on the rise⁸. Approximately 670,000 people live in extreme poverty. Furthermore, the country is a net importer of food thereby rendering many parts of its population food insecure. Extreme poverty, inequality, and widespread deprivation are some of the greatest restraints to sustaining peace and to accelerating growth and sustainable development in Liberia.

19. The World Bank (2021) estimated that Liberia's economy is rebounding after contracting for two consecutive years. Real Gross Domestic Product growth is projected at 3.6% in 2021, allowing per capital Gross Domestic Product to increase for the first time since 2016. Notwithstanding the rebound in economic activity, inflationary pressures have moderated. The rate of inflation slowed steadily to 7.1% by July 2021 due to a decline in food prices and the Liberia Central Bank's cautious monetary stance. Liberia's economy is projected to expand by an average of 4.9% in 2022-23. Growth will be driven mainly by the mining sector and external demand. Structural reforms are expected to increase activity in mining, agriculture, and construction. Per capita Gross Domestic Product is expected to return to pre-COVID-19 levels by 2023⁹.

20. In rural areas, poverty is higher (71.8%) compared to urban settings (31.5%). This is a result of limited income-generating opportunities with only 18.1% of the workforce in paid employment and the informal sector accounting for 85% of all employment in the country¹⁰. Young people in Liberia, especially in rural Liberia, face many barriers and obstacles to engage in productive employment and establish sustainable livelihoods. The civil wars exposed Liberians especially youth to a wide range of traumatic experiences which have had immense social, political, and humanitarian implications on Liberians and youth alike leading to

⁵ Country's 2012—2017 National Youth Policy.

⁶ Pro Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development

⁷ 2021 World Bank Country Profile.

⁸ Pro Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development

⁹ World Bank country (2022). <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/liberia/overview#1> (Consulted on 11/01/2022)

¹⁰ 2021 UNDP Country report. <https://www.lr.undp.org/content/liberia/en/home/projects/livelihood-and-employment-creation-project.html> (Consulted on 12/01/2022)

low levels of education and lack of skills. High poverty and unemployment rates continue to rise among youth and most feel excluded and marginalized. The World Bank noted that 85% of young people, who make up two-thirds of Liberia's population, are unemployed. Many youths are engaged in low skilled jobs, more often than not in the informal sector, which increases their vulnerability (gig economy). The 2017 "Mapping of opportunities for the consolidation of peace in Liberia", carried out by the Liberia Peace Building Office in 2017, identified land and property disputes as well as youth unemployment as key aspects of conflict and fragility in Liberia¹¹.

21. Land disputes are common in Liberia and in the last few years have become a major driver of fragility in the country. This is a consequence of wartime displacement and resettlement patterns as well as persistent ambiguities between customary and formal property rights. Having been particularly hard hit by the civil war, and following massive conflict induced displacements, disputes over land were particularly concentrated in Bong and Lofa, two neighbouring counties in the North-West of Liberia, where palpable risk of resurgence remains, and where the project was implemented. This is significant as many Liberians live in rural communities and depend on access to land and agricultural resources for sustainable livelihoods. Additionally, gender inequalities have marginalized many women from employment opportunities, and they continue to face barriers in acquiring the skills necessary to enter the labor force.

22. Even though, there are challenges in accessing court-based dispute resolutions (scarce resources in the judicial system and crowded dockets), the Government of Liberia and its partners have developed numerous alternative dispute resolution mechanisms to address land disputes. The Ministry of Justice with support from partners including United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), has developed a conflict resolution program to address and settle a range of disputes and complaints.¹² There are also existing strategies and frameworks to address conflict in the country. The Government and UNMIL also developed a Peacebuilding Plan to ensure continuous peace and security in Liberia. The plan provides guidance to achieve a peaceful, just, and inclusive society, based on the rule of law and respect for human rights¹³.

2.1.2. Project description

23. As per the Project's document, the project under review, named "*Sustaining Peace and Improving Social Cohesion through the Promotion of Rural Employment Opportunities for Youth in Conflict-Prone Areas in Liberia*", aimed to support Peace in Liberia through the strengthening of existing peace building structures and selected value chains to create decent jobs for its vulnerable youthful beneficiaries. It also fostered entrepreneurial skills development among youth and women to enhance employability, support self-employment and support the transition of young people into the labor market. Linked to the greater access of beneficiaries' in land-related and economic decision-making, the project sought to address the socio-economic needs of youth and create decent farm and non-farm jobs for women and youth at risk of being marginalized and disadvantaged. To address the issues related to youth, gender and conflict in Liberia, this project provided conflict resolution training to women and youth champions in the targeted counties. The project sought to address two

¹¹ The evaluation Terms of References (ToRs).

¹² Government of Liberia. 2016 Alternative Dispute Resolution report. <http://moj.gov.lr/administration/adr/> (Consulted on 12/01/2022)

¹³ Liberia MTPF Project document.

interlinked root causes of grievances and conflict in Liberia, namely insufficient participation of youth in local dispute resolution and lack of youth employment and livelihood opportunities¹⁴.

24. The project was implemented in Bong and Lofa counties, intensely affected by the civil war. These counties were selected “due to their high level of conflict risk- linked to the concentration of land disputes in this region and the intensity of the challenge of poverty, food insecurity and lack of educational attainment”¹⁵. Bong County was the rebel base of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL). According to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), the faction accounted for 63,843 (39.0%) of all human rights violations committed in the Country¹⁶. Two of the major warring factions the United Liberation Movement (ULIMO-K) and the Liberians United for Democracy (LURD) both hailed from Lofa county and accounted for 24,876 (16%) of all human rights violations. Furthermore, 71.3% of Bong County’s population live in absolute poverty, 55.9% in food poverty – like Lofa County (68.7% and 55% respectively). In terms of educational attainment, Bong County had the highest, and Lofa county the third highest population-share having enjoyed no education at all (68% for women/50% for men and 65% for women/41% for men respectively)¹⁷. Many young people who joined these warring factions today, still lack income and employment opportunities that offer them a viable future, a situation which does not help curb potential violent tendencies.

25. The goal of the project is to contribute to sustained peace and improved social cohesion through the promotion of rural employment. The project’s objective is to sustain peace by addressing the two interlinked root causes of conflict in Liberia (as mentioned previously, grievance over insufficient participation in local dispute resolution and lack of employment and livelihoods opportunities). The project has two main outcomes and six outputs, two for outcome 1 and four for outcome 2 (Table 4). With funding from the Peacebuilding Fund, the project lasted for 30 months started in February 2019 and officially ended in August 2021. The total budget for the project was \$1,500,000 with \$760,042 for FAO, \$405,700 for the International Labor Organisation (ILO), and \$334,334 for the World Food Programme (WFP). Of this amount, about 50% was allocated to activities in direct pursuit of gender equality and women’s empowerment. This is consistent with the project design and the enrolment of 55% of women beneficiaries in all project activities. Overall, a total of \$261,747.60 was expended under outcome 1, while \$724,058.24 was expended under outcome 2; a budget absorption of 65,7% for both outcomes was recorded in July 2022.

Table 4: Results framework with corresponding Sustainable Development Goals

Outcome 1 – Young women and men have increased access to local conflict resolution mechanisms, with a focus on land disputes, and become active agents of peace <i>Corresponding Sustainable Development Goals: 16 (Peace and justice); 5 (gender equality); 10 (Reduced inequalities)</i>	
Outputs	Land, youth, and gender related drivers of conflicts mapped and documented.
	1.1. Young women and men and their communities have enhanced peacebuilding and conflict resolution capacities.
Outcome 2 - Rural young women and men have access to sustainable agricultural livelihoods addressing key drivers of conflict <i>Corresponding Sustainable Development Goals: (Zero hunger); 8 (Decent jobs and economic growth); 17 (Partnership for the Goals)</i>	

¹⁴ <https://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/project/00113990> (Consulted on 11/01/2022)

¹⁵ Liberia MTPF Project document.

¹⁶ Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Liberia, Volume II: Consolidated Final Report; 2009

¹⁷ Liberia MTPF Project document.

Outputs	<p>2.1. Young women and men have enhanced access to market-based entrepreneurial skills training and business development services.</p> <p>2.2. Youth farmers' have enhanced capacity to manage their agricultural cooperative effectively.</p> <p>2.3. Sixty (60) hectares of integrated community lowland for rice and vegetable production rehabilitated and developed through employment-intensive techniques.</p> <p>2.4. Poultry production and productivity improved.</p>
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Source: PBF Project document.

26. The project provided conflict resolution training to women and youth champions in the conflict prone communities and districts of Bong and Lofa counties. The trainings included lessons on cultural tolerance and promoting dialogue, as well as the need to reduce violence and realize improved social cohesion. The project created decent farm and non-farm jobs for women and youth at risk of being marginalized and disadvantaged and provided technical and vocational capacity building, entrepreneurship skills and income-generating activities. Making access to certain services conditional on the participation in training on conflict mitigation, further strengthened the link between business development and peacebuilding efforts. Business development services, such as access to finance, infrastructure, technology, and networks, were provided to add value to existing products and grow businesses¹⁸.

27. The evaluation team conducted focus group discussions and key informant interviews with beneficiaries as well as key project stakeholders. Key stakeholders include project funders, UN Resident Coordinator's Office, implementers, participating organizations, and convener (annex 5). Initially, the project targeted 1200 young women and men as direct beneficiaries (targeting 50% male and 50% female participants) and 5,000 indirect beneficiaries in Lofa and Bong counties. The selection of beneficiaries was focused on underemployed male and female youth between 18 and 29 years old, living in rural communities of Lofa and Bong counties. To ensure conflict sensitivity, and promote contact between communities, it also included members of different ethnic and religious communities in accordance with their overall share of the population of the two counties.

2.2. Theory of Change

28. As part of the evaluability assessment, the evaluation team reviewed the existing underlying Theory of Change based on findings from secondary sources. Several mechanisms leading to changes regarding the priorities of the PBF project in Liberia are the basis of this Theory of Change (annex 4). These are implemented in cooperation and collaboration with other UN agencies such as WFP and ILO. The project theory of change is focused on the following assumption: *“If young women and men have more conflict resolution skills and better access to local (land) conflict resolution mechanisms and to sustainable rural employment and livelihood opportunities; THEN youth will be able to act as active agents and messengers of peace and be less likely to be affected by drivers of violence; BECAUSE the intervention addresses existing constraints for youth to participate in local conflict*

¹⁸ Liberia MTPF Project document.

resolution, notably access to grievance mechanisms and to increased economic opportunities, as well as lessened grievances over young people's exclusion in the economic sphere¹⁹."

29. A structural analysis of the project document reveals that the project management was guided by a result-based management process using a concise results and resources framework²⁰. Its implementation was done through a number of activities organised around specific outputs which are related to two collective outcomes. Outcome 1 aims to increase access for young women and men to local conflict resolution mechanisms, with a focus on land disputes, and become active agents of peace. In the absence of a baseline for its two indicators, there is no evidence to inform how the project management will achieve its targets such as: i) at least 20% increase in perception change among youth, women, and local leaders of their own ability to prevent, reduce, and cope with conflict and promote peace; ii) at least 25% reduction in land related disputes and conflicts in the project areas. Outcome 2 aims to provide access for rural young women and men to sustainable agricultural livelihoods addressing key drivers of conflict. However, while a baseline study was conducted later in 2020 for outcome 2, it provides only a guideline for comparison of the achieved results on its two performance target indicators as well as for the four outputs target indicators. The evaluators found that these targets seem reasonable given the limited financial capacity as well as the concentration of project activities in both districts of Bong and Lofa.

30. The project implementation strategy was led by FAO with the participation of WFP and ILO, all of which shared in the implementation modalities through their decentralized offices in Bong and Lofa. Each of the three agencies collaborates with local NGOs and CSOs with proven experience in peacebuilding and conflict prevention and resolution to serve as implementing partners in providing technical inputs. Key partners such as Ministry of Agriculture (MOA), Ministry of Youths and Sports (MYS) and the Ministry of Gender Children, and Social Protection (MoGCSP) were involved in providing decentralized services at county and district levels. Procurement of assets and selection of implementing partners and activities were conducted via the individual agencies' rules and regulations, cognizant of the PBF's requirements.

31. The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) as well as the communication and visibility strategy were designed to be jointly managed by agencies to ensure timely and informative communications to all project beneficiaries, stakeholders, including public and private development partners within Liberia. As exit strategy, the project prioritizes: commitment of the national government, support from a strong coalition of stakeholders, and strong involvement of the PBF and key partners at all stages of the process and their active participation in all the phases of the project. The project also envisages to collaborate with International Financing Institutions such as the World Bank and others operating in Liberia, as well as with the private sector.

32. Major risks and assumptions able to hinder the intervention include: i) the security situation compromising access and the operationalization of action plans and activities, the inaccessibility of several areas in the two counties; ii) the difficulty of maintaining acquired knowledge due to potential disruption in the course of the intervention; (iii) lack of a multi-sector coordination mechanism between ILO, WFP, and FAO; iv) the absence of an existing legal framework to ensure better representation of women, girls, and boys on an equal basis; v) socio-cultural norms; vi) weak motivation and commitment of civil society leaders,

¹⁹ The evaluation Terms of Referenes (ToRs).

²⁰ The results and resources framework is available in annex 2.

religious advocates for the participation and commitment of women and young girls in the process of national reconciliation and the enhancement of their image.

3. Findings

33. The findings are organized along the evaluation criteria and key evaluation questions.

3.1. Relevance

Box I – key findings Relevance

The PBF project design had an explicit alignment with national strategic documents such as the PADP2018-2023 in the areas of peace, security, gender equality, agriculture, livelihoods, and sustainable development. The project is also well aligned with the SDG with its contribution towards the implementation of 6 SDGs. Furthermore, the project was relevant to the needs and priorities of the target groups in terms of peacebuilding, livelihoods and sustaining peace. Its project approach was strategically articulated to produce the desired change using an explicit Theory of Change.

Strategic positioning of the project to the main peacebuilding goals and challenges in the country at the time of the PBF project's design including a conflict analysis

34. As per its vision, key informants met agree that the PBF aims to supports countries which have come from wars and those in conflicts to promote peace, to move from emergencies to development. The design of this PBF project had an explicit alignment with the main peacebuilding goals and challenges in Liberia, most of which are expressed in the national strategic documents in the areas of peace, security, gender equality, agriculture and livelihoods, and sustainable development. Special attention was also given to project alignment with the National Development Agenda for 2018-2024 that links peacebuilding priorities to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD2018-2023)²¹, and the Agenda for Transformation (Aft²²): Steps towards Liberia rising 2030²³ (Table 5). Therefore, the project paid greatest attention to youths as potential actors of peace using agriculture and services construction to support peacebuilding at the community levels.

Table 5: PBF project alignment national framework regarding peacebuilding goals and challenges

Sector/Project outcomes	National document focus areas (AtF)
Outcome I – Young women and men have increased access to	Pillar I — Peace, Security and Rule of Law (specifically sections 8.2 Peace and reconciliation and 8.3 Justice and rule of law) aligns with the project in its attempt to adopt a multifaceted approach throughout all elements of society and must grow

²¹ Cc. The PADP2018-2023 framework available at: file:///C:/Users/seyak/Downloads/pro-poor_agenda_for_prosperity_and_development.pdf

²² Agenda for Transformation (Aft) 2012 - 2017 was the national development plan that preceded PAPD: 2018 – 2023 and is available at [Agenda for Transformation – Official Website of the Environmental Knowledge Management System \(ekmsliberia.info\)](http://ekmsliberia.info)

²³ Cc. Pillars of the Agenda for Transformation: Steps towards Liberia Rising 2030: <file:///C:/Users/seyak/Downloads/aft%20document-%20april%2015%202013.pdf>

local conflict resolution mechanisms, with a focus on land disputes, and become active agents of peace	<p>organically over time to palliate the inadequate capacity and inefficiencies in laws, practices and procedures that inhibit the proper and prompt functioning of the justice sector)</p> <p>Pillar IV — Governance and Public Institutions (eg. Section 11.1. Political governance) aligns with the project in its attempts to engage target groups and community members to ensure equitable, peaceful, transparent and inclusive local peacebuilding structures and enhanced political governance at local level.</p> <p>Pillar V — Cross-Cutting Issues (especially section 12.1 Gender equality, 12.3 Persons with disabilities, 12.4 Youth empowerment, 12.6 HIV/AIDs, and 12.7 Human rights) aligns with the project in its attempts to promote equity, gender equality, youth empowerment, Gender-Based Violences, and Human rights issues.</p>
Outcome 2 - Rural young women and men have access to sustainable agricultural livelihoods addressing key drivers of conflict	<p>Pillar II — Economic Transformation (such as section 9.1 Private-sector development, 9.3. Infrastructure, 9.4. Agriculture and food security, and 9.7. Capacity development needs and opportunity for economic transformation sectors) aligns the project in its attempts to support sustainable small-scale business development.</p> <p>Pillar III — Human Development (such as 10.3. Social protection) aligns with the project in its attempts to build a social protection of the poorest and most vulnerable households and groups from poverty and hunger, and enhanced resilience to risks and shocks.</p>

Source: Adapted from PADP2018-2023 and NAT2030.

35. Furthermore, the project is aligned with existing strategies and frameworks for peacebuilding such as the UN Peacebuilding Plan (Phase II) which aims to address poverty and support sustainable livelihoods and development opportunities with a focus on women's economic empowerment and youth employment. According to the consortium team, specific orientations from a rapid conflict analysis guided the selection of the two counties such as a history of conflict related to: travel related conflicts for land management, religious conflicts, conflicts linked to intermarriages and lack of employment for youths, most of whom were orphaned/ alone and jobless in rural areas. The two counties are the most fragile counties in Liberia. Both are dealing with peacebuilding challenges, and this agricultural project is positioned as a strategy to mitigate the conflicts. Bringing people from different backgrounds to come and work together by providing livelihood opportunities to tackle peacebuilding root was indeed targeted. Furthermore, the project targeted the most violent communities in Liberia and aimed at preventing conflict and at building peace among different ethnic groups (Madingo and Loma) which have been in conflicts for many decades.

Relevance of the project to the UN's peacebuilding mandate and the SDGs, in particular SDG 16

36. Desk review as well as evidence from KIIs assert that the PBF project was relevant and is aligned to the UN's peacebuilding mandate and to the SDGs, including SDG 16. Its expected outcomes are aligned to the UN's priorities for peacebuilding as shown in table 6. Project emphasis was placed on the promotion of peaceful and inclusive communities as well as on supporting resilience skills and capacities of targeted beneficiaries in Bong and Lofa counties. The project involved marginalized and vulnerable groups and sought to empower them to bring peace to the county. The UN supports the government's efforts to promote a sustained, and to facilitate transitional action plans and their implementation (peaceful election, governance mechanism); the UN also supports the government in ensuring its land tenure system and land right are implemented. The UN team is working to help Liberians gain access to justice, provide livelihoods activities to young people, and involve these youths in business development.

37. Regarding the SDGs, project outcome 1 is aligned to SDG 5, 10, and 16 whereas outcome 2 is aligned to SDG 2, 8, and 17. Special attention was paid to youths and women as key target beneficiaries given as dictated by the Liberian development context; the project sought to address the increased challenges to employment opportunities and access to community livelihoods, using agricultural activities for income generating activities to mitigating causes of conflicts.

Table 6: Alignment to UN's peacebuilding mandate and the SDGs

Sector/Project outcomes	UN's peacebuilding Mandate	Corresponding SDGs
1 – Young women and men have increased access to local conflict resolution mechanisms, with a focus on land disputes, and become active agents of peace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Youth political engagement - Justice and human rights - Peaceful management of concession-related conflicts 	5 - Gender equality 10 - Reduced inequalities 16- Peace and justice
2 - Rural young women and men have access to sustainable agricultural livelihoods addressing key drivers of conflict	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Women empowerment 	2 - Zero hunger 8 - Decent jobs and economic growth 17 - Partnership for the Goals

Source: PBF desk review.

38. The project was very relevant because it sought to bring peace among communities and gave skills to young people, enabling them work and earn money to sustain their families. Many young people came together under one umbrella with a message of peace. The project targeted the population most relevant in terms of need and most likely to benefit from its proposed action.

Relevance of the project to the needs and priorities of the target groups/beneficiaries. Were they consulted during design and implementation of the project?

39. Evidence from annual reports as well as from FGDs support that the PBF project was very relevant to the needs and priorities of the target groups in terms of peacebuilding, livelihoods and sustaining peace. The project provided resilience mechanism for communities by targeting youths and women in Bong and Lofa counties to get sources of incomes or revenues.

40. Attention was paid to peacebuilding and local governance with the empowerment of young people under the participation of the Ministry of Youth and Sports (Peace and provision of livelihoods opportunities). The objective was to ensure peace and social cohesion, and to strengthen the role of young men and women in peacebuilding, gathering target beneficiaries into awareness campaign for peace. The project supported and strengthened beneficiaries' entrepreneurship skills and practices as part of giving them sustainable livelihoods by promoting youth business programmes in the two counties.

"I believe the project was necessary in every way because it brought unity among young people. The project also taught people how to work together to achieve one goal. Before the launching of the project young people usually got involved into violent activities, since the start of the project we have seen a massive reduction in violent activities in the communities because young people are involved into meaningful activities. Thanks to the partners who made it possible".
A member from a FGD in Salala, Lofa county

Even though the project was relevant to the needs of the target groups overall, most of the target beneficiaries were not consulted at the design stage (as corroborated through discussions with stakeholders and as per reports on the design stage). Furthermore, certain key project elements were mixed in their results, particularly as regards the livelihood activities (cropping and vegetable production). Indeed, while cropping and vegetable production did in fact take place in each of the project communities²⁴, at the time of evaluation rarely did more than one production cycle take place, limiting the possible assessment of effectiveness or sustainability of the endeavor as well as of its potential impact on livelihoods²⁵.

Extent to which the project's theory of change clearly articulate assumptions about why the project approach is expected to produce the desired change.

41. Evidence from desk analysis, especially from the PBF document framework as well as from the annual reports, support that the project approach was strategically articulated to produce the desired change. The Theory of Change (ToC) was built on the following assumption: *“If young women and men have more conflict resolution skills and better access to local (land) conflict resolution mechanisms and to sustainable rural employment and livelihood opportunities; THEN youth will be able to act as active agents and messengers of peace and be less likely to be affected by drivers of violence; BECAUSE the intervention addresses existing constraints for youth to participate in local conflict resolution, notably access and increases economic opportunities, and lessen grievances over young people’s exclusion in the economic sphere”*. To achieve its goal towards this assumption, the ToC was explicit in the two project outcomes which were tightly designed as a collective goal for the consortium organization to achieve the desire goal (Figure 1). In fact, as expected, the mobilization of youth to engage in peacebuilding and develop non-violent means of expressing grievances on land conflict, lay the foundations for long-term peace while providing livelihoods opportunities for youth.



Figure 1: Simplified representation of the Theory of Change

42. The articulation of how-to bring change and realize the project goal is seen in the following components as expressed by the consortium team and the PBF:

²⁴ BONG COUNTY: Salala – rice; Totota – Maize, etc.; Tumutu – Cucumber, sweet pepper, onions, cabbage, etc; and LOFA COUNTY: Salayea – hot pepper, sweet pepper, cucumber; Zorzor – rice). For poultry, despite delay in supply input, cycle one of production had commenced by the time funding phased.

²⁵ Of note, irrigation support was not optimal at vegetable producing sites, particularly Totota which is the largest of the three and integrated with poultry as a model garden. This was largely due to significant increase in cost of goods and services occasioned by the COVID-19 (and its containment measures' disruption of supply chain), and to double digit inflation.

- (1) **Key activities:** i) Outcome 1 (Mapping and documentation of land, youth and gender related drivers of conflicts; and enhancing the capacities of young women and men and their communities for peace-building and conflict resolution); ii) Outcome 2 (enhancing access to young women and men to market-based entrepreneurial skills training and business development services, enhancing the capacities of youth farmers' to manage their agricultural cooperative effectively, Rehabilitation and development of thirty hectares of integrated community lowland for rice and vegetable production through employment-intensive techniques, and improvement of the poultry production and productivity).
- (2) **Expertise:** To be provided by the consortium Team, consisting of both national and international specialists and capable experience field specialists. Each of the three agencies committed to sign a letter of agreement (LoA) with local NGOs and CSOs with proven experience in peacebuilding and conflict prevention and resolution to serve as implementing partners in providing technical inputs.
- (3) **Partnership:** The project was to be implemented in partnership with decentralized services of the MoA, MYS and the Ministry of Gender Children, and Social Protection (MoGCSP) at county and district levels.
- (4) **Targeted location and beneficiaries:** Focused on two target groups living in rural communities in Bong and Lofa counties using specific characteristics, made of by members of different ethnic and religious communities to mitigate conflict sensitivity and targeting 50% women and 50% men so as to ensure that male and female participant have equal opportunities to access technologies introduced by the project.

43. The evaluators found that the above components are logical, relevant and valid for the realities on the ground. Key activities directly respond to the needs and priorities of the target beneficiaries as they expressed these in the FGDs. However, the plan of simultaneously working on all of the above within the limited project period with coordination by the three agencies was ambitious, especially with the existing security and political context in Liberia. In effect, the project suffered delays in the finalization of the agriculture component of the project regarding poultry. Indeed, delay with the construction of poultry infrastructures and equipment such as housing, incubators, feeders, water Pot, heater, fencing, flooring, and coops and Cages; and delay with capacities delivery, negatively impacted the achievement of intermediary results as the economic aspect started later than planned. These were compounded by a domino effect in which delay in contractors' delivery of construction facilities²⁶ subsequently delayed training/finalization of inputs supply given the inability of facility to host said inputs.

²⁶ The initial delay led to contract cancellation and re-awarding to two new contractors for completion of poultry houses. Arrow Group completed Gangloata and IDEAL Contractors delivered Totota, both taking over from Concrete Menders after almost a year of delay.

3.2. Effectiveness

Box 2 – key findings Effectiveness

The PBF project has reached significant targets for most of its performance indicators at outcome and output levels. The project created intended positive change in peacebuilding among women and men, in livelihoods' development to provide alternative source of revenue, support food security, and participation of women and men in peacebuilding. In addition, the project provides access to local conflict resolution mechanisms by participatory engagement of both men and women in the conflict resolution committees in each county. They participated in peacebuilding dialogues and worked towards their community-based planning processes. Factors that facilitated these results include the promotion of peace through the implication of the community and religious leaders as catalytic agents to gather the participation of community members; the partnership among the consortium team to share roles and resources; the conclusion of both men and women equally, targeting of young people who are prone to violence.

However, negative factors include delays with the installation of the irrigation schemes; delays in acquiring and acting upon received feedback; traditions and local norms; weak coordination at the implementation stage; absence of a joint monitoring and evaluation system for field activities and reporting; and the covid-19 pandemic. The project supports gender-responsive peacebuilding, with equal participation of women, men and youths in the design and implementation phases. As a gender-sensitive project, it provides economic empowerment opportunities for both women and men.

Extent to which the PBF project achieved its intended objectives/results, and contributed to the broader strategic outcomes identified in Liberia's nationally owned strategic plans, legislative agendas, and policies

44. To frame the investigation process and assess progress made toward PBF outcomes, outputs and results, the evaluators conducted a desk review in which they focused on outcome and output target indicators. The result of this analysis is that intended (estimated) output and outcome indicators can, overall, be considered “SMART²⁷”. The evaluators surmise this should have eased the measurement and reporting processes. However, as confirmed by the desk review and as confirmed through KIs, notwithstanding the SMART nature of the output and outcome indicators as conceived, the reporting process did not follow the reporting scheme as not all indicators were distinctively linked or aligned to the results framework. The evaluators found no evidence of control nor of verification means for the achieved indicators by each member of the consortium team (FAO, ILO, and WFP).

45. Furthermore, in opposition to intended outcome and output indicators, the rationale behind the output and outcome indicators realized in the results framework is not explicit. This in turn makes the link between outcome indicator and result tenuous. One such example is the link between outcome 1: “Young women and men have increased access to local conflict resolution mechanisms, with a focus on land disputes, and become active agents of peace” and the intended project result of “Increased access of youth to economic opportunities and their empowerment to participate in conflict resolution”. This link appears in the theory of change and is theoretically sound and appropriate. However, in reality, the lack of a baseline, coupled with a lack of a perception survey, coupled with an implicit, unverifiable link, renders the adequate conceptual link

²⁷ Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound

weak in practice. Similarly, Outcome II: “*Rural young women and men have access to sustainable agricultural livelihoods addressing key drivers of conflicts*” intended project result of “Increased access of youth to economic opportunities and their empowerment to participate in conflict resolution” share a strong conceptual, logical link, but which in practice cannot be verified. Nevertheless, the consortium team made significant efforts to achieve most of the target indicators as reported for each outcome and output (Table 7 and 8). The project largely achieved its intended outcomes and output indicators, with some variations, as per the addressed activities and counties.

Outcome I: Young women and men have increased access to local conflict resolution mechanisms, with a focus on land disputes, and become active agents of peace.

46. Progress reports as well as KIIs and FGDs reveal that the project created access to local conflict resolution mechanisms under the community-based monitoring structures with a focus on land disputes for young women and men, and, through this, that they became active agents of peace. However, the perception survey could not assess, for lack of answers received, the extent to which change occurred among youth, women and local leaders on their ability to prevent, reduce and cope with conflict and promote peace. At the output level, the evaluators found that the consortium team made significant progress in the achievement of all target indicators, despite limited availability of reliable and disaggregated data. Large contributions to peacebuilding were made by reducing conflict on land related disputes in the project areas, all of which created social cohesion among members of the recipient communities. Furthermore, information from desk review and FGDs stressed that young women and men participated in all peacebuilding dialogues in the two counties with the establishment of community-based monitoring structures in the selected locations, and that they were able to restart community-based participatory planning in both Salala and Totota villages (Bong County), and socio-cultural activities, community mobilization and awareness raising campaign for peace and development in their localities. The collaboration of the Ministry of Youth and Sports helped bring government support to project peacebuilding initiatives, which was useful to give hope, build confidence, and establish trust among community members.

Table 7: Progress towards the achievement of outcome I and its related output indicators.

Performance Indicators	Baseline	Targets	Rate (%)	Assessment based on reported ²⁸ rate only
Outcome I - Young women and men have increased access to local conflict resolution mechanisms, with a focus on land disputes, and become active agents of peace.				Partially achieved
1.1 - % change in perceptions among youth, women and local leaders of their own ability to prevent, reduce and cope with conflict and promote peace	0	At least 20% increase in perception change	N/A	Unsatisfactory (Not achieved)
1.2 - % change in the number of land related conflicts and disputes in the project areas.	0	At least 25% reduction in land related disputes and conflicts.	50	Satisfactory

²⁸ Achievement rates as found in project reports are assessed here. The assessment is not a reflection of the Evaluation team's opinion, but a grading of the numerical percentage rate of achievement reached.

Output 1.1 - Land, youth and gender related drivers of conflicts are mapped and documented				Very satisfactory
1.1.1 - # of land, youth and gender related conflict drivers mapped and documented	One report on the drivers of conflict	One report completed	100	Very satisfactory
1.1.2 - # of updated conflict profile	Existing conflict profile	Conflict driver profile updated	100	Very satisfactory
Output 1.2 - Young women and men and their communities have enhanced peacebuilding and conflict resolution capacities				Very satisfactory
1.2.1 - # of community based participatory planning conducted	0	At least 4 Community Based Planning Processes in Lofa and Bong Counties	100	Very satisfactory
1.2.2 - # of peacebuilding structures strengthened	0	At least 1 in each county including the LLA	100	Very satisfactory
1.3 - # of socio-cultural activities, community mobilization and awareness raising campaign conducted	0	At least 2 in each county	100	Very satisfactory
1.4 - # of dialogue and capacity building for peacebuilding organized	0	Young women and men participating in at least 4 peacebuilding dialogues	100	Very satisfactory

Legend: less than 25% = Very unsatisfactory 25-50% = Unsatisfactory 50-75% = Satisfactory
Above 75% = Very satisfactory

Outcome 2 – Rural young women and men have access to sustainable agricultural livelihoods addressing key drivers of conflicts

47. Overall, the project package of trainings and workshops, developing and piloting improved cultivation techniques and poultry productivity for livelihood development, as well as tools and techniques specific to each component, and market-oriented support, were all helpful for rural young women and men to access sustainable agricultural livelihoods, and therefore to address key drivers of conflicts. The project completed significant progress towards the achievement of the outcome and outputs however some outputs remain unfinished and require additional efforts to get them fully completed²⁹.

48. The project could have greatly benefited from carrying out a perception survey, such as a Household Survey to assess any change in the economic situation of the target beneficiaries at the Outcome level. The evaluators, based on discussion with beneficiaries, noted that some youths (about 25% of expected target) still don't have access to sustainable agricultural livelihoods, however, a project-wide perception survey would strengthen and validate this empirical assessment. Furthermore, the evaluation found, as corroborated by FGDs and KII, many if not most beneficiaries and particularly youths feel demotivated as the livelihood component was delayed. As a result, the project saw a massive reduction in its work force, which in turn hindered productivities.

²⁹ The evaluation team learnt that as of July 2022, FAO, as the lead and technically-equipped agency, had owned up to this challenge and re-programmed US\$75,000 to support improved irrigation, value addition, and marketing at the Totota Model Garden. Procurement for a full solar-powered irrigation was being concluded. It should be noted this could not be verified by the evaluation team but it does speak to the commitment of FAO to the project.

49. At the outputs level, most of the target indicators were achieved. However, the evaluators did not find evidence to properly rate progress towards the achievement of certain indicators, such as 2.1.5 (financial organizations receiving technical support) and 2.1.7 (market network established). In fact, site visits and FGDs showed that while market stalls were constructed in Bong and Lofa counties, the market network had yet to be established and made functional). Most of the irrigation schemes which have been rehabilitated are not functional during the dry season, and therefore require maintenance. Nevertheless, training through the “Start and Improve Your Business” (SIYB) methodology, provided presentation skills as well as business support services to entrepreneurs, and supporting youths and their involvement in cooperatives in a sustainable manner as the project targeted individual who then trained beneficiaries (thus disseminating the training widely and sustainably as the trainers can then train other cohorts). The SIYB tool was largely distributed to all group members as a guiding material on doing businesses. The overall assessment of the progress towards achievement of outcome 2 and its related outputs are summarized in table 8. As mentioned previously (see para 45), the outcome and output level indicators irrespective of their achievements, do not necessarily translate into project results as these indicators are not always explicitly linked to the project’s logical framework. One such example is that while irrigation schemes have been built, and are considered positive achievements of the project, when these do not function, they do not contribute to project results. Nevertheless, performance of project is based on these target indicators level of achievement, while effectiveness of the project is based on its results.

Table 8: Progress towards the achievement of outcome 2 and its related outputs.

Performance indicators	Baseline	Targets	Rate (%)	Assessment based on reported rate only
Outcome 2 - Rural young women and men have access to sustainable agricultural livelihoods addressing key drivers of conflict				Satisfactory
2.1 - % of targeted youth with access to sustainable agricultural livelihoods	16	At least 50% of targeted youth (male: 50% and female: 50%)	75 (not disaggregated)	Very satisfactory
2.2 - % of participants who expect their future economic situation to be better than their present economic situation	0	At least 50% of targeted youth (male: 50% and female: 50%)	50 (not disaggregated)	Satisfactory
Output 2.1 - Young women and men have enhanced access to market-based entrepreneurial skills training and business development services				Satisfactory
2.1.1 - # of livelihood activities youth engaged in for self-reliance	51.84% have at least 2 livelihoods	At least 3 livelihoods (rice, assorted vegetables, and poultry products)	100	Very satisfactory
2.1.2 - # of training manuals adapted to local context	0	At least 2 (SIYB and Farmer Field and Life Schools Facilitator’s Guide)	100	Very satisfactory
2.1.3 - # of mentorship and business management training conducted	0	At least 2 in Nimba and Bong	100	Very satisfactory
Indicator 2.1.4 - # of capacity building training conducted	0	At least 2 in Bong and Lofa.	100	Very satisfactory
2.1.5 - # of financial organizations receiving technical support	0	At least 2 financial organizations per county	N/A	Unsatisfactory (Not achieved)

2.1.6 - # of products competitive in the market against imported products	0	At least 3 products (rice, assorted vegetables and poultry products)	33 ³⁰	Moderately Unsatisfactory
2.1.7 - # of market network established	0	At least one functional market networking	50 (partially achieved)	Unsatisfactory (Not achieved)
2.1.8 - # of agro-processing centers established	0	1 equipped center available	50 (partially achieved)	Unsatisfactory (Not achieved)
Output 2.2: Youth farmers' have enhanced capacity to manage their agricultural cooperative effectively				Satisfactory
2.2.1 - # of local partners engaged in developing/supporting youth agricultural cooperatives identified	1	At least 2	50	Moderately Satisfactory
2.2.2 - # of financial institutions identified/assessed	0	At least 2 in Bong and Lofa	50	Moderately Satisfactory
2.2.3 - My.COOP training package adapted and available in the local language	0	My.COOP training package available in the two selected countries	100	Very satisfactory
2.2.4 - # of TOT workshops conducted;	0	2 TOT workshops	100	Very satisfactory
2.2.5 - Number of youth groups trained in the formation of cooperatives using the My.COOP training package	0	6 youth and women groups trained	100	Very satisfactory
Output 2.3 - Thirty (30) hectares of integrated community lowland for rice and vegetable production rehabilitated and developed through employment-intensive techniques				Very satisfactory
2.3.1 - # of hectares identified and selected	0	30ha in Lofa and Bong	100	Very satisfactory
2.3.2 - % of participants who report feeling comfortable working alongside a member of another social group	0	at least 50% of targeted beneficiaries (male:50%, female: 50%)	100 (not disaggregated)	Very satisfactory
2.3.3 - # of farm implements sets, planting materials and agro processors distributed to beneficiaries	0	1 assorted hand tools and rain boots	100	Very satisfactory
2.3.4 - # of irrigation schemes rehabilitated and developed	0	8 simple irrigation technology	62.5 (5)	Satisfactory
2.3.5 - # of post-harvest facilities constructed	0	2 in Lofa and Bong	100	Very satisfactory
2.3.5 - # of training conducted for rice and vegetable	0	4 in Lofa and Bong	100	Very satisfactory
2.3.6 - Number of trainings conducted on asset creation on integrated lowland productivity and behavioural change communication to improve youth participation in agriculture	0	6 training (3 in Lofa and 3 in Bong)	100	Very satisfactory
Output 2.4 - Poultry production and productivity improved				Very satisfactory
2.4.1 - # of sites identified for poultry production	0	4 sites in 2 counties	100	Very satisfactory
2.4.2 - # of raw material identified locally	0	At least 3 local raw materials (maize, beans and supplements)	100	Very satisfactory
2.4.3 - # of birds and associated poultry materials distributed to beneficiaries	0	Day-old chick: 5,000 Feed: 16.5 Mt	100	Very satisfactory

³⁰ Only poultry products (1 of 3 intended products) were targeted and became competitive.

2.4.4 - # of training conducted	0	4 trainings in Lofa and Bong	100	Very satisfactory
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Legend: less than 25% = Ver unsatisfactory 25-50% = Unsatisfactory 50-75% = Satisfactory
Above 75% = Very satisfactory

Unintended positive and negative changes generated by the project

50. Using desk review as well as KIIs and FGDs, the evaluators found that the project perhaps contributed to establish, but at the very least coincided with, in a very short time, a period of peace in both locations: no additional attack nor ambush, and no hazardous unsecured events were recorded in the two communities during the life of the project. Furthermore, the income generating activities (IGA) supported by FAO mostly for youths together with supporting trainings on these IGA, provided opportunity and motivation for neighboring groups of beneficiaries to be more engaged. Neighboring young people were able to come and learn from the economic activities (farming and poultry production). In addition, the project captured the attention of local authorities, especially those of the agriculture extension workers who visited the group beneficiaries, even without the presence of any of the three agencies. Finally, the storage or machinery warehouses for rice helped avoid any shortage, and other community members benefited from these assets as they brought their own grains for processing using the machine installed.

51. However, the water shortage incurred in Ganglota was unexpected, even when accounting for and assuming availability of the irrigation schemes built for the modern garden in Totota. In truth, this irrigation system didn't work properly: while the irrigation scheme was built, it stopped working shortly after being turned-on, due to a mechanical failure: this mechanical failure is not assimilated to a project failure as the mechanical breakdown cannot, in the evaluation's opinion, be traced back to project shortcomings. The irrigation scheme remained, by spring 2022, dysfunctional. Furthermore, FGD participants argued that the project as a whole targeted only part of the community, leaving members behind. This is explained by a budget shortfall which led ILO to no longer offer incentives it had originally offered. Covid-19 also caused a 2-3 months delay in the disbursement of funds. Finally, Liberia, with its history of war, traditions, and norms mostly related to male dominance and gender inequality, the slow pace of UN organizations, and the many breaks suffered by the project, unintentionally discouraged participation, leading to project beneficiary dropouts, particularly within the livelihood components.

Factors (positive and negatives) that affected the performance of the project

a) Positive factors

52. Desk review as well as KIIs, FGDs and site visits helped identify positive and negative factors affecting the performance of the project. Regarding positive factors, community and religious leadership implication helped support peacebuilding activities as they can easily gathered people when needed. They served as catalytic agents to gather the participation of community members. The partnership among the consortium team brought key complementary resources (financial, technical and knowledge) in the implementation process of the overall activities. This was greatly supported by, during the planning phase of the project, joint planning between agencies and the participation of the government counterpart in the coordination of the project. For example, FAO provided improved seeds, fertilizers, built a poultry house, and delivered basic

knowledge; WFP supported linkage of farmers to their native communities through social cohesion and peacebuilding actions, which were facilitated by the establishment of the peacebuilding structures in the two counties; while ILO supported education and business trainings for farmers, which enabled them to gather into cooperatives and become potential entrepreneurs. Beneficiaries affirm that the trainings received positively greatly affected the performance of the project (See also efficiency criteria, where joint performance, strong during the planning phase, but less so during the implementation and monitoring of the project, is further detailed).

53. Finally, the conclusion of both men and women equally is that provision of trainings and targeting of young people who are prone to violence, positively affected the performance of the project. In a peacebuilding area, the involvement of the different mitigation groups such as community and religious leaders to cover the conflict drivers. getting people to sit together to look at how they manage peace, trainings on sustainable agriculture with the provision of materials (training manual on low land production so that they can train other people) were very helpful in supporting the performance of the project. Additionally, people met stressed that that the peace component greatly facilitated the implementation of the livelihood activities as it allowed security, confidence, and trust in communities and amongst people who were working together to achieve the same goal.

b) Negative factors

54. However, various negative factors have hindered the performance of the project. Delays with the installation of the irrigation system (still is not working properly) created a shortage of water availability during the dry season; delays from the management team of FAO to provide feedbacks over the implementation process of the projects' activities; and delay in providing inputs (seeds and construction of the poultry house) for the economic aspects of the projects were also very challenging Furthermore, people used to work individually, as a result getting them into groups took time as most group recipients such as in the farming groups took-on this type of work for the first time. Particularly, getting farmers to work and collaborate through a common schedule was challenging. They also raised high expectation with the feeling that they would receive everything they needed; in the end, while logistical issues were for the most part resolved, the expectations went unmet.

55. Even though the consortium team worked together on the planning stage; the evaluators found that this collaboration was largely missing during the implementation phase. One of the biggest challenges was related to the covid-19 pandemic which hindered substantially the performance of the project. Most of the delays as well as various breaks which occurred during the implementation phase were due to the government restrictions imposed to mitigate the impact of covid-19. The consortium team adopted physical distancing as well as online working mode to run the planned activities and for meetings. The pandemic caused some changes in the timeline of field activities because of the hurdles that happened in project implementation due to the inaccessibility to farming supplies, increasing prices of commodities and transportation costs, and frequent cancellation of meetings. Furthermore, in constructing the poultry house, people met during field visits as well as during individual and group interviews argued that activities were slow due to delays and therefore, contributed to some of the negative changes. The pandemic also slowed down some of the project activities. Contractors were unable to deliver on time and delay in disbursement of funds also slowed down the project.

Extent to which gender equality and women's empowerment considerations have been included in the design and implementation to support gender-responsible peacebuilding.

56. Gender equality was a major part of the project. According to the PBF project document, the project design included women, men, and youths (boys and girls) from the two counties. With the participation of the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MGCSP), the project's scope was reviewed against existing gender inclusion policies during the planning stage. It ensured equal participation of young men and women in decision making and implementation of the project's activities. The project and every activity were gender-sensitive and youth inclusive. Young men and women were treated the same, and women were empowered through engagement in agriculture-based livelihood like vegetable, rice, and poultry farming. The adoption of a community action plan helped build the capacities of local groups (women in network) on issue like domestic violence through Community Based Organization.

57. Furthermore, the same balance of women, men and youths was adopted for trainings and capacity building of the selected target beneficiaries using a gender matrix to ensure gender balance. The composition of groups shows more women than men, and overall gender balance at the leadership level, where the chairmen were men and co-chair were women or vice versa. In some sites, like Salala district, most of the participants were women. They were empowered through livelihoods skills opportunities such as entrepreneurship trainings.

58. In fact, one of the most important benefits of the project was to be gender sensitive as it ensured equitable participation of both women and men, with equal involvement of women and men in the trainings which lead to changes in gender dynamics in the communities. The project had an overall higher degree of women participation (more women trained than men in the area of peacebuilding and agriculture). Throughout the implementation of the project, women played major roles and were equally represented in trainings, without any discrimination.

“Women now have access to resources to help themselves. We have source of livelihood; we know how to start a business and manage one. Our lives have been impacted positively. I am happy to say that women came out of the project empowered with skills that they can use to help themselves”.

A Woman participant during a FGD in Lofa district

3.3. Efficiency

Box 3 – key findings Efficiency

The PBF project was efficient in achieving its expected results. The consortium team adopted a joint M&E framework at inception, but it was less effective during the implementation and monitoring stages. Funds were delivered on time; despite delays recorded in the completion of project activities, these had no significant impact on the achieved results. Most data were not disaggregated due to the absence of a systematic data collection. The PBF provided value for money by applying a strategic approach to efficiently use available resources. Nevertheless, effective joint activities, common operations, joint procurement, sharing of information and responsibilities, and pursuing collective outcomes could have enhanced the project management and deliveries at least costs.

Efficiency of the overall staffing, planning, procurement, and coordination within the project (including between the FAO, WFP, and ILO and with stakeholders)/ Degree of delivery of project funds and activities

59. The project was efficient in achieving its expected results. Desk review of progress reports and KIs revealed, as seen previously, that at project design, the consortium team adopted joint programming and joint planning with shared roles and responsibilities at the design stage. But the expected synergies and coordination were inadequately developed during the implementation and monitoring phases of the project. Each agency worked individually on procurement and management of its activities. The coordination was limited by the unavailability of staffs, especially linked to the covid-19 pandemic. During the past two years, agencies attended board meetings on a non-regular basis to discuss difficulties, challenges and take adequate decisions with the participation of government representatives.

60. The evaluators found that agencies adopted a joint M&E strategy at the design phase, but it did not materialize during implementation. The evaluation team found field monitoring visits were conducted by each agency individually, and no joint M&E report was found. Only WFP and FAO have a dedicated M&E Officer in charge of monitoring, evaluation, and reporting; monitoring on the ILO side may have been hindered by lack



of such an officer, and explains why no field visits to people trained were recorded. Nevertheless, cooperation between the partners is deemed overall adequate by the evaluation team: each of the three agencies had staff with the right skills needed to implement the project. The M&E activities were conducted in the field by the agriculture technicians assigned by FAO to conduct routine monitoring visits to determine whether project planned activities were on track. While joint monitoring visits had been planned, these were cancelled due to COVID19 measures put in place by government. In January 2020, the PBF conducted a monitoring visit to touch-base with progress achieved and provided adequate advice on existing gaps and field challenges.

Figure 2: A view of a poultry house in Salala District, supported by FAO through the project.

61. Evidence from KIs and progress reports stressed that although funds were delivered most often on time, various delays were recorded at different stages of the implementation phase (distribution of inputs to farmers, construction of poultry house and the irrigation schemes, trainings, and monitoring of field activities). People met argued that the UN administration was not very flexible, which caused long delay with procurement and delivery of field materials (livelihood component). Field visits attested that livelihood activities such as the production and development of value chains in grains and vegetables of the project were still underway in Bong and Lofa counties³¹.

Collection and use of data to monitor results, effectivity of updated data used to provide adaptive management of the project

62. Discussions with the consortium team as well as desk review revealed that there was effective monthly reporting from all field staffs. Though delays were encountered with feedbacks, no negative impact on the overall process was recorded. Each agency used its own monitoring data to review the management process of its field activities. No evidence was found of any shared data between agencies to coordinate field activities. Data quality is key to effectively enhance mutual accountability between agencies; in the absence of an appropriate baseline with disaggregated data by geographic location, sex, communities, and typology of beneficiaries' group this mutual accountability did not occur.

63. The evaluators did not find any evidence of a systematic data collection mechanism to inform decision making. Discussions with the consortium team stressed that there was no effective data collection system over the course of the project except for the records that were kept by the project focal person and the FAO county field technicians. There were a few individual monitoring visits where the consortium team shared challenges and opportunities during meetings in Monrovia. In fact, apart from monthly project reports, agencies did not really collect data systematically, but monthly reports always included challenges and recommendations to ease the decision-making process mitigating the absence of a systematic monitoring system as originally planned. As per the project design framework, it was expected two surveys would be conducted. Firstly, a mobile surveys using ODK or EpiCollect was planned to measure the project peacebuilding outcomes through a baseline survey of participants' perceptions and behavior regarding their peacebuilding capacities, economic opportunities, grievances, and social cohesion. The second survey was scheduled to take place towards the end of the project to document both changes in perceptions and attitudes of participants, and overall beneficiaries' satisfaction with the project. But the evaluators find no evidence that these data collection mechanisms could provide adaptive management avenues for the project.

Extent to which the PBF project provides value for money, efficiency in the use of resources

64. The PBF project provided value for money by applying a strategic approach to efficiently use the resources available. Desk review and KIs revealed that the project adopted a training of trainers' model for all the training packages delivered to support progress towards their expected results including increased number of farmers with enhanced capacity to manage their agricultural cooperative effectively through employment of intensive techniques received. Furthermore, field technicians were recruited locally

³¹ In fact, the two FAO's technician in Lofa and Bong continue as of July 2022 to engage with project beneficiaries, who under the sustainability approach from FAO, are now enrolled as FAO/MoA supported farmers/value chain actors – while the information could not be verified by the evaluation team because received outside of the evaluation period, it does speak to FAO's commitment to the project.

in each of the two counties in an effort to save costs and to create local ownership of the project. In addition, throughout implementation, each agency had its own procurement and procedures but shared certain practices, such as in cases when an agency is below 75% of delivery, no request for money release is possible. These management processes were very useful in reducing the transaction costs of the project deliveries. However, there was no reliable data on the extent to which transaction costs were reduced or what amounts were in fact saved.

65. Moreover, internal coordination mechanisms under PBF leadership to support common services to ensure that the three agencies apply joint programming and common services were only weakly developed. This might have contributed to missed opportunities regarding critical action for leveraging responses to the implementation and monitoring challenges. Discussions with the consortium team stressed that joint activities, common operations, joint procurement, sharing of information and responsibilities, and pursuing collective outcomes could have enhanced the project management and deliveries at reduced costs.

66. However, during the implementation, resources were used to train youths, many of whom decided not to participate in the project due to long breaks within project activities, non-completion of all the activities, and general delays. For example, the creation of a community action plan to be built by youth remains pending, due to lack of skilled workforce. Overall, the partners provided the bulk of what was in the project design. During the implementation of the project, resources were made available to each agency from PBF specifically to ensure the timely delivery of project tools, irrespective of delays recorded.

3.4. Sustainability and ownership

Box 4 – key findings Sustainability and ownership

The project design included a sustainability and exit strategy to promote local ownership, support positive changes in peacebuilding and resilience-building through strong involvement of stakeholders at all levels, including government authorities, implementing partner, and groups of beneficiaries such as young men and women's organisations. But the project couldn't bring in expected other partners, such as the financial institution. Government authorities were involved in the steering committee to support ownership, but their commitment was limited by the lack of resources for continuity of work achieved. Emphasis was placed on job creation through the development of strong capacity development and completion of the livelihood's components, which sought to provide opportunity to strengthen youth employment in agriculture. Groups of beneficiaries' ownership rested on the establishment of peace structures to run conflict disputes and land management and on knowledge gained through trainings to organize themselves over the long run. However, ownership of the livelihood component was limited by a lack of water for crop irrigation and by lack of equipment such as grain mills in the warehouse built. The project was not financially and/or programmatically catalyzed by other peacebuilding projects; the project catalyzed government action when government adopted a plan to work on similar projects.

Extent to which the intervention design includes an appropriate sustainability and exit strategy (including promoting national/local ownership, use of national capacity) to support positive changes in peacebuilding after the project ends

67. Evidence from desk review and discussions with key informants confirmed that the project design included an appropriate sustainability and exit strategy to promote local ownership and to support positive changes in peacebuilding and resilience building after the end of the project. This was done through strong

involvement of stakeholders at all levels, including government authorities, implementing partner, and groups of beneficiaries such as young men and women's organizations in the project. However, contrary to what had been expected, the project couldn't bring in the collaboration of any other partners such as financial institution like the World Bank and other development organizations operating in Liberia as well as the private sector. The exit strategy adopted hinged on bringing in such a partner to ensure both the continuity of results achieved and the financial viability of the activities after the project ended.

68. At the start of the project implementation stage, the creation of a steering committee supported extensive consultations at national and local levels, but this committee became less effective beginning in 2020 with the onset of the covid-19 pandemic. At the national level particularly, where government restrictions were stricter than at local levels, members of the steering committee disengaged.

69. The project also emphasized job creation through the development of strong capacity development and through the completion of livelihoods components, which sought to strengthen youth employment in agriculture, with a focus on promoting the business and technical skills necessary for entrepreneurship and self-employment in both farm and off-farm activities. Overall, this exit strategy had potential and could have been successful. For example, the poultry component is considered a catalytic project, with the possibility to be duplicated in other communities. Although poultry farming is generally perceived as rearing chickens for meat and egg purposes, farmers believe that the poultry business surpasses this perception. They want to hold specialized business opportunities that can enhance growth in the sector, create employment opportunities, and increase incomes. However, they lack equipment for feed processing to make poultry feeds more affordable for farmers. Moreover, local ownership and interest by farmers rests on the agricultural know-how for vegetables, and rice production, an asset supported by the development of the farm value chain through construction of market stores to support the sustainability of households' activities. Constitution of these beneficiaries into cooperatives will sustain achieved results as they will be able to hold meetings, run their business and take care of their household's incomes. At the local level, the implementation process was facilitated by the implication of the leadership of community leaders to ensure ownership of the project by



facilitating access to land free of charge for farming activities. For the peace sector, the provision of motorbikes, office equipment, payment of office fees supported the capacities of agents of peace, men and women employed by the peace structures set up to resolve conflicts.

Figure 3: Women participating in a FGD in Totota district.

Degree of the commitment of the Government of Liberia and other stakeholders to own and sustain the results generated by PBF support and continuing initiatives, especially women's participation in decision making processes, supported under the project

70. The commitment of the government of Liberia and other stakeholders to own and sustain the results of the PBF project and continuing initiatives, especially women's participation in decision making processes

under the PBF project was relatively good. Indeed, people met affirm that government has the commitment but might lack financial resources; lack of expertise and knowledge were also mentioned but could not be ascertained. There is an explicit commitment from the government to further this initiative at the local levels, with a special emphasis on women's participation. FGDs and site visits in Bong and Lofa reveal that the government, through the ministry of youths, is helping empower Youths through government-run projects such as the Youth Opportunities Project (YOP) funded by the USAID, to improve access to income generation opportunities for targeted youth. The Youth Opportunities Project (YOP) is scaling up farming schemes generated through the peacebuilding project. The government reportedly adopted a plan to boost efforts and make sure that achieved results from the PBF project will last, and that similar structures in place, necessary to duplicate existing practices, remain. But the evaluators didn't find any evidence of this existing plan nor information of when it was adopted. Even though the project field officers have been working with the local government to show them the activities of the project, the government has not been strongly involved at the national level. Their financial capacity is weak and therefore, limits their ability to scale-up further interventions in line with the PBF project. A second phase of the project might have provided an opportunity to reinforce their ability in this regard.

"Peoples now see young people making peace instead of engaging in violent activities. Young people now feel like they are an important part of the community and the general narrative around young people as troublemakers have changed a lot. They are now involved into key development activities in the town. Some of their leaders, peacemakers and are now changing the way we look at youth. The desired change of the project was met for sure".

A member of a Peacebuilding Structured during KII in Salala district (Bong)

71. Access to economic opportunities was the project's linchpin to ensure women's participation in decision making processes. Some of the factors that positively affected performance are the equal inclusion of men and women in activities, provision of trainings, and targeting of young people prone to violence. Women were also members of the decision-making bodies set up to run conflict disputes and to lead the peacebuilding structures established in the two counties. This achievement was largely supported by a study on the profile and analysis of Youth, gender, and land related conflicts in Bong and Lofa conducted, and validated ahead to the implementation phase.

Extent to which the project results are owned by the stakeholders

72. Discussions with both KIIs and FGDs' participants revealed that the project's ownership at stakeholders' level resided on two key achievements. Firstly, the establishment of the peace structures to run conflict disputes and land management by community members and for themselves was very successful. Participants met affirmed that they can address and resolve any community dispute peacefully and congenially with the participation of both men and women. The peacebuilding process and structures set up to run conflicts received a strong support from the local administration made up by the township, chiefs and community leaders representing indigenous people.

73. Secondly, the training package developed around local business enterprises to enable young entrepreneurs to run their local business helped increase ownership of project results. People trained were able to train others in both managing existing businesses and in starting new businesses. Connections and linkages with other organizations to partner, even after project ended, were critical tools for sustainability. Beneficiaries' groups are strengthening cooperative structures in place to make sure they remain independent. They affirm that much knowledge was gained through trainings and that they can use the knowledge acquired to organize themselves in the long run. The support provided by the Cooperative Development Agency

(CDA) offers legal facilitation to the incorporation of farmers' cooperatives, and at such, allows for legal ownership of these business groups in the short, medium, and long term.

Figure 4: Men entrepreneurs participating in a FGD in Salala district.

74. However, the ownership of the livelihood component might be limited by a number of factors including the limited availability of water for crop irrigation given that the irrigation system is not yet working properly everywhere, as seen in Salala district. Furthermore, the project built the warehouse planned, but planned provision of machinery such as grain mills remains unfulfilled. An equipped warehouse will if not sustain, significantly contribute to the livelihood of group beneficiaries, and help make them independent. These groups will also draw surrounding communities' members to use these machine and other existing equipment, thereby generating revenue. However, it is not currently the case as the equipment was not yet provided, due to delivery delays, as planned by FAO.



Figure 5: A view of the FAO built warehouse, still missing equipment.

Extent to which the project is financially and/or programmatically catalytic in scaling up other peacebuilding work and/or has helped to create broader platforms for peacebuilding

75. The evaluators do not find any supporting evidence that the project has been financially and/or programmatically catalytic in scaling up other peacebuilding activities and results. Participants met for both KIs and FGDs affirm that they did not receive any similar intervention apart from the consortium team (FAO, ILO, and WFP). The PBF project complemented government activities in the country, but currently there is no other entity striving for similar or complementary achievements.

76. Of note, while discussions with agencies reveal that FAO received some money from the United Arab Emirates to complement and develop further peacebuilding and resilience intervention including agricultural development in Liberia, the evaluators did not find any evidence indicating that this could be in any way attributed or linked to the PBF Project. In addition, the implication of the agricultural extension officers provides a learning opportunity for the government to initiate and extend similar intervention in other counties. But the government participants met assessed that probably, the covid-19 as well as the political environment of Liberia remain non-attractive to foreign investments, including external supports from both humanitarian and development agencies.

3.5. Coherence

Box 5 – key findings Coherence

The synergies and complementarity among agencies and the government were limited regarding coordination at the design, implementation, and field level. Among agencies, the partnership brought key complementarity of resources (financial, technical and knowledge) in the implementation process of the overall activities. The evaluation did not find any evidence that the project had ensured synergies and complementarity within different programmes of FAO, WFP, and ILO or any other implementing organisations, including donors to the same thematic area. The project design does not fulfil the conditions for the adoption of a Triple nexus application within the PBF project, which implies that the interlinkages between the humanitarian, development, and peace sectors should be made explicit. Government leadership, which is a critical factor of success of the HDP, was missing in the PBF project.

Extent to which the PBF project ensure synergies and complementarity within different programmes of FAO, WFP and ILO and other implementing organizations and donors to the same thematic area

77. The evaluation does not find any evidence that this PBF project has ensured synergies and complementarity between or within different programmes of FAO, WFP, and ILO and any other implementing organizations, including other donors on the topic of peace building (the same portfolio). The PBF remains the unique donor and no other implementing organization was involved, apart from the Volunteers for Sustainable Development in Africa (VOSEIDA), engaged to run the project activities.

78. However, synergies and complementarity were built on the coordination front at these three layers/ levels: i) design (government and UN co-chair); ii) implementation level (government and agencies); iii) Field level (involvement of district agriculture officers, the local land administration authorities).

79. Another layer of synergy and complementarity were built among agencies. The partnership among the consortium team brought key complementarity of resources (financial, technical and knowledge) in the implementation process of the overall activities. This was greatly supported by joint planning (which quite became limited with COVID-19) between agencies and the participation of government counterpart in the coordination. For example, as mentioned previously, FAO (provided improved seeds, delivered fertilizers and built a poultry house, it also provided basic knowledge), WFP (supported linkage of farmers to their native communities through social cohesion and peacebuilding actions which were facilitated by the establishment of peacebuilding structures in the two counties) and ILO (supported education and business trainings for farmers which enabled them to be gathered into cooperatives and become potential entrepreneurs) interlinked their activities, relying on building blocks provided by other members of the consortium.

Extent to which and how the project design takes account of the triple nexus in designing activities, outcomes and targeting

80. Document review as well as interviews with the consortium team revealed that the project design does not fulfil the conditions for the adoption of a Triple nexus application within the PBF project. The triple nexus implies interlinkages between the humanitarian, development and peace sectors should be made. It specifically refers to attempts in these fields to work together to meet people's needs, mitigate risks and vulnerabilities, and move toward sustainable peace more effectively. Although the consortium team was pursuing collective outcomes, the timeline of the project was too short to allow them to properly leverage their comparative advantage. An attempt for durable solutions was made through the collaboration among agencies to achieve the intervention around peacebuilding and development. But none of these agencies had

dedicated a staff member or resources to cover the triple nexus. In fact, the project design was not built on the application of a triple nexus, which require that the above conditions should be met.

81. On the other hand, the main element of the triple nexus emphasizes the need to place the experiences of local people and communities at the center of their planning and interventions. Understanding these realities from the ‘bottom-up’ brings community and individual knowledge to the fore, and may help address certain operational and technical challenges in implementing the triple nexus approach. The evaluation found that the group beneficiaries were not systematically consulted in the design stage of the project. The evaluation considers this a missed opportunity to capture more fully the needs of these groups and thus the project’s ability to achieve its stated goals.

82. Finally, one of the most important early findings related to operationalizing the triple nexus is that government leadership is a critical factor for success. Often, this means that national governments have adopted dedicated laws to deal with protracted humanitarian crises as well as included humanitarian crises and conflict drivers into national development or peace planning and analysis. National and local policies on durable solutions may be key to ensuring that people’s needs, and solutions are embedded into integrated triple nexus planning and interventions. These critical conditions were not present in this PBF project.

3.6. Conflict-sensitivity

Box 6 – key findings Conflict-sensitivity

The PBF project adopts explicit multi-sectoral and holistic approaches to conflict-sensitivity by engaging young women and men as agents of changes to play instrumental roles in the prevention and resolution of conflicts. The project involves large awareness meetings and scaling up strong participation by calling on religious and community leaders to work with youth in conflict prevention and resolution, in peacebuilding structures for decision-making at all levels. These efforts were facilitated by the livelihoods’ development to mitigate causes of conflicts. Nevertheless, the project was not effective in supporting further partnership which might have been helpful to increase political, financial, technical, and logistical support for the work with young peacebuilders. No unintended negative impacts due to the project was found. Potential unintended impacts were anticipated through a needs assessment completed at the onset stage to identify conflict drivers.

Extent to which the PBF project have an explicit approach to conflict-sensitivity

83. Desk review as well as discussions with key informants and group beneficiaries support that the PBF project adopted explicit multi-sectoral and holistic approaches to conflict-sensitivity. Indeed, the project engages young women and men as agents of change to play instrumental roles in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, as a key aspect of the sustainability, inclusiveness and success of peacemaking, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding efforts. By doing so, the project recognizes that youth should actively be engaged in shaping lasting peace and contributing to justice and reconciliation and that targeting a large youth population presented a unique opportunity that could contribute to lasting peace and economic prosperity in the selected locations.

84. Furthermore, the project worked on specific domain of actions including large awareness meetings and scaling up of strong participation by calling on religious and community leaders to involve young people in conflict prevention and resolution, violence prevention and in the promotion of social cohesion. The

established peacebuilding structures considered the representation of youth, men and women in decision-making at all levels. In addition, capacity building modules and trainings considered issues such as protection in recalling the obligations to protect vulnerable groups, and ensuring the human rights of all, including youth (girls and boys), and protecting them from all forms of sexual and gender-based violence. For example, the project engaged young people to help address the root causes of conflict by addressing their relationship to the past and putting them at the forefront of reshaping the narrative on how collectively they can work together to build a better living environment for all. As highlighted in section 4.I (Relevance criteria), the project selected two counties that have been most affected by conflicts to strengthen the leadership and capacities of young women and men. By doing so, this project helped young women and men actively participate in peacebuilding activities in their communities under peace committees set up to resolve conflicts and to develop their potential as leaders, to become ambassadors of peace for their communities in future.

85. Finally, the project supports livelihoods' development to mitigate causes of conflicts. This was a unique occasion for beneficiary-groups to run a community planning process, move and adapt their livelihood through both farming and poultry production in order to generate additional household incomes. This was key to ensure that people and their communities have access to alternative livelihood opportunities by adopting agricultural best practices and enabling income generation through a conflict-sensitivity approach. In turn, access to alternate livelihood strengthened the communities' environment, which can be directly attributed to the socioeconomic investments of the project.

86. Still, the project was not effective in supporting further partnerships, which might have been helpful to increase political, financial, technical, and logistical support for the work with young peacebuilders by engaging relevant UN entities as well as financial, regional and international organizations. Further partnerships would also have ensured the effects of the project were sustainable in time, particularly the conflict sensitivity results achieved could have been maintained over time and thus strengthened. As it is, to persist in time, these gains are likely dependent on the good will of individuals only, and benefit from no further incentive.

"The project was useful because prior to the project there were a lot of disturbances and violence in the county. When this peacebuilding project came, it put an end or diminished a lot of riots in the community. It brought unity among young people through cooperative development. The project also taught people how to work together to achieve one goal. Before the launching of the project young people usually got involved into violent activities; since the start of the project, we have seen a massive reduction in violent activities in the communities because young people are involved into meaningful activities. So young people served on all the committees in the communities instead of being perpetrators [of violence] young people became peace ambassadors".

A male participant during a FGD in Bong

Project role in any unintended negative impacts, availability of any ongoing process of context monitoring and a monitoring system that allows for monitoring of unintended impacts established

87. The evaluation does not find any unintended negative impacts due to the project. The existing M&E framework was set up to address the needs of the project and to capture any unintended impacts. The M&E system was premised on the joint collaboration between agencies, which did not in fact take place outside of the project's planning stage, and people met revealed that there had been potential for unintended impacts at the beginning of the intervention. Specifically, the irrigation systems in Salayea and Zorzor for farming were provided to boost long term development of farming activities for vegetables and rice production, but were

not working as expected, as mentioned previously. Moreover, another potential source of unintended impacts without any significant effect was related to the size of community member groups which varied from one to another, with variations much greater than anticipated. For example, some communities had about 100 beneficiaries instead of 30 as planned, and while the project decided to reorganize them so that only 30 people were selected in certain communities, this was not possible in others.

88. Strategically, the project anticipated and sought to mitigate any unintended impact by completing a conflict analysis study. During project design, a need assessment was completed to identify conflict drivers which deal with land access, facilitation of trainings and social meetings to help mitigate any unintended impact related to conflicts as people was busy with farming; provision of sources of revenues (incomes to peoples through agriculture and livestock activities). Beneficiary groups were trained on the contribution of gainful employment on peacebuilding. They were encouraged to consider social cohesion opportunities at the community level to build peace.

4. Conclusions and recommendations

4.1. Conclusions

89. The conclusions are based on findings that emerged from data collected and analysed by the evaluation team.

Conclusion 1 – The PBF Project was aligned to national policy documents, targeted SDG, and met peacebuilding and livelihoods of selected communities; it's ambitions were curtailed by the short implementation period and vast implementation area, compounded by budget and time constraints which further limited project's actual scope and coverage.

90. At design, peacebuilding drivers were identified ahead of time from studies and assessments despite limited consultation with stakeholders. The project addressed important needs of communities living in the two counties, but its approach led to delays in the project's delivery of the livelihood component. The budget and time constraint did not allow for adequate cover of the expected target of youth. Its Theory of change was adequate to produce the desired change.

Conclusion 2 – The effectiveness of the project is reflected in its achievement of most outputs and outcomes target indicators despite some negative factors such as the covid-19 pandemic which hindered most field activities just a year after project began.

91. The Implication of the community and religious leaders, and the partnership among the consortium team to share roles and resources positively supported peace promotion and project results. However, delays around feedbacks, traditions and local norms, weak coordination at the implementation stage, absence of a joint monitoring and evaluation system, and the covid-19 pandemic substantially limited the performance of the project. The project is gender-sensitive in that it supported equal participation of women, men and youths in its design and implementation phases.

Conclusion 3 – The efficiency of the project is reflected in its ability to develop strong coordination among agencies which was useful to provide value for money. However, most data were not disaggregated by either gender, beneficiary groups or location due to the lack of a systematic data collection system to inform on progress achieved and to identify existing gaps. Globally, the project also did not provide an opportunity for the adoption of corrective measures such as a mid-term evaluation.

92. A strong coordination and a joint M&E framework were adopted at design, but the M&E was less effective during the implementation stage. Delays were recorded in the completion of project activities, but with no significant impact on the achieved results other than delayed achievement; the project used available resources overall efficiently, providing value for money. By applying joint activities, implementing common operations, using joint procurement, sharing information and responsibilities, and pursuing collective outcomes as had been originally planned, the project could have enhanced project management and delivery

Conclusion 4 – The sustainability and existing exit strategies were useful to promote local ownership and to support positive change in peacebuilding and livelihoods' development at the local level. But ownership at the national level remained very weak given that the government lacked adequate resources to ensure continuity of achieved results. The sustainability strategy was also built on job creation and the established peace committee set up to run conflict resolution: this proved overall successful and sustainable.

93. The implementation of sustainability and exit strategies were inclusive, but no financial institution was involved. Government commitment is limited by the lack of resources for continuity of work achieved. The provision of a functioning irrigation system and the equipment of the warehouse built by the project with grain mills as originally planned could enhance the sustainability of achieved results.

Conclusion 5 – The project generates synergies and complementarity among agencies and the government; but it was less effective in promoting synergies and complementarity within different programmes of FAO, ILO, and WFP and any other organisation including donor(s) on the same portfolio. Furthermore, the project was not able to effectively apply a triple nexus approach as the conditions were not met.

94. Synergies between agencies and the government were limited to coordination at the design, implementation, and field level. However, the partnership among agencies was supported by complementary of resources in the implementation process of the overall activities. The conditions for the adoption of a Triple nexus approach within this project were not met, which imply that the interlinkages between the humanitarian, development, and peace sectors were not achieved. Also, government leadership on the HDP approach was missing in this PBF project.

Conclusion 6 – The conflict-sensitive nature of the project was achieved through the adoption of an inclusive and multi-sectoral approach. The ability of the project to build new partnership was weak. However, the project was able to avoid any unintended negative impact.

95. Engaging young women and men as agents of change to play instrumental roles in the prevention and resolution of conflicts was essential to support peacebuilding. The conflict-sensitive nature of the project was facilitated by the livelihoods' development component which sought to mitigate causes of conflicts. Additional partnership might have increased political, financial, technical, and logistical support for the work with young peacebuilders, but no new partners joined the project. Potential unintended impacts were anticipated by a need assessment study completed at the onset stage to identify conflict drivers.

4.2. Recommendations

96. The proposed recommendations below are based on findings and conclusions of the evaluation as well as on active consultation with key stakeholders. Each interview verified the perceptions of various stakeholders concerning the main recommendations in assisting FAO and its partners to disclose their needs. To support any further PBF project, these recommendations are addressed to the consortium team as they have the primary responsibility of formulating, managing, and implementing this intervention.

Recommendation 1 – Through an inclusive and participatory approach, the consortium team should engage target stakeholders in all steps of the design phase of future PBF Peacebuilding projects including in the identification of additional sources of livelihood to cope with beneficiaries' needs. Sufficient funds should be allocated under a suitable timeframe.

Recommendation 2 – This PBF project should seek further support through technical cooperation funding specific to peacebuilding and livelihoods' development. For example, the comparative advantage of the consortium team could be useful in seeking substantial contribution from the PBF as well as from other country donor elsewhere to further support peacebuilding and livelihoods' development.

97. This could help enlarge the geographical scope of the PBF project in Liberia to at least 35% of the most violent counties. This is relevant as the needs addresses by the project in the two counties of project implementation are similar across the nation.

Recommendation 3 – The Consortium team should further contribute to the harmonization of data collection tools and the monitoring process among agencies through a joint M&E framework to strengthen their respective decision-making processes.

98. Further reinforcement of the gender-sensitive nature of future PBF project would benefit from mandatory joint data collection among all implementation partners. This would enable disaggregated data by gender, sites and targeted groups to be generated, and would better inform the consortium team in its decision-making process regarding gender, but also more generally when needed.

Recommendation 4 – The consortium should reinforce partnership development with national and local organisations by inviting other UN agencies and development entities during joint meetings.

99. This might reinforce existing partnerships and start fruitful partnerships, such as those that has been planned under this project but were not, in the end, realized, such as with financial institutions.

Recommendation 5 – Even though the project timeline has ended, the consortium team should complete the sustainability strategy by considering a second phase of the project to sustain the achieved results.

100. For example, the project ought to provide the equipment to the warehouse built and ensure its maintenance and/or provide new irrigation system useful for farming where necessary. This is essential to sustain local ownership of the achieved results by the group beneficiaries in Bong and Lofa counties. Furthermore, this will provide an opportunity to reinforce the ability of government stakeholders to scale-up farming activities through for example another peacebuilding or other intervention.

Recommendation 6 - The coordination with the government should be strengthened at the national level to better engage and ensure government ownership of achieved results. To do so, a possible avenue could be to change the leadership of the steering committee and to institute a rotative chair. This would ensure at least periodic ownership and responsibility. Another is to require a focal point to establish and strengthen that link through either incentive or required validation of outputs and reports.

101. Within this collaboration, the agencies should also provide capacity building support to government entities with the aim of strengthening its institutional ability to sustain achieved results.

Recommendation 7 – The consortium team should reinforce the synergies and complementarity by adopting a triple nexus approach in the design stage under the leadership of the government from the inception phase of any future project; this will support and strengthen the interlinkages between humanitarian, development, and peace sectors.

5. Lessons learned

102. Several lessons emerged from the evaluation findings.

- (1) Having a consortium of UN agencies on board can help achieve greater results with limited resources and on limited timeline. The implementation of the PBF project is an example of joint efforts towards the achievement of ambitious outputs and outcomes. The overall PBF project results are attributed to FAO, ILO, and WFP, and might not have been achieved individually.
- (2) Promotion of peacebuilding and local economies requires joint efforts from humanitarian and development actors when working in a fragile country context like Liberia. The instrumental role played by the consortium team as well as partners and government entities were essential to leverage peace and development results in recovery, resilience, and peacebuilding while providing life-saving support to the most vulnerable groups in Bong and Lofa counties. Continued and more effective (this collaboration was planned but less well implemented) such collaboration should therefore be sought in future projects.
- (3) Substantive change in attitude and behaviours regarding in peace, social cohesion, and gender-based violence can be made possible by empowering the entire community, including women, men, and youth as well as community leaders in a common space. By targeting men, women, and youth, and community leaders, the project enabled an environment for people to learn collectively from their common interests and needs, working together and sharing responsibilities on how to handle existing challenges.
- (4) Community engagement and participation strongly rely on targeting the key agents for change. The PBF project made it possible by giving more spaces to women and youths which create positive outcomes at the community and household levels.
- (5) Systemic assessment at earlier stage of a peacebuilding project provides a unique opportunity for all community members to get involved in the identification of conflict drivers which are necessary to foster peace and develop livelihoods. For example, participatory methods adopted in conflict resolution were helpful to bring back peace when there is little to no common dialogue.

Annexes

Annex 1: Terms of references



Liberia PBF
Evaluation ToR_Clea

Annex 2: PBF Results framework



Project results
framework.docx

Annex 3: List of documents reviewed

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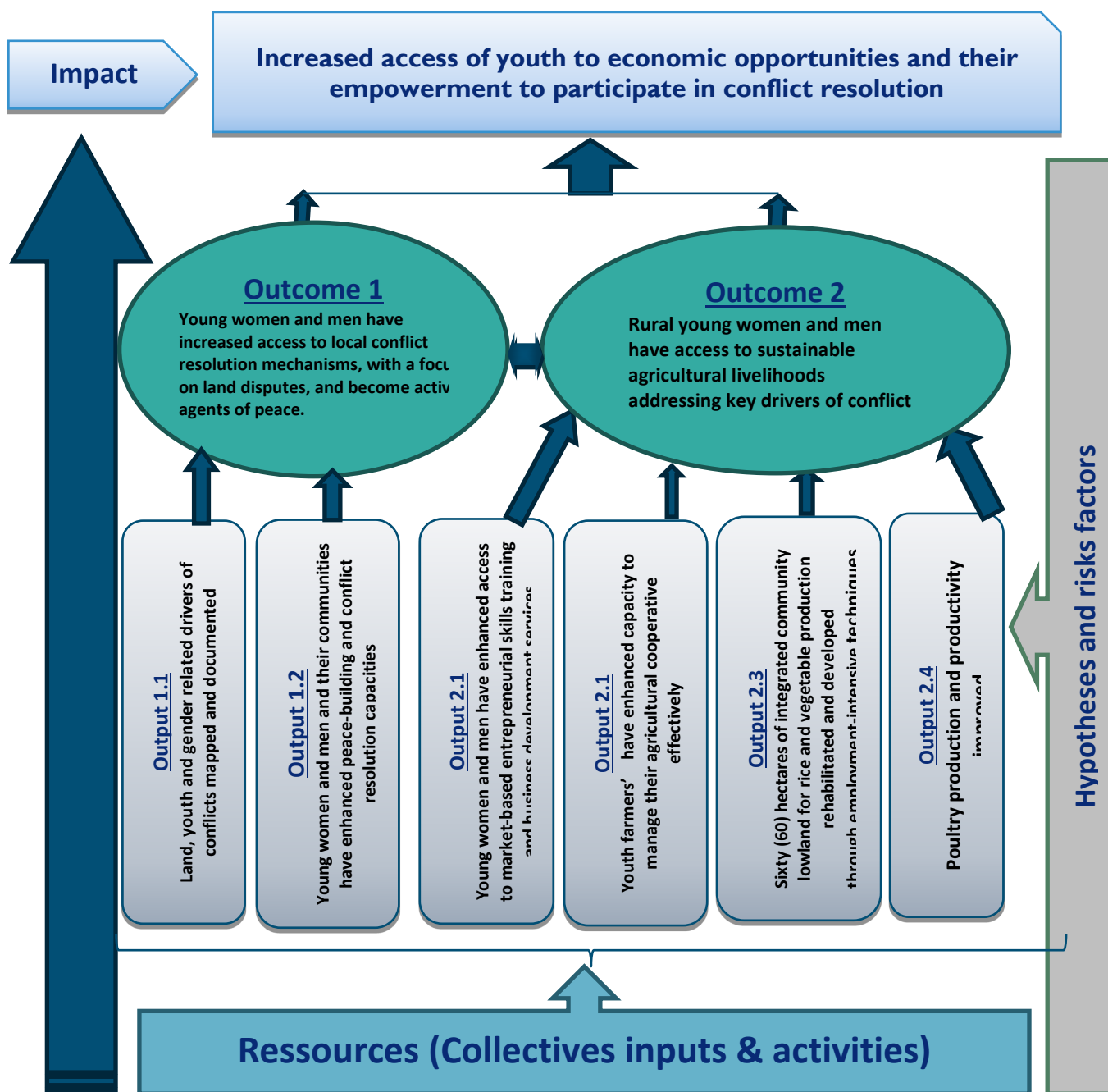
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Annex 4: Conceptualized Theory of Change of the PBF Project



Source: The evaluation team.

Annex 5: Stakeholders' mapping

Categories	Stakeholders	Roles and responsibilities
Government	Ministries of Youth and Sports, Agriculture, Labor, Gender, Children and Social Protection and Internal Affairs.	Joint Implementers
UN agencies	ILO, WFP	Joint Implementers
	FAO	Implementer and convenor, overall coordination and accountability
Donors/Funders	United Nations Secretary General Peacebuilding Fund (UN PBF) PBF, Office in UN Resident Coordinator's Office, Liberia Peacebuilding Support Office	Project funder Provided oversight of the project
Implementing organisations (CSO/NGO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cooperative Development Agency - Liberian National Federation of Cooperative Societies - West Africa Farmers Cooperatives (WAFC) - National Farmers Union Network (FUN). 	Project participants and implementers
Beneficiaries' groups	Young Women	Project recipients
	Young men	

Source: Adapted from the PBF Project document.

Annex 6: Evaluation Matrix

Sub-questions	Indicators	Data sources	Data collection methods	Data analysis methods
1. Relevance				
1.1. Was the project appropriate and strategic to the main peacebuilding goals and challenges in the country at the time of the PBF project's design including a conflict analysis?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Degree of alignment to the main peacebuilding goals and challenges - Alignment to national plans and priorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project reports, UN reports, and national documents - UN agencies - Government staffs - Implementing partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk review - KIIs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Content analysis - Analysis of coherence - Contribution analysis - Triangulation
1.2. Was the project relevant to the UN's peacebuilding mandate and the SDGs, in particular SDG 16?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Degree of relevance of UN's peacebuilding mandate in Liberia - Degree of alignment of the project to concerned SDGs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project reports, UN reports, and national documents - UN agencies - Government staffs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk review - KIIs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Content analysis - Analysis of coherence - Triangulation
1.3. Was the project relevant to the needs and priorities of the target groups/beneficiaries? Were they consulted during design and implementation of the project?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Alignment to the needs and priorities of the target beneficiaries - Degree of inclusiveness of the target beneficiaries in the design and implementation of the project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project reports, UN reports, UN agencies - Government staffs - Implementing partners - Groups' beneficiaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk review - KIIs - FGs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Content analysis - Analysis of coherence - Triangulation
1.4. Did the project's theory of change clearly articulate assumptions about why the project approach is expected to produce the desired change? Was the theory of change grounded in evidence?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adequation between assumptions and the project approach - Number and nature of existing evidence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project reports, UN reports, UN agencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk review - KIIs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Content analysis - Triangulation
2. Effectiveness				
2.1. To what extent did the PBF project achieve its intended objectives/results, and contribute to the broader strategic outcomes identified in Liberia's nationally owned strategic plans, legislative agendas, and policies?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Degree of progress towards the achievement of intended results - Extent to which the achieved results contribute to the collective outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project reports, UN reports, UN agencies - Government staffs - Implementing partners - Groups' beneficiaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk review - KIIs - FGs - Field observations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Content analysis - Analysis of coherence - Strategic comparative advantage analysis - Contribution analysis - Triangulation
2.2. What unintended changes, positive and negative, did the project contribute towards?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Extent to which unintended changes (positive or negative) exist - Alignment of achieved results to unintended results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project reports, UN reports, UN agencies - Government staffs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk review - KIIs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Content analysis - Analysis of coherence - Contribution analysis - Triangulation

2.3. What are the factors (positive and negatives) that affected the performance of the project?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Extent to which positive factors have support the performance of the project - Extent to which negative factors have hindered the performance of the project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project reports, UN reports, UN agencies - Government staffs - Implementing partners - Groups' beneficiaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk review - KIIs - FGs - Field observations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Content analysis - Funding Analysis - Contribution analysis - Triangulation
2.4. To what extent have gender equality and women's empowerment considerations been included in the design and implementation to support gender-responsible peacebuilding?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Extent to which the project promotes gender equality and women's empowerment - Extent to which the project involved an inclusive participation for both sexes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project reports, UN reports, UN agencies - Government staffs - Implementing partners - Groups' beneficiaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk review - KIIs - FGs - Field observations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Content analysis - Analysis of coherence - Contribution analysis - Triangulation
3. Efficiency				
3.1. How efficient was the overall staffing, planning, procurement, and coordination within the project (including between the FAO, WFP and ILO and with stakeholders)? Have project funds and activities been delivered in a timely manner?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Degree of efficiency of the project towards staffing, planning and coordination among agencies - Extent to which project fund was timely delivered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project reports, UN reports, and national documents - UN agencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk review - KIIs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Content analysis - Strategic comparative advantage analysis - Funding Analysis - Triangulation
3.2. How well did the project collect and use data to monitor results? How effectively was updated data used to provide adaptive management of the project?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Extent to which M&E was grounded in the implementation process - Quality and availability of timely data for decision-making process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project reports, UN reports, UN agencies - Government staffs - Implementing partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk review - KIIs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Content analysis - Analysis of coherence - Contribution analysis - Triangulation
3.3. Overall, did the PBF project provide value for money? Have resources been used efficiently?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Availability and positive factors for a reduction of transaction costs - Nature of coordination mechanism and functioning pathways 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project reports, UN reports, UN agencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk review - KIIs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Content analysis - Analysis of coherence - Funding analysis - Contribution analysis - Triangulation
4. Sustainability and ownership				
4.1. Did the intervention design include an appropriate sustainability and exit strategy (including promoting national/local ownership, use of national capacity etc.) to support positive changes in peacebuilding after the end of the project?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Extent to which the project develops coping mechanisms to identified challenges - Extent to which the project promotes national ownership on the development process - Existence of exit strategy and extent to which they can support the achieved results for the institutional level (govt) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project reports, UN reports, and national documents - UN agencies - Government staffs - Implementing partners - Groups' beneficiaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk review - KIIs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Content analysis - Analysis of coherence - Contribution analysis - Triangulation
4.2. How strong is the commitment of the Government of Liberia and other stakeholders to sustaining the results of PBF support and continuing initiatives, especially	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Extent to which existing synergies and collaboration fostered by agencies have contributed to the sustainability of achieved results by having government champions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project reports, UN reports, and national documents - UN agencies - Government staffs - Implementing partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk review - KIIs - FGs - Field observations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Content analysis - Analysis of coherence - Strategic comparative advantage analysis - Contribution analysis

women's participation in decision making processes, supported under PBF Project?	- Existence and extent to which agencies and government were jointly involved in the coordination process of the project	- Groups' beneficiaries		- Triangulation
4.3. How were stakeholders (including minority groups and indigenous people if applicable) involved in the project's design and implementation and to what extent where project results owned by the stakeholders?	- Degree of inclusiveness of the vulnerable groups and indigenous peoples in the design and implementation of the project	- Project reports, UN reports, and national documents - UN agencies - Government staffs - Implementing partners - Groups' beneficiaries	- Desk review - KIIs - FGs	- Content analysis - Analysis of coherence - Contribution analysis - Triangulation
4.4. Was the project financially and/or programmatically catalytic in scaling up other peacebuilding work and/or has it helped to create broader platforms for peacebuilding?	- Extent to which the project attracts other donors and partners - Extent to which the project contributes to the creation of platforms for peacebuilding	- Project reports, UN reports, and national documents - UN agencies - Government staffs - Implementing partners - Groups' beneficiaries	- Desk review - KIIs - FGs - Field observations	- Content analysis - Contribution analysis - Triangulation
5. Coherence				
5.1. To what extent did the PBF project ensure synergies and complementarity within different programmes of FAO, WFP and ILO and other implementing organizations and donors with the same portfolio?	- Extent to which existing synergies and collaboration fostered by agencies have contributed to the sustainability of achieved results	- Project reports, UN reports, and national documents - UN agencies	- Desk review - KIIs	- Content analysis - Analysis of coherence - Contribution analysis - Triangulation
5.2. To what extent and how did the project design take account of the triple nexus in designing activities, outcomes and targeting?	- Extent to which the project design involves the triple nexus approach and analysis	- Project reports, UN reports, and national documents - UN agencies	- Desk review - KIIs	- Content analysis - Analysis of coherence - Contribution analysis - Triangulation
6. Conflict-sensitivity				
6.1. Did the PBF project have an explicit approach to conflict-sensitivity, and why?	- Conflict analysis reports - Consistency of the project design to conflict-sensitivity	- Project reports, UN reports, and national documents - UN agencies - Government staffs - Implementing partners	- Desk review - KIIs	- Content analysis - Analysis of coherence - Triangulation
6.2. Was the project responsible for any unintended negative impacts, and was an ongoing process of context monitoring and a monitoring system that allows for monitoring of unintended impacts established?	- Degree of support provide by the project towards the generation of unintended impacts (+ & -) - Performance of existing M&E structure	- Project reports, UN reports, and national documents - UN agencies - Government staffs - Implementing partners	- Desk review - KIIs	- Content analysis - Analysis of coherence - Triangulation

Annex 7: Explanation of sampling strategy

Proposed Sample	Purpose/Objective	Sampling Criteria	Population/Sampling Frame	Sampling Unit	Sample Size	Sampling Design/Method	Limitations
Sampling for desk review							
Project documents and related materials (external reports relevant to the project)	To utilize secondary data as evidence stream	Relevant to the project in Liberia	All project/programmes related materials	Individual materials	Number of project/programmes materials available and related to the project	Census	Quality of some materials and reliability of some data may be an issue
Sampling for Key informant interviews							
Sample of stakeholders in Liberia and abroad (out of the country)	To capture qualitative primary data related to evaluation questions quantitative data could be captured as well	Specifically named stakeholders in each group to be identified in collaboration with the project, and partners	All individuals and partner organisations identified (but the exact sampling frame isn't known)	Individuals in Monrovia, Bong, and Lofa with credible knowledge of the project	Total = 30+ to be disaggregated between women and men	Purposive and non-random sampling	Confidence intervals not applicable; subject to bias
Sampling for Focus-group discussions							
Sample of group beneficiaries in Liberia (Women, men and youth groups)	To capture qualitative and quantitative primary data related to evaluation questions	Specifically named stakeholders in each group to be identified in collaboration with Agencies and ESC	All beneficiary groups identified	Beneficiary groups in Bong and Lofa with credible knowledge of the project interventions	Total: 07 FGDs, Mixed, men and women groups (04 in Bong., and 03 in Lofa)	Systematic sampling	Confidence intervals not applicable
Sampling for field observation							
Sample of the projects' partners locations in Liberia	To capture additional qualitative primary data related to evaluation questions which have been raised or missing and serve as physical evidence to data collected	Specifically list of key achievements (mostly physical achievements) identified in the project's annual/final reports	All physical achievements identified (sampling frame can be known)	Each physical achievement in the projects' partners locations in Liberia	Total = 2 counties	Purposive and random sampling	Can be too subjective and time consuming

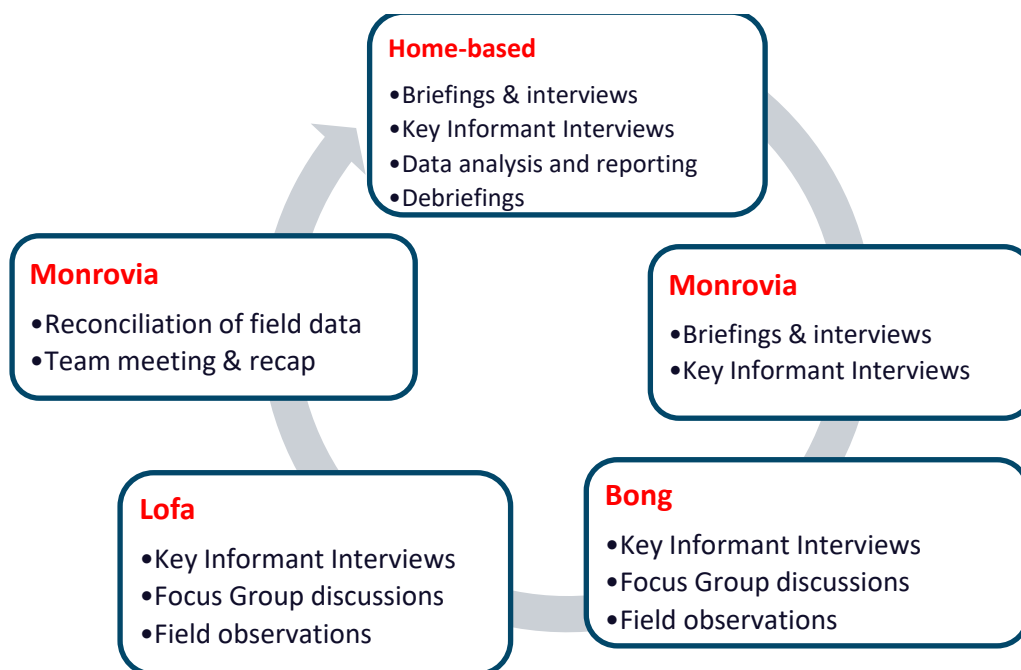
Annex 8: Description of the evaluation methods

A. Sampling for sites and field work strategy

The sample frame for key informant interviews and Focus-group discussions covers stakeholders and beneficiaries from 30 target groups. The following criteria was used by the evaluators to consider the final sample frame for site visits: i) Insecurity issue currently observed in the whole country; ii) Distance between locations; iii) Timeline for site visits to be covered within 15 days plus travel days; iv) Travel times which have been estimated for a day; and v) Road conditions.

Travels to field locations were done by road. The strategy of field work plan has taken into consideration various limitations such as the time and security concerns in each of the PBF implementation areas. The field work activities were done during a three-week period, including online KIIs. Work activities in the field were carried out based on a six-day work week while working around community ceremonies and obligations. Efforts were taken to inform group beneficiaries at least two days beforehand to avoid work delays in their respective fields, and to schedule those group interviews at a convenient time. Figure 6 provides the strategy for fieldwork and site visits with evaluation activities, and the evaluation timeline is available in annex 10.

Figure 6: Evaluation workplan strategy



Source: The evaluation Team

B. Sampling and sources for Document review, and analysis

The document review included a range of relevant and available documents both internally provided from the PBF and FAO as well as external documents collected from Google search. A census sampling approach was used for document review and all relevant documents were included in the sampling frame. All documents were compiled in a Google Drive and made available to the evaluators.

Content analysis was used to glean key information and emerging themes. A systematic review of available documentation was developed by the evaluators. Using content analysis method, the evaluators have been able to reconstruct the project logic, develop an understanding of the context of project design,

implementation of its activities, the utilization of the results and resources framework, and search for evidence of progress made towards the expected outcomes, management of challenges, and initial lessons prior to field visits to Liberia. Furthermore, the review has provided background information, and the list of primary stakeholders relevant for the project implementation.

C. Sampling and Sources for Key Informants Interviews, and analysis

People met by the evaluators for KIIs were individuals who were involved in appropriately related roles and responsibilities either in the design, and/or the implementation of the project activities. A purposive and non-random sampling technique with maximum variation³² was used to obtain a list of KIIs. Using an interview guide, most of them were one-on-one and face-to-face. The evaluators used phone (whatsapp), Teams, and Zoom calls to interview those KIs who were not available to be met face-to-face.

The evaluators acknowledged that purposive sampling is prone to expert bias. However, guidance was provided by the evaluators to the EM to complete the full list of people to meet based on additional criteria such as: primary beneficiary group and/or representative of key stakeholder group; likely availability, position/role of the individual, sex for gender balance; and geographic location given the insecurity issue in the working context of Liberia. Therefore, bias was limited, as KIs were free to provide key information as the primary aim was to gather their opinion of the project performance as well as on the future programming. The actual list of KIs met is available in Appendix 9.I. This list is disaggregated by location, gender, and per the different groups of KIs.

Following the approval of the workplan, all data collection methods (e.g. interview protocols) were explicitly linked to the specific criteria and questions in the evaluation matrix to ensure that all questions are adequately addressed and that the criteria and each question have multiple and diverse data sources. During each individual or group interview, responses were recorded on the response forms. Each form was organized according to selected classification codes related to the type of actors, geographic area, thematic activities, and gender. Each KII takes about 45-60 minutes. Fieldwork for data collection was scheduled in February during the dry season, convenient for travels.

D. Sampling and sources for Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

People met in FGDs were beneficiary groups of men, women, and youths (girls and boys). A convenience sampling technique was used to obtain a list of FGDs. FGD participants in each men's, women's and youths' group were purposively and specifically sampled by the evaluation team. There was therefore no bias with a systematic sampling of concerned participants in a research/evaluation. Individual men, women, and youths (girls and/or boys) from each group were free to express their opinions.

The following criteria were applied to the selection of group beneficiaries: i) All types of trainings and awareness, provision of inputs and other farming services around peace building, food security, availability and access to social services (for education, health, water and sanitation, hygiene, etc), women and youth empowerment activities; ii) Security issues in the targeted counties that might prohibit or impede access; iii) The distance and time constraints between villages to be covered within maximum 10 km from the county capital; iv) The accessibility of the targeted counties/villages due to poor roads or flooding; and v) Gender distribution within beneficiaries' organizations. The actual list of FGDs completed using a semi-structured

³² De Vaus D. 2001. Research Design in Social Research. Sage Publication, London (Ltd). 148p.

interview guide is available in Appendix 9.2. This list is disaggregated by location, gender, and per the different beneficiary groups.

Each FGD has a minimum 4 participants and some FGDs basically with women gathered up to 15-22 peoples. FGDs were done outdoors with the respect of physical distancing as preventive measures against Covid-19. Respondents include women, youth (girl and boys), and men groups in each of the counties which have been purposively selected. Each FGD takes about 60 - 120 minutes. Given the time constraint to complete some KIIs and FGDs under conflicting calendar, the evaluators divided most often in two sub-groups to cover scheduled meetings in each of the two sites.

E. Sampling and sources for site visits

In each location, a site visit was conducted by the evaluators simultaneously after FGDs and/or KIIs using a structure checklist. These sites were purposively sampled, with the objective of capturing additional primary data related to evaluation questions that were raised or missing and serve as physical evidence of data collected. The sample frame was made of by the list of key achievements (mostly physical investments and equipment given to beneficiaries) selected from project report. Field observations were done using photographs with the assistance of community members in Bong and Lofa. While site visits were time consuming, they were a critical part of the evaluation methodology, particularly as they were very helpful to identify and compare, e.g. types of physical equipment and infrastructure provided by any UN agency or jointly to beneficiary groups in the targeted communities. Photographs of these materials serve as evidence of either the quality of asset infrastructure or to confirm the existence of subsistence level of tools and/or livelihoods in each community.

The site selection process was informed by security information provided by UNMIL, given the fragile context of work in Liberia. Locations for site visits were therefore randomly selected based on the following criteria: i) Security context in each location; ii) Staff availability and project modalities; iii) Timeline for site visits to be covered within 15 days plus travel days; and iv) Gender distribution within beneficiary groups to include women, men, and youths.

F. Quality assurance and ethical considerations

The evaluation team members were not involved in any stage of the project. All members of the evaluation team were to abide by the 2020 UNEG Ethical Guidelines and the 2014 Guidelines on Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations. Technical support and back-stopping were provided by the EM and the evaluation reference group. Quality assurance and technical advice were provided by the EM. Quality assurance in line with UNEG evaluation quality assurance norms and standards were ensured through reviews by the relevant FAO structures and stakeholder validation workshops before its approval and publishing of the evaluation report. This quality assurance does not interfere with the views or independence of the evaluation team but ensures that the report provides credible evidence and analysis in a clear and convincing way and draws its conclusions on that basis.

The evaluation follows the UNEG norms and standards for evaluations³³ and was guided by the UNEG's ethical guidelines and principles for evaluation. Explicit consent was obtained from all interviews, group meetings and survey participants. The principle is also consistent with the Tri-Council Policy Statement³⁴: ethical conduct for research involving Humans including respect for human dignity, respect for free and

³³ UNEG Norms and standards (2016): www.unevaluation.org/document/download/2601

³⁴ Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical conduct for research involving Humans, 1998 (updated in 2000 and 2002).

informed consent, for privacy and confidentiality, for inclusiveness and, recognizing the potential for harm and maximizing benefits for all stakeholders involved. While appreciating the context of the PBF project, the evaluation likely identified examples of good practices, upon which future PBF can be built on. Hence, the evaluation assesses challenges faced and use them as learning opportunities. The emphasis was set on what works well, while at the same time pointing out thematic areas where changes are needed.

The evaluation was planned in a realistic timeframe and within the resources available through an inclusive process. Effective research requires honest and meaningful inputs at all stages of the study and the need to be culturally sensitive. The Team carefully adapts research strategies to the cultural context of Liberia and consider the sanitary measures to prevent and fight against the COVID-19. The sample size was distributed across the selected locations, purposefully including men, women, and vulnerable groups such as youths (girls and boys). The rights of respondents who participate in this evaluation were respected. During its course, precautions was taken to ensure the protection of the rights of the respondent. Ethical principles of respect and justice was applied in the selection of the respondents. To respect these principles, data collection strategies include the following measures: i) No interview began without receipt of informed consent from each respondent; ii) Interviews was conducted in a private setting as much as possible. The data collectors (Team members) were in control of their written notes always. Electronic transmission of data was done under secure measures. iii) Interviewers were instructed that information provided by respondents should not be discussed outside of the work environment; iv) The evaluators assess the ability of the respondent to make autonomous decisions through a conversation in their language with better understanding of informed consent; v) The approach and activities cause no harm to the participants involved in this evaluation.

Annex 9: Actual figures for KIIs and FGDs

Annex 9.1: Actual number of Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)

Stakeholders	Virtual		Liberia		Total (sex)		Grand total	%	
	M	F	M	F	M	F		(M/F)	
UN Agencies	5	3	0	0	5	3	8	62.5	37.5
Governments	1	0	1	3	2	3	5	40	60
Donors	1	1	0	0	1	1	2	50	50
CSO (Community leaders & Implementing partners)	0	0	3	2	3	2	5	60	40
Total (M/F)	7	4	4	5	11	9	20	55	45
Total	11		9		20		20	100	

Source: The evaluation Team

Legend: F = Female M = Male

Annex 9.2: Actual number of Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

Locations	Mixtes		Men/Boys	Female /girls	Grand total	Total by sex		% (M/F)	
	F	M	H	F		F	M	F	M
Bong	12	30	0	7	49	19	30	38.7	61.3
Lofa	15	13	3	0	31	15	16	48.4	51.6
T (M/F)	27	43	3	7	80	34	46	42.5	57.5
Total	70		3	7	80	80		100	

Source: The evaluation team.

Legend: F = Female M = Male

Annex 10: Evaluation management

A. The evaluation Team

Person/role	Responsibilities
Serge Eric YAKEU DJIAM Team Leader, Coordination, and management of the evaluation team (Contact person)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate the evaluation mission, maintain contact and provide updates as necessary to the evaluation focal point (EM) • Conduct the evaluation in accordance with the approved work plan; • Lead desk review, data collection and data analysis • Analyze findings conclusions and recommendations to respond fully to evaluation questions • Integrate findings, conclusions and recommendations by region and across the two regions • Serve as lead writer and as a technical reviewer of deliverables • Prepare and submit all deliverables for revision and approval; • Ensuring the quality assurance of all deliverables; • Manage the Team; and all aspects of the evaluation; • Prepare and conduct a meeting/workshop to present the findings, conclusions, recommendations and lessons of the evaluation.
Laura GOLAKEH National Consultant, Lead of the country context and field data collection (will also provide translation services when needed)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in team planning meeting and fieldwork • Desk review and contribution on work plan • Accompany the team during field data collection • Conduct field visits with photographs as additional data validation • Provide translation, facilitate and participate in Key informant interview and Focus Group Discussion • Provide input for data analysis during the reporting phase • Provide inputs to pending issues during the reporting phase • Provide any other input upon request by the TL.
Oliver Sonah Field assistant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accompany the National Consultant during field data collection • Conduct field visits with photographs as additional data validation • Provide translation, facilitate and participate in Key informant interview and Focus Group Discussion • Provide any other input upon request by the National Consultant and the TL.

B. Quality assurance and technical support

The responsibilities of the Evaluation Manager (EM) and the evaluation reference group include:

- Assure effective scheduling of KIIs, FGDs, site visits and timely access.
- Identify, and facilitate access to, documentation and people deemed of importance to the evaluation process.
- Share deliverables with key stakeholders;

- Collect and consolidate into a single matrix for ease of reference by the consultant, all relevant stakeholder comments on the draft report;
- Collect and consolidate into the Google Drive all relevant files and documents as needed by the evaluators;
- Prepare and include the management response to the evaluation report that documents their response to the recommendations and establishes how each organization will (or will not) follow-up on the recommendations.
- Assess the overall performance of the Consultant for the present mandate;
- Disseminate the evaluation report after it has been completed and for ensuring that the executive summary is made available to all stakeholders.

C. Timelines and structure of the evaluation report

Deliverables	Proposed deadline (2022)
Draft Inception Report incl. evaluation matrix	22/01
Inception workshop/meeting	28/01
Final Inception report	01/02
Evaluation field mission	28/02
PowerPoint presentation of primary findings) and debriefing workshop	
Draft evaluation report	15/03
Final evaluation report	28/03/2022

The anticipated structure of the final evaluation report was as follows.

- Acknowledgement
- Executive summary
- Introduction
- Evaluation framework
- Findings (by the evaluation criteria) in response to the evaluation questions
- Conclusions and Recommendations
- Lessons learned
- Annexes (TOR, Evaluation Matrix, consulted documents, consulted stakeholders, Interview guides, survey questions, etc)

Annex I I: List of people Consulted

List of people met for Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)

No	Name	Position	Organisations	Gender (M/F)
1	Jerry Soni	Evaluation Manager	FAO	M
2	Anne-Clemence Owens	Evaluation Support Officer	OED (FAO)	F
3	Octavius Quarbo	Assistant Representative	FAO	M
4	Evelyn Z. Karmah	FAO Agriculture Field Technician	FAO	F
5	Edward Winnie	Agricultural technician in Lofa	Agricultural extension Officer	F
6	John Dennis	Country Coordinator	PBF Secretariat, Liberia	M
7	Jelena Zelenovic	Program Manager	PBSO/PBF	F
8	Salif A. Massalay		ILO	M
9	Momo T. Watson		ILO	M
10	Micheal Vawah		WFP	M
11	Rufus Sackie		WFP	F
12	Alieu L. Kemokai	Administrative & Technical Assistant	Department of Technical Vocational Education & Training (TVET), Ministry of Youth & Sports	F
13	Julius B. Kawa	Director, Policy & Planning	Liberia Land Authority (LLA)	M
14	Dr. Moses Zolue	Project Coordinator	Ministry of Agriculture	F
15	Christopher P. Sargbah	District Agriculture Officer	Ministry of Agriculture	N
16	Amos wennie	Youth Chairman	Project Focal Preson Totota	M
17	Alberta Cole	Chair Lady	Project Focal Person Salala	F
18	Benedick Kerkula	Youth Chairman	Project Focal Person Tumutu	M
19	Jackson Jeremiah	Project Officer	VOSEIDA	F
20	Rufus Sumo	Town Chief Yeala	Project Focal Person Yeala	M

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List of Peoples met for FGDs

BONG FIELD MISSION

Name of group: Totota progressive Youth for development (Mixed)

No	Names	Position	Gender (M/F)
1.	Emmanuel D.Wennie	Member	M
2.	Zebedee Kerkula	Member	M
3.	Moses Dennis	Member	M
4.	Bill Dennis	Member	M
5.	Bill S. Bennie	Member	M
6.	Yamka Daniel	Member	F
7.	Karton K. Gwee	Member	M

Name of group: Women Totota Progressive Youth For Development

No	Name	Position	Gender (M/F)
8.	Fatuma K. Gwee	Member	F
9.	Cathrine G. Sumo	Member	F
10.	Esther Y. George	Member	F
11.	Nowa Kollie	Member	F
12.	Ruth C. David	Member	F
13.	Rachel Sumo	Member	F
14.	Tutu Giddings	Member	F

Name of group: Salala Kaigieyamah Farmers Youth Cooperative

No	Name	Position	Gender (M/F)
15.	Amadu Fahnbulleh	Secretary	M
16.	Alberta g. Cole	Chair Lady/ Project Focal Person	F
17.	Thomas Kolleh	Member	M
18.	George Kerkula	Member	M
19.	Mary Kerkula	Member	F
20.	Samson Aecee	Member	M
21.	Abraham Sherirf	Member	M

22.	Martin Jackson	Member	M
23.	Tonia Garnett	Member	F
24.	Korto Momo	Member	F
25.	Emmanuel Lincoln	Member	M

Name of group: Tumutu Tonyanwelekermah Cooperative

No	Name	Position	Gender (M/F)
26.	Benedick Kerkula	Chairman/ Project Focal Person	M
27.	Edward T. Johnson	Advisor	M
28.	Junior Lavelah	Member	M
29.	Ezekiel Sackie	Member	M
30.	Prince Kromah	Member	M
31.	Richard Kollie	Member	M
32.	Nathaniel S. Gorpu	Member	M
33.	Emmanuel Nelson	Member	M
34.	Sekou F. Sirlief	Member	M
35.	Mohammed Kanneh	Member	M
36.	Aaron Bondo	Member	M
37.	Beyan D. Kanneh	Member	M
38.	Esther David	Member	F
39.	Watta Sirleaf	Member	F
40.	William Bondo	Member	M
41.	Jemah Massaquoi	Member	F
42.	Nelson Klemeh	Member	M
43.	S. Mohammed B. Kelleh	Member	M
44.	Sumo Davies	Member	M
45.	Winston Addy	Member	M
46.	Nelly S. Garmo	Member	F
47.	Lawou D. Kesselly	Member	F
48.	Queeta Wenney	Member	F
49.	Mamie Paye	Member	F

LOFA FIELD MISSION**Name of group:** Try and see cooperative, Salayea Town

No	Names	Position	Gender (M/F)
50.	Lorpu Flomo	Assit. Chair Lady	F
51.	Tutu Kamara	Member	F
52.	Lorpu Sumo	Member	F
53.	Klubo Johnson	Member	F
54.	Gayduo Weedor	Member	F
55.	Nathaniel P. Tolongo	Youth Chair	M
56.	Henry Sumo	Project Field Supervisor	M

Name of group: Try and see cooperative

No	Name	Position	Gender (M/F)
57.	Junior N. Sumo	Member	M
58.	Barkolleh Sumo	Member	M
59.	Junior M. Yarkpazuo	Member	M

Name of group: Yeala United Youth Multipurpose Society LTD; Yeala Town

No	Name	Position	Gender (M/F)
60.	Tokpa Brown	Youth Chair/ Project Focal Person	M
61.	Lawuo Wane	Chair lady	F
62.	Cooper Tuboi	Member	M
63.	Mamie Noko	Member	F
64.	Kebbe Noko	Member	F
65.	Suwa Kortimai	Member	M
66.	Big Boy Zayzay	Member	M
67.	Sieneh Sumo	Member	F
68.	Supu Goloi	Member	M
69.	Lorpu Sumo	Member	F
70.	Johnson Kwewu	Member	M

Name of group: Name group: konia Youth In Action For Development Cooperative

No	Name	Position	Gender (M/F)
71.	J. Akoi Yekeh	Chairman/ Project Focal Person	M
72.	Jacks0n K. Gayflo r	Member	M
73.	George Gayflor	Member	M
74.	Sarr Flomo	Member	M
75.	Mulbah Yanquoi	Member	M
76.	Fatuma Forfana	Member	F
77.	Fatu Sarnor	Member	F
78.	Mawatta Dulleh	Member	F
79.	Kebeh Tarnue	Member	F
80.	Kebeh Mulbah	Member	F

Annex 12: Project evaluation data collection schedule

Final Evaluation of the PBF-FAO-RAF Project

Evaluation workplan for primary data collection (27/12/2021 – 31/03/2022)

Evaluation Team

- Serge Eric Yakeu (CE), International Consultant (Team Leader)
- Laura Golakeh, National Consultant

Day and Date (2022)	Location	Activities
January		
03 - 31	Home-based	Desk review, KIs, Inception report and preparation for primary data collection
February		
Monday 07	Virtual	Briefing meeting and completion of admin issues
Tuesday 08 to Friday 11	Virtual/ Monrovia	KIs
Saturday 12	Monrovia/Bong	Travel to Bong by road
Sunday 13	Bong/virtual	Team meeting and recap
Monday 14 to Saturday 19	Bong	KIs, FGDs and site visits (FO)
Sunday 20	Bong/Lofa	Team meeting and recap Travel to Lofa from Bong
Monday 21 to Saturday 26	Lofa	KIs, FGDs and site visits (FO)
Sunday 27	Lofa /Monrovia	Travel to Monrovia from Lofa Team meeting and recap
Monday 28	Virtual/ Monrovia	Debriefing meeting of preliminary findings

NB: Online data collection will be happening simultaneously while the national consultant will be managing field work in Bong and Lofa Counties.

Annex I3: Data collection protocols and tools

A. Informed concern form

Interview protocol (Should precede each interview for informed concern)

The Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) has engaged a Team of Consultants to conduct the summative evaluation of the joint project: *“Sustaining Peace and Improving Social Cohesion through the Promotion of Rural Employment Opportunities for Youth in Conflict-Prone Areas in Liberia”*.

The primary purpose of this evaluation is to understand and learn lessons from the implementation of the framework and to see what worked best and what did not work so well. The evaluation is not interested in pointing fingers or blaming people. As someone familiar with this work and given your outstanding experience, we would appreciate your input into the evaluation. The interview will take about an hour.

Your participation in this is totally voluntary. If you do not want to participate in this, you can say no. Although I will record notes, nothing you say will be attributed to your name in any public report produced by this evaluation. It is part of my job as credentialed evaluator to protect the confidentiality of this interview. I won't connect what you say to your name when I write the evaluation report. Your name will be listed in the inception report, but your input will not be attributed to you.

Do you agree to participate in the interview and the information you provide to be used in the evaluation?

☐ Yes

No – explore conditions under which she/he would be comfortable participating. If she/he still does not consent, thank him/her for his/her consideration.

A. Interview guide

Date: _____

State: _____

County: _____

Name: _____

Affiliation: _____

Position: _____

Contact: _____

(The list of all Key Informants will be recorded and inserted as annex of the final evaluation report. The concerned Key Informant category is marked with an “x”)

Themes for interview	UN agencies	Government	Implementing partners	Local leaders/Representatives of groups' beneficiaries
1. Relevance				
1.1. Was the project appropriate and strategic to the main peacebuilding goals and challenges in the country at the time of the PBF project's design including conflict analysis?	X	X	X	
1.2. Was the project relevant to the UN's peacebuilding mandate and the SDGs, in particular SDG 16?	X			
1.3. Was the project relevant to the needs and priorities of the target groups/beneficiaries? Were they consulted during design and implementation of the project?	X	X	X	X
1.4. Did the project's theory of change clearly articulate assumptions about why the project approach is expected to produce the desired change? Was the theory of change grounded in evidence?	X	X	X	
2. Effectiveness				
2.1. To what extent did the PBF project achieve its intended objectives/results, and contribute to the broader strategic outcomes identified in Liberia's nationally owned strategic plans, legislative agendas, and policies?	X	X	X	
2.2. What unintended changes, positive and negative, did the project contribute towards?	X	X		
2.3. What are the factors (positive and negatives) that affected the performance of the project?	X	X	X	X
2.4. To what extent have gender equality and women's empowerment considerations been included in the design and implementation to support gender-responsible peacebuilding, and has the project been implemented in a way that ensures equitable participation and benefits for both sexes?	X	X	X	X
3. Efficiency				
3.1. How efficient was the overall staffing, planning, procurement, and coordination within the project (including between the FAO, WFP and ILO and with stakeholders)? Have project funds and activities been delivered in a timely manner?	X	X	X	
3.2. How well did the project collect and use data to monitor results? How effectively was updated data used to provide adaptive management of the project?	X			
3.3. Overall, did the PBF project provide value for money? Have resources been used efficiently?	X	X	X	

3.4. Was the project financially and/or programmatically catalytic in scaling up other peacebuilding work and/or has it helped to create broader platforms for peacebuilding?	X	X	X	X
4. Sustainability & ownership				
4.1. Did the intervention design include an appropriate sustainability and exit strategy (including promoting national/local ownership, use of national capacity etc.) to support positive changes in peacebuilding after the end of the project?	X	X	X	
4.2. How strong is the commitment of the Government of Liberia and other stakeholders to sustaining the results of PBF support and continuing initiatives, especially women's participation in decision making processes, supported under PBF Project?	X	X	X	X
4.3. How were stakeholders (including minority groups and indigenous people if applicable) involved in the project's design and implementation and to what extent were project results owned by the stakeholders?	X	X	X	X
5. Coherence				
5.1. To what extent did the PBF project ensure synergies and complementarity within different programmes of FAO, WFP and ILO and other implementing organizations and donors with the same portfolio?	X	X		
5.2. To what extent and how did the project design take account of the triple nexus in designing activities, outcomes and targeting?	X			
5.3. The extent to which HDP was applied, were opportunities for this used and partnerships established?	X	X	X	
6. Conflict-sensitivity				
6.1. Did the PBF project have an explicit approach to conflict-sensitivity?	X	X	X	
6.2. Were regional/national internal capacities of FAO, ILO and WFP adequate for ensuring an ongoing conflict-sensitive approach?	X			
6.3. Was the project responsible for any unintended negative impacts, and was an ongoing process of context monitoring and a monitoring system that allows for monitoring of unintended impacts established?	X	X	X	

B. Focus Group guide (Women, men, and youth)

(NB: This guide will be also applied to the leaders of beneficiaries' groups).

Date: _____ Type of groups (Women/Men/Mixed): _____

State: _____ County: _____

NB: List of participants to be provided separately (Name, affiliation, and position)

Introduction

- i. What are the most living challenges the community encounter? Eg. For women, men, and children, and youth
- ii. Who are the most vulnerable and why?
- iii. How have these challenges changed over the past three years?
- iv. Which type of supports have you received over the past three years? By whom?
- v. Who control resources in your community? And why?
- vi. Are there cultural barriers for change?

Effectiveness/Relevance/sustainability/Conflict-sensitivity and Governance

- 1) Given your collaboration with UN PBF project, what activities have been more successful in reaching the most vulnerable? Please tell us how do these works? (Participants, content/type of activities, providers, etc)
- 2) What have changed in your life after receiving these activities?
- 3) Do you think that your primary needs have been met? If yes, how? If no, why? What might be the new activities or improvement of existing activities you would like to see?
- 4) Which activities were found more important to your needs?
- 5) Are there people in your community that would meet the project's targeting criteria who have been excluded?
- 6) How are you collaborating with government to promote peace?
- 7) Who else is involved and how does it work?
- 8) To what extent did the project support and provide more agriculture-based economic opportunities to women as compared to men?
- 9) In what ways do you report intra-household relations to have changed (access and control over resources, services, and marketing facilities)?
- 10) How could the project better target and address the needs of vulnerable people?

Thanks for your participation!

C. Checklist for field observation

Date: _____

State: _____ County: _____
(Observations will be made with videos and photographs where necessary)

- Ob1. Types of existing facilities
- Ob2. Types of Improved Agricultural Technologies Practice
- Ob3. Types and nature of Extension Services and Source of Inputs
- Ob4. Types of health services in the community
- Ob5. Number of household members accessing financial services by state/county/village
- Ob6. Saving history for cash transfers (notebooks for each group category)
- Ob7. Number of individuals who have access, owned and controlled resources (eg. Land)
- Ob8. Number of women and men operating viable income generating activity
- Ob9. Types of education services and infrastructures
- Ob10. List of Food Security Coping Strategies
- Ob11. List of working equitable and inclusive agriculture and protection policies, services and structure, particularly for women and marginalized populations
- Ob12. Existing Forms of gender-based violence experienced in the community
- Ob13. Number of individuals (women) who have access, owned and control resources
- Ob14. Number of women leading community-structures or groups.
- Ob15. Any other specific observation (To be completed in-county)
 - Contracts
 - Other relevant observations

Comments on observations:

Annex 14: Profile of the evaluation Team

Serge Eric Yakeu Djiam, B.Sc., Ir., M.Sc., CE

Bilingual (French & English), Serge Eric is a Credentialed Evaluator (CE). He is the Chair of EvalIndigenous, the Vice-President of the International Development Evaluation Association (IDEAS), and Former President of the African Evaluation Association (AfrEA). His background covers mostly Education and Rural development, Evaluation Capacity development, Project design and Planning, Participatory Monitoring & Evaluation, Outcome mapping and Impact Assessment, Food Security, Livelihoods Management, Rural finance and Institutional Analysis, Agricultural economics research, Environmental economics, and Development evaluation. He spent the 15+ years conducting evaluations in Africa (21 countries), Europe (7), North America, Middle-East (2), and Asia (3). He works with stakeholders at multiple levels including community-based organisations, donors/funders (AfDB, EU, Global Affairs Canada, GIZ), governments, partners' and UN agencies such as UNICEF, ILO, UNIDO, OHCHR, UN Country Offices, UNDP, UNESCO, IFAD, FAO, UNWomen, and WFP.

Serge Eric led the design and implementation of over 120 country research worldwide and within complex and humanitarian environments either as individual or in team setting in various locations including very remote areas. Most work required very strong cultural sensitivity. With his ability to manage participatory approaches in addition to his knowledge and leadership skills, he adapts readily to different cultural environments. He has an excellent command of both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies and statistics, outstanding knowledge and experience of statistical analysis software such as SPSS, R, CESPRO, SNARP – SURVEY and other new technologies.

He is also a Visiting Professor with various universities such as Quebec University in Montreal (UQAM), the Faculty of Agriculture and Food Consumption of the United Arab Emirates University, University of Constantine II in Algeria, and served as “Senior Lecturer” for the Institute of Environmental Sciences in Cameroon. Serge Eric is very active as adviser for youth empowerment and as a Mentor for EvalYouth Mentorship programme. Furthermore, he is currently serving as international resource specialist to chair workshop/conferences, for scientific reviews with evaluation journals, research and evaluation networks worldwide. His bilingual communication skills are outstanding with an excellent public speaking facility with various types of audience. He's pretty talented and swift in the design and production of high-quality reports in English and French, which could bear both technical and policy-oriented styles. He is also a Member of the Canadian Evaluation Society (CES), Cameroon Development Evaluation Association (CaDEA), and the Canadian Association of International Development Professionals (CAIDP).

With regards to his qualification, Mr. Yakeu has a Double International M.Sc. in Rural development (Belgium), A Master Degree in Research Methodologies and Statistics (Wageningen, Netherlands), M.Sc. in Environmental Economics (Humboldt, Germany), an Engineer Diploma (M.Sc.) in Agricultural economics and Rural Sociology, a B.Sc. in Human Nutrition (Cameroon). He also has several international certificates in Participatory M&E and Results-Based Management, in Equity-Focused Evaluation, in Planning and Development Evaluation (IPDET), in Development Cooperation (Belgium). He finally completed the Advanced Security In The Field (ASITF) and the Basic Security In The Field (BSITF II) Certificates of the United Nations Department of Safety and Security. For more details, please look at: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/serge-eric-yakeu-djiam-lab15140/>

Laura Golakeh, National Consultant

Laura Golakeh is an education advocate and gender expert. She is the founder of an NGO based in Liberia providing reading and writing skills to underprivileged children and engaging policy makers on the importance of quality education in Liberia. The organization called Right to Read, promotes early grade reading among children and operates a mobile library. Ms. Golakeh is the Founder and Lead Consultant for Light Consultants, a consultancy firm in Liberia specialized in educational leadership, evaluation as well gender and development. Through her firm, Ms. Golakeh provided consultancies to many international organizations including UNICEF, UN Women where she worked as National Consultant to develop the Liberia National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 and build the capacity of staff of the Ministry of Gender, other government agencies and civil society organizations to implement the action Plan. She also worked as Liberia Education Context Specialist for USAID on a mid-term evaluation of the Accelerated Quality Education Project and most recently as Gender Expert for the German Institute for Development. Laura currently provides consulting services to the World Bank country office in Liberia through it's Social Protection and Jobs program. Laura has also worked in various program and media capacities at non-governmental organizations like the Wellesley Center for Women in Boston, Massachusetts and the Liberia Media Center.

Laura has over five years' experience working both in the private sector (mentioned above) and the public sector, including the Executive Office of the President of Liberia at the Ministry of State and the Angie Brooks International Center at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. At the Angie Brooks International Center, she worked as Communications Officer and worked closely with Executive Assistant to implement projects including the Women's Situation Room as well UNITAR trainings.

Laura has a Master of Arts in Gender and Peacebuilding. She is a 2014 Mandela Washington Fellow, volunteer Country Director for EiC Corporation and a former member of the UN Women Civil Society Advisory Committee. Laura loves traveling, writing and mentoring young people.