EQUIPPING NATIONAL AND LOCAL ACTORS IN INTERNAL CONFLICT MANAGEMENT PROCESSES WITH SKILLS FOR DIALOGUE AND CONSTRUCTIVE NEGOTIATION

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

1.1.1. Project Description

Background

1. Internal UNDP and UN estimates show that at least ninety countries will face the prospects of prolonged deadlock, or potentially violent internal tensions and instability, over the next 2-3 years. Only twenty countries are benefitting from formal UN or regional diplomacy, or the presence of UN or regional peace operations. The rest, out of concern for sovereignty and other political reasons, would prefer to either not invite international attention or request only limited regional assistance.

2. In situations where a UN peace mission is not present on the ground, the primary vehicle for UN assistance becomes the UN Country Team (UNCT), and in particular UNDP. Since 2004, the UN system has provided such support through the following instruments (which work in partnership with civil society networks such as the West Africa Network for Peace; the “democratic dialogue” network in Latin America; and FEMLINK-Pacific, as well as regional civic peace-building organizations such as the Nairobi Peace Initiative):

The Conflict Prevention Group (CPG) of UNDP’s Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR): CPG/BCPR works with UNDP Country Offices in developing and implementing strategic initiatives [e.g. through conflict sensitive development program design] aimed at supporting national counterparts in preventing or resolving potentially violent tensions. It supports the deployment of conflict prevention specialists (currently in 30 countries, and referred to as “peace and development advisors” where they are jointly deployed with the UN Department for Political Affairs - DPA) to lead the implementation of these initiatives. It also hosts and provides operational support, for the instruments indicated below:

- Interagency Framework Team for Preventive Action (FT): The Framework Team, currently co-chaired by UNDP and the DPA, assists the UN Resident Coordinators with the development of integrated conflict prevention strategies. The Secretariat of the FT, which also maintains the “community of practice” of the “peace and development advisors” referred to below, is permanently hosted by BCPR.

- Joint UNDP-DPA Programme on Building National Capacities for Conflict Prevention (Joint UNDP-DPA Programme): Executed by BCPR on behalf of UNDP and DPA, the Joint UNDP-DPA Programme supports strategic initiatives aimed at reducing tensions through the development and implementation of national capacities towards this end. “Peace and Development Advisors” (PDAs) are jointly deployed (currently in 15 countries) by DPA and UNDP, and help UNDP and United Nations
Country Teams (UNCT) develop the entry points, partnerships, and catalytic activities through which longer-term initiatives are then implemented.

3. Since they were first applied in 2004, these instruments have yielded a number of specific results. For instance, they helped the UN system in-country to work more closely with the EU and with bilateral partners to achieve violence-free elections in Ghana (2004; 2008); Guyana (2006); Lesotho (2007); Sierra Leone (2007); Maldives (2008); Nepal (2008); Togo (2010); Solomon Islands (2010); and Benin (2011), and referenda in Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, and Zanzibar/Tanzania (2010). Autonomous internal platforms for dialogue were also achieved in Ecuador (2005), Mauritania (2006); Bolivia (2008); Lesotho (2009); Fiji (2010-2011); and Maldives (2010) in situations of significant political polarization and deadlock, with a resolution being obtained to the significant constitutional crises in Ecuador, Mauritania, and Bolivia, and a three year, potentially violent, deadlock in Lesotho. Violent conflicts in Dagbon (2006-2008) in Ghana, and Benue in Nigeria (2009-2010), have also been resolved through this assistance.

**Rationale:**

4. As the majority of countries undergoing turbulent transitions, or facing recurrent tensions and instability, have not requested external mediation and are unlikely to do so, key actors in these countries will have to be equipped with their own skills for constructive negotiation and dialogue. In addition, they will have to be accompanied in applying these skills. Finally, lasting mechanisms and forums for internal mediation of future conflicts will have to be agreed upon, established, and sustained by the actors themselves. This project, with duration of 1.5 years or eighteen months, will provide the initial basis for the lasting establishment of such capacities by allowing actors to acquire the relevant skills, apply them to the diffusion of immediate tensions, and reach agreement on the form and content of longer-term capabilities.

5. The leading edge of UN in-country assistance for internal efforts towards dialogue and negotiation, and for building national and local capacities for conflict prevention, continue to be conflict prevention specialists (including PDAs), who bring a rare set of skills, i.e. political analysis, facilitation and negotiation, and programmatic leadership, to bear on their work. However, these specialists face two critical challenges: Firstly, participants and national facilitators in these processes suffer from a prior lack of competences for constructive negotiation, leadership, and mediation. Secondly, the specialists often find themselves pre-occupied with the day-to-day tasks of managing in-country resources and operations rather than being able to take the requisite time for imparting these skills.

6. Through the project, the UN and the EU could ensure that conflict prevention specialists have additional and targeted resources—developed in partnership with civil society where feasible—to train participants in internal dialogue processes in skills for constructive negotiation, and are also able to employ national staff to support day-to-day operations. Current experience shows that where governments and other national institutional actors are reluctant to receive direct support from external partners on sensitive political matters because of concerns over
sovereignty, well-placed internal actors (especially key individuals) may be able to assist with “insider mediation,” facilitation, and even training of their counterparts in negotiating skills. The challenge is to equip the latter to play these roles without compromising their “insider status.” Entry-points for providing this support currently exist for all the twenty countries identified as the “long-list” for EC-UN collaboration in paragraph 39. However, should such entry points no longer be readily available, the UN will assess with the EU the possibility of alternative countries for engagement.

7. In the ten countries selected as pilots for this initiative, initial entry-points should have been achieved and PDAs or other conflict prevention specialists deployed either through UNDP or through the Joint UNDP-DPA Programme. The EU contribution will then complement these initial steps by enabling the targeted training of critical and select national actors, as well as relevant EU and UN staff in-country, in mediation, facilitation, and negotiation. Emphasis will be placed on those actors who have not already been targeted through the existing UN initiative. A mapping will also be undertaken in each pilot country, through existing UNDP or Joint UNDP-DPA Programme resources, of similar existing initiatives so as to identify gaps in capacity-building for conflict management, and then specifically target these gaps. In many instances, these are likely to involve leaders of critical civic groups such as religious organizations and commercial institutions, as well as political leaderships at provincial and local levels (much current capacity-building tends to be targeted at national level political or governmental leaders). Equally critically, EU resources will be applied to establishing a pool of “insider” trainers and facilitators who could then assist with further training.

8. The average overall cost of a conflict prevention initiative per country over an eighteen month period is currently and approximately € 300,000. The EU contribution will be applied towards activities totalling approximately € 60,000, and will thus contribute approximately a fifth of overall outlay. The remain resources will be mobilized, or have been allocated, through UNDP’s TRAC 3 (in the case of BCPR contributions) or Country Office TRAC, or through the Joint UNDP-DPA Programme (with contributions primarily from Sweden, Finland, and Luxembourg).

9. EU delegations will play the following specific and critical roles in the implementation of country-level activities:

i) Assisting UNDP/BCPR with the identification of “insider” trainers and facilitators;
ii) Assisting UNDP/BCPR with identifying participants for skills-building exercises;
iii) Participating, as appropriate, in skills-building exercises and/or additional training exercises;
iv) Development of substantive inputs, based on training exercises, for the Guidance Note;
v) Joint identification of and resource mobilization for, with UNDP experts, additional follow-on initiatives, beyond the first eighteen months, for sustaining national capacities for conflict prevention and management.
Results:

10. By the end of the project, key political, civic, and governmental leaders should have acquired, and been assisted in applying, skills for constructive negotiation, mediation, and facilitation in their own countries, with—depending on political circumstances—processes for consensual solution/s having been initiated for at least one major area of contention or dispute in ten countries. In addition, a pool of national and local mediators and facilitators should have been established for each country, and agreement reached on the form and content of a lasting national forum or capacities for internal mediation of future conflicts. The pool of experts will be based with these forums or capacities or with UNDP (which will bear their costs) until such time as these are established. In the aftermath of the project, these capacities, and the pool of facilitators, could also be based with an independent national institution (e.g., the national university, the ombudsman, office of the speaker of the parliament, etc.) considered as autonomous. The institution will vary from country to country depending on the local political circumstances.

Specific outputs:

11. The following specific outputs will be achieved through this project:

Output 1: Ability of national stakeholders (governments, political parties, civil society) and their international counterparts to implement internal dialogue and negotiation initiatives strengthened, especially where entry-points for external mediation are not present, or as necessary complements to external mediation, or where UN missions are not present or drawing down;

Output 2: Agreements reached (and short-term tensions eased as a result) on developing lasting national capacities for preventing, transforming, managing, and resolving recurring tensions and conflicts; such conflicts can take place in the context of turbulent transitions which are not subject to one-time mediation, or repeated phenomena such as elections, and tensions over land and natural resources.

Output 3: Civil society and non-state actors equipped to play significant and credible roles as internal mediators and intermediaries in support of national and local conflict prevention initiatives;

Output 4: Knowledge on internal negotiation and dialogue initiatives documented as a necessary component of wider efforts to build skills and capacities for such initiatives.

Specific results under each output:

12. Key results that will be achieved under each output are detailed below, including their specific impact on target groups and beneficiaries, in paragraphs 4, 10, 11, 13, 14, 17, 21, and 22, and are highlighted in bold:
Output 1: Skills and Capacities for Internal Dialogue and Negotiation

13. Through training in methods for facilitation of dialogue, for designing processes to build consensus across multiple groups, and for mediation, select beneficiaries from government, political parties and civil society engaged in on-going dialogue processes or conflict management or resolution initiatives will be equipped with the requisite skills in the ten pilot countries. The criteria for the selection of participants, which will take place in consultation with EU delegations as appropriate, will be as follows:

i. Nature of roles played in potential or on-going processes of dialogue or conflict management;

ii. Gender, geographic, and group balance;

iii. Ability of selected individuals to play “cross-over” roles such as convenors or facilitators;

iv. Previous lack of access to the relevant skills.

14. A cadre of trainers and facilitators, sustained through UNDP support beyond the first 18 months of the project, and through national budgets (as is currently the case with the mediators associated with the National Peace Council in Ghana or the Ministry of Social Solidarity in Timor Leste) once an autonomous institutional home has been identified, will be developed for each of the ten pilot countries. Identified individuals will first participate in “training of trainer” exercises, for which their per diem and travel expenses will be covered through the project budget. Once trained, they will help implement skills-building exercises, and will be remunerated through consultancy contracts (provided for in the expenses for the skill-building exercises in the attached budget). In the longer-term, the viability of this cadre will depend on their attachment with, or inclusion into, national peace architectures, or credible institutions playing intermediary or conflict management roles.

15. Pertinent and select UN and development partners’ staff, including EU Delegations, in these countries, may also participate as appropriate (taking into account local political sensitivities) in these skills-building exercises.

16. Selection of countries will be contingent on the (i) entry points available for internal dialogue and negotiation; (ii) ongoing processes of civic or political dialogue that require additional support and capacities for the participants, as well as facilitators; (iii) and assessments by national counterparts, UN, and development partners as to the feasibility of achieving specific and targeted results with this support. Selection of countries will be done in consultation with EU Headquarters. Priority will be given to countries where complex UN peace operations are not already present on the ground, and hence international resources and entry points not available to address potentially violent tensions.

Output 2: Longer-term capacities for conflict prevention and management

17. Key national counterparts will be assisted and accompanied in applying skills for dialogue and mediation towards two ends:
a. Reduction of potentially violent tensions;
b. Reaching agreement on the specific capacities—processes, fora, and institutions—necessary to resolving future conflicts; several countries currently developing such capacities—Ghana, Kenya, Zimbabwe, and Kyrgyzstan, for instance—refer to them as “infrastructures for peace.”

18. Assistance and accompaniment will be provided both by in-house [EU and UN] conflict prevention specialists, including PDAs, as well by the cadre of especially trained national mediators and facilitators (all PDAs and similar conflict prevention specialists currently deployed by the UN possess basic competencies, as part of their profiles and TORs, for mediation and facilitation; these competencies will be enhanced, for both UN staff as well as EU counterparts, through training supported through this project). Should additional training exercises need to be conducted (for political reasons or issues related to availability of space), outside of those budgeted through this project, for UN and EU staff, their costs will be covered through ongoing UNDP-supported programmes. The achievement of the second objective (in para. 17) in particular will help ensure that national capacities are developed and sustained beyond the life of this project.

19. The building of lasting national capacities is especially critical given that in many fragile or developing country contexts, conflicts increasingly lack boundaries. Tensions or deadlocks may occur in the context of rolling or turbulent transitions, as are currently taking place in the MENA region. Conflicts over issues such as land, natural resources, elections, or wealth allocation may recur, and not just at the national level, but increasingly at all levels of a society or a political system, as global climate change and economic turbulence drive increasing volatility. Rather than resolving tensions or conflicts piecemeal, societies may therefore need to build resilience through standing capacities or systems for conflict transformation and management.

Output 3: Civil society, and conflict prevention and management

20. To the extent possible, UNDP, EU delegations, and resident conflict prevention specialists will ensure that civic organizations, especially youth and women’s groups, are sufficiently represented among the ranks of national stakeholders trained in mediation and negotiation, and among the national cadre of trainers and facilitators established for each of the ten countries.

21. In the course of applying skills and capacities for mediation and negotiation to the resolution of specific conflicts, civic organizations should be able to develop the “entry points,” relationships, and forums that will allow them to sustain constructive interaction with governmental and international actors. With the support of UNDP, EU delegations, and resident conflict prevention specialists, civic organizations will also be assisted in participating in discussions and agreements on establishing standing conflict management capacities, and in ensuring sustained civic participation in these processes.
Output 4: Development of knowledge and guidance

22. To aid with this process, two consultants (in total for the project) selected from civil society organizations from the “global south” with substantive experience in supporting internal dialogue processes (e.g. Pacific Centre for Peace-building; WANEP in West Africa; FLACSO in Latin America; Nairobi Peace Initiative; Action for Conflict Transformation from South Africa) will be engaged to accompany (or monitor either through the PDAs, or through their own in-country affiliates) the skills-building exercises, and the conversations on “infrastructures for peace,” in the ten selected countries for this project with the purpose to document and distil the “best practices” and “lessons learned” into a Guidance Note on supporting—and building capacities for—processes of internal negotiation and dialogue, and on developing and applying national “infrastructures for peace.” The “quality assurance team” referred to in paragraph 38 will be responsible for ensuring that this exercise does not overlap with those currently being supported through other EU projects.

23. Regional Crisis Response Planning Officers (RCRPOs) and EU Delegations and EU Headquarters, specifically the Conflict Prevention, Peace-building and Mediation Division of the European External Action Service, the Foreign Policy Instruments Service - Stability Instrument Operation, and other relevant Commission services, will be fully associated with the development of this Guidance Note through the provision of technical knowledge, collation of “best practices,” and the identification of partners. Partners towards this end will also be identified in collaboration with relevant civil society networks, whose direct assistance may also be sought for training activities as well as for the development of the Guidance Note. The Guidance Note will be visibly developed and launched as a joint EU-UNDP product, including through a formal public launch at EU headquarters, and be disseminated as such.

Specific activities required to achieved the key results under each output

24. The following specific activities will be undertaken under each output in order to achieve the results identified in paragraphs 7-18:

Output 1: Skills and Capacities for Internal Dialogue and Negotiation

25. Conflict prevention specialists and PDAs already deployed in the field through UNDP resources or through the Joint UNDP-DPA Programme will lead the organization, and where feasible the conduct, of skills-building and training exercises on negotiation and consensus-building for national counterparts. Detailed breakdown of the costs for these exercises are provided in the attached budget. As appropriate, specialized trainers and facilitators may be engaged from the global “community of practice” on conflict prevention, and especially from civil society organizations already engaged in conflict prevention and peace-building initiatives, to support these exercises, and special preference will be given to women trainers and facilitators, and those from the “global south” (the costs of these trainers are included in the average costs for training exercises proposed in the attached budget). PDAs and similar specialists will also
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provide follow-on accompaniment to participants in applying the acquired skills. RCRPOs and EU Delegations will be fully associated with the definition of the scope of these exercises and their conduct.

26. For each country, a maximum of five exercises will be conducted bringing together select counterparts from government, civil society, and other pertinent stakeholders in ongoing or envisaged processes of dialogue, internal mediation, or conflict resolution. In addition to these exercises, an additional three-four sessions are envisaged in order to establish a standing pool of trainers and facilitators per country.

27. In five of the selected ten countries, depending on in-country capacity requirements as well as a joint determination made by the UN and the EU of the required capacities, national officers (as opposed to international staff) from the beneficiary country will be recruited, through the project budget, to work full-time with UNDP and to assist PDAIs with operational aspects of their work, and to therefore free up the latter’s time for supporting skills-and-capacity-building for key national counterparts. The national officers themselves will undergo training in this work, and constitute—once their engagement with the UN system is completed—additional in-country capacity for supporting internal negotiation and dialogue. Emphasis will be given to candidates from civil society, minorities, and women’s groups in the recruitment of national officers. During the course of their employment, these officers will receive regular UN staff contracts, i.e. for a fixed term of one year with all accompanying benefits. The staff will be required primarily for the intensive period of training and capacity-building. Should they be required beyond the twelve-month period, UNDP will cover the cost of their extension.

Output 2: Longer-term capacities for conflict prevention and management

28. For each of the selected ten countries, exercises on skills-building for negotiation and dialogue will also include systematic conversations on developing or strengthening standing “infrastructures for peace,” or institutions and forums for conducting internal dialogue, and also continuing to build internal capacities for this purpose, as part of both state and the civil society. It is hoped that by the end of the first year, initial agreements would have been reached in each of ten countries on either developing or further strengthening such infrastructures, or at least substantive conversations begun towards this end. Peace architectures that have already been developed and recently applied by countries such as Ghana and Kenya are expected to provide useful pointers in this regard. Initial agreements should also help find a standing “home,” even if on an interim basis, for the pool of facilitators and trainers developed for each country.

29. Up to four facilitated conversations on this topic will be held per country, and will feature a mix of dialogue and “experience sharing” with regard to “infrastructures for peace.” To the extent that this project’s budget will have been used to finance the training exercises, and the establishment of the pool of facilitators, consultations on “infrastructures for peace” will be covered by UNDP. Facilitation will be provided by resident PDAIs and RCRPOs, or other conflict prevention specialists with UN Country Teams and EU Delegations, as appropriate, together with select individuals from government and civil society who have been equipped with the requisite
skills for training and facilitation. Facilitation will be convened by PDAs, in collaboration with EU delegations as appropriate.

Output 3: Civil society, and conflict prevention and management

30. UNDP Country Offices, together with EU delegations and in full consultation with all relevant national counterparts, will jointly identify between 5-10 civic organizations per country to participate in the achievement of outputs 1, 2, and 4. Great care will be taken to ensure that the identified organizations include not just those conducting advocacy for particular issues, but mass membership entities such as unions, interfaith groups, and chambers of commerce. Priority will be given to credible women’s and youth groups. Additional priority will be given to organisations with significant local outreach and activities, especially beyond capital cities and urban centers. Identified groups may include a mix of national organizations, as well as regional entities such as WANEP and FLACSO with significant national-level presences or interventions.

31. Given levels of suspicion and mistrust that often characterize relations among government and civic organizations, especially in fragile contexts, separate initial training and skills building exercises may be held for each set of actors in particular countries, and the participants then brought together for joint work once sufficient mutual confidence and trust have been established.

Output 4: Development of knowledge and guidance

32. Relevant knowledge and “best practices” from country-level training and facilitation activities, as well as from their application to on-going dialogue or conflict resolution processes, will be assessed and collated by the end of the first year into a Guidance Note, which will be prepared under the auspices of two civic organizations, as indicated in para 22, and via a meeting to bring together relevant practitioners and analysts for a review of the first draft of the note. Depending on the location, the meeting will include “local” participants (either EC or UN staff from their respective HQs) as well as select beneficiaries of the skills-building exercises.

33. Once finalized, the Guidance Note could be launched globally through EU and UN headquarters, with PDAs and other conflict prevention specialists as well as RCRPOs/EU Delegations then working with their in-country partners (governments, political parties, civil society) to support its implementation.

34. A member of the UNDP-BCPR’s Conflict Prevention Group (CPG) will play the role of “project manager,” the relevant costs being covered by BCPR. The project manager will assist PDAs, EU Delegation staff and other conflict prevention specialists with regard to the development and the management of skills-building activities, the recruitment and the training of national officers, as well as the coordination of the work of civil society partners in distilling and drafting the content of the Guidance Note. Direct technical support, as necessary and feasible, for
in-country initiatives will be provided by UNDP-BCPR, the Framework Team Secretariat, and DPA.

1.1.2. Project Methodology

35. The country-level activities of the project will be implemented through UNDP Country Offices in partnership with EU Delegations, and will be led by PDAs and other conflict prevention specialists in consultation with EU Delegation staff. Existing and pertinent UNDP programmes and initiatives will be used as platforms for these activities, and the advisory boards of these programmes will provide venues for consultation. Globally, the project will be supervised by the Team Leader, Conflict Prevention Group (CPG), UNDP-BCPR, in consultation with the members of the CPG, the Framework Team Secretariat, the Conflict Prevention, Peace-building and Mediation Division of the European External Action Service, the Foreign Policy Instruments Service - Stability Instrument Operation, and other relevant Commission services. UNDP-BCPR will bear responsibility for all substantive and financial reporting and accountability for the project.

36. The dual-layered approach—with implementation at national as well as at global level—will allow the project to capitalize on newly-developed entry-points, or on going initiatives, for dialogue and mediation at the national level, with a view to strengthening the reach and results of these initiatives. At the same time, global supervision will ensure quality assurance across all ten country-level interventions.

37. The achievement of the project’s four outputs will be measured through the following indicators:

**Output 1 indicator:** Acquisition and application of dialogue and negotiation skills by key national counterparts, including civil society, with concrete and measurable changes in style and effectiveness of internal conflict management processes, in ten countries.

**Output 2 indicator:** Substantive agreements, or launch of viable conversations thereof, on building national infrastructures for peace in the selected countries; specific provisions in these agreements to link local and national-level initiatives and structures.

**Output 3 indicator:** Discernible and substantive roles by civic actors, as well as a clear articulation of these roles in proposed infrastructures for peace, in achieving outputs 1 and 2 in the selected countries.

**Output 4 indicator:** Development, launch, and dissemination of Guidance Note on best practices on developing negotiation and dialogue skills for national actors, and on their application.

38. Measurements of these indicators will be carried out by a “quality assurance team” comprised of at least one colleague each from CPG/BCPR-UNDP, the Framework Team Secretariat, DPA, the Conflict Prevention, Peace-building and Mediation Division of the
European External Action Service, the Foreign Policy Instruments Service - Stability Instrument Operation, other relevant Commission services, and BCPR’s M&E unit. This team will engage directly with UN and EU colleagues in the selected countries, as well as key national counterparts, to prepare a substantive section on the measurement of the indicators for the final, year-end project report.

39. The selection of ten countries proposed for the project will be carried out jointly by CPG/BCPR-UNDP, the Framework Team Secretariat, the Conflict Prevention, Peace-building and Mediation Division of the European External Action Service, the Foreign Policy Instruments Service - Stability Instrument Operation, and other relevant Commission services within 60 days of signing of the contract. Provisionally the following twenty countries (from which ten could be selected), based on current EU and UN priorities for preventive action—and for support for transitions—have been identified to this end. They include: Peru, Guyana, Nepal, Thailand, Bangladesh, Maldives, Kyrgyzstan, Georgia, Tunisia, Yemen, Guinea, Nigeria, Ghana, Chad, Uganda, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Tanzania, and Lesotho.

40. The following criteria were used to identify the provisional list of twenty countries:

i) Entry-points and potential partnerships for preventive action, as detailed in paragraph 12.

ii) Existing UN or EU conflict prevention initiatives, with staff capacities such as “peace and development advisors,” in which additional support from the EC and the UN could be anchored (EU delegations are currently assisting conflict prevention or peace-building initiatives, or have indicated interest in doing so, in Guyana, Nepal, Bangladesh, Maldives, Kyrgyzstan, Georgia, Tunisia, Guinea, Nigeria, Chad, and Zimbabwe).

iii) Joint prioritization by DPA and UNDP for preventive action (with an emphasis on early prevention rather than post-conflict peace-building).

iv) Broader interagency interest within the UN system, including through the Framework Team (the Framework Team is currently supporting the development or updating of integrated UN conflict prevention strategies in Guyana, Ghana, Kenya, Maldives, Kyrgyzstan, and Yemen).

v) The availability of political entry-points for preventive action,

1.1.3. Duration and indicative action plan

41. The following will be the anticipated sequence of activities for the project (in each instance, the primary local partners will be UNDP Country Offices, in consultation with EU delegations, and in partnership with select local civic or independent organizations):

First-second months:

Ten target countries identified; current member of BCPR’s Conflict Prevention Group identified as project manager; entry-points for training and skills-building identified through UNDP Country Offices, EU delegations, and on-going in-country initiatives.

1 At that juncture, a logical framework will be defined and attached to this Description of Action.
Third-fifth months:
Recruitment of national officers as UNDP staff (see para 27 for additional details) conducted for five of the ten selected countries; First set of "training of trainers" exercises conducted for all ten countries.

Sixth-seventh months:
Second set of "training of trainers" conducted for all ten countries.

Eighth-ninth months:
First two of four skills-building exercises conducted for all ten countries. (all skills-building exercises, as well as training of trainers and facilitators, will be covered through the project budget; first set of consultations on parameters of national "infrastructures for peace" held in five countries (these consultations will be covered by UNDP).

Tenth-Eleventh months:
Second two of four skills-building exercises conducted for all ten countries. Two consultants for the development of the Guidance Note identified and able to participate in the concluding set of skills-building exercises for all ten countries (consultants’ fees included in the costs for the Guidance Note in the attached budget; their participation costs in skill-building exercises are included in the budgets for these exercises in the attachment).

Twelfth month:
Consultations on developing national infrastructures for peace completed.

Thirteenth-fourteenth months:
Additional ad hoc consultations conducted, as necessary and covered by UNDP, in all ten countries on further programming to help build national infrastructures for peace; draft "best practices" and Guidance Note on building internal mediation capacities prepared by the two consultants’ and circulated to national and international partners.

Fifteenth to eighteenth months:
National actors accompanied in applying mediation and negotiation skills by PDAs, and by resident UN and EU conflict prevention specialists; workshop to validate Guidance Note held in sixteenth month; Guidance Note launched in the seventeenth month; follow-on project, in support of national efforts to develop "infrastructures for peace," developed, as appropriate, in the eighteenth month.

1.1.4. Sustainability of the action (max 3 pages)

Project impact:

42. The project will have the following measurable impact:

First, an increase in the number of facilitated conversations or dialogues around select issues of contention, thus leading to a reduction in tensions; depending on the political
situation, the targeted issues might be at the local or the national level (if entry-points are bigger), or smaller issues selected so as to pave the way or create confidence for addressing larger issues.

Second, a greater awareness of, and an eventual agreement on, the parameters of standing conflict management capabilities ("infrastructures for peace") in each of the ten selected countries; in particular key national and international actors at the country level should be more aware of the necessity for such capabilities given recurring tensions during prolonged transitions, and also given recurrent conflict over issues such as land and natural resources.

Dissemination and multiplier effect:

43. The agreements on the establishment of national “infrastructures for peace,” as well as the dissemination and use of the Guidance Note, should provide a significant “multiplier effect” for the results of the project, in that they will allow initial interventions and support to be replicated by the concerned actors themselves, and to reach more lasting consensus around a wider range of issues and disputes. UNDP Country Offices will serve as focal points for both the implementation of agreements on “infrastructures for peace,” as well as for the dissemination of the Guidance Note. Following the formal launch of the Guidance Note at UN headquarters, subsequent launches will be held in each of the ten pilot countries, and follow-on conversations conducted by PDAs with institutions such as universities and public training academies for the inclusion of the note in their curricula.

Key risks and assumptions

44. The central risk for the implementation of the project will be the potential lack of political will among key stakeholders—especially political “principals” at the centre of deadlocks or potentially violent tensions—who may not wish to engage in the search for negotiated solutions or to even consider the possibility thereof, and hence acquire tools towards this end. Especially difficult will be discussions over the exercise of power. The project is predicated upon the key assumption that such political will be available, or can be created, as per the approach identified below.

Elements of risk management strategy:

45. On-going initiatives in countries as diverse as Zimbabwe, Kenya, and Thailand—and which could be further assisted through this project—have faced this precise difficulty at their inception. The challenge was often overcome through three linked approaches:

(i) The first was to “de-stigmatize” the issue; i.e. instead of confronting governments with the need to share power or to resolve conflict, the issue was articulated (often by national counterparts) as being one of building consensus around priorities, or advancing social cohesion, within a development framework;
(ii) The need for acquiring negotiation skills was similarly articulated not from a particular political perspective, but instead from the point of their day-to-day applications, from the office to the business, and from the parliament to the domicile; once participants had agreed to and acquired these skills, they often drew their own conclusions with regard to their wider application;

(iii) For those actors susceptible to “win-lose” perspectives on the exercise of power, “insider mediators” with access to these actors were identified and gently supported, so as to not compromise their credibility, in making the case for “win-win” approaches, and then accompanying their application.

46. Through “experience-sharing” among national counterparts supporting country-level initiatives, and through a “community of practice” of PDAs and other conflict prevention specialists managed by the Framework Team secretariat, a combination or variations of these approaches will be used to address and manage political risks as they arise.

Post-project sustainability

47. The achieving of the project outputs will in-and-of-itself provide the basis for the sustainability of its core results.

Financial and Institutional Sustainability: National concepts and initial work on infrastructures for peace should also be accompanied by consensus—ideally achieved during the life of this project or thereafter with UNDP assistance—on partial support for these instruments through national budgets, as has been the case with the National Peace Council in Ghana, or on additional joint advocacy with international and bilateral partner for continued resourcing of these efforts.

Political sustainability: Past experience shows that the skills built during the first year of the project will be continued to be applied for an additional period of 3-5 years before requiring replenishment. Consistency with projects in EU Country Strategy Papers (or their equivalent) for the selected countries to enable a possible follow-up (through UN or other actors) will be ensured.

Visibility

48. PDAs will work with the EU delegations and their national counterparts to develop a visibility plan for each of the ten pilot countries by the fourth month of this project. In several situations, public visibility may have to be curtailed given the sensitive nature of the dialogue or mediation initiatives being supported, and because “insider” facilitators and mediators may be most effective when operating “under the radar screen.” In these instances, emphasis will be placed on ensuring that key policy makers, and parties to significant disputes, are aware of the new skills and capacities offered through the project, and of the opportunities for utilizing them. The central public events for the project will be the launches of the Guidance Note at EU headquarters and at the country level, covered by this project’s budget.