

## Mid-Term Evaluation of the Western Balkans SALW Control Roadmap

### Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF)

#### 1. Project and Evaluation Details

Mid-Term Evaluation of Western Balkans SALW Control Roadmap Multi-Partner Trust Fund	
Evaluation Timeline	October 2022 – 20 February 2023
Duration being reviewed	15 March 2019 – 31 December 2021
Review Team	First Call Partners Ltd (Henry Smith, Taz Greyling, Astrit Istrefi, Ben Lovelock, Hope Kilmurry)

Project Title	Western Balkans SALW Control Roadmap Multi-Partner Trust Fund
Function	To ensure a coordinated donor approach to support the implementation of the Roadmap. It was established to enable a platform to strengthen coordination, planning and communication among donors, implementing partners and national authorities, and develop synergies among different players involved in this programmatic area.
Territories	Jurisdictions of Belgrade, Podgorica, Pristina, Sarajevo, Skopje and Tirana.
Region	Europe and Central Asia/Western Balkans
Project dates	Start: March 2019
Total value of Fund as of 31 December 2022.	Approx. US\$ 24,181,024 <sup>1</sup>
Funding source	Governments of France, Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and United Kingdom.
Implementing party	Coordinated by the UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub for Europe and the CIS, through UNDP SEESAC; Administrative Agent: United Nations MPTF Office Implemented by UNDP and UNODC

	Project	Implementing Organisation	Project Budget	Current implementing period
1st call for proposals	Halting Arms and Lawbreaking Trade (HALT) in Bosnia and Herzegovina	UNDP in Sarajevo and UNODC	\$2,200,000	20 February 2020 – 31 December 2022
	Support to Combating Illicit Arms Trafficking in Kosovo for Criminal Police (CPIAT)	UNDP in Pristina	\$660,000	20 February 2020 – 30 June 2022
	Criminal Justice Response Against Arms Trafficking (regional project)	UNODC	\$1,899,999	20 February 2020 – 30 March 2023
	Urgent Action on Ammunition Destruction - Project EXPLODE+, in Bosnia and Herzegovina	UNDP in Sarajevo	\$583,546	20 February 2020 – 31 October 2022
	Strengthening Control, Administration and Social Attitudes Towards SALW	UNDP in Tirana	\$1,661,314	14 December 2020 – 14 December 2022

<sup>1</sup> As of 17 January 2023, cited in: <https://mptf.undp.org/fund/slwo0>



<b>2nd call for proposals</b>	<b>Advancing the Capacities of the Ministry of Interior in the SALW Control-Related Field (Phase II)</b>	UNDP in Belgrade	\$1,429,520	5 January 2021 – 4 July 2023
	<b>Advancing the Capacities of the Police Directorate in the Field of Custody Chain, Crime Scene Investigations and the Forensic Laboratory in the Field of Operations and Investigations in Detection and Trafficking of Explosives Criminality</b>	UNDP in Podgorica	\$664,812	5 January 2021 – 4 July 2023
	<b>Cross-border Integrated Institutional Approach Towards Combatting IAT and SALW</b>	UNDP in Pristina-UNDP in Skopje	\$522,067	18 March 2021 – 31 December 2022
	<b>Prevention and Illicit Arms Reduction in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Project PILLAR+)</b>	UNDP in Sarajevo	\$769,406	5 January 2021 – 3 July 2023
	<b>Support for Increased International Cooperation in Criminal Matters</b>	UNODC	\$1,604,153	24 June 2021 - 31 December 2023

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### 3. List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

Acronym	Description
BiH	Bosnia and Herzegovina
CEPOL	European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats (EMPACT), EU Delegations, IPA with European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training
CIAT	Countering Illicit Arms Trafficking
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
COVID-19	Coronavirus 19 Pandemic
CPIAT	Combating Illicit Arms Trafficking in Kosovo for Criminal Police
EEAS	European External Action Service
ECIS	Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States
EMPACT	European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats
EU	European Union
EUROPOL	European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation
EXPLODE+	Urgent Action on Ammunition Destruction - Project EXPLODE+
FCP	First Call Partners
HALT	Halting Arms and Lawbreaking Trade
INTERPOL	International Criminal Police Organisation
IT	Information Technology
ITF	ITF Enhancing Human Security
KII	Key Informant Interviews
MPTF	Multi-Partner Trust Fund
MOD	Ministry of Defence
MoI	Ministry of Interior
MoIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
MTE	Mid-Term Evaluation
MTR	Mid-Term Review
NABIS	National Ballistics Intelligence Service, UK
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
OECD DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development - Development Assistance Committee
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PSSM	Physical Security and Stockpile Management
PILLAR	Prevention and Illicit Arms Reduction
RAG	Red, Amber, Green
RF	Results Framework
SALW	Small Arms and Light Weapons
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SEESAC	South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons



SOCTA	Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessment
SC	Steering Committee
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNTOC	United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime
US	United States of America
USD	United States Dollar



## 4. Executive Summary

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### Introduction

In October 2022, First Call Partners was contracted to conduct the Mid-term Evaluation (MTE) of the Western Balkans SALW Control Roadmap Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF). The MTE was conducted in conjunction with the Final Evaluation of the UNDP regional project “Support to the implementation of the Roadmap for a sustainable solution to the illegal possession, misuse and trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) and their ammunition in the Western Balkans” and the Mid-Term Review (MTR) of the Western Balkans Roadmap Implementation.

To support the management and reduction of SALW in the region, six Western Balkans jurisdictions (Belgrade, Podgorica, Pristina, Sarajevo, Skopje and Tirana), supported by the Governments of Germany and France, in coordination with the European Union (EU), and with the technical support of the SEESAC, developed the Western Balkans SALW Roadmap. The Western Balkans SALW Control Roadmap Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) was set up to directly support the implementation of the Roadmap. Established by UNDP and UNODC, the MPTF aims at coordinating donor contributions to Roadmap implementation through the UN and providing an effective monitoring and management system. Key donors have included Germany and France, as well as the United Kingdom, Sweden, Norway, and the Netherlands. To date, the MPTF has gathered over \$24 million USD. The MPTF is governed by the Steering Committee,<sup>2</sup> responsible for overall oversight of the MPTF and its strategic direction; the Secretariat<sup>3</sup> which is responsible for Fund coordination and monitoring; and the Administrative Agent (run by the MPTF Office) which manages the administrative aspects of the fund. The MPTF is half-way through its duration and has funded 10 projects to date, two of which have now been completed.

The objective of the MTE was to analyse the Fund’s functioning and performance and provide forward-looking recommendations for the future support of the Fund to Roadmap implementation. Overall, it assesses three key aspects:

1. The performance of the Trust Fund management and governance.
2. The programmatic performance of the overall Fund, through assessments of the funded projects implemented by UNDP and UNODC.
3. The strategic performance of the Fund.

The evaluation assessed the following criteria, which are based on the OEDC-DAC evaluation criteria:<sup>4</sup> Impact, Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Sustainability, Coherence, visibility and communications, and ‘cross-cutting’ principles and values, including gender, human rights, and human development.

### Findings

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<sup>2</sup> This includes representatives of UNDP, UNODC, France, Germany and the EU (as ex-officio members), and other top three donors of the fund (currently the UK, Sweden and the Netherlands).

<sup>3</sup> Led by SEESAC

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>



The main conclusions arising, organised by evaluation criteria are as follows:

**Impact.** The overall strategic performance of the fund has been good and it is assessed to be essential to sustaining both political and technical momentum on SALW in the Western Balkans. The MPTF provides synergies and interlinkages with other funds and initiatives which collectively contribute to the implementation of the Roadmap, therefore increasing overall impact. Through the MPTF, the implementing organisations have established new – or consolidated existing – partnerships beyond those which are essential for project implementation, resulting in a broader constituency of actors engaged on SALW control.

**Relevance.** Achieving the Roadmap’s goals is a multi-year effort, and the complexity and scope of the challenge means that this must be sustained by jurisdictions, donors, implementing partners and other stakeholders beyond the period currently envisaged. At this stage and taken against the backdrop of continued threat from the use of SALW and proliferation, the projects have made relevant progress in support of the Western Balkans jurisdictions’ efforts towards meeting the Roadmap goals, and the specific needs/priorities of the target groups and the beneficiaries. Nevertheless, it is challenging to evaluate precisely progress towards sustainable outcomes across the project portfolio given (a) Roadmap implementation is only at mid-stage where final results are not expected; and (b), some areas in which additional detail (for example full elaboration of the assumptions underpinning the Theory of Change, baselines and indicators showing how project level outcomes have a measurable effect on achievement of regional goals would be valuable. .

**Effectiveness.** The fund is highly effective as a means of demonstrating support for the Roadmap. Nevertheless, its effectiveness as a means of decisively tackling illicit SALW is by its nature limited given the scope and scale of the problem and the resources available. It may be on too small a scale to have a significant and sustainable effect, although it is too early to reach a definitive judgement and the contributions of jurisdictions and other external funding should also be considered as an important contributing factor. Thus, for the remaining period and beyond, the question is whether to double down on essentials and secure the gains – or to continue with a more thinly spread set of activities which nevertheless serve a wider a political purpose. To assist with answering this question the evaluability of the Fund needs to be improved. This will help to sharpen the focus on impact, effectiveness (and sustainability). The theory of change, outcome level objectives and key performance indicators should be refreshed. There should be a clear focus on the specific logic of how outcomes will be achieved and the resources and timeframe required to achieve them. Finally, in the preparation and conduct of their projects the implementing organisations have benefitted from their own corporate capacities and the previous work on SALW control across the Western Balkans region and beyond.

**Efficiency.** Notwithstanding its relatively modest scale, the MPTF’s selected projects have been efficiently resourced and supported. It is clear that efficiency in project execution remains a focus, and governance structures are adequate, although further efforts to encourage SALW Commissions’ direct engagement would be beneficial. More broadly, ongoing efforts will be needed to resolve certain human resourcing challenges and the development of a sub-regional community of expertise (outside of the SALW Commissions and existing communities of practice) on SALW issues and the region itself should be fostered. This would enable a more systematised approach ensuring sufficient resource on SALW engagements.

**Coherence.** The MPTF and its implementers have worked to ensure complementarity, harmonisation, and coordination with other relevant interventions of the jurisdictions in the Western Balkans and other

donors. Whilst additional local engagement and ownership are clearly desirable as important contributions to, and results of, greater coherence, creative ways should be sought to reduce the bureaucratic load on key individuals where possible. Options include reducing scope and the volume of paperwork and focussing more on 'change' using outcome-based reporting.

**Sustainability.** Whilst the true degree of sustainability is difficult to establish, progress has been good. The fund should now maintain a twofold focus: firstly, on improved operational performance and the degree to which jurisdictions / institutions take forward and apply the capacity built through project implementation; and secondly ensuring that the gains that have been made are secured.

**Communications.** External communications are well developed and effective. There are two potential areas for further support at the jurisdiction level. The focus of communications with SALW Commissions could be examined to ensure that it is fully effective in both directions. Jurisdictions should also be further encouraged to communicate the practicalities of the support provided and also the concrete operational benefits that these bring. This would also have the effect of enhancing ownership and public awareness.

**Cross-cutting principles and values.** Whilst high level policy and in turn project documentation highlights the salience of cross cutting issues, and for example, notes the risk of not achieving gender mainstreaming, the performance of projects in practice does not match these policy aspirations. Progress, as reported, does not yet show significant results across these issues. It follows that the emphasis on these issues should be re-emphasised within projects, as is already the case with SEESAC's ongoing work on gender, UNODC's commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment and UNDP's Gender Equality Strategy (2018-2021).<sup>5</sup>

#### Lessons for the future and recommendations.

The MTE offers the following lessons and recommendations to support the remainder of the current MPTF period, and any relevant future mechanisms which might follow, both in the Western Balkans and further afield. The relevant evaluation criteria are included at the end of each recommendation.

*Lesson 1. Focus on the big picture (but don't forget about delivery):* The MPTF is an important mechanism through which regional cooperation and confidence building have been incentivised and instrumentalised. These strategic impacts go beyond the stated expected results for individual projects. As such, the aggregate overall impact of the MPTF is more significant than the results of the individual projects. However, whilst maintaining strategic focus, an appropriate balance must be maintained between strategic, political and technical objectives to ensure that the MPTF supports practical change on the ground as well as coordination and commitment at higher levels.

*Recommendation 1:* Higher-level and strategic benefits should be captured in MPTF fund-level goals and tracked through regular reporting, with indicators relating to increased confidence and cooperation included as part of MEL frameworks. (impact, relevance, sustainability)

*Lesson 2. Fund and project relevance:* Part of the success of the MPTF is that the overall Fund and the projects it has selected for funding have been clearly relevant both to the Roadmap and underpinning threats and priorities relating to SALW control across the Western Balkans region. However, there are

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<sup>5</sup> For instance, the UNODC Strategy identifies seven areas in which it will contribute to gender equality and women's empowerment, all of which are relevant to Roadmap implementation, and to MPTF project delivery. <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/gender/unov-unodc-gender-strategy-2022-2026.html>. Furthermore, UNDP also has a Gender Equality Strategy which outlines the key priority of gender equality in projects/programming. <https://www.undp.org/publications/undp-gender-equality-strategy-2018-2021>.



areas in which Fund support has been less extensive, including for instance parts of the justice chain and support for civil society, and there is a broader lesson about the scale of the Fund being relatively small in comparison to the nature of the problem. Ensuring that this alignment is maintained and further broadened is essential to its ongoing relevance.

*Recommendation 2.1:* To maintain awareness of the context, the MPTF steering committee should be kept updated on changes in political and security dynamics and priorities of key stakeholders. This could take the form of occasional briefings on threat and opportunity analysis. (relevance, effectiveness)

*Recommendation 2.2:* To ensure that the MPTF remains aligned with Roadmap priorities, at the point at which a decision is taken regarding the future of the current Roadmap, work should immediately begin to refocus the MPTF so it can fund new priorities at the point at which any new Roadmap goes 'live'. (relevance, efficiency)

*Recommendation 2.3:* One of the functional areas of SALW control that has not been actively taken forwards is supporting wider civil society engagement with SALW control. Future MPTF funding for civil society would be a sound investment for the future. Establishing a civil society challenge fund should be considered which could fund innovative civil society-led projects aimed at supporting Roadmap and local SALW strategy and action plan commitments. (relevance, effectiveness, sustainability)

*Lesson for the future 3. The value of good programme design and management:* Project design and management arrangements have not been fully effective in helping attribute causality between project outputs and higher-level outcomes. As the MPTF reaches its planned conclusion it will be more important to ascertain the extent to which projects have achieved sustainable change.

*Recommendation 3:* Invest further in dynamic programme design and management, including theories of change which elaborate results chains and describe underpinning assumptions, capture contributions towards higher level outcomes, and move beyond monitoring of deliverables to a learning-focused approach to M&E. (efficiency, effectiveness)

*Lesson for the future 4. Investing in people.* There is a relatively small cohort of highly committed people across the jurisdictions who carry a disproportionate weight of responsibility for ensuring that progress is maintained. In many cases, departments are in effect 'one deep' when it comes to human resource capacity. One of the important benefits of MPTF project implementation across the region is that it has helped connect professionals in different jurisdictions, providing the basis for a 'community of expertise', which in addition to assisting with specific implementation tasks, also has the potential to provide mutual recognition and support and to sustain inputs. This benefit is also reflected in SEESAC, both in terms of the makeup of the staff team and its long corporate history of providing technical support. Longer term sustainability of Roadmap gains are dependent on maintaining this human capacity (outside of the SALW Commissions) and nurturing communities of expertise at a sub-regional level that can be drawn upon at short notice should be seen as an efficient as well as effective use of resources.

*Recommendation 4:* Consider funding projects which support human resource planning in partner ministries and agencies and identify opportunities for how SEESAC, UNDP Offices and UNODC can continue to support investment in human capacities, including increasing technical skills and knowledge and further encouraging cross-jurisdictional support, building on the significant support which has been provided both within and outside the framework of the MPTF. (effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability)

*Lesson for the future 5. Sustainability should be sought, and not taken for granted.* The Roadmap emphasises the importance of sustainability, as does the guidance for MPTF funding. However, there is





relatively little attention paid in project design, implementation and monitoring to whether intended levels of sustainability will be achieved.

*Recommendation 5.* At this stage in the MPTF process, all ongoing projects should be assessed to ascertain the degree of sustainability, and where necessary, additional focus should be placed on managed exits or transfer to other support to enhance the chances of benefits being sustained once project funding has ended. For future MPTF projects, sustainability assessments should be concluded as part of ongoing monitoring and reporting, and cost and no-cost extension decisions should take sustainability into account. (effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability)

*Lesson for the future 6. Report what is needed, not what is done.* There is a fine balance between requiring reporting that is necessary for good dynamic project management and that which has the appearance of being comprehensive, but which in reality adds little to overall understandings. When using MPTF funds and funding provided through other sources (NATO, EU, bilateral supporters), the reporting burden has in some cases been disproportionate to the scale and likely benefit of work being undertaken. Donor focus on areas in which reporting and data can be shared or counted against multiple requirements would help reduce time spent on reporting, and allow more focus on implementation.

*Recommendation 6:* Consider reforming MPTF reporting requirements so that they focus on results and higher-level outcomes rather than project inputs. MPTF Steering Committee should actively coordinate with other funders to identify ways in which reporting can be streamlined. (efficiency, coherence)

*Lesson for the future 7. Communications is a two-way street.* Whilst efforts to create visibility of MPTF projects have been observable, a more sustained approach to communications appears less systematic. To achieve some of the harder aspects of SALW control – i.e. changes in public attitudes and underpinning social norms - broader partnerships and a deeper engagement with the wider citizenry is essential.

*Recommendation 7.1:* Identify opportunities for MPTF to support communications between SALW Commissions and local populations in a way that seeks genuine engagement and would in turn benefit the design and implementation of effective MPTF projects. This could include seeking views on SALW strategies and action plans, as well as consultations on changes to laws and procedures. (effectiveness, coherence, sustainability)

*Recommendation 7.2:* Consider broadening of jurisdiction-level partnerships to encourage the engagement and involvement of local politicians, the private sector and civil society, and MPTF to consider making funding available to support this objective. (effectiveness, coherence, sustainability)

*Lessons for the future 8. Action on gender must be incentivised.* Whilst there are numerous commitments to tackling gender equality in the MPTF and its projects, these have yet to have a significant effect on the ground on equality in a practical sense. This is partly due to the deep-rooted and systemic challenges related to gender norms in society. It is also due to the lack of direct funding for projects which explicitly aim to improve gender equality as part of Roadmap implementation.

*Recommendation 8.* During future MPTF calls for proposals, at least one project, ideally cross-border or at the regional level which focusses solely on gender equality, should be considered. Potential foci could include establishing cohorts of woman technical advisers, establishing regional verification tools led by women, and encouraging recruitment of women into senior roles at the jurisdiction levels.



## 5. Introduction and Overview

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In October 2022, First Call Partners was contracted to conduct the Mid-term Evaluation (MTE) of the Western Balkans SALW Control Roadmap Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF). The MTE was conducted in conjunction with the Final Evaluation of the UNDP regional project “Support to the implementation of the Roadmap for a sustainable solution to the illegal possession, misuse and trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) and their ammunition in the Western Balkans” and the Mid-Term Review (MTR) of the Western Balkans Roadmap Implementation. The three tasks were awarded to First Call Partners by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The MTE was conducted between November 2022 – February 2023 in three phases: inception report and desk review; data collection (including interviews and group discussions in each regional jurisdiction through field visits); and report writing. The evaluation provides an impartial and independent assessment that reviews the functioning and performance of the MPTF and provides recommendations for the remaining support of the Fund for Roadmap implementation.

## 6. Introduction to the Roadmap and Multi-Partner Trust Fund

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SEESAC is a joint initiative of UNDP and the Regional Cooperation Council. A key focus of UNDP’s engagement in Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (ECIS) region through SEESAC since 2002 has centred on enhancing the capability of both national and regional actors to contain and decrease the spread, illicit use, misuse and trafficking of small arms and light weapons (SALW) and related ammunition. This is intended to support the jurisdictions of South Eastern and Eastern Europe and more specifically the Western Balkans region, in strengthening stability, security and development.

To support the management and reduction of SALW in the region, the Western Balkans jurisdictions, supported by the Governments of Germany and France, in coordination with the European Union (EU), and with the technical support of the SEESAC, developed the Western Balkans Roadmap. In July 2018, as part of the framework of the ‘Berlin Process’ following strong leadership from Germany, France and the EU, the Roadmap was adopted during the Western Balkans Summit in London, demonstrating a strong willingness of the jurisdictions to tackle the challenge of SALW in the Western Balkans and across Europe.

The Roadmap aims to make the Western Balkans “a safer region, and an exporter of security, where comprehensive and sustainable mechanisms, fully harmonised with the European Union and other international standards, are in place to identify, prevent, prosecute, and control the illegal possession, misuses and trafficking of firearms, ammunition and explosives”.<sup>6</sup> The Roadmap has 7 goals:

1. The establishment and harmonisation of legislative frameworks on arms control in the Western Balkans in line with EU and other related international legislation such as the Arms Trade Treaty, and the United Nations (UN) Firearms Protocol.
2. The creation of evidence-based and intelligence-led arms control policies and practices on firearms, ammunition and explosives in the Western Balkans.
3. The reduction and tackling of the illicit flows of firearms, ammunition and explosives into, within and beyond the Western Balkans.

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<sup>6</sup> Roadmap 2018, p.7



4. Awareness raising, education, outreach and advocacy regarding the dangers associated with the illicit possession and misuse of firearms
5. Significant decrease in the number of firearms in illicit possession in the region.
6. Systematically reduce the surplus and destroy seized SALW and ammunition.
7. Prevent the proliferation of firearms and ammunition by improving the security of firearms, ammunition and explosives stockpiles.

A key cross-cutting issue of significant importance is gender equality with the Roadmap design based on gender analysis of SALW/firearms control in the region.

The MPTF was set up to directly support the implementation of the Roadmap. Established by UNDP and UNODC, the MPTF aims at coordinating donor contributions to Roadmap implementation through the UN and providing an effective monitoring and management system. Key donors have included Germany and France (who led the creation of the Roadmap), as well as the United Kingdom, Sweden, Norway, and the Netherlands. Throughout its duration, the MPTF has received over \$24 million USD. The MPTF is governed by the Steering Committee,<sup>7</sup> responsible for overall oversight of the MPTF and its strategic direction; the Secretariat<sup>8</sup> which is responsible for Fund coordination and monitoring; and the Administrative Agent (run by the MPTF Office) which manages the administrative aspects of the fund.

The MPTF provides funding for activities related to SALW control that support the implementation of the Roadmap and its associated goals. These projects are implemented by UNDP offices within the six Western Balkan jurisdictions<sup>9</sup> and UNODC. The MPTF is half-way through its duration and has funded 10 projects to date, two of which have now been completed.

## **7. Mid-Term Evaluation Scope and Objectives**

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### Objective

The objective of the MTE is to analyse the Fund's functioning and performance and provide forward-looking recommendations for the future support of the Fund to the Roadmap implementation. As part of this, it provides an evidence-based assessment of the progress of both the MPTF and its individual projects implemented by UNDP and UNODC. It identifies findings and forward-looking recommendations to inform the MPTF's key stakeholders such as the Steering Committee, the Secretariat, the MPTF Office, and the Participating UN Organisations, for the remaining duration of implementation and its future iterations.

### Scope

The MTE examines the role of the MPTF in supporting the six Western Balkans jurisdictions in implementing the SALW Control Roadmap. Overall, through the criteria outlined in section below, it assesses three key aspects:

1. The performance of the Trust Fund management and governance.
2. The programmatic performance of the overall Fund, through assessments of the funded projects implemented by UNDP and UNODC.

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<sup>7</sup> This includes representatives of UNDP, UNODC, France, Germany and the EU (as ex-officio members), and other top three donors of the fund (currently the UK, Sweden and the Netherlands).

<sup>8</sup> Led by SEESAC

<sup>9</sup> Belgrade, Podgorica, Pristina, Sarajevo, Skopje and Tirana.

### 3. The strategic performance of the Fund.

This includes the identification of lessons in relation to the implementation of the MPTF so far, and the provision of recommendations to improve the functioning of the fund, including its design, operationalisation and governance. The evaluation covers the period from the establishment of the fund in March 2019 to 31 December 2021. Given that much of the MPTF implementation so far has coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic, the evaluation also considers the wider contextual factors (political, economic and social) and their impact on the implementation.

## 8. Mid-Term Evaluation Approach and Methods

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### Approach and Key Priorities

The overall approach analysed data gathered through the document review, interviews and group discussions to assess the implementation of the MPTF as well as its funded projects. The document review gathered data at both levels. Interviews focused primarily at the project level, with the exception of those conducted with regional and international counterparts of relevance to the overall MPTF. As part of this, 75 interviews were conducted, with a specific focus on the MPTF itself. At the overall MPTF level, the following questions were identified as the framework for evaluation:

#### **Performance of the Trust Fund Management and Governance**

- Are the structure and procedures of the Fund Governance (Steering Committee and Secretariat) efficient and effective for delivering decisions?
- Is the Secretariat properly resourced and funded (if the case)?
- Is decision-making transparent, based on evidence, and undertaken in a timely manner?
- Is the Steering Committee, the Fund's decision-making body, able to adopt corrective measures, where necessary?
- Have any areas for improvement of efficiency, effectiveness and transparency of project identification, selection, and approval procedures been identified? What could be done better?
- Has project selection resulted in a portfolio of relevant and quality funded projects? Are the projects fitting together in a coherent portfolio?

#### **Programmatic Performance of the Overall Fund**

- Does the Fund have a clear Theory of Change? What has been the progress so far? Does the Theory of Change need to be refined?
- Is the Fund capitalisation sufficient to meet its objectives? Does the Fund have an effective resource mobilisations strategy?
- Looking at the individual funded projects, how relevant, effective, efficient, and sustainable are the Fund and its interventions? Are relevant UN values and principles addressed? Is the Fund well communicated amongst contributors, beneficiaries, and other stakeholders?

#### **Strategic Performance of the Fund**

- What is the strategic contribution of the Fund to the Western Balkans priorities in relation to the implementation of the Roadmap?
- To what extent have there been synergies and interlinkages between the interventions of the Fund and other Funds and initiatives contributing to the Roadmap implementation? And how can the Fund build on or expand them?

- Have the Implementing Organisations established new partnerships, or consolidated critical ones?
- Have the Implementing Organisations leveraged additional resources, or scaled up their projects?
- What are the key lessons learnt to improve the design, operationalization, management and governance of the Fund to make results impactful and sustainable?
- Are the lessons learned in the Fund being shared and applied with other funding mechanisms and regions that may share similar challenges?

In addition to adopting a rigorous approach to data collection and analysis, the evaluation also focused on identifying lessons to support implementation for the remainder of the MPTF, as well as future projects and approaches to SALW control. This means that as well as assessing results (what has been achieved), it also examined what has worked (and what has not worked) to achieve these results, as well as what could be improved throughout the remainder of the implementation of the MPTF. The Evaluation Team completed the following tasks as part of the MTE:

#### *Detailed Desk Review*

[See Annex 4 – Document Reference List](#). The team completed a desk-based review to assess the status of the MPTF and its 10 funded projects within the six jurisdictions. The review assessed the status of the projects against the six criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, coherence, communications and cross-cutting principles and values, including gender and human rights (the criteria are outlined in more detail below), using questions outlined in the Terms of Reference (ToR). The team reviewed 128 MPTF and project-related documents/sources, as well as 29 documents related to the Roadmap more broadly. Information gathered during this phase formed the basis of an initial assessment, which was then elaborated and deepened during the data collection mission.

#### *Data Collection Mission*

The data collection mission was conducted in conjunction with the *Final Evaluation of the UNDP Regional Project* and the *Mid-term Review of the Western Balkans SALW Roadmap Implementation*. Qualitative data collection was conducted through an 18-day field mission with five staff members between 23 November – 10 December 2022, supplemented by remote KII and group discussions conducted before and after travel (during the weeks commencing 21 November 2022, 12 December 2022 and 9 January 2023 for confirmatory interviews).

During the field mission, the team spent up to three days within each jurisdiction. To maximise the time available, the team split into two sub-teams to allow two sets of meetings to occur at the same time where required, ensuring at all times that interviewees were aware of the different tasks and their objectives, and suitable recording of data gathered to ensure separation between the different tasks during the analysis phase. The sequence and timeline were as follows: Tirana: 24 – 25 November; Podgorica: 28 – 29 November; Pristina: 30 November – 1 December; Skopje: 2 – 5 December; Belgrade: 6 – 7 December; and Sarajevo (with travel to Banja Luka): 8 – 9 December.

Interviewees were selected based on their engagement with the MPTF. Key categories included relevant stakeholders at portfolio level including members of the MPTF Secretariat, Steering Committee and key donors; implementing partners such as UNDOC and the relevant UNDP offices; beneficiaries including specific ministries or actors within each jurisdiction, relevant at the project level; as well as other key actors that had some form of engagement with the MPTF in each jurisdiction. The list of stakeholders for interview were provided as part of the inception report. The team aimed to ensure that the list of



stakeholders was as broad and representative as possible given the timeframe. This led to 75 interviews being held with 110 individuals during the data collection mission.

The team gathered data on progress of implementation of the MPTF and its funded projects; whether the results achieved so far were sustainable and in line with the vision of the Roadmap; what the key challenges were for implementation; what key lessons and opportunities were identified during implementation. Furthermore, the team assessed whether organisations and donors effectively supported the implementation of the Roadmap through the MPTF; whether the distribution of support reflects the priorities of the project implementation; as well as evidence of progress and impact against the intended results of the individual projects.

Other key issues included whether gender equality and the empowerment of women, a human-rights-based approach, and effective communications had been included in the design and implementation of MPTF projects; if there were any good practices identified; and whether there had been effective coordination of efforts and resources during implementation.

#### *Review and Report Writing*

The final phase consisted of drafting the MTE report based on findings generated through desk review and interviews.

Additionally, the team will provide a consolidated findings report which will bring together the key findings from both the Final Evaluation of the UNDP Regional Project and the Mid-Term Evaluation of the MPTF and will include the consolidated findings, challenges, lessons learnt, and forward-looking recommendations. The report will highlight synergies and provide a consolidated and analytical picture of the two evaluations' findings.

[See Annex 1a – Mid-Term Evaluation Schedule of Tasks, Timelines and Mid-Term Evaluation Deliverables.](#)

#### *Limitations and challenges*

The principal challenge in conducting this evaluation was the tight deadline for completion. This meant focussing the field visit component on capital-based interviews and group discussions. Additional time would have enabled site visits – which whilst outside of the scope of the ToR would have allowed the team to build a stronger understanding of the impact on the ground of the MPTF and its sub-projects - and a broader range of interviewees. This challenge has been addressed to some degree by ensuring that interviewees include those who have been involved in project implementation and through placing additional emphasis on the considerable levels of project-level reporting. As mentioned above, this led to 75 interviews being held with 110 interviewees. The proximity to Albanian independence celebrations, planned local and regional SALW Roadmap consultations, and the Christmas and New Year holiday periods were also factors in the timing of visits. A further challenge related to the scale of reporting and project-documentation in particular which was considerable, and the implications for this for the numbers of questions and criteria that had to be covered in the document review.

The parallel taskings of this MTE of the MPTF, combined with both the Mid-Term Review of the Roadmap Implementation, as well as the Final Evaluation of the UNDP Regional Project represented both a challenge and an opportunity. It led to the consolidation of the three field missions into one trip, meaning that interviews sometimes covered two or three tasks simultaneously. To avoid any confusion with regards to which project was being assessed, the team explained what was being discussed in interviews and ensured that there was appropriate separation between the different tasks. It also allowed the team to obtain a comprehensive perspective from a wide range of stakeholders on overall Roadmap progress. It



must be noted that by bringing in extra resource by expanding the team to five people, enabled the team to allocate the required amount of time to conduct this evaluation, as per the original methodology of the Terms of Reference, tender response and the inception report, as agreed with UNDP. The team interviewed all of the required stakeholders and followed up where there were any gaps.



## 9. Analysis of Projects

Analysis for this Mid-Term Evaluation combined an extensive desk-based document review using questions provided by UNDP as part of the ToR against which the documents were examined, as well as information gathered during the field mission, in which 75 interviews were conducted with 110 interviewees. The full desk review was conducted in an Excel template, agreed during the inception phase; the outline of interviews conducted can be found in [Annex 3 – List of Stakeholders Interviewed](#); and the list of documentation reviewed for the desk review can be found in [Annex 4 – Document reference list](#).

The table below provides a summary of the key findings against each of the criteria under each of the projects funded by the Multi-Partner Trust Fund. This combines both sets of data gathered and provides a ‘helicopter’ overview of the assessment of progress against each project according to a red, amber, green (RAG) rating. Section 10 provides a more detailed qualitative assessment of progress under each criteria and should be read alongside the data below.

The RAG rating was conducted as follows:

RAG Rating System	
	Meets the criteria assessed, with few or no improvements to be made
	Partially meets the criteria assessed
	Does not meet the criteria assessed
	Not Applicable: it was not possible to assess the criteria

Project and Criteria	RAG Rating	Justification
<b>Halting Arms and Lawbreaking Trade (HALT) in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Sarajevo)</b>		
<b>Implementing organisation:</b> UNDP in Sarajevo and UNODC		
<b>Budget:</b> \$2,200,000		
<b>Current implementing period:</b> 20 February 2020 – 31 December 2022		
Relevance		Contributes to Goals 2, 3, 4, 5 and 7. Identified as relevant to the context.
Effectiveness		Results partially completed - delays due to several factors, difficult to assess operational effectiveness based on the reporting.
Efficiency		Whilst some challenges in partner absorption capacity as well as contextual factors, capitalisation of fund is deemed good (low risk). Note: delays caused by implementation issues, time extensions agreed on no cost basis.





Sustainability		Concerns raised over sustainability: no real evidence of actions to foster credible sustainability beyond middle manager discussions. Much more can be done on this.
Coherence		Coherence with other strategies and plans, training and procurement in line with EUROPOL and other partners' standards and approaches; as well as partnerships with local, regional and other international actors but limited reporting on this in detail.
Communications		Project Document refers to communications strategy but limited evidence of effect in reporting. However, project teams continued timely and regular coordination with local stakeholders and beneficiaries. Limited evidence of project results being communicated by beneficiaries.
Cross-Cutting		Gender equality, empowerment of women and rights-based approach included in project outputs, with basic concepts used during workshops - however, limited evidence of effect.
<b>Support to Combating Illicit Arms Trafficking in Kosovo for Criminal Police (CPIAT) (Pristina)</b>		
<b>Implementing organisation:</b> UNDP in Pristina		
<b>Budget:</b> \$660,000		
<b>Current implementing period:</b> 20 February 2020 – 30 June 2022		
Relevance		Contributes to Goals 2, 3 and 5. Activities based on gap analysis and relevant to the context.
Effectiveness		Project concluded to revised timetable with a small budget surplus and with most activities undertaken (activities revised during implementation)
Efficiency		Good ratio between effort and outcome, project spend and programme management. Small budget surplus at the end. Delays due to COVID-19 and other contextual factors.
Sustainability		Marked as amber as this is too early to tell - but good indicators including strong focus on capacity building for criminal police in particular. Potential questions over life cycle maintenance of IT and equipment.
Coherence		Explicitly links to Countering Organised Crime Strategy, Intelligence Led Policing Strategies and Strategy against GBV. No direct linkages with other regional jurisdictions, but relationship to other areas of law enforcement domestically suggests greater coherence.
Communications		Commitments to communications made in ProDoc and some progress reported in quarterly reporting, but no communications strategy has been seen. Regular communications between project stakeholders took place.
Cross-Cutting		Reference to Strategy Against GBV and commitments in ProDoc but limited evidence of impact in relation to gender and human rights.
<b>Criminal Justice Response Against Arms Trafficking (regional project)</b>		
<b>Implementing organisation:</b> UNODC		
<b>Budget:</b> \$1,899,999		
<b>Current implementing period:</b> 20 February 2020 – 30 March 2023		
Relevance		Contributes to Goals 1, 2 and 3. Project is a significant regional-level activity and helps to extend the reach of the Roadmap.
Effectiveness		Delays in implementation due to COVID-19 and other contextual factors - progress on Output 1 and 2; Output 3 largely complete in 2022.



Efficiency	Orange	Whilst capitalisation of fund is deemed as good (low risk), delays caused by implementation issues, including partner operational capacity. Two time extensions agreed on no-cost basis.
Sustainability	Orange	Whilst there is evidence of local ownership increasing sustainability, more work needs to be done to ensure that results are sustained.
Coherence	Green	Coherence and coordination with European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats (EMPACT), EU Delegations, IPA with European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training (CEPOL) and FRONTEX; regular meetings with OSCE and has established information exchange channels both at headquarter and field missions' levels.
Communications	Orange	Strategy in place and visibly achieved but no evidence of reporting of read-across to jurisdictions' own communications. Regular communication between internal stakeholders; limited externally.
Cross-Cutting	Orange	Whilst ProDoc refers to gender equality, very limited evidence in any of the reporting.
<b>Urgent Action on Ammunition Destruction - Project EXPLODE+, in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Sarajevo)</b>		
<b>Implementing organisation:</b> UNDP in Sarajevo		
<b>Budget:</b> \$583,546		
<b>Current implementing period:</b> 20 February 2020 – 31 October 2022		
Relevance	Green	Contributes to Goals 5, 6 and 7 and is deemed as relevant.
Effectiveness	Orange	Progress is partial - faced specific challenges related to the disposal of ammunition which required revision of ProDoc in 2020.
Efficiency	Orange	Three extensions: delays regarding challenges of disposal of ammunition, implementing partners and with process of transferring materiel to destruction points, as well as slow decision-making processes. Budget remained the same despite changes in timing and materiel.
Sustainability	Orange	Outcomes should be sustainable once achieved.
Coherence	Green	Some good evidence of coherence/engagement with EUFOR, EU, US and UK; furthermore, the project was strictly in line with the national plan for disposal.
Communications	Grey	An outline communications plan set out in initial ProDoc but very limited evidence in reporting - unable to comment.
Cross-Cutting	Grey	No obvious contribution and no reference in the ProDoc or revisions. Whilst the ProDoc states that the project will apply the 'gender equality principle' – there is limited evidence of this. This has been marked grey as it is not necessarily applicable for this project and therefore should not be rated in direct comparison with the other projects.
<b>Strengthening Control, Administration and Social Attitudes Towards SALW (Tirana)</b>		
<b>Implementing organisation:</b> UNDP in Tirana		
<b>Budget:</b> \$1,661,314		
<b>Current implementing period:</b> 14 December 2020 – 14 December 2022		
Relevance	Green	Contributes to Goals 2, 4, 5 and 7 and is relevant to local context.
Effectiveness	Orange	Very slow progress in 2021 with many delays in procurement processes.



Efficiency		Funding is sufficient with no issues identified. However, difficulties in finding an IT expert; delays in recruitment processes of civil engineer.
Sustainability		Maintenance remains an issue with limited evidence of budget commitments to maintaining equipment provided through project.
Coherence		Coordination with other UNDP Project in Tirana: 'Support to Albania's Law Enforcement Authorities', as well as engagement with OSCE in awareness-raising with information shared with them.
Communications		ProDoc outlines clear communications strategy, with some internal and external communications reported.
Cross-Cutting		Whilst ProDoc refers to gender equality, this could be improved - only evidence of gender mainstreaming is using gender disaggregated data in desk-review under output 3. More can be done gender and rights-based approach.
<b>Advancing the Capacities of the Ministry of Interior in the SALW Control-Related Field (Phase II) (Belgrade)</b>		
<b>Implementing organisation:</b> UNDP in Belgrade		
<b>Budget:</b> \$1,429,520		
<b>Current implementing period:</b> 5 January 2021 – 4 July 2023		
Relevance		Contributes to Goals 1, 2, 3, 5 and 7. Project deemed as very relevant to the context.
Effectiveness		Progress made but with several delays, largely due to COVID-19.
Efficiency		One budget revision of less than 15% approved in March 2022.
Sustainability		Standardising of procedures and methods key area in ensuring sustainability. Limited information on life-cycle management of procured equipment.
Coherence		Engagement with several actors to ensure coherence such as with Swedish police and MoI in Belgrade to prevent overlaps, National Ballistics Intelligence Service (NABIS) and the National Forensics Centre etc.
Communications		ProDoc articulates a communications and visibility plan and there is some evidence of it being implemented - including notebooks and pens but this appears to be relatively limited.
Cross-Cutting		Project demonstrates commitment to improving gender inequality but very limited evidence of this in practice. Articulates environmental commitments.
<b>Advancing the Capacities of the Police Directorate in the Field of Custody Chain, Crime Scene Investigations and the Forensic Laboratory in the Field of Operations and Investigations in Detection and Trafficking of Explosives Criminality (Podgorica)</b>		
<b>Implementing organisation:</b> UNDP in Podgorica		
<b>Budget:</b> \$664,812		
<b>Current implementing period:</b> 5 January 2021 – 4 July 2023		
Relevance		Contributes to Goals 1 and 3. Very relevant to context.
Effectiveness		Some progress made, delays due to a range of contextual factors.
Efficiency		Funding is sufficient with no issues identified. No cost-extension for 1 year for the project.
Sustainability		Development of SOPs to ensure sustainability; lack of evidence of sustainability plan, particularly with regards to equipment.



Coherence		Very limited engagement with other actors identified in the reporting. ProDoc refers to engagement with EU RoL but unclear if this has been done.
Communications		Whilst there is a Communication and Visibility plan outlined in the ProDoc, there is very limited reporting on this. Unable to comment in detail.
Cross-Cutting		ProDoc demonstrates commitment to gender equality – however, this appears to be very limited in the reporting. More work is required on this.
<b>Cross-border Integrated Institutional Approach Towards Combatting IAT and SALW (Pristina and Skopje)</b>		
<b>Implementing organisation:</b> UNDP in Pristina, UNDP Skopje)		
<b>Budget:</b> \$522,067		
<b>Current implementing period:</b> 18 March 2021 – 31 December 2022		
Relevance		Contributes to Goals 3, 4 and 5. Very relevant to the current context between Pristina and Skopje.
Effectiveness		Delays in implementation due to COVID-19, political challenges, and resources issues. Some progress made – such as against Output 1, but very limited on Outputs 2, 3 and 4.
Efficiency		Funding has remained the same despite being extended. Weakness in human resourcing although appears to be remedied.
Sustainability		Sustainable in terms of building coordination and relationships but more work required to ensure institutional capacity is sustained following project completion.
Coherence		Whilst difficult to assess, there does appear to be a strengthening of good cooperation and collaboration between the Mols of both jurisdictions.
Communications		ProDoc outlines joint communications plan – evidence of it being implemented to some degree through social media: predominantly UNDP in Skopje and UNDP in Pristina Facebook accounts.
Cross-Cutting		Very limited progress on this – some women have been trained but tangible impact on gender appears limited at this stage, as is practical progress on implementing a human-rights based approach.
<b>Prevention and Illicit Arms Reduction in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Project PILLAR+) (Sarajevo)</b>		
<b>Implementing organisation:</b> UNDP in Sarajevo		
<b>Budget:</b> \$769,406		
<b>Current implementing period:</b> 5 January 2021 – 3 July 2023		
Relevance		Contributes to Goals 4, 5 and 6. Very relevant to the context.
Effectiveness		Whilst difficult to assess effectiveness of activities, lots of events organised with people reached and objectives/outputs met.
Efficiency		Cost of contracted budget deemed as good value considering scale and scope of the work. Budget changes and delays were justified.
Sustainability		Likely to be sustainable due to activities: even if the substantive knowledge becomes out of date, the women police officers will be able to mount new public information projects and manage them in future.



Coherence		Limited data on complementarity/awareness raising campaigns – appears that more can be done to improve coherence.
Communications		Very effective at communications: popular, wide-reaching..
Cross-Cutting		Could improve on gender with concerns over negative impact of segregating women police.
<b>Support for Increased International Cooperation in Criminal Matters (regional project)</b>		
<b>Implementing organisation:</b> UNODC		
<b>Budget:</b> \$1,604,153		
<b>Current implementing period:</b> 24 June 2021 – 31 December 2023		
Relevance		Contributes to Goals 2 and 3. Very relevant to the context.
Effectiveness		Despite delays, progress made with the project.
Efficiency		Clear relationship between inputs and results which are appropriate and justifiable, including budget. UNODC staff delays impacted implementation.
Sustainability		Difficult to determine sustainability at this stage but several indications of intention to be sustainable including: training maximum no. of participants; train the trainer course; as well as the development of knowledge products.
Coherence		Engagement with EMPACT with regular communication. Synergies also discussed between INTERPOL Firearms Programme and project Countering Serious Crime in the Western Balkans.
Communications		Has a Visibility Plan with 7 components, aims to encourage local ownership – however, unclear on the impact of this.
Cross-Cutting		Insufficient information to make a valid assessment at this stage due to the short period between project start (1 July 2021) and the cut-off point for the Evaluation (31 December 2021). The Programme Document aims to include equal gender participation of criminal justice practitioners, as well as gender-disaggregated data, and commits to a human rights-based approach overall. Evidence of the degree to which these have been met should be assessed at the end of project implementation.

## 10. Findings and Conclusions

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### Impact

**The overall strategic performance of the fund has been good and it is assessed to be essential to sustaining both political and technical progress on SALW in the Western Balkans.** The MPTF was set up by UNDP and UNODC, together with the MPTF Office, to contribute to a coordinated approach to donor funding for the implementation of the Roadmap and to provide a comprehensive risk and results-based management system. The Trust Fund has benefitted from strong cooperation with its initial funding partners Germany and France, and subsequent partners the United Kingdom, Sweden, Norway, and the Netherlands (and the political support of the EU).<sup>10</sup> So far the Western Balkans SALW Control Roadmap MPTF mobilised contributions exceeding US\$24 million.<sup>11</sup> Without the interaction and change driven by donor-funded MPTF projects it would not have been possible for the WB jurisdictions to make progress in relation to their Roadmap goals and it is likely that political and practical momentum would have been lost.

The fund (with its secretariat) provides a means of encouraging, cohering, and managing donor contributions.<sup>12</sup> The resulting projects bring a continued focus on SALW through providing a combination of technical analysis backed by practical technical assistance – on legislative harmonisation for example<sup>13</sup> – and this presents multiple opportunities for practical expert level, as well as political, contacts. As such the fund indirectly helps to support the management of wider underlying conflicts which remain challenging in the political domain. For donors, the fund offers an excellent means of demonstrating political support by providing a mechanism through which they can pursue wider objectives.

**The MPTF provides synergies and interlinkages with other funds and initiatives which collectively contribute to the pursuit of the Roadmap.** The fund has benefitted strongly from the jurisdictions' internal and collective consensus on the need to address the prevalence of SALW in the WB through a Roadmap approach. The previous work done in this area and the ongoing presence of the SALW Commissions has provided a helpful basis for the MPTF and this is summarised in the following extract from the MPTF 2021 annual report "(...) *The financial assistance provided by the Trust Fund has allowed the Participating UN Organizations to support the Western Balkans authorities to implement strengthened arms control policies in the Western Balkans and maximizes their capacities and financial resources. The Trust Fund resources also enabled the Participating UN Organizations and key donors to strengthen their position as important players and strategic partners for the governments in the region in implementing the Roadmap. (...) The Trust Fund provided essential support for replicating and scaling up previous initiatives, demonstrating the catalytic investment of the Fund. (...) [For example] In Belgrade, the Trust Fund enabled UNDP to continue the support to the forensics and ballistics sector initiated in 2019... (i.e. under the UNDP funding window).*"<sup>14</sup> The Evaluation Team agree with this reporting: this previous funding – through the UNDP Regional Funding Window - helped to initiate set up, provided experience of the

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<sup>10</sup> Western Balkans SALW Control Roadmap MPTF Quarterly Progress Report September 2022.

<sup>11</sup> UNDP SALW MPTF website <https://mptf.undp.org/fund/slwo0> accessed 16 January 2022.

<sup>12</sup> MPTF Steering Committee minutes 2021, 2022.

<sup>13</sup> For example, the project: Criminal Justice Response to Firearm-Related Crimes, Implemented by UNODC.

<sup>14</sup> MPTF Western Balkans SALW Control Roadmap MPTF Annual Report 2021 p 37.



context and initiated some project topics which have since been taken forward by the MPTF. There were nevertheless some significant implementation delays due to a range of contextual and programmatic factors, including the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>15</sup> A particular positive synergy to highlight is with direct EU funding in support to the association process.

**Through the MPTF the implementing organisations have established new partnerships, and in some cases consolidated critical ones.** Within and across jurisdictions multiple technical expert working groups and points of contact have been established. These arrangements include international/regional working groups (e.g. UNODC in pursuit of UNTOC) as well as bilateral groups (e.g. Skopje and Pristina cross-border interaction)<sup>16</sup> and internal groups in each jurisdiction. Also, many subject-specific individual connections have been established across various elements of the criminal justice chain within and between jurisdictions, and many of these contacts tend to transcend political factors.<sup>17</sup> It is also important to note that the OSCE continues to implement SALW control projects across the region, and in each instance reviewed by the evaluation team, there was a degree of communication with MPTF partners and project teams.

**In the preparation and conduct of their projects the implementing organisations have benefitted from their own corporate capacities and the previous work on the Roadmap.** UNDP and UNODC have leveraged their corporate capacities which provide invaluable knowledge, experience, and access to international networks. Reporting does not indicate that other specific funding sources have been leveraged although it seems clear that the preparation of projects has benefitted from the earlier support provided through the UNDP Regional Project, “Support to the implementation of the Roadmap for a sustainable solution to the illegal possession, misuse and trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) and their ammunition in the Western Balkans”.

**The MPTF has identified a number of key lessons learnt to improve the design, operationalisation, management, and governance of the Fund in order to make results impactful and sustainable.** Four main lessons were identified in the 2021 SALW MPTF Annual report:<sup>18</sup> The evaluation team recognises these lessons, and they were also identified by interlocutors in different jurisdictions. It was not possible to identify whether they had been applied fully to new projects though and there may be benefit in future Calls for Proposals asking how lessons identified in MPTF reporting have been reflected in project formulation.

- **Virtual meetings, communications, and trainings helped projects to advance in their implementation when faced with COVID-19-related restrictions of movement and gathering imposed by governments.** This practice increased the efficiency of the everyday operational meetings with partners and beneficiaries. Nevertheless, virtual meetings cannot serve as a complete substitute for in-person interaction, particularly during trainings where direct and spontaneous communication is needed, in exchanging sensitive information, and in activities for building trust and networking. Also, online trainings were often found to be less effective and efficient than in-person ones, with beneficiaries less keen to participate, frequently insisting on face-to-face trainings to ensure the quality of delivered information.

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<sup>15</sup> MPTF Western Balkans SALW Control Roadmap MPFT Annual Report 2021. Western Balkans SALW Control Roadmap MPTF Quarterly Progress Reports: Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4 2021 and Q1, Q2, Q3 2022.

<sup>16</sup> This is seen in the UNDP in Pristina and Skopje-implemented Cross-Border Integrated Institutional Approach Towards Combatting IAT and SALW.

<sup>17</sup> This was strongly evident from KII in the region 24 November-9 December 2022, including interviews with UNDP and UNODC.

<sup>18</sup> MPTF Western Balkans SALW Control Roadmap MPFT Annual Report 2021, p.41.

- **The ability to be flexible and adjustable remained key to ensuring the achievement of results during the COVID-19 pandemic.** The implementing organisations took advantage of those periods with low COVID-19 infections to intensify project activities that required live contact and travelling. The other periods prioritised administrative activities that could be completed either at a distance or from the office.
- **Cross-border projects require significantly stronger coordination between the involved parties to ensure timely and sustainable achievement of project results.** In this case, it is necessary to envisage longer implementation periods for projects that entail many activities with numerous stakeholders from the targeted jurisdictions.
- **The full buy-in by national counterparts and close cooperation and coordination with project beneficiaries are vital to achieving results in complex situations.** A climate of trust between the project implementers and stakeholders on the ground can be established by developing joint action plans for the implementation of activities and ensuring transparency through regular communication and information sharing. Regular communication with the beneficiaries ensures that project partners remain committed and engaged in the project implementation and enable the project team to navigate any challenging context.

**There is clear evidence that the UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub, SEESAC, UNDP Offices, and UNODC share relevant lessons and other information with interested parties.**<sup>19</sup> Nevertheless, it is not possible to judge the extent of the full replicability of the SALW Roadmap and MPTF elsewhere as ultimately this would depend on other regions' contexts and challenges as well as the available political and practical incentives for change activities.<sup>20</sup>

**Achieving impact has been challenged by a number of issues, many of which are interlinked.** Whilst the COVID-19 pandemic has been a factor, it would be overstating the case to assess this as the main driver for either a delay or a reduction to impact. Issues connected to political decision making and internal political and institutional instability in the jurisdictions, operational delays (partner availability / UNDP and UNODC recruiting processes / equipment procurement), and cultural factors (including social and cultural norms regarding the possession and use of SALW) all have an influence on projects' progress (and potential for sustainability).<sup>21</sup> It is also likely that the unseen effect of corruption and organised crime, cultural factors around acceptability and possession of firearms, ammunition and explosives, and concerns about risks of returning to (underlying) conflicts also have a bearing on the issue.<sup>22</sup> The potential incentives provided by the prospects of eventual EU membership are also a variable factor and the extent to which this drives societal and hence political appetite for progress is perhaps questionable as time passes.

### Conclusions on Impact

The overall strategic performance of the fund has been good and it is assessed to be essential to sustaining both political and technical progress on SALW in the Western Balkans. The MPTF provides synergies and interlinkages with other funds and initiatives which collectively contribute to the pursuit of the Roadmap.

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<sup>19</sup> Interviews with UNDP, SEESAC, UNODC, OSCE. See also the publicly available information on the SEESAC and UNDP SALW MPTF websites.

<sup>20</sup> The Evaluation Team was informed that the Roadmap concept has been replicated in the Caribbean, however assessing its success was outside the scope of this evaluation. Similarly, the Roadmap also influenced the EU Action Plan of combatting illicit arms trafficking, although reviewing the Action Plan was outside the scope of this evaluation.

<sup>21</sup> See for example MPTF Western Balkans SALW Control Roadmap MPTF Annual Report 2021, pp39-40.

<sup>22</sup> KII in the region 24 November-9 December 2022.





Through the MPTF, the implementing organisations have established new partnerships, and in some cases consolidated critical ones. In the preparation and conduct of their projects the implementing organisations have benefitted from their own corporate capacities and the previous work on the Roadmap.

## Relevance

### *The objective and vision of the Fund*

The objective and vision as laid out in the MPTF terms of reference is:

*“to contribute to the implementation of the Roadmap for a sustainable solution to the illegal possession, misuse and trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons and their ammunition in the Western Balkans. The Roadmap’s vision is that the Western Balkans is a safer region, and an exporter of security, where comprehensive and sustainable mechanisms, fully harmonized with the European Union and other international standards, are in place to identify, prevent, prosecute, and control the illegal possession, misuse and trafficking of firearms, ammunition and explosives.”<sup>23</sup>*

This is a challenging enterprise. Achieving the Roadmap’s goals is part of a multi-year effort, and the complexity and scope of the challenge means that this effort will need to be sustained by jurisdictions, donors, implementing partners and other stakeholders beyond the currently envisaged period. (See also comments on Fund’s realistic capacity under effectiveness below).

**The projects have made relevant progress in support of the Western Balkans jurisdictions’ efforts towards meeting the Roadmap goals and targets, and the specific needs/priorities of the target groups and the beneficiaries.** During field interviews it was clear that heads of SALW commissions and other beneficiaries found the thrust of the Roadmap and the specific project work of the SALW MPTF to be highly relevant to their continuing local needs and those of the Western Balkans sub-region.<sup>24</sup> This was also found in the desk-review, with all projects identified as directly relevant to the context. It is clear that the assessment and decision-making processes conducted under the leadership of the MPTF Steering Committee had identified relevant needs and prepared projects to address these.<sup>25</sup>

**With the data available at this stage, it is nevertheless challenging to evaluate the detailed progress towards sustainable change outcomes across the project portfolio.** In 2021, the last year for which a full report is available, the annual report executive summary states that *“...the Trust Fund contributed to five of the seven goals: Goal 1, Goal 2, Goal 3, Goal 4, and Goal 6”*.<sup>26</sup> This suggests that Goals 5 and 7 were not supported. Whereas the material Annexed in the same report suggests that all goals were supported by the projects and that the range of Key Performance Indicators is covered<sup>27</sup> (it is assumed that this latter interpretation is correct). It must be noted however, that some of the projects were only launched in 2021, with their contribution not yet included in the annual reporting. It is expected that this will be clearer in the 2022 reporting. The following table summarises the picture:

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<sup>23</sup> MPTF Terms of Reference – UNDP SALW MPTF website p 4-5.

<sup>24</sup> KII in the region 24 November-9 December 2022.

<sup>25</sup> Interviews with relevant KII and review of Steering Committee minutes confirm that the Steering Committee has a well-supported, comprehensive and responsive decision-making process.

<sup>26</sup> Western Balkans SALW Control Roadmap MPTF Annual Report 2021 p 9.

<sup>27</sup> Western Balkans SALW Control Roadmap MPTF Annual Report 2021 Annex 1.

**Table Showing Project – Goals – KPIs (Source SALW 2021 Annual report)**

	Project	Implementing Organisation	Project Budget	Current implementing period	Relevance to Goals and KPIs
1 <sup>st</sup> call for proposals	<b>Halting Arms and Lawbreaking Trade (HALT) in Bosnia and Herzegovina</b>	UNDP in Sarajevo and UNODC	\$2,200,000	20 February 2020 – 31 December 2022	2 3 4 5 (7) <sup>28</sup> 4 6 9 10 14
	<b>Support to Combating Illicit Arms Trafficking in Kosovo for Criminal Police (CPIAT)</b>	UNDP in Pristina	\$660,000	20 February 2020 – 30 June 2022	2 3 5 1 3 8 9 10
	<b>Criminal Justice Response Against Arms Trafficking (regional project)</b>	UNODC	\$1,899,999	20 February 2020 – 30 March 2023	1 2 3 1 3 8 9 10
	<b>Urgent Action on Ammunition Destruction – Project EXPLODE+, in Bosnia and Herzegovina</b>	UNDP in Sarajevo	\$583,546	20 February 2020 – 31 October 2022	(5) <sup>29</sup> 6 7 10 12 14
2 <sup>nd</sup> call for proposals	<b>Strengthening Control, Administration and Social Attitudes Towards SALW</b>	UNDP in Tirana	\$1,661,314	14 December 2020 – 14 December 2022	2 4 5 7 4 10 13 14
	<b>Advancing the Capacities of the Ministry of Interior in the SALW Control-Related Field (Phase II)</b>	UNDP in Belgrade	\$1,429,520	5 January 2021 – 4 July 2023	1 2 3 5 (7) <sup>30</sup> 3 4 5 9 14
	<b>Advancing the Capacities of the Police Directorate...and the Forensic Laboratory in the Field of Operations and Investigations in Detection and Trafficking of Explosives</b>	UNDP in Podgorica	\$664,812	5 January 2021 – 4 July 2023	1 3 3 9 14
	<b>Cross-border Integrated Institutional Approach Towards Combatting IAT and SALW</b>	UNDP in Pristina and Skopje	\$522,067	18 March 2021 – 31 December 2022	3 4 5 4 5 9 10 14
	<b>Prevention and Illicit Arms Reduction in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Project PILLAR+)</b>	UNDP in Sarajevo	\$769,406	5 January 2021 – 3 July 2023	4 (5 6) <sup>31</sup> 10 14

<sup>28</sup> To note, the Annual Report 2021 states that this project only links to Goals 2, 3, 4 and 5; However, the Programme Document also states a connection with Goal 7.

<sup>29</sup> Another discrepancy with the Annual Report which only connects this to 6 and 7; while the Programme Document aligns EXPLODE+ with Goal 5 too.

<sup>30</sup> As with the above point.

<sup>31</sup> Discrepancy between Annual Report 2021 and ProDoc.

<b>Support for Increased International Cooperation in Criminal Matters</b>	UNODC	\$1,604,153	24 June 2021 - 31 December 2023	2 3
				6 8 9

**Most MPTF spending is targeted to Roadmap Goals 2, 3 and 5.**<sup>32</sup> Whilst there are discrepancies between the alignment of projects to goals, it was found that the most funding is allocated to Goals 2, 3, and 5; with the least alignment against Goal 6. This is understandable given the different nature of Goal 6, appetite for taking on certain activities such as Physical Security and Stockpile Management (PSSM), as well as the context in which other projects and funding was already allocated against the other goals. However, it also demonstrates a strong focus on the aims and intentions of Goals 2, 3 and 5.

**The threat from use of SALW and proliferation remains significant.** The programming remains broadly relevant to the threat in the region as set out in the regional threat assessments and EUROPOL SOCTA.<sup>33</sup> Based on discussions in the region,<sup>34</sup> the review team notes that a number of further threat-related issues are worth discussing and there may be merit in updating the threat assessment. The absence of a blue border focus by the MPTF is surprising and could be re-assessed. The potential downstream SALW related and other consequences (both political and security focused) of the war in Ukraine also merit discussion. Concerns expressed about polymer weapons should be further verified given that these are not currently viewed as a problem.

**Programme and project level risk management has generally been handled satisfactorily.** Programme and project documentation shows that risks were identified and generally managed.<sup>35</sup> There were some instances where subsequent revisions added in new risks.<sup>36</sup> This seems reasonable in respect to the COVID-19 epidemic which could not be foreseen. Nevertheless, other risks notably political challenges, procurement difficulties and recruiting<sup>37</sup> issues are not new topics and likely could have been foreseen earlier and plans adjusted accordingly. These risks, singly or in combination, have been key factors leading to scheduling, delivery and spend delays during the implementation. Delays in jurisdictions’ political decision making are noted as a particular concern. The management of these risks has necessitated ongoing decision making and adjustments prepared by SEESAC/ MPTF and agreed by SC. Whilst these processes were well handled, they have unsurprisingly contributed to delay in achievement of Roadmap goals, albeit the scope and effect of this delay is unquantifiable.

*Conclusions on relevance*

Achieving the Roadmap’s goals is part of a multi-year effort, and the complexity and scope of the challenge means that this effort will need to be sustained by jurisdictions, donors, implementing partners and other stakeholders beyond the currently envisaged period. At this stage and taken against the backdrop of continued threat from the use of SALW and proliferation, the projects have made relevant progress in support of the Western Balkans jurisdictions’ efforts towards meeting the Roadmap goals, and the specific

<sup>32</sup> A summary of the Roadmap Goals can be found in Annex 5.

<sup>33</sup> European Union Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessment – A Corrupting Influence, EUROPOL 2021.

<sup>34</sup> KII in the region (including UNDP experts) 24 November-9 December 2022.

<sup>35</sup> See original documents for the 10 MPTF projects.

<sup>36</sup> And usually time extensions.

<sup>37</sup> For example, the challenges with obtaining maintaining trained subject matter expert human capital in the Western Balkans sub region. Examples of this including the Criminal Justice Response Against Arms Trafficking, as well as Strengthening Control, Administration and Social Attitudes Towards SALW due to issues regarding the recruitment of an IT expert.

needs/priorities of the target groups and the beneficiaries. Nevertheless, it is challenging to evaluate the detailed progress towards sustainable change outcomes across the project portfolio.

## Effectiveness

### *Performance of the Trust Fund Management and Governance*

**The structure and procedures of the Fund Governance (Steering Committee and Secretariat) provide an efficient and effective means for delivering decisions.** The use of multi partner trust funds is a tried and tested model for effective management and disbursement of donor funds as well as supporting programming; and UNDP has significant experience of operating these as well as the institutional back up to sustain key processes such as monitoring and evaluation and high-level donor engagement. Importantly, SEESAC has 20 years of valuable in-depth experience of the SALW challenge and gender issues in the region.

**The Secretariat function is adequately resourced and funded.** SEESAC provides highly effective secretariat services for the fund. In addition to acting as secretariat, SEESAC provides a knowledge base and is an influential thought leader. The team is busy and there is assessed to be some risk in the fact that SEESAC is deeply reliant on a small number of highly experienced people. Hence there would be merit in providing further staffing capacity, and hence depth.

**Decision-making appears to be generally transparent, based on evidence, and undertaken in a timely manner.** The preparatory work on projects, selection processes and onward project management are all well developed and effective. The extent to which local SALW commissions are truly involved in problem identification, rather than signing off on good ideas, is not however clear.<sup>38</sup> There is no evidence of public consultation or wider government (i.e., beyond Ministries of Interior) participation in prioritisation or selection of specific projects. There is merit in examining these aspects as a means of enhancing transparency and, ultimately, deepening local ownership of project results.

**The steering committee adopts corrective measures, where necessary.** The Steering Committee is well briefed by the Secretariat, decisions appear clear and well-structured and minutes are well presented. The use of virtual meetings appears to enhance effectiveness. Any urgent Steering Committee decisions (for example on project extensions or selection of projects) are taken when needed and do not appear to impose any significant delay on project delivery.<sup>39</sup>

**The project selection process has resulted in a portfolio of relevant and quality funded projects which form a coherent portfolio.** The selected projects are well founded and provide a sensible spread across the array of significant challenges that the Roadmap seeks to address. Clearly those projects selected are acceptable to jurisdictions (bearing in mind that jurisdictions are not identical) and donors; moreover, they also represent the art of the possible in view of the level of resources and expertise available. The evaluation team is unable to judge whether the portfolio fills a gap that others were not covering within

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<sup>38</sup> This of course does not imply any lack of interest but the level of involvement is not quite clear to the review team. KII in the region 24 November-9 December 2022.

<sup>39</sup> Interviews with relevant KII and review of Steering Committee minutes confirm that the Steering Committee has a well-supported, comprehensive and responsive decision-making process.

the broader support in the sub region (notably EU and US funding). Nor can this evaluation judge whether other projects could have been more effective (material on projects not selected was outside the scope of this evaluation and therefore was not requested or provided).

The following overview draws on the data collection mission, as well as supplementary information from the desk review.

1. *Belgrade*: The 'Advancing the Capacities of the Ministry of Interior in the SALW Control-Related Field (Phase II)' began in March 2021. However, the Evaluation Team identified positive steps in delivery at the time of reporting. Progress has been made with several activities; however, there have been significant delays.
2. *Podgorica*: 'Advancing the Capacities of the Police Directorate in the Field of Custody Chain, Crime Scene Investigations and the Forensic Laboratory in the Field of Operations and Investigations in Detection and Trafficking of Explosives Criminality' project has demonstrated some progress. However, the project has faced delays due to a range of contextual factors. This project was initiated in 2021.
3. *Pristina*: The 'Support to Combating Illicit Arms Trafficking Against Arms Trafficking in Kosovo for Criminal Police (CPIAT)' project has demonstrated activities being delivered on budget and to a revised timetable, with evidence of the capacity to detect and investigate firearms trafficking by the Criminal Police increased. Furthermore, there appears to be a stronger relationship with other areas of law enforcement. There is however, limited available data on subsequent detections or investigations, so it is difficult to assess the true impact on the ground.
4. *Pristina and Skopje*: 'Cross-border Integrated Institutional Approach Towards Combatting IAT and SALW'. Although this project was initiated in March 2021, there appear to be positive steps with regards to cross-border interaction and cooperation between Pristina and Skopje. Furthermore, 400 community police officers were trained on information sharing, gathering and analysis; and 60 police officers were trained in weapons categorisation, explosives and other handmade explosive devices, the possession and misuse of firearms, and community policing/intelligence-led policing in 2021. The data collection mission validated the effectiveness of these activities, with evidence of improved cooperation between the two jurisdictions.
5. *Regional*: Whilst it is difficult to assess in detail without substantial additional data gathering and analysis, the 'Criminal Justice Response Against Arms Trafficking' project has demonstrated its role as a region-level activity that helps to extend the reach of the Roadmap. Whilst the project suffered a delayed start, regional activity has been positive with effective work conducted in each jurisdiction. The recommendations of the gap analyses have already assisted policy makers and legal experts in identifying corresponding gaps and formulating new criminal provisions. It remains to be seen how far this will be operationalised, with capacity development conducted and support to collection and analysis to be finalised in Q1 2023.
6. *Regional*: 'Support for Increased International Cooperation in Criminal Matters'. Progress has been identified with needs assessment missions conducted in all jurisdictions on information exchange on criminal matters, and on extending the iARMS access to relevant national law

enforcement agencies through the extension of the i24/7 secure network completed. There is currently limited evidence on capacity strengthening due to delays in project implementation, the fact that needs assessments were only just completed at the time of the evaluation, with dates confirmed for national trainings between September – November 2022.

7. *Sarajevo*: ‘Halting Arms and Lawbreaking Trade (HALT) in Bosnia and Herzegovina’ has demonstrated some progress with some results achieved on the results framework, however this has been hampered by delays. The project has enabled UNDP to respond to institutional requests for urgent support in the disposal of unsafe ammunition, that otherwise would not have been possible. Project output 1 has been partially delivered – ITA capacity building; and output 2 partially. It is not yet possible to judge operational effectiveness of these measures, with further work identified for the remainder of the project.
8. *Sarajevo*: ‘Prevention and Illicit Arms Reduction in Bosnia and Herzegovina’ (Project PILLAR+). At this stage in reporting it is difficult to determine the effectiveness of activities. This is something that is likely to occur over time. However, many events have been organised with high numbers of people reached and objectives/outputs met.
9. *Sarajevo*: ‘Urgent Action on Ammunition Destruction – Project EXPLODE+, in Bosnia and Herzegovina’ has faced challenges with a portion of the amount of materiel allocated destroyed, and more required. Consequently, effectiveness as this stage is still partial, although ongoing commitment of stakeholders during periods of delays is still important.
10. *Tirana*: Strengthening Control, Administration and Social Attitudes Towards SALW has faced significant delays due to a range of factors both contextual and programmatic. There have been some activities conducted against outputs 1 and 2, with limited progress against output 3. It is too early to tell the impact and effectiveness of this project at this stage in reporting.

**The field research also highlighted a number of potential gaps which merit examination.** These include: the lack of tailored support to judges – including through assistance to improve and increase the use of existing law; focus on creating resilient systems (not least in the wake of potential flows from the war in Ukraine), including furthering adoption of whole-life management by defence actors, countering the effect on regional insecurity on incentivising an arms race or hoarding of surplus stockpiles; absence of civil engagement and consent promotion (i.e. going beyond information campaigns and taking a human security approach which recognises the underlying drivers for why people in the region have weapons and dealing with those specifically)<sup>40</sup>; focus on improving the role of SALW outreach in community policing activities; lack of measures to address SALW aspects of organised crime and corruption;; approaches to tackle the unaffordable costs of registering firearms; lack of funding on advancing gender equality/integrating the gender perspective; and general lack of engagement with (and by) parliamentarians.<sup>41</sup> These points emerged across various fora as questions about the approach and do merit further examination.

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<sup>40</sup> This could include approaches aimed at tackling the drivers of insecurity, access to opportunities, building trust in the state, among others.

<sup>41</sup> KII in the region 24 November-9 December 2022. At least one project has engaged with parliamentarians on a specific legislative issue.

### *Programmatic Performance of the Overall Fund*

**The Fund's Theory of Change is solidly structured although it does need some refinement.** The theory of change supports the efforts by jurisdictions to change themselves, supported politically by the international community and practically by donations drawn together by the fund. Given the context, these efforts are (necessarily) incremental. The theory of change provides broad guidance for the delivery of the majority of the Roadmap goals, although the linkage to goal 7 is indirect and does not describe specific types of change. Further refinement of the theory of change is required to ensure that it covers all goals and all key performance indicators. Analysis of the relationship between the goals and the key performance indicators suggests incomplete coverage (see also the comments above on this with the table showing projects goals and KPIs in the relevance section).

**It is not possible to assess whether the fund capitalisation is sufficient to meet its objectives – programming priorities (and fund capitalisation) merit further examination.** One question emerging is the extent to which the fund – which is of a relatively modest scale – is really able to cover the full range of ambitious goals to a meaningful extent and thus where priorities should lie. This factor and the analysis of the theory of change and KPIs (above) support the contention that it is necessary to elaborate the theory of change more clearly. It would then be possible to score projects against their specific effect on this as part of the programme management process, including funding decisions (see also comments on project results below). This process may have implications: either for the level of capitalisation required by the fund and any further resource mobilisation required to support the Roadmap; or, alternatively, that goals and priorities should be reassessed.

**The adequacy of resource mobilisation is an uncertain factor.** Taking the above comments into account, two countervailing resource factors impact on the fund. First the challenge in spending funding at sufficient pace. Donors will be concerned with this and the need to demonstrate results against spend. Second the predictability, reliability, and scale of future funding as well as any earmarking which are major factors in portfolio design. There were no obvious problems on future funding identified during interviews, but clearly it will impact programme and project management priorities and decisions.

**To what extent have the projects' activities been implemented, and the intended results and the specific objective/outcome achieved?** Currently projects are partially implemented. The individual project results frameworks<sup>42</sup> (and reporting) do not capture the relationship between outputs and outcomes.<sup>43</sup> Reporting<sup>44</sup> focusses heavily on outputs and there is no substantive discussion of outcomes. It is not possible to track the relevance or connection between specific activities conducted and the desired results – because there are no assumptions provided nor logic described. The degree of change at outcome level cannot therefore be assessed. What is clear is that there has generally been good progress yet also some significant implementation delays across the projects.

**Have there been any delays in the projects' initiation and implementation, what have been the causes, and have they been resolved? Were adequate steps taken by the project to adjust its implementation strategy to the new circumstances and needs imposed by COVID-19 pandemic relevant?** The COVID-19 pandemic had an effect in causing delays, although this is not the only, nor necessarily the main, factor.

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<sup>42</sup> Results frameworks are presented in the Project Documents and revisions.

<sup>43</sup> Noting that at the fund/programme level outcomes are the same as the Roadmap goals.

<sup>44</sup> MPTF Western Balkans SALW Control Roadmap MPFT Annual Report 2021. Western Balkans SALW Control Roadmap MPTF Quarterly Progress Reports: Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4 2021 and Q1, Q2, Q3 2022.

Operational delays and political decision making have also played a significant part. (See also comments on risk management in the impact section above). Whilst delays have been managed, including through the Steering Committee agreeing no-cost extensions, the loss of momentum will clearly have impacted efficiency and management overheads, including for the beneficiaries.

**The main lessons emerging from the implementation delays relate to the need for active risk identification and mitigation.** As already mentioned above, risk analysis and development of practical solutions, which are apposite to the context, is key. Human resource identification is a perennial challenge in the sub-region and this highlights the need to avoid assuming availability during planning and also to foster a sub-regional SALW community of practice in the SALW field. There is also a case for enhancing political engagement in order to reduce, or at least fully understand, risks.

**Local and other stakeholders appeared to be content with the quality of achieved outputs.** The research did not reveal concerns about the specific quality of outputs. The project governance mechanisms have in all cases monitored delivery. Whilst Local Coordination Meetings and Regional Coordination Meetings organised to review Roadmap implementation are important opportunities for SALW Commissions to provide a degree of monitoring and oversight of the support provided by others, specific monitoring, or oversight of individual project implementation by beneficiaries at the level of SALW commissions was much less visible.<sup>45</sup> It was noted that the UNDP project board structure is somewhat internally focused and that the real extent of quality assurance by the jurisdictions represented is not clear. Without exception beneficiaries were grateful for the support provided whilst acknowledging the significant additional workload presented by project management.<sup>46</sup>

#### *Conclusions on effectiveness*

**The fund is highly effective as a means of demonstrating support.** Nevertheless, assessing its effectiveness as a means of decisively tackling illicit SALW is more complex given the scope and scale of the problem and the resources available (as discussed above). The fund may be on too small a scale to have a lasting effect, although it is too early to reach a definitive judgement on this. Thus, for the remaining period and beyond, the question becomes whether to now double down on essentials and secure the gains – or to continue with a slightly thinly spread series of activities which nevertheless serve a wider a political purpose.

**To assist with answering this question, the evaluability of the fund needs to be improved.** This will help to sharpen the focus on impact, effectiveness (and sustainability). The theory of change, outcome level objectives and key performance indicators should be refreshed. There should be a clear focus on the specific logic of how outcomes will be achieved, and the specific resources and timeframe required to achieve these outcomes – bearing in mind the inherent delivery risks of operating in this area which have already been experienced. This approach should bring a focus onto priorities and the realities of resource mobilisation. All reporting at programme and fund level should include a strong focus on outcomes – this is how progress can be judged and will help to secure resources in future.

**This work on enhancing evaluability will provide a focus on the next steps needed to maintain the effectiveness of the fund for the remaining period.** The Steering Committee should take stock of the

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<sup>45</sup> This does not imply that project monitoring did not exist, but we were unable to find evidence of this.

<sup>46</sup> KIIs in the region 24 November-9 December 2022.



situation, including threats emerging, risks and the overall impact of delays and priorities and then use this to help shape the next phase. (This is further discussed in the sustainability section below).

**Effectiveness would be further enhanced by deepening two-way engagement with SALW commissions** particularly on matters of project identification, selection, and management. This will help to establish priorities (and areas of difficulty) and to ensure buy in and ownership. (But note comments on beneficiary workload under sustainability).

## Efficiency

**Resources provided for the projects appear to be adequate and are generally efficiently allocated although further emphasis on catalytic interventions would be welcome.** The Mid-Term Evaluation found no evidence of the projects experiencing a shortage of allocated funds. Nevertheless, given the finite resources available to the fund, this review underlines the need to seek catalytic interventions for most effect and to avoid making small contributions to large scale problems. This implies, for example, avoiding most large-scale military stockpile management;<sup>47</sup> or any procurement without establishing life cycle management processes;<sup>48</sup> and avoiding capacity building activities where effects cannot become self-sustaining by design.

**Some human resource shortfalls were evident.** For this subject matter there is a shortage of human capacity in the region and a ‘brain drain’ effect is prevalent and well known. This significantly impacts local institutions’ ability to recruit<sup>49</sup> and it can be difficult for implementing partners to find all types of expertise locally (which is preferable for local knowledge and relevancy of experience).<sup>50</sup> When necessary, it is important, but not always easy, to use international experts who actually know the region. Beyond this, it will be important to develop a self-sustaining community of practice for this sector.

**The project management arrangements and formal governance structures appear adequate and appropriate at the jurisdiction level.** Nevertheless, there remain some questions about the level, extent, and effect of the governance role of the SALW Commissions, whose roles and influence differ slightly in practice across the region, even though their mandates are similar.

**Utility of virtual meetings.** During the COVID-19 pandemic, in common with many other sectors, the MPTF projects were able to continue some activities virtually.<sup>51</sup> Whilst not always ideal, this was found to be pragmatic, cost effective and enabled the maintenance of management activity and some project delivery. Unsurprisingly many participants were keen to return to face-to-face activities as these are easier for establishing personal relationships, although the virtual media remain a valuable tool.

### *Conclusions on efficiency*

Notwithstanding its relatively modest scale, the MPTF’s selected projects have been efficiently resourced and supported. It is clear that efficiency in project execution remains a focus, and governance structures

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<sup>47</sup> Whilst only one project: EXPLODE+ focuses on this, there were many challenges faced with this project.

<sup>48</sup> Whilst some implementing partners anecdotally demonstrated basic provisions in place for life-cycle management, there were very limited examples of this outlined in any of the programme documentation assessed as part of the evaluation.

<sup>49</sup> Local economic factors and salary levels are also a significant factor. KII in the region 24 November-9 December 2022.

<sup>50</sup> Several projects identified capacity issues such as Strengthening Control, Administration and Social Attitudes Towards SALW and Cross-border Integrated Institutional Approach Towards Combatting IAT and SALW.

<sup>51</sup> KIIs in the region 24 November-9 December 2022. MPTF Western Balkans SALW Control Roadmap MPFT Annual Report 2021 p41.



are adequate to support this, although further efforts to encourage SALW Commissions' direct engagement would be beneficial. Ongoing efforts will be needed to resolve human resourcing challenges and the development of a sub-regional community of expertise on SALW issues should be fostered.

## Sustainability

**The extent to which achieved outcomes and outputs remain sustainable and whether these will lead to benefits beyond the lifespan of the project is challenging to assess.** Progress at the project outcome level is not defined or reported on.<sup>52</sup> The extent to which the individual benefits of capacity building are really internalised by institutions, and will remain in future, is very difficult to assess.<sup>53</sup> One particular challenge is the maintenance of equipment and how this would be taken on by beneficiaries. There were some efforts to establish basic repair capabilities, but it was unclear how expensive items of complex capital equipment would be sustained beyond the two-year guarantee period. There were some examples of train-the-trainer approaches, but other cases where this appeared to not be in place. In one case, the refresher training for canine capacities (K9) had been scheduled during the busy summer period when borders would be at their most active and most border police were needed to cover that.<sup>54</sup>

**The extent to which the projects strengthened and promoted local ownership and leadership varied.** There were instances where the target groups and other stakeholders had taken an active role in implementing the projects (particularly in the development legislative material and SOPs). At the expert technical level, interlocutors interviewed were uniformly enthusiastic about the support provided. Yet the incidence of either real broad-based political ownership of the work or specific political engagement to lead civil society on the importance of arms control was not evident. Sampling (in discussion with key informants) suggested also that civilian awareness and ownership appeared to be low (cultural and conflict related factors were also noted as highly relevant).

**To what extent have the capacities of relevant government institutions been strengthened? Will the results of the projects be sustained?** The overwhelming focus of projects is specifically on government capacity; thus, it is to be expected that there should be residual benefit. Nonetheless, the extent to which the individual projects are really internalised by institutions, and what will remain in a few years' time is very difficult to establish. Generally, it is quite early to judge the overall effect on capacities of the programme but there is no question that activity has been positive (notwithstanding delayed starts and some implementation delay). Whilst the project portfolio has not yet been delivered in full, KPIs show good levels of meaningful activity. The fund should now maintain a focus on improved operational performance (and reporting on that) plus the degree to which jurisdictions / institutions actually take forward, apply, and communicate the fruits of the projects (e.g., using harmonised legislation to secure convictions, applying increased field capacities (particularly across borders), and application of evidence-based policy and practice).

**Are lessons learnt documented by the funded projects on a regular basis?** Lessons are captured at project level.<sup>55</sup> Although the Evaluation Team were unable to find a consolidated list of these at fund level. Establishing such a list to identify and document progress on lessons would help to support the work of

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<sup>52</sup> This was also found during the Final Evaluation of the UNDP Regional Project, as well as a wider assessment of the implementation of the Roadmap itself.

<sup>53</sup> The large majority of jurisdictions' staff at KII saw a need for continuous external support.

<sup>54</sup> KIIs in the region 24 November-9 December 2022.

<sup>55</sup> Other than the 4 high lessons identified in the MPTF Western Balkans SALW Control Roadmap MPFT Annual Report 2021.

the Steering Committee and regional and local coordination meetings. It might also be beneficial to include an actions tracker alongside lessons, e.g., if the lesson is to digitise training and provide user access outside classes, then the action could be review other courses and decide if/how to resource digitisation.

### *Conclusions on sustainability*

Whilst the true degree of sustainability is difficult to establish, progress has been good. The fund should now maintain a twofold focus on: firstly, improved operational performance and the degree to which jurisdictions / institutions actually take forward and apply the work of the projects (e.g., using the harmonised legislation, increased capacities, and evidence-based policy and practice) etc; and secondly ensuring that gains made are secured.

To this end, implementing partners should conduct a specific sustainability audit and exit strategy planning before the closure of each project and make plans for capitalising on gains made, ensuring sustainment of intellectual material (SOPs etc) and physical equipment that has been provided, and promoting train the trainer etc. It would be preferable to use remaining resources on sustaining what has already been provided rather than spreading funds more thinly across further activities that may not get completed. This approach should inform the next phase of programming.

### Coherence

**The MPTF's SALW interventions demonstrate a high degree of compatibility within the Western Balkans sub region (and beyond). The MPTF and supporting implementers have worked to ensure complementarity, harmonisation and coordination with other relevant interventions of the jurisdictions in the Western Balkans, stakeholders and donors.**<sup>56</sup> Coordination with a wide range of relevant stakeholders (for example with representatives of SALW Commissions, ministries, technical working partners and donors, NATO, EU, INTERPOL, contractors etc) and complementarity are salient features of the work of the MPTF through SEESAC and implementing agencies. It was evident from the documentation reviewed, and particularly during field visits, that coordination activity was an ongoing, successful process which helped to underpin coherence. The existence of other strategies and plans including jurisdictions' own SALW strategies (also for example trafficking, organised crime, violent extremism) is generally well referenced in MPTF project documentation and quarterly and annual reporting. In some cases, other policies and strategies were a particular driver for how the project is designed and conducted.<sup>57</sup> On a practical note, it was evident that this coordination brought benefits including mutual understanding and deconfliction but also maintaining focus on key implementation issues. No specific cases of duplication of effort were identified.

**The activities of the fund generate a significant workload for beneficiary teams.** The project cycle generates considerable activity for jurisdictions' staff. The effort involved in supporting the process of identifying and justifying projects, contributing to writing bids, project development, implementation, and inputting into reporting is significant. Whilst there was no dissent in interviews on the need to feed the process it was clear that the impact of this was considerable. Within jurisdictions much of the effort, including contributing to ongoing reporting, falls onto small numbers of staff who are already busy with their own roles.<sup>58</sup> This factor would tend to detract from jurisdictions institutions' internal coherence.

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<sup>56</sup> High level KIIs.

<sup>57</sup> For example, the UNODC led Criminal Justice Response Against Arms Trafficking (regional project).

<sup>58</sup> KII in the region 24 November-9 December 2022.



Whilst local engagement and ownership are clearly desirable, it is suggested that creative ways be sought to reduce the bureaucratic load on key individuals. Options include reducing scope and the volume of project paperwork and focussing more on change using outcome based (operational) change stories as a main means of reporting.

### *Conclusions on coherence*

The MPTF's SALW interventions demonstrate a high degree of compatibility within the Western Balkans sub region (and beyond). The MPTF and supporting implementers have worked to ensure complementarity, harmonization, and coordination with other relevant interventions of the jurisdictions in the Western Balkans and other donors.

Whilst local engagement and ownership are clearly desirable, it is suggested that creative ways be sought to reduce the bureaucratic load on key individuals where possible. Options include reducing scope and the volume of project paperwork and focussing more on change using outcome-based change stories as a means of reporting.

### Communications

**The fund (as a whole, at the regional and international level) is well communicated externally to contributors and other stakeholders.** The fund has an extensive physical and virtual presence in the Western Balkans region and beyond. The activities of the fund (and notably the excellent work of SEESAC) are accessible, well known, and appear to be highly appreciated. The contributors and stakeholders in particular appreciate the salience of the fund's engagement, the available information, and the expertise that the fund brings.<sup>59</sup>

**Internally between the fund and beneficiaries, communication also works well.** The communications aspects of the coordination of the fund's activities through the steering group and as they relate to the Regional Coordination Meetings organised as part of Roadmap implementation is effective. These provide excellent opportunities for both formal and informal interaction and the maintenance of both political and the all-important technical relationships. SALW Commissions and specific beneficiaries do receive regular briefing (although as already noted, the extent to which two-way communication (and ownership) really occurs is unclear).

**At the level of individual jurisdictions and projects the effectiveness of communications appears less clear.** The review found limited examples of beneficiaries using internal communication about projects and the positive changes provided. The preponderance of project-related communications (using social media) was originated by implementing partners themselves.<sup>60</sup> Clearly this has some effect, yet it does not demonstrate that beneficiaries are fully taking ownership or making attempts to raise public awareness of the SALW issue and what is being done about it. Most jurisdiction partners involved in projects seemed unaware of the funding source. On a more positive note, it was clear from interviews that much informal communication does occur at the expert level both within the criminal justice chain

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<sup>59</sup> KII with donors and other stakeholders.

<sup>60</sup> MPTF Western Balkans SALW Control Roadmap MPFT Annual Report 2021. Western Balkans SALW Control Roadmap MPTF Quarterly Progress Reports: Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4 2021 and Q1, Q2, Q3 2022. It was also notable during KII in the region that interlocutors did not place particular outward emphasis on 'ownership'.

and in some cases across borders.<sup>61</sup> This indicates user satisfaction and a degree of ownership; however, this does not penetrate to the public domain.

### *Conclusions on communications*

External communications at Fund level are well developed and effective. There are two potential areas for further support at the jurisdiction level. The focus of communications with SALW commissions could be examined to ensure that it is fully effective in both directions. Jurisdictions should also be further encouraged to communicate both the practicalities of the support provided but also the concrete operational benefits that these bring. This would also have the effect of enhancing ownership and public awareness.

### Cross-cutting Principles and Values

The MPTF places specific importance on the advancement of gender equality, as well as integration of gender perspectives towards greater programme effectiveness. SEESAC is particularly active in this field.

**Programme design in some instances showed weaknesses on cross-cutting issues.** The extent and effectiveness to which the projects promoted gender equality, the empowerment of women, human rights and human development at the implementation stage is not clear. Project documentation refers to gender equality as a regular dimension during implementation - with gender mainstreaming integrated into project design, and plans for gender mainstreaming across implementation, and failure to achieve gender mainstreaming is identified as a risk.<sup>62</sup> However, apart from some gender-disaggregated data in reporting, there is very limited evidence of effective gender mainstreaming in project implementation and of the use of disaggregated analysis to improve the impact of SALW controls on women and girls at risk of armed violence.<sup>63</sup>

**The extent to which the projects have contributed to and promoted gender equality, empowerment of women, rights-based approach, and human rights in their planning and implementation appears limited.**

**Some good practice promoting positive changes in gender equality and human rights is evident.** The need to improve the collection and use of data at the operational level has been recognised, and SEESAC is currently supporting Firearm Focal Points in the Western Balkans to advance their capacities for gender-sensitive data collection and analysis (through training and forthcoming development of guidelines).<sup>64</sup>

**Gender and human rights mainstreaming could have been improved in planning, implementation and follow up.** The use of professional gender adviser(s) to analyse the positive and negative potential effects of the project concepts would mitigate the risk of unintended harms to men and women. Specific steps to improve this could include: use of gender-sensitive conflict analysis to confirm specific problems; more effort to include gender mainstreaming in all documentation; including gender as a key aspect of training and ensuring that there are sufficient numbers of women staff included; and ensuring that awareness raising and all communications have a gender dimension and are gender sensitive.

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<sup>61</sup> Practitioners interviewed were highly enthusiastic about the connections that had been developed - KII in the region 24 November-9 December 2022.

<sup>62</sup> Project Documents and revisions.

<sup>63</sup> MPTF Western Balkans SALW Control Roadmap MPFT Annual Report 2021. Western Balkans SALW Control Roadmap MPTF Quarterly Progress Reports: Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4 2021 and Q1, Q2, Q3 2022.

<sup>64</sup> Discussion and email from SEESAC staff 12 January 2023 07:34.

**The extent to which marginalised and disadvantaged groups have benefited from the work of the projects in such a way that encourages inclusion and safeguards the vulnerable is limited.** Whilst this is generally covered in the project documentation, no obvious impacts were identified in the reporting.

**Direct coverage of relevant UN values and principles is limited in project documentation and implementation.** Nevertheless, the implicit linkage of the MPTF's work to SDG 16 (Promote Peaceful and Inclusive Societies) is clear regarding illicit flows of weapons (SDG 16.4 Combat Organized Crime and Illicit Financial and Arms Flows). The same applies to SDG 5 (Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls). These linkages should be made more explicit.

#### *Conclusions on Cross-cutting principles and values*

High level policy and project documentation highlights the salience of cross cutting issues, and notes the risk of not achieving gender mainstreaming, but the performance of projects in practice does not match these policy aspirations. Progress, as reported, does not yet show significant results across these issues. The emphasis on these issues should be re-emphasised within projects, as is already the case with SEESAC's ongoing work on gender mainstreaming, UNODC's Strategy on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment and UNDP's Gender Strategy.

## **11. Lessons and Recommendations**

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This section offers lessons from the first phase of MPTF implementation. These should be considered both in the second phase of the current MPTF timeframe, and in any future arrangements (should the Roadmap be extended or renewed). These lessons are combined with practical recommendations for action by MPTF, UNDP, donors and jurisdictions. All recommendations are relevant to more than one OECD-DAC criteria and this is indicated in parentheses at the end of each recommendation.

*Lesson for the future 1. Focus on the big picture (but don't forget about delivery):* The MPTF is an important mechanism through which regional cooperation and confidence building has been incentivised and instrumentalised. These strategic impacts – which underpin the political aspects of the Roadmap go beyond the stated expected results for individual projects. As such, the MPTF portfolio can be described as more than just the sum of its parts: the aggregate overall impact is more significant than just the results of the individual projects. However, whilst maintaining strategic focus, an appropriate balance must be maintained between strategic, political and technical objectives to ensure that the MPTF supports practical change on the ground as well as coordination and commitment at higher levels.

*Recommendation 1:* Higher-level and strategic benefits which accrue from a well-curated portfolio of relevant projects should be captured in MPTF fund-level goals and tracked through regular reporting, with indicators relating to increased confidence and cooperation included as part of MEL frameworks. (impact, relevance, sustainability)

*Lesson for the future 2. Fund and project relevance:* Part of the success of the MPTF is that the overall Fund and the projects it has selected for funding have been clearly relevant both to the Roadmap and underpinning threats and priorities relating to SALW control across the Western Balkans region. However, there are areas in which Fund support has been less extensive, including for instance parts of the justice chain, and support for civil society and there is a broader lesson about the scale of the Fund being relatively small in comparison to the nature of the problem, suggesting that realism is important in terms of its scale of relevance to the Roadmap and the SALW problematic. Ensuring that this alignment is

maintained and further broadened is essential to its ongoing relevance, both to the region and to prospective partners and donors.

*Recommendation 2.1:* To maintain awareness of changes in the context, the MPTF Steering Committee could be kept updated on changes in political and security dynamics and priorities of key stakeholders. This could take the form of occasional briefings to the Steering Committee on threat and opportunity analysis. (relevance, effectiveness)

*Recommendation 2.2:* To ensure that the MPTF remains aligned with Roadmap priorities, at the point at which a decision is taken regarding the future of the current Roadmap (potentially an extension or a 'new' Roadmap), work should immediately begin to refocus the MPTF so that it is able to fund new priorities from the point at which any new Roadmap goes 'live'. (relevance, efficiency)

*Recommendation 2.3:* One of the functional areas of SALW control that has not been actively taken forwards during the first period of MPTF project funding is supporting wider civil society engagement with SALW control beyond being the target of, or involved in, awareness campaigns. Future MPTF funding for civil society (NGOs, business, media and academia amongst others) engagement as a means to help ensure the Roadmap remains aligned with local priorities and takes advantage of opportunities and initiatives would be a sound investment for the future. As such, establishing a civil society challenge fund should be considered which could fund innovative civil society-led projects aimed at supporting Roadmap and local SALW strategy and action plan commitments. (relevance, effectiveness, sustainability)

*Lesson for the future 3. The value of good programme design and management:* Whilst some of the strategic benefits (see Lesson 1) of the MPTF are visible, project design and management arrangements have not been fully effective in helping to attribute causality between project outputs and higher-level outcomes - and thus lasting operational improvements. As the MPTF reaches its planned conclusion it will be more important to ascertain the extent to which projects have achieved sustainable change (for instance the extent to which capacity building has led to increases in intelligence led operations).

*Recommendation 3:* Invest further in dynamic programme design and management, including theories of change which elaborate results chains and describe underpinning assumptions, results that capture contributions towards higher level outcomes, and moving beyond monitoring of deliverables to a learning-focused approach to M&E, which emphasises actual change and learning lessons that inform future implementation and funding decisions. (efficiency, effectiveness)

*Lesson for the future 4. Investing in people.* Despite overall good progress in MPTF funded project implementation, there is a relatively small cohort of committed people across the jurisdictions who carry a disproportionate weight of responsibility for ensuring that progress is maintained. In many cases, departments are in effect 'one deep' when it comes to human resource capacity for delivery of MPTF and wider Roadmap priorities. One of the important benefits of MPTF project implementation across the region is that it has helped connect professionals in different jurisdictions, providing the basis for a 'community of expertise', which in addition to assisting with specific implementation tasks, also has the potential to provide mutual recognition and support and to sustain inputs. This benefit is also reflected in SEESAC, both in terms of the makeup of the staff team and its long corporate history of providing technical support. Longer term sustainability of Roadmap gains is dependent on maintaining this human capacity and initiatives, including nurturing communities of practice, should be seen as an efficient as well as effective use of resources that will have a direct effect on sustainability in the future. A cohort of experts from across the region, could provide additional capacity at times of need as well as reducing reliance on

international experts from further afield. This community of expertise would complement existing Communities of Practice supported by SEESAC.

*Recommendation 4:* MPTF Steering Committee to consider funding projects which support human resource planning in partner ministries and agencies and identify additional opportunities for how implementing partners can continue to support investment in human capacities, including increasing technical skills and knowledge and encouraging cross-jurisdictional sharing and support, building on the significant support which has been provided both within and outside the framework of the MPTF. (effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability)

*Lesson for the future 5.* Sustainability should be sought, and not taken for granted. The Roadmap emphasizes the importance of sustainability, as does the guidance for MPTF funding. However, there is relatively little attention paid in project design, implementation and monitoring to whether intended levels of sustainability will be achieved.

*Recommendation 5.* At this stage in the MPTF process, all ongoing projects should be assessed to ascertain the degree of sustainability, and where necessary, additional focus should be placed on managed exits or transfer to other support to enhance the chances of benefits being sustained once project funding has ended. For future MPTF projects, sustainability assessments should be concluded as part of ongoing monitoring and reporting, and cost and no-cost extensions decisions should take likely sustainability into account. (effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability)

*Lesson for the future 6.* Report what is needed, not what is done. There is a fine balance between requiring reporting that is necessary for good dynamic project management and that which has the appearance of being comprehensive, but which in reality adds little to overall understandings. When using MPTF funds and funding provided through other sources (NATO, EU, bilateral supporters), the reporting burden has in some cases been disproportionate to the scale and likely benefit of work being undertaken. Donor focus on areas in which reporting and data can be shared or counted against multiple reports would help reduce time spent on reporting, and allow more focus on implementation.

*Recommendation 6:* Consider reforming MPTF reporting requirements so that they focus on results and higher-level outcomes rather than tracking project inputs. MPTF Steering Group should actively coordinate with other funders to identify ways in which reporting can be streamlined. (efficiency, coherence)

*Lesson for the future 7.* Communications is a two-way street. Whilst efforts to create visibility of MPTF projects have been observable, a more sustained approach to communications in a broader sense appears less systematic. To achieve some of the harder aspects of SALW control – such as changes in public attitudes and underpinning social norms – broader partnerships and a deeper engagement with the wider citizenry is essential.

*Recommendation 7.1:* Identify opportunities for MPTF to support communications between SALW Commissions and local populations in a way that seeks genuine engagement and would in turn benefit the design and implementation of effective MPTF projects. This could include seeking views on SALW strategies and action plans, as well as consultations on changes to laws and procedures. (effectiveness, coherence, sustainability)

*Recommendation 7.2:* Consider broadening of jurisdiction level partnerships to encourage the engagement and involvement of local politicians, the private sector and civil society and MPTF to consider making funding available to support this objective. (effectiveness, coherence, sustainability)





*Lessons for the future 8. Action on gender must be incentivised.* Whilst there are numerous commitments to tackling gender equality in the MPTF and its projects, these have yet to have a significant effect on the ground on equality in a practical sense. This is partly due to the deep-rooted and systemic challenges related to gender norms in society. It is also in part due to the lack of direct funding for projects which explicitly aim to improve gender equality as part of Roadmap implementation.

*Recommendation 8.* During future MPTF calls for proposals, at least one project, ideally cross-border or regional which focusses solely on gender equality, should be considered to add to other support provided outside the MPTF framework. Potential foci could include establishing cohorts of woman technical advisers, establishing regional verification tools led by women, and encouraging recruitment of women into senior roles at the jurisdiction levels.

## Annex 1 – Mid-Term Evaluation Terms of Reference<sup>65</sup>

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### Rationale

The mid-term evaluation is conducted in line with the requirements of the Fund’s Term of Reference and Operations Manual. The evaluation is meant to provide a clearer understanding of the progress made by the Fund and the projects implemented by UNDP and UNODC, and the challenges and lessons learnt from implementation. The findings and recommendations generated by the evaluation will be used by the Fund’s Steering Committee, the Secretariat, the MPTF Office, and the Participating UN Organizations to strengthen the remaining implementation of the Fund and inform future programming. The evaluation is conducted back-to-back with the final evaluation of the UNDP regional project supporting the Roadmap implementation and funded by the Germany, given the common objectives and implementing organizations (i.e. UNDP Offices in the Western Balkans). The UNDP regional project was established as a kick-off initiative before the Trust Fund was fully operational. The regional project led the way for replication and scaling up of SALW control initiatives implemented by the UNDP Offices in the Western Balkans.

### Objectives

The objective of the mid-term evaluation is to analyse the Fund's functioning and performance and provide forward-looking recommendations for the future support of the Fund to the Roadmap implementation, based on broader evidence. In a substantive analysis of the effectiveness of the funded projects’ approach and feedback from beneficiaries, the evaluation aims to assess cause and effect relations, identifying the extent to which the observed changes can be attributed to the funded projects. The evaluation will thus enable partners and stakeholders to form a better understanding of the Trust Fund achievements and those of the individual Fund projects, their challenges, and areas for improvement. The evaluation will support learning and accountability towards its stakeholders.

### Scope

The evaluation will assess the Fund’s performance to understand the extent to which the Fund has been able to support the Western Balkan authorities’ efforts in the implementation of the Western Balkans SALW Control Roadmap. The evaluation will look at three aspects: i) the performance of the Trust Fund Management and Governance, ii) the programmatic performance of the overall Fund, through assessments of the funded projects implemented by the Participating UN Organizations, and iii) the strategic performance of the Fund<sup>66</sup>. The evaluation will document lessons learnt and provide recommendations for improving the design, operationalization and governance of the Fund in order to increase its effectiveness and efficiency and achieve relevant and sustainable results.

The evaluation will cover the period from the establishment of the fund in March 2019 to 31 December 2021.

Apart from desk review of key documents (see Attachment 2), the evaluation will draw from interviews with all parties involved, including SALW Commissions and other project beneficiaries, donor partners, implementing organizations, key international, regional, and local organizations (see Attachment 1). The emphasis will be to conduct a pragmatic evaluation that compliments existing information.

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<sup>65</sup> To note, this does not represent the ToR in its entirety but the relevant section to demonstrate the key requirements, scope and focus of the Mid-Term Evaluation.

<sup>1</sup> A separate mid-term evaluation of the overall Roadmap is also planned.

The evaluation will take into consideration the political, economic and social changes that occurred during the three years of implementation of Fund, and in particular the challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

### ***EVALUATION CRITERIA AND KEY QUESTIONS***

The Fund evaluation should be guided by the following questions, to determine the programmatic and strategic performance of the Fund and its governance and management bodies. The evaluation questions are summarized below.

#### **Performance of the Trust Fund Management and Governance**

- Are the structure and procedures of the Fund Governance (Steering Committee and Secretariat) efficient and effective for delivering decisions?
- Is the Secretariat properly resourced and funded (if the case)?
- Is decision-making transparent, based on evidence, and undertaken in a timely manner?
- Is the Steering Committee, the Fund's decision-making body, able to adopt corrective measures, where necessary?
- Have any areas for improvement of efficiency, effectiveness and transparency of project identification, selection, and approval procedures been identified? What could be done better?
- Has project selection resulted in a portfolio of relevant and quality funded projects? Are the projects fitting together in a coherent portfolio?

#### **Programmatic Performance of the Overall Fund**

- Does the Fund have a clear Theory of Change? What has been the progress so far? Does the Theory of Change need to be refined?
- Is the Fund capitalization sufficient to meet its objectives? Does the Fund count with an effective resource mobilizations strategy?
- Looking at the individual funded projects, how relevant, effective, efficient, and sustainable are the Fund and its interventions? Are relevant UN values and principles addressed? Is the Fund well communicated amongst contributors, beneficiaries, and other stakeholders?

The performance of the individual projects should be assessed following six criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, cross-cutting principles and values, and communication. **The project-level assessment should feed into a consolidated assessment of the overall Fund performance.**

#### **a. Relevance**

- To what extent have the funded projects supported the Western Balkans jurisdictions' efforts towards meeting the Roadmap goals and targets, and the specific needs/priorities of the target groups and beneficiaries? What is the project impact and benefit on the implementation of the Roadmap? What would the implementation of the Roadmap have been like without the projects' intervention in the area of concern?
- What are the positive or negative, intended or unintended, changes brought about by the project's interventions?
- Are the SALW Commissions in each jurisdiction steering the projects' design and implementation? How?
- Have all relevant risks been considered when designing the projects, and are the risks regularly monitored and updated to respond to any changes in the environment in which the projects are

implemented?

- To what extent has the project been successful in ensuring complementarity, harmonization and coordination with other relevant interventions of the governments in the Western Balkans and other donors, avoiding duplication of efforts and adding value?

#### **b. Effectiveness**

- Are the projects' results frameworks well defined and relevant to measure the achievement of the project objective and results?
- To what extent have the projects' activities been implemented, and the intended results and the specific objective/outcome achieved? What are the main accomplishments of each project?
- Have there been any delays in the projects' initiation and implementation, what have been the causes, and have they been resolved? Were adequate steps taken by the project to adjust its implementation strategy to the new circumstances and needs imposed by COVID-19 pandemic relevant? What lessons have been learnt from these cases?
- Is the quality of achieved outputs satisfactory? To what extent are key stakeholders/final beneficiaries satisfied with the project implementation and the outputs delivered? Is there anything that can be improved and how? What are some of the specific challenges in the area of concern?
- Have the funded projects through their achievements/outputs been effective in supporting the Western Balkans jurisdictions in the implementation of the Roadmap and the achievement of the Roadmap goals and targets?
- Are the funded projects adequately monitored by their governance mechanisms including the SALW commissions, implementing organizations, donors?

#### **c. Efficiency**

- Is the requested and provided funding sufficient to meet the needs identified by the projects?
- Have resources (financial, human, technical) been allocated strategically and economically to achieve the projects' results?
- Is the relationship between project inputs and results achieved appropriate and justifiable?
- Have there been any weaknesses in programme design, management, human resource skills, and resources?
- Are the management arrangements and governance structures of the funded projects adequate and appropriate at the jurisdiction level?

#### **d. Sustainability**

- To what extent are the achieved outcomes and outputs sustainable? Will the outputs lead to benefits beyond the lifespan of the project?
- To what extent have the projects strengthened and promoted local ownership and leadership? To what extent have the target groups and other stakeholders taken an active role in implementing the project?
- To what extent have the capacities of relevant government institutions been strengthened to sustain the results of the projects?
- What are the elements that do not deliver sustainable results?
- What are the innovations/ best practices that need to be further build upon?

- Are lessons learnt been documented by the funded projects on a regular basis?

**e. Cross-cutting principles and values**

- To what extent have the projects contributed to and promoted gender equality, empowerment of women, rights-based approach and human rights in their planning and implementation?
- Are there any good practices in promoting positive changes in gender equality?
- Could gender mainstreaming have been improved in planning, implementation or follow up?
- To what extent have the marginalized or disadvantaged groups benefited from the work of the projects?

**f. Communications**

- Do projects have a proper external communications strategy or action plan? Is the individual contributors' visibility adequately ensured?
- Is the internal communication with stakeholders regular and effective? Are the project beneficiaries and key stakeholders aware of the project activities and results? If needed, how could stakeholder awareness be improved?
- Do the project beneficiaries show ownership of the projects' results through the communication of project activities on their own channels?

**Strategic Performance of the Fund**

- What is the strategic contribution of the Fund to the Western Balkans priorities in relation to the implementation of the Roadmap?
- To what extent have there been synergies and interlinkages between the interventions of the Fund and other Funds and initiatives contributing to the Roadmap implementation? And how can the Fund build on or expand them?
- Have the Implementing Organizations established new partnerships, or consolidated critical ones?
- Have the Implementing Organizations leveraged additional resources, or scaled up their projects?
- What are the key lessons learnt to improve the design, operationalization, management and governance of the Fund to make results impactful and sustainable?
- Are the lessons learned in the Fund being shared and applied with other funding mechanisms and regions that may share similar challenges?

The evaluation needs to assess the degree to which the project initiatives have supported or promoted gender equality, a rights-based approach, and human development. In this regard, United Nations Evaluation Group's guidance on Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation should be consulted.

**METHODOLOGY**

The Evaluation Team will propose an evaluation methodology and agree on a detailed plan for the assignment as a part of the evaluation Inception Report. The proposed methodology should employ innovating participatory approaches, relevant quantitative, qualitative or combined methods to conduct the evaluation, based on diverse ecosystem of evidence, using gender sensitive data collection and analytical methods and tools applicable in the concrete case. The Evaluation Team is expected to combine the standard and other evaluation tools and techniques to ensure maximum reliability of data and validity

of the evaluation findings. These methods and approaches need to generate feedback loops and insights for transformational change. Stakeholder participation is an important source of data which can mitigate observational biases. The Evaluation Recommendations will be forward looking and focused on adaptation in the changing system addressed by the Project intervention.

Limitations to the chosen approach/methodology and methods shall be made explicit by the Evaluation Team and the consequences of these limitations discussed in the proposed methodology. The Evaluation Team shall, to the extent possible, present mitigation measures to address these limitations.

The Evaluation Team is expected to carry out the evaluation process with careful consideration of these Terms of References. In cases where sensitive or confidential issues are to be addressed in the evaluation, the Evaluation Team should ensure an evaluation design that do not put informants and stakeholders at risk during the data collection phase or the dissemination phase.

As general guidance, the methodology would suggest the following data collecting methods:

- **Desk review:** The Evaluation Team will conduct a detailed review of the project materials and deliverables including the Project Document/Description of the Action, theory of change and results framework, monitoring and project quality assurance reports, annual workplans, consolidated progress reports etc. *An indicative list of documents for desk review is provided in Attachment 2.*
- **Key informant interviews:** The Evaluation Team will interview representatives of the SALW Commissions, project beneficiaries and partners, project implementors, and other relevant stakeholders in all Western Balkans jurisdictions, as well as representatives of the Steering Committee, the Secretariat, the MPTF Office, and other donors. For the interviews, the Evaluation Team is expected to design evaluation questions around the indicated evaluation questions, according to different stakeholders to be interviewed. *An indicative list of main stakeholders that may be considered for meetings is provided in Attachment 1.*
- **Meetings / focus group discussions with SALW Commissions and project beneficiaries:** 1-2 site visits per Western Balkans jurisdictions will be arranged to discuss with stakeholders and review the results. The visits shall be conducted in tandem with the visits planned within the final evaluation of the UNDP regional project supporting the Roadmap implementation and funded by Germany. The evaluation team is requested to respect the COVID-19-related measures in place in the respective jurisdiction.
- Other methodologies, as appropriate, such as case studies, statistical analysis, social network analysis, etc.

**Note:** *As of 11 March 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a global pandemic as the new coronavirus rapidly spread to all regions of the world. If it is not possible to travel to or within the jurisdiction for the evaluation then the evaluation team should develop a methodology that takes this into account the conduct of the evaluation virtually and remotely, including the use of remote interview methods and extended desk reviews, data analysis, surveys and evaluation questionnaires. This should be detailed in the Inception report and agreed with the Secretariat.*

*If a data collection/field mission is not possible then remote interviews may be undertaken through telephone or online (skype, zoom etc.). International consultants can work remotely with national evaluator support in the field if it is safe for them to operate and travel.*

*A short validation mission may be considered if it is confirmed to be safe for staff. International consultants can work remotely with national evaluator support in the field if it is safe for them to operate and travel.*

**No stakeholders, consultants or staff of the Trust Fund should be put in harm's way and safety is the key priority.**

The final methodological approach, including interview schedule, field visits, and data to be used in the evaluation should be clearly outlined in the inception report and be fully discussed and agreed between the Secretariat and the Evaluation Team.

### ***EVALUATION TASKS / DELIVERABLES***

Following the initial briefing and a detailed desk review, the Evaluation Team will be responsible for delivering the following products and tasks:

- **Inception Report** (10-15 pages) will be presented before the evaluation starts. The inception report sets out the conceptual framework to be applied in the evaluation. It includes the understanding of the evaluation objectives, theory of change, evaluation questions and possible sub-questions, defines the detailed methodology, and provides information on data sources and collection, sampling and key indicators. The Inception Report should elaborate an **evaluation matrix** (template available in Attachment 3) and propose a schedule of tasks, activities and evaluation deliverables.
- **Evaluation and data collection missions:** Upon the approval of the Inception Report and the evaluation work plan by the UNDP, the Evaluation Team is expected to carry out the project evaluation. To collect data and insights on the project, the Evaluation Team will undertake at least one field mission per jurisdiction and have meetings and interviews with relevant stakeholders, including SALW Commissions, project beneficiaries, UNDP and UNODC project teams, other stakeholders as relevant. The Trust Fund Secretariat will provide support in establishing initial contact with the authorities before the organization of meetings and identifying interpreters and covering the costs of the interpretation (if required). Following the field missions, and prior to the drafting of the evaluation report, the Evaluation Team will debrief the Secretariat with preliminary findings.
- **Draft Evaluation Report:** Based on the findings generated through desk review and data collection missions, the Evaluation Team will prepare and submit the Draft Evaluation Report to the Trust Fund Secretariat. **The Findings and conclusions section of the report should include both findings from the assessment of the individual funded projects, and findings relevant to the programmatic, strategic, and management performance of the overall Trust Fund.**
- **Evaluation review process** (and eventual dispute settlement): Comments, questions, suggestions and requests for clarification on the evaluation draft will be submitted to the Evaluation Team and addressed in the agreed timeframe. The Evaluation Team should reply to the comments through an **evaluation audit trail document** and not directly in the draft report. If there is disagreement in findings, these should be documented through the evaluation audit trail, while effort should be made to come to an agreement.
- **Evaluation debriefings:** Once the evaluation draft report is agreed upon with the Secretariat, the Evaluation Team will participate in at least two debriefing meetings to present the findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the evaluation to all relevant stakeholders. The meetings are expected to take place online.
- **Evaluation Report** (maximum 50 pages of the main body) should be logically structured, contain data and evidence-based findings, conclusions, lessons and forward-looking recommendations, and be presented in a way that makes the information accessible and comprehensible. The Evaluation Team should be ready to participate in presentations of the final evaluation, and present the findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the evaluation. The final report will be formally approved by the Steering Committee.



- **Consolidated findings report** (maximum 10 pages) should include consolidated findings, challenges, lessons learnt, and forward-looking recommendations of this evaluation and the final evaluation of the UNDP regional project supporting the Roadmap implementation. The report should highlight synergies and provide a consolidated and analytical picture of the two evaluations' findings.

**Note:** *In line with the UNDP's financial regulations, when determined by UNDP and/or the service provider that a deliverable or service cannot be satisfactorily completed due to the impact of COVID-19 and limitations to the evaluation, that deliverable or service will not be paid. Due to the current COVID-19 situation and its implications, a partial payment may be considered if the contractor invested time towards the deliverable but was unable to complete to circumstances beyond his/her control.*





### Annex 1a – Mid-Term Evaluation Schedule of Tasks, Timelines and Final Evaluation Deliverables

Activity	Estimated # of days	Date of completion	Place	Responsible party
<b>Phase One: Desk review and inception report</b>				
Meeting briefing with the Trust Fund Secretariat	-	At the time of contract signing, est. week of 7 November 2022	Online	Evaluation Team/ Secretariat
Sharing of the relevant documentation with the evaluation team	-	At the time of contract signing, est. week of 7 November 2022		Secretariat
Desk review, Evaluation design, methodology and updated workplan including the list of stakeholders to be interviewed	4 days	Within one week of contract signing est. week of 14 November 2022	Home-based	Evaluation Team
Submission of the inception report (10-15 pages)	-	Within two weeks of contract signing, 17 November 2022		Evaluation Team
Comments and approval of inception report	-	Within three days of submission of the inception report, est. week of 21 November 2022	Online	Evaluation Manager/ Secretariat
<b>Phase Two: Data-collection mission</b>				
Consultations and field visits and interviews	12 -14 interview days plus required travel days	24 November – 9th December	Field visits in 6 jurisdictions	Evaluation Team/ Secretariat to facilitate contacts for interviews
Debriefing to Evaluation Manager/Secretariat	0.5 day	Within one week after the consultation and field visits are conducted, est. 16 December 2022	Online	Evaluation Team, Secretariat
<b>Phase Three: Evaluation report writing</b>				
Preparation of draft evaluation report (50 pages maximum of the main body of the report), executive summary (4-5 pages)	7 days	Within two weeks of the completion of the field mission	Home-based	Evaluation Team
Draft report submission	-	Est. 16 January 2023		Evaluation Team
Consolidated Secretariat and key stakeholder comments to the draft report	-	Within one week of submission of the draft evaluation report, est. 23 January 2023	Online	Evaluation Manager/ Secretariat
Debriefings with Secretariat	0.5 day	Est 15 February 2023	Online	Secretariat/ Evaluation Team
Finalization of the evaluation report incorporating additions and comments and submission of the report to UNDP (50 pages maximum of the main body)	5 days	Est. 20 February, with presentation of Evaluation Results by 28 February 2023	Home-based	Evaluation Team
Finalization of consolidated findings report alongside finalisation of MPTF MTE	0.5 day	Est. 20 February 2023	Home-based	Evaluation Team
<b>Estimated total days for the evaluation</b>	<b>31-33 (excluding travel days for field mission)</b>			

## Annex 2 – Data Collection Instruments

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### Introduction – Guidance for the interview

The interviews and group discussions will intend to capture the following findings:

1. *What are the key lessons learned, identified risks and opportunities in the implementation of the MPTF projects?*
2. *Are there specific aspects of the project implementation that have been identified as good practices or lessons learned, used in other geographic or thematic areas?*
3. *Have organizations and donors effectively supported the implementation of the Western Balkans Roadmap through these projects? What have been the challenges? What should improve in the future?*
4. *Is the distribution of support reflecting the priorities of the project implementation? Are there areas/needs within the projects where the support provided has been identified to be more limited or non-existent?*
5. *What evidence can respondents give that illustrates progress or lack of progress against the Western Balkans Roadmap?*

This will be explained at the beginning of the interview. Where necessary, the interview will make a distinction between the MPTF Mid-Term Evaluation and the final evaluation of UNDP Regional Project in support of the Roadmap implementation (and include the MTR where necessary) – this will be adapted to the stakeholder being interviewed. Not all questions will be asked during every interview or discussion - these will be adapted according to the stakeholder(s), drawing on the questions below which are an overview of the key issues identified. For example, questions for donors will focus on the strategic level, while for other stakeholders, focus will be more granular looking at implementation of specific projects. It must also be noted that the way in which questions are asked will also be adapted to ensure that they are appropriate for the stakeholder in question. Questionnaires will be sent to stakeholders ahead of interview with the questions already adapted.

### Relevance

*What is/was the relevance (and strategic performance) of the MPTF/specific project in terms of Road Map goals & targets, as well as regional, country-specific and local needs? Any gaps – what could not be achieved or prioritised?*

- Degree of positive / negative change achieved versus actual needs of the context. Risks of firearms and explosives misuse, illicit use and trafficking. Details on perceived / actual gaps.
- Synergies and linkages across the programme (and externally).
- How well is it tailored to needs and what specific impacts achieved (positive/negative/unintended)?

### Effectiveness

*Have the projects/MPTF been managed effectively: have quality outcomes been achieved. Degree of stakeholder satisfaction with these? What lessons have been learned and applied?*

- Quality of TOC, programme design, management tools, RFs, risk management etc. Application of UN values. [Mostly from literature, but interviewees may have views.]
- Have the right outputs and outcomes been achieved? Quality of results (and measurement)?
- Effective identification and use of lessons to improve - both for projects and regionally?



- Covid 19, political, social, economic impact on delivery and how managed. Any other constraints / delays?

### **Efficiency**

*To what extent has the use of available resources been efficient across the project/MPTF? Any lessons?*

- Effective (economical) application and management of resources provided: does programme governance work? (Particularly by SALW commissions – need examples).
- Any leverage of additional resources achieved? Any resource gaps?
- Management overhead issues [not in terms of reference, but donors will be interested].

### **Sustainability**

*What the sustainability of the outputs and outcomes that have been delivered in [jurisdiction/project] - to what extent are these durable and impactful beyond project lifespan?*

- Any sustainability glitches?
- Any sustainability best practices emerging (and have lessons been applied)?
- Has local ownership been a driving factor? Any examples of good take-up here?
- Have government institutions been strengthened (and will this be durable)?
- What are the takeaways on sustainability and what should be the next steps in this area?

### **Cross-cutting principles & values**

*Have gender equality, empowerment of women and a rights-based approach been both contributed to and promoted during planning and implementation?*

- Good practices and lessons?
- Potential for improvements to mainstreaming in planning and implementation?
- Results for marginalised / disadvantaged groups – any benefit from the work?

### **Communications**

*What communications strategy was used across the project/MPTF and was it effective?*

- Any lessons on improving stakeholder awareness?
- Have beneficiaries taken ownership and actually communicated results themselves?

### **Regional and Strategic level performance**

*Management, alignment, and impact of the project/MPTF from a regional and strategic perspective?*

- Extent that programme catalysed new partnerships or approaches leading to action.
- Extent that programme harmonised / avoided duplication with other in region interventions.
- Extent to which management arrangements effective for the regional context.
- Any lessons to be shared with others (funding mechanisms and regions)?

### **Final questions**

- *Any driving factors or issues that we have failed to ask about?*
- *Request permission to follow up for any additional information / gaps (email if needed).*

### Annex 3 – Stakeholders Interviewed

The following stakeholders were interviewed as part of the Mid-Term Evaluation of the Multi-Partner Trust Fund:

<b>Total number of interviews conducted for Mid-Term Evaluation of MPTF</b>	75
Total number of individuals interviewed for Mid-Term Evaluation of MPTF	110
Total number of men interviewed for MTE	67
Total number of women interviewed for MTE	43

<b>Breakdown of interviewees per jurisdiction<sup>67</sup></b>	
Belgrade	26 (13 M/ 13 W)
Podgorica	8 (4 M/4 W)
Pristina	13 (12 M/ 1 W)
Sarajevo and Banja Luka	17 (11 M/ 6 W)
Skopje	13 (6 M/ 7 W)
Tirana	15 (10 M/ 5 W)
Regional/Remote	18 (11 M/ 7 W)

<b>Breakdown of interviewees per institution</b>	
Security Sector (Includes Police/MoI/MoD/MoIA/Customs/Export Control/Ballistics/Forensics)	45 (32 M/ 13 W)
Prosecutors	6 (5 M/1 W)
MoJ/Judges/Courts/Judicial Training Centres	10 (3 M/7 W)
Ministry of Economy/Civil Affairs/Ministry of Foreign Affairs	1 (0 M/1 W)
Implementers (UNDP, UNODC, NABIS, INTERPOL)	35 (20 M/ 15 W)
MPTF Governance Structure <sup>68</sup>	13 (7 M/6 W)

A full breakdown of all of the interviewees can be provided on request.

<sup>67</sup> As demonstrated in the breakdown in the following table, this includes representatives of government institutions, donors and international organisations, as well as any other relevant stakeholder such as implementing partners. It must be noted that the Evaluation Team also had several discussions with civil society organisations more broadly during the field mission, so these findings have also been incorporated into the report.

<sup>68</sup> To note that some members of the MPTF Governance Structure are donors, as well as members of the governance structure such as the Steering Committee. This is listed in detail in the MPTF Project Interviewee List sent as an attachment to this report.

## Annex 4 – Document Reference List

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1. Roadmap for a Sustainable Solution to the Illegal Possession, Misuse and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) and Their Ammunition in the Western Balkans, by 2024.
2. Albania Action Plan 2022-2024. Decision No. 754, dated 9/12/2021 On the Approval of the Action Plan 2022-2024 of the Small Arms, Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Explosives Control Strategy 2019 – 2024.
3. Albania – Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Explosives Control Strategy 2019 – 2024.
4. Small Arms and Light Weapons Control Strategy in Bosnia and Herzegovina 2021 – 2024.
5. Kosovo Action Plan for Control of Small and Light Weapons and Explosives 2017 – 2021.
6. Montenegro: Strategy for Combating Illegal Possession, Misuses and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) and their Ammunition from 2019 to 2025. Podgorica, November 2018.
7. North Macedonia: National Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) Control Strategy and Action Plan, 2017 – 2021 (Revised Version).
8. Serbia: Action Plan for the Implementation of the SALW Control Strategy for the Period 2019 -2020.
9. Roadmap Key Performance Indicators (KPI) Regional Reporting Framework, 1 January – 31 December 2018. 1<sup>st</sup> KPI Report.
10. Regional Narrative Progress Report on the Implementation of the Roadmap. Progress information on the Roadmap Goals Overall Targets. 1 January – 31 December 2018. 1<sup>st</sup> Narrative Report.
11. Roadmap Key Performance Indicators (KPI) Regional Reporting Framework, 1 January – 30 June 2019. 2<sup>nd</sup> KPI Report.
12. Regional Narrative Progress Report on the Implementation of the Roadmap. Progress information on the Roadmap Goals Overall Targets. 1 January – 30 June 2019. 2<sup>nd</sup> Narrative Report.
13. Roadmap Key Performance Indicators (KPI) Regional Reporting Framework, 1 July – 31 December 2019. 3<sup>rd</sup> KPI Report.
14. Regional Narrative Progress Report on the Implementation of the Roadmap, 1 July – 31 December 2019. 3<sup>rd</sup> Narrative Report.
15. Roadmap Key Performance Indicators (KPI) Regional Reporting Framework, 1 January – 30 June 2020. 4<sup>th</sup> KPI Report.
16. Regional Narrative Progress Report on the Implementation of the Roadmap, 1 January – 30 June 2020. 4<sup>th</sup> Narrative Report.
17. Roadmap Key Performance Indicators (KPI) Regional Reporting Framework, 1 July – 31 December 2020. 5<sup>th</sup> KPI Report.
18. Regional Narrative Progress Report on the Implementation of the Roadmap, 1 July – 31 December 2020. 5<sup>th</sup> Narrative Report.
19. Roadmap Key Performance Indicators (KPI) Regional Reporting Framework, 1 January – 30 June 2021. 6<sup>th</sup> KPI Report.
20. Regional Narrative Progress Report on the Implementation of the Roadmap, 1 January – 30 June 2021. 6<sup>th</sup> Narrative Report.
21. Roadmap Key Performance Indicators (KPI) Regional Reporting Framework, 1 July – 31 December 2021. 7<sup>th</sup> KPI Report.
22. Regional Narrative Progress Report on the Implementation of the Roadmap, 1 July – 31 December 2021. 7<sup>th</sup> Narrative Report.
23. Contribution by Regional and International Organisations – Roadmap for a sustainable solution to the illegal possession, misuse and trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) and their ammunition in the Western Balkans by 2024. 1<sup>st</sup> Report.



24. Contribution by Regional and International Organisations – Roadmap for a sustainable solution to the illegal possession, misuse and trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) and their ammunition in the Western Balkans by 2024. 2<sup>nd</sup> Report.
25. Contribution by Regional and International Organisations – Roadmap for a sustainable solution to the illegal possession, misuse and trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) and their ammunition in the Western Balkans by 2024. 3<sup>rd</sup> Report.
26. Contribution by Regional and International Organisations – Roadmap for a sustainable solution to the illegal possession, misuse and trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) and their ammunition in the Western Balkans by 2024. 4<sup>th</sup> Report.
27. Contribution by Regional and International Organisations – Roadmap for a sustainable solution to the illegal possession, misuse and trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) and their ammunition in the Western Balkans by 2024. 5<sup>th</sup> Report.
28. Contribution by Regional and International Organisations – Roadmap for a sustainable solution to the illegal possession, misuse and trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) and their ammunition in the Western Balkans by 2024. 6<sup>th</sup> Report.
29. Contribution by Regional and International Organisations – Roadmap for a sustainable solution to the illegal possession, misuse and trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) and their ammunition in the Western Balkans by 2024. 7<sup>th</sup> Report.

#### **Western Balkans SALW Control Roadmap MPTF**

1. General documents on establishing and managing multi-partner trust funds
2. MPTF Memorandum of Understanding – link doesn't work online.
3. MPTF Terms of Reference.
4. MPTF Operations Manual
5. MPTF Risk Matrix
6. MPTF Results Matrix
7. MPTF Resource Mobilization Action Plan
8. Standard Administrative Arrangement (SAA) for the MPTF
9. Steering Committee meeting minutes
10. Guidelines for calls for proposals 2019, 2020
11. Steering Committee evaluation reports and decisions on selected project proposals
12. Project documents of approved projects and annexes (project results frameworks, project budgets, multi-year annual work plans, project risk matrixes):
  - a. Halting Arms and Lawbreaking Trade (HALT) in Bosnia and Herzegovina, implemented by UNDP in Sarajevo and UNODC, project budget: \$2,200,000, implementing period: 20 February 2020 – 30 September 2022
  - b. Support to Combating Illicit Arms Trafficking in Kosovo for Criminal Police (CPIAT), implemented by UNDP in Pristina, project budget: \$660,000, implementing period: 20 February 2020 – 30 June 2022
  - c. Criminal Justice Response Against Arms Trafficking (regional project), implemented by UNODC, project budget: \$1,899,999, implementing period: 20 February 2020 – 30 September 2022
  - d. Urgent Action on Ammunition Destruction - Project EXPLODE+, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, implemented by UNDP in Sarajevo, project budget: \$583,546, implementing period: 20 February 2020 – 31 October 2022
  - e. Strengthening Control, Administration and Social Attitudes Towards SALW, implemented by UNDP in Tirana, project budget: \$1,661,314, implementing period: 14 December 2020 – 14 December 2022
  - f. Advancing the Capacities of the Ministry of Interior in the SALW Control-Related Field (Phase II), implemented by UNDP in Belgrade, project budget: \$1,429,520, implementing period: 5 January 2021 – 4 July 2023

- g. Advancing the Capacities of the Police Directorate in the Field of Custody Chain, Crime Scene Investigations and the Forensic Laboratory in the Field of Operations and Investigations in Detection and Trafficking of Explosives Criminality, implemented by UNDP in Podgorica, project budget: \$664,812, implementing period: 5 January 2021 – 4 July 2022
  - h. Cross-border Integrated Institutional Approach Towards Combatting IAT and SALW, implemented by UNDP in Pristina-UNDP in Skopje, project budget: \$522,067, implementing period: 18 March 2021 – 17 May 2022
  - i. Prevention and Illicit Arms Reduction in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Project PILLAR+), implemented by UNDP in Sarajevo, project budget: \$769,406, implementing period: 5 January 2021 – 3 July 2023
  - j. Support for Increased International Cooperation in Criminal Matters, implemented by UNODC, project budget: \$1,604,153, implementing period: 24 June 2021-23 December 2022
13. Project revision documents –four projects were extended with 6 to 12 months with the approval of the Steering Committee, one project requested a 7-month project extension (the Steering Committee decision is currently pending); budget revisions were also conducted and approved by the Steering Committee or Head of the Secretariat, in line with the Fund’s Operations Manual.
14. Consolidated quarterly progress reports 2020 - 2021
15. Consolidated annual progress reports 2019, 2020, 2021, available at: <https://www.seesac.org/UN-Multi-Partner-Trust-Fund/>
16. MPTF Office Gateway: <https://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/fund/SLW00>
17. Social media accounts and websites of the Implementing Organizations and beneficiaries of funded projects.

## **Annex 5 – Summary of Roadmap: “For a Sustainable Solution to the Illegal Possession, Misuse and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) and their Ammunition in the Western Balkans by 2022” Goals**

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Goal 1: By 2023, ensure that arms control legislation is in place, fully harmonized with the EU regulatory framework and other related international obligations and standardized across the region.

Goal 2: By 2024, ensure that arms control policies and practices in the Western Balkans are evidence based and intelligence led.

Goal 3: By 2024, significantly reduce illicit flows of firearms, ammunition and explosives (FAE) into, within and beyond the Western Balkans.

Goal 4: By 2024, significantly reduce the supply, demand and misuse of firearms through increased awareness, education, outreach and advocacy.

Goal 5: By 2024, substantially decrease the estimated number of firearms in illicit possession in the Western Balkans.

Goal 6: Systematically decrease the surplus and destroy seized small arms and light weapons and ammunition.

Goal 7: Significantly decrease the risk of proliferation and diversion of firearms, ammunition and explosives.