

**Final evaluation report for the UNDP regional project
“Sustaining peace through insider mediation in the
Arab States”, 2022-2024**

Independent evaluation commissioned by UNDP

Richard Barltrop, evaluation consultant
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PROJECT AND EVALUATION INFORMATION

Project/outcome information		
Project/outcome title	Sustaining peace through insider mediation in the Arab States	
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Corporate outcome and output	Regional Programme outcome 2 and output 2.2	
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Region	Arab States	
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Project dates	Start	Planned end
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Evaluators	Richard Barltrop	
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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

Clingendael	Clingendael Institute (the Netherlands Institute of International Relations)
DAC	Development Assistance Committee (OECD committee)
IDare	IDare for Sustainable Development (Jordanian NGO)
IEO	UNDP Independent Evaluation Office
IM	insider mediator
BRDO	Building Resilience Development Organization (Sudanese NGO)
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
RBAS	UNDP Regional Bureau for Arab States
Search	Search for Common Ground (INGO and partner in Lebanon)
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEG	UN Evaluation Group
UNSSC	UN System Staff College

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This is a summary of the independent final evaluation report for a two-year UNDP project that aimed to support insider mediation in the Arab States region, with a focus on Jordan, Lebanon and Sudan. The evaluation assessed the project against a set of criteria, aiming to produce findings, conclusions and recommendations that could inform future initiatives or projects. The primary intended users of the evaluation report are UNDP and the donor.

The project

2. The evaluated project, titled “Sustaining peace through insider mediation in the Arab States”, was funded by the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs and was implemented during the period December 2022 to November 2024.

3. The overall goal of the project, summarised in the original project document, was for UNDP’s Regional Bureau for Arab States (RBAS) to bring together insider mediators and actors supporting insider mediators from across the Arab States region, with a focus on Jordan, Lebanon and Sudan, in order to establish a “regional platform” to support insider mediators. Under this overall aim, three contributing objectives were specified:

- (1) *Create an enabling environment for insider mediators to play a more effective role in preventing and resolving conflict, particularly by providing space to local approaches and locally-owned processes.*
- (2) *Foster a shared understanding – amongst relevant international, regional, national and local actors – of the processes in which insider mediators (IMs) are engaged that require support for sustainable peace and reconciliation to emerge.*
- (3) *Foster stronger relationships and provide opportunities for peer-to-peer learning and exchange amongst IMs and those working to support them both at the national and regional levels.*

4. The two-year period in which the project was implemented by RBAS in Amman saw both significant changes and continuities in contexts. The war that began in Sudan in April 2023 had significant implications for the project, necessitating revision of plans. The increase in tensions and cross-border hostilities in southern Lebanon after the start of the Israel-Gaza war, and Israel’s war in Lebanon in October-November 2024, also impacted on project implementation.

Evaluation scope, methods and conduct

5. The purpose of the evaluation was to *assess the relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of the project*, using the OECD DAC criteria for evaluations; and to generate recommendations accordingly. In addition to the six DAC criteria, the evaluation assessed the project against the cross-cutting themes of *gender equality, disability, and human rights more broadly*. The evaluation addressed overarching questions for each criterion and theme.

6. The project was small in expenditure (within its budget of €994,436), small in the number of people involved, and short in duration (two years); it spanned three very different country contexts, in a wider region; and it aimed to make a positive contribution to certain individuals’ capabilities and roles, and networking and attitudes that can support the role of “insider mediation”. Furthermore, the project aimed to make a positive contribution in an area of highly uncertain and usually very difficult social and political processes (mediation, conflict resolution and peacebuilding), where lasting change is usually achieved only very gradually.

7. The evaluation used a combination of qualitative research, analysis and partly participatory evaluation. Research methods included: analysis of project documentation; semi-structured and tailored interviews and focus group discussions with people and organizations who were involved in the project's implementation or were intended beneficiaries; a field visit to Jordan, providing a chance to conduct a number of interviews in person and visit a facility in Zarqa used by mediators supported by the project; and an anonymous online survey, in Arabic and English, to gather IM perceptions about the project and insider mediation. Security, financial and time constraints meant that more extensive in-person field research was not possible.

8. The evaluation was conducted in accordance with the UN Evaluation Group's 2020 ethical guidelines for evaluations. It used the four-point rating scale used by the UNDP Independent Evaluation Office:

- 4 = Fully achieved / exceeds expectations: intended outputs and outcomes fully achieved or exceeding expectations. High performance.
- 3 = Mostly achieved: most of the intended outputs and outcomes delivered. Moderate, but good, performance.
- 2 = Partially achieved: intended outputs and outcomes only partially achieved. Moderate performance overall, but less positive.
- 1 = Not achieved: limited or no achievement of intended outputs and outcomes. Poor performance.

The main constraints on the overall ability of the evaluation to ensure the reliability of findings and conclusions was the level of dependence on remote research. However, with the multiple types of source used, combined with contextual and thematic understanding, the evaluator is confident that the overall accuracy of findings and conclusions is good.

Evaluation findings

9. The evaluation found that the project's impact-level theory of change was logical. The most significant relevant observation was that the project document did not contain analysis of the specific situation in each country where the project aimed to work. Some of the assumptions presented as the implicit basis for the theory of change were optimistic.

10. The survey of IM perceptions of the project received 37 responses out of a potential maximum of 62, a response rate of 60%, relatively even across the three countries. The survey found:

- A generally positive level of IM engagement in the project, from men and women, of widely varying ages and situations.
- A generally favourable IM view of the training and networking opportunities provided by the project, and the relevance of the project.
- IM support for and recommendations about follow-up to the project.

11. 70% of respondents said they had participated *a lot* in the online and in-person training and networking opportunities provided by the project, and 19% said they had participated in *some*. 73% of respondents rated the training and networking opportunities provided by the project as *good or excellent*, and 24% rated them as *adequate or ok*. 76% of respondents said they had learnt or benefited *a lot* from the project, 24% said they had learnt *some things*. 76% of respondents said that they felt the concept of insider mediation was *very clear*, and 89% felt that the concept was *very relevant* in their country.

Relevance

How relevant is insider mediation in Jordan, Lebanon and Sudan, and how relevant is the idea of a regional platform to support insider mediators in the Arab States region?

12. Finding: Insider mediation, or local mediation (as it is more often called), is certainly very relevant in Jordan, Lebanon and Sudan, as it is in all countries but especially in countries which are suffering from or at risk of violent conflict or community tensions. A regional support “platform” – meaning essentially opportunities to share experience, learning and moral support – can be rewarding to individuals participating in it. But its utility should not be overstated, and should not overshadow the potential benefit of other in-country actions (such as facilitation of interaction with other local and national actors relevant to mediation and peacebuilding) which can have more effect and impact.

Rating: 3

Coherence

How coherent was the project in its design, concepts and objectives?

13. Finding: The project had a high level of internal coherence. The design, concept and objectives of the project were maintained and articulated consistently from the outset of the project through implementation, including modifications to the project’s intended results framework. However, the coherence between the project’s vision and the reality of the contexts in the three countries was less. The weakness in that coherence did not prevent constructive action and good arising from the project; but it has contributed to mixed and uncertain expectations about the project’s goals and impact.

Rating: 3

Effectiveness

How effective was the project at achieving its overall goal and the three contributing objectives?

14. Finding: The overall goal of the project was to support insider mediation at local and national levels in the Arab States region by “establishing a dedicated regional platform” and piloting this platform and activities in three countries. This goal and three contributing objectives were retained in the 2023 revision to the project results framework. The project produced a regional platform, albeit not matching the ambitious scale and detail envisaged in the original project document. The project had limited success on the three contributing objectives, the first two of which were also over-ambitious. However, the project also had considerable positive effect on the ground, and this achievement should be recognized. The fostering of three small networks of individuals under the shared banner of IMs, the training opportunities and interaction between these networks, and the small initiatives that the IMs pursued, were all positive achievements in a short timeframe. Moreover, this was done with comparatively modest overall financing, and across three countries, with all the contextual differences and complications that entailed.

Rating: 3

Efficiency

How efficient was the project as a whole, in terms of implementation efficiency? (i.e. were the resources used for the project proportional to the results?)

15. Finding: The project showed high levels of efficiency in its use of financial resources and its management, relative to its outputs. Overall financial efficiency was represented by what the project achieved with an initial budget of just under US\$1.2m at the outset, and an eventual expenditure within that ceiling figure. This is modest expenditure for outputs comprising the establishment of three small networks across three countries, training and support resources for those networks, and local initiatives pursued by IMs. Overall management efficiency is represented by the fact that the project achieved good levels of implementation and quality, despite the difficulties posed by the situations in Sudan and later Lebanon, and within a little over two years (including no-cost extension). Shortcomings in

efficiency certainly occurred, but these were mainly to do with factors outside the control of the project (such as the difficult country operating contexts, and UNDP structures) which caused delays at times but were not of a scale that outweighed the overall positive efficiency.

Rating: 4

Impact

How much impact did the project have?

16. Finding: The project had moderate impact in that it established three IM networks in three countries, a platform to support them, and aspirations in those networks to pursue further initiatives of a local mediation and peacebuilding type. The limitations to this impact were primarily scale and level: the networks were small (in number of members) and partial in their geographic focus (in the case of Jordan and Sudan); and the levels of mediation and peacebuilding that they could operate at were very local. Nonetheless, the positive impact of the project, within the limitations of the project's capability, deserves to be recognized.

Rating: 3

Sustainability

How sustainable were the project as a whole and its results and outputs?

17. Finding: During its implementation the project did not have an assurance of further financing or a fixed exit strategy, with an expectation that arrangements would be in place by the end of the project under which the support platform and the networks could continue to operate fully in a self-sustaining way. However, it is reasonable to judge the sustainability of the project's results and outputs as moderately good. An intrinsic part of the project's ideas was that at least individuals in the networks (if not the networks themselves) would be more motivated and more able, thanks to the project, to pursue further constructive local mediation and peacebuilding activities in the future, independent of whether the project continued. Feedback from the IMs, and from the implementing partner organizations, indicated that this motivation and ability was present. Furthermore, the online support platform has potential to be sustained and used beyond the project with limited additional inputs or costs, for example if it is made available in some form to other projects or organizations.

Rating: 3

Gender equality

To what extent did the project contribute to the goal of gender equality, in the project's design, implementation and results?

18. Finding: The project achieved a high level of equality in women's participation in the IM networks, and it appears that women IMs generally felt that the project supported their participation and role as IMs very well. The exact level of women's participation varied slightly across the three countries but was in all three cases positive relative to the social contexts in which the project was operating.

Rating: 4

Disability

To what extent did the project contribute to the goal of inclusion of persons with disabilities, in the project's design, implementation and results?

19. Finding: The project made positive efforts to include persons with disabilities within the IM networks and to support their participation. It is not possible to vouch for all aspects of how initiatives associated with the project were conducted. However, the evaluation found no evidence that the project had inequitable or discriminatory impacts on persons with disabilities. The project did not have outputs with the potential to cause restrictions on resources or basic services for people with disabilities.

Rating: 4*Human rights more broadly*

To what extent did the project uphold the principle of 'leaving no one behind', and did it make positive contributions in regards to any other aspect of human rights or human rights more broadly?

20. Finding: The project did not focus on the subject of human rights and human rights were not an explicit element of intended outputs and outcomes. The evaluation cannot vouch for all aspects of how initiatives associated with the project were conducted, but the evaluation found no evidence of the project significantly and directly impacting the human rights of a particular population or group. Given that there was not a significant human rights focus, it would therefore not be very meaningful for the evaluation to give a rating for project performance against the criterion of human rights broader than gender equality and disability.

Rating: n/a

Conclusions and recommendations

21. In conclusion, the evaluation found project performance to have been good. The mean average rating against the six core criteria was 3.2 out of a maximum of 4 (on a continuous four-point evaluation scale). Including gender equality and disability, the average rating was 3.4 out of 4.

22. The evaluation draws four main conclusions. These, in summary, are:

- (i) The project's performance against the criteria of relevance and coherence was moderately good. To increase the relevance and coherence of a future project, it would be beneficial to make some adjustments in **strategy**.
- (ii) The project's performance against the criteria of impact and sustainability was moderately good. To increase the impact and sustainability of a project of this nature in the future, it could be helpful to make some changes regarding **partners and stakeholders**.
- (iii) The project's performance against the criteria of effectiveness and efficiency were, respectively, moderately good and very good or high; its performance regarding the crosscutting themes of gender and disability was also very good or high. To maintain or improve performance against the criteria of effectiveness and efficiency, and on gender and disability, in a future project, certain actions or measures in project **implementation and management** may be helpful.
- (iv) The project produced constructive outputs and some results in the field of local mediation and peacebuilding. However, given how large the challenges are to build or maintain peace in some countries, one general overall conclusion about the project should be that sustained support and collaboration are important for peacebuilding and peace support initiatives to meet the challenges and needs.

23. The evaluation report concludes with a set of recommendations for UNDP and partners, and others seeking to draw lessons from the project. These, in summary, are:

Strategy

Recommendations to UNDP and donors:

- a) Build on the project*
- b) Increase role of national partners*
- c) Increase clarity about types of mediation*
- d) Maintain realism about outcomes*

Partners and stakeholders

Recommendations to UNDP and donors:

- e) Explore ways to engage with community structures and political actors*
- f) Encourage collaboration with complementary initiatives*
- g) Broaden donor engagement*

Implementation and management

Recommendations to UNDP:

- h) Involve national partners and IMs in project planning*
- i) Revisit and update analyses of situations*
- j) Anticipate project continuity challenges*
- k) Review content of online support platforms*

24. Details of the above recommendations are contained in section 5 of the report. Additional reference materials are contained in the Annexes.

1. INTRODUCTION

This report is an independent final evaluation report for a two-year UNDP project that has aimed to support insider mediation in the Arab States region, with a focus on Jordan, Lebanon and Sudan. The report was prepared by the consultant contracted to conduct the evaluation, in accordance with a terms of reference. The evaluation was commissioned by UNDP and was conducted during September–December 2024, following an agreed process including an inception report, a research phase, UNDP review of a draft report, and finalisation of the report.

The evaluation was tasked with assessing the project against a set of criteria, and producing findings, conclusions and recommendations that could inform future initiatives or projects. The primary intended users of the evaluation report are UNDP and the donor, and the report may be of interest or use to others.

Section 1 of the report introduced the project, and Section 2 sets out the evaluation scope, methods and conduct. Section 3 presents the evaluation findings, section 4 the conclusions, and section 5 the recommendations. Additional reference materials are contained in the Annexes.

1.1 THE PROJECT

The evaluated project, titled “Sustaining peace through insider mediation in the Arab States”, was funded by the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs and was implemented by UNDP during the period December 2022 to November 2024.

The overall goal or aim of the project, summarised in the original project document and the ToR, was for UNDP’s Regional Bureau for Arab States to bring together insider mediators and actors supporting insider mediators from across the Arab States region, with a focus on Jordan, Lebanon and Sudan, in order to establish a “regional platform” to support insider mediators. Under this overall aim, three contributing objectives were specified in the original project document (wording and emphases in bold as per the project document):

- (1) Create **an enabling environment** for insider mediators to play a more effective role in preventing and resolving conflict, particularly by providing space to local approaches and locally-owned processes.
- (2) Foster a shared understanding – amongst relevant international, regional, national and local actors – of the processes in which IMs [insider mediators] are engaged that **require support for sustainable peace and reconciliation to emerge**.
- (3) Foster stronger relationships and provide **opportunities for peer-to-peer learning and exchange** amongst insider mediators and those working to support them both at the national and regional levels.

The project document framed these objectives within a strategy which included an impact-level theory-of-change and a set of assumptions about UNDP, insider mediators and the project team. The document likewise set out in further detail the intended results of the project, in a logical framework of intended results and partnerships (sections III and V), a monitoring and evaluation plan (section VI), a provisional multi-year workplan (section VII), and accompanying guidance on project management arrangements (sections IV and VIII). These objectives, plans and guidance will be considered in the evaluation, in relation to the activities, outputs and impact of the project.

Within UNDP globally, the project was aligned with UNDP’s Regional Programme for the Arab States, aiming to contribute to outcome 2 in the regional programme (*Governance accountability increased to foster more resilient communities*) and output 2.2 (*Capacities for conflict prevention, resilience and peacebuilding strengthened at regional, national, and subnational levels and across borders*). The project had a budget of €994,436, funded by the donor. The project was implemented by RBAS with support and inputs from UNDP country offices in Jordan, Lebanon and Sudan, the UN System Staff College, the Clingendael Institute, and three NGOs (IDare in Jordan; Search for Common Ground in Lebanon; and the Building Resilience Development Organization in Sudan).

1.2 THE CONTEXT

The two-year period in which the project was implemented saw both significant changes and continuities in contexts. Of the three countries in which the project sought to support insider mediators, Jordan was the most stable, with no major changes in the political and economic situation (but some economic deterioration) and no escalation of major armed conflict. In Lebanon, the period 2022-2024 saw considerable political and economic difficulties, and an increase in tensions and cross-border hostilities in the south after the start of the Israel-Gaza war in October 2023. This increased in the final months of the project, with Israel’s war against Hizbullah causing major population displacements from southern Lebanon, and Israeli bombardment extending to targets in Beirut and Bekaa. Sudan underwent major and catastrophic events during the period of the project, with civil war erupting in April 2023 and causing enormous and ongoing levels of population displacement, injury and loss of life, as well as major economic and political fracturing of the country. Inevitably, the major changes in the contexts in Sudan, especially, and in Lebanon to a lesser extent, had implications for the implementation of the project and its potential impact. This is discussed in section 3, as part of the evaluation findings.

1.3 SPECIFIED PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

The overall purpose of the evaluation (specified in the ToR) was to *assess the relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of the project*, following the OECD DAC criteria for evaluations; and to *generate recommendations* accordingly. Further to this, the ToR recommends that the evaluation:

- *Assess the project’s success against its initial goals, allowing for learning, accountability and decision-making.*
- *Document achievements, identify areas for improvement, and inform stakeholders (mainly UNDP and donors) about project outcomes for future planning and implementation.*
- *Be forward-looking, capture lessons learnt, and provide information on the impact and sustainability of the project.*
- *Assess the project theory-of-change, design, scope, implementation, and capacity to achieve objectives.*
- *Examine the allocation and use of funds.*
- *Address how the project mainstreamed gender, the development goal of “leaving no one behind”, disability issues, and rights-based approaches.*

2. EVALUATION: SCOPE, METHODS AND CONDUCT

2.1 SCOPE

The scope of the final evaluation, was the full duration of the project, from official launch in December 2022 and start of implementation in April 2023, through to final activities, scheduled for November 2024. Accordingly, the evaluation aimed to cover the totality of project results, across the three focus countries and regionally.

Evaluability analysis

Evaluability analysis or assessment is the term used to describe an analysis or assessment of the “extent to which an activity or project can be evaluated in a reliable and credible fashion”. Such an analysis can most usefully be done before a project’s design is completed, or during a project’s implementation, when the analysis can inform adjustments to the project design or implementation. An evaluability analysis at the point of project completion, and when a project commitment has already been made that an evaluation will be conducted (as is the current situation with the Insider Mediation project) has the utility primarily of only providing a wider reflection on how reliable and credible the proposed evaluation can be. In the case of the Insider Mediation project, the following observations are warranted:

- *Evaluability in principle:* A two-year project to support insider mediation in three countries, with an expenditure of around US\$1.2m, is without doubt evaluable in principle. The thematic areas of the project are, at the broadest level, peacebuilding and capacity building (including a range of intended support). Both of these areas of activity are commonly evaluated in development aid programmes. The availability of project documentation, and ability to access and interview stakeholders (donor, project team, project partners, beneficiaries), should be sufficient for an evaluation to be conducted, and were sufficient.
- *Evaluability in practice:* The project was clearly evaluable in practice. The main constraint on evaluation was access to stakeholders and relevant third parties. The project operated across three countries, and one of those countries, Sudan, has been in a state of war since April 2023, which was early in the project’s implementation. The war has caused a severe deterioration in conditions for civilians, with consequences too for project implementation and access. This narrowed the avenues for researching beneficiary and third party perspectives on project implementation and impact, and it reduced the scope for the evaluator to gain the type of insights that in-person and on-the-ground interviews and research can provide. Nonetheless, given the availability of reference material, the feasibility of online or telephone interviews, and survey or e-mail communications, largely remote research was certainly adequate for conducting the evaluation. This was coupled with a short field visit to Jordan and in-person meetings in in one project site.

The project had a results framework and monitoring and evaluation arrangements that followed the prevailing orthodoxy of UNDP and other international development organisations. This meant that the project was, of course, evaluable in practice against the intended outputs and outcomes in the results framework, to the extent that the evaluation can make a fair and balanced assessment of the level of materialisation of the intended outputs and outcomes, and what is attributable to the project.

- *Evaluation utility:* It was clear that an evaluation of the project can be useful. Specifically it can be useful for informing consideration or design of a follow-on or second-phase

project; more generally it can be useful for potential donors, project management and partners, and beneficiaries, helping them to learn from the project. If the evaluation report is made available, it can also be useful reference for other projects on or related to insider mediation, conflict prevention and peacebuilding in the Arab States and other regions.

Evaluation of cross-cutting issues

The ToR specified gender equality and disability as cross-cutting themes or criteria which the evaluation should cover. This was appropriate and feasible. The original project design and document evidently sought to make the project responsive to gender issues, and this was reflected in the application of ‘gender marker’ codes (of GEN2, on the scale of 0-3) for each of the four intended outputs in the project document. Disability and the inclusion of persons with disabilities was considered in a checklist in the original project document, which was used to check the project’s compliance with the overarching principle of “leaving no one behind”.

To evaluate how well the project has addressed gender equality and disability issues, the evaluator therefore included in the evaluation research the following:

- Data about inclusivity in project beneficiaries and project materials (for example guidance material on insider mediation).
- Interviews with women and persons with disability.
- Consideration of any relevant examples of how gender equality and disability issues have been addressed in insider mediation and peacebuilding projects elsewhere.

Gender equality, disability issues and the Sustainable Development Goals’ principle of “leaving no one behind” are focuses within the wider field of human rights. The Insider Mediation project document did not speak of other focuses of human rights, or human rights in general (except in the checklist mentioned above). This was likely reasonable, given that the project involved engaging with a small number of intended beneficiaries (around 20 per country), compared with the much larger kinds of numbers involved in other development or (especially) humanitarian projects, and given that the project did not involve transfer of material or financial benefits.

Objectives

The language of programming and evaluation is sometimes duplicative. Thus, *objectives* are sometimes specified in addition to *purpose* and *goals* (and in parallel with discussion about the objectives and goals of a project or programme). In the case of this evaluation, and as is logical, the objectives of the evaluation were essentially the same as the overall purpose, stated in section 1.3 above. The evaluator has prioritised answering the overarching questions relative to each evaluation criterion, and identifying recommendations that can be useful for a potential follow-up or second-phase project.

2.2 METHODS

The evaluation approach and methodology was to use research and data collection methods that were suitable for the task of producing a high-quality evaluation of a project of the nature concerned, and were proportionate to the time and resources available for the evaluation.

The project was small in expenditure and the number of people involved in implementation and as beneficiaries; it was short in duration (two years); it spanned three very different country contexts, in a wider region; and it aimed to make a positive contribution to certain individuals’ capabilities and roles, and networking and attitudes that can support the role of “insider mediation”. Furthermore, the project aimed to make a positive contribution in an

area of highly uncertain and usually very difficult social and political processes (mediation, conflict resolution and peacebuilding), where lasting change is usually achieved only very gradually.

Given these characteristics, and given that the evaluation was commissioned by UNDP (meaning that *a priori*, by the ToR, it was at least partly a participatory evaluation), the most appropriate methods for the evaluation were a combination of qualitative research, analysis and partly participatory evaluation (balancing beneficial involvement of stakeholders and beneficiaries in the evaluation research, with the need for the evaluation to meet the definition of being an *independent* evaluation).

The evaluation proceeded through what in the ToR were called phases, but which can equally be referred to as steps with deliverables:

- preparation of inception report;
- revision of inception report, and preparation and conduct of evaluation research;
- preparation of draft full evaluation report;¹
- finalisation of full evaluation report.

Research and data collection methods

The evaluation research used the following methods:

- *Analysis of project documentation*: The evaluation research included analysis of project documentation (including project monitoring documentation), in order that the evaluation report could present an accurate and referenced account of the project design, implementation and results. The final evaluation report includes references to other written sources (e.g. reports and academic literature on insider mediation and peacebuilding, and the situations in specific countries) where relevant to the evaluation report's findings and recommendations.
- *Interviews*: Central to the evaluation research was the conduct of semi-structured and tailored interviews (key informant interviews) with people and organizations who were involved in the project's implementation or were intended beneficiaries (project partners and stakeholders). Some interviews were in the form of focus group discussion, where this was a practical and effective option, for example where logistical factors and feasibility made it sensible to meet with a small group of insider mediators together rather than seeking to interview those persons individually. A specific numerical target for the total number of interviews was not set, as it was anticipated that other factors (such as who an interview was with and the duration of the interview) would be more determining of the value of the interviews than quantity. Selection of interviewees was based on role and suitability for the purpose of the interviews (i.e. purposive) and availability and feasibility (i.e. convenience). The evaluator aimed to ensure that diversity in who was interviewed was sufficient for the drawing of reliable observations and findings, and equally-sized samples of IMs from each country were interviewed.
- *Field visit*: The research included a short field visit to Jordan and the city of Zarqa, providing a chance to conduct a number of interviews in person and visit a facility used by mediators supported by the project. In ideal circumstances, short field visits would also have been conducted to Lebanon and Sudan, with the objective of conducting interviews during these visits. However, UNDP security, time and financial constraints meant that this was not practical. All evaluation work was otherwise therefore home-based.

¹ The ToR proposed a phase of preparing an *interim report with preliminary findings*. At an early stage in the evaluation, this was removed, as the donor indicated that an interim report was no longer needed.

- *Survey:* As part of the evaluation an anonymous online survey was used, in Arabic and English, with a set of closed-ended and open-ended questions. The survey was distributed to the IMs and aimed to gather perceptions about the project and insider mediation. Responses were analysed for this report and have been drawn on without attribution. The survey provided some quantitative data.

By using these methods together, it was possible to triangulate and check to a satisfactory degree the perceptions and data gathered during the evaluation research.²

Quality, quantity and substance

The evaluation research and report have given due attention to the relative importance of quality and quantity in data and analysis, and the importance of substance and clarity in communicating the evaluation's findings. Mediation, peacebuilding more broadly, and capacity building, are all areas in which quality may often matter more than quantity: for example, one highly effective mediator or skills development opportunity may be much more valuable than five less effective ones. For this evaluation, therefore, qualitative assessment has in general been considered to be more informative than quantitative assessment.

This evaluation report also aims to avoid unnecessary jargon and complication. Neither a project nor a report is made better by being generously filled with words that merely evoke positive ideas and principles. Clarity and conciseness are more helpful, especially in a context where multiple languages are being used. The evaluation report draws on guidance on evaluations from UNDP's Independent Evaluation Office (IEO), as well as wider international practice in evaluations and research.³

Ethical considerations

The evaluation was conducted in accordance with the UN Evaluation Group's 2020 ethical guidelines for evaluations. In their full scope, the four UNEG principles speak to larger and more complex evaluations. Applied to the conduct of this evaluation of the Insider Mediation project, the four UNEG principles mean in summary:

- *Integrity:* Fulfil relevant requirements regarding alignment with ethical principles, communication, professional development, competency and avoidance of conflicts of interest.
- *Accountability:* Fulfil relevant requirements regarding redress, judgements, resources, transparency, wrongdoing, data management and adherence.
- *Respect:* Inform interlocutors/interviewees appropriately; respect rights to contribute in confidence and non-attributively, as needed; be inclusive and non-discriminatory; engage empathetically with interlocutors.
- *Beneficence:* To the extent possible, position the evaluation to contribute towards the achievement of human rights, gender equality and SDGs; address power imbalances in data collection; ensure no harm is done in the evaluation.

The evaluation treated interviewees with due sensitivity and respect, given the political, economic, social and security risks that individuals may face in the contexts that they live and work in.

² Given the mixed qualitative and participatory approach of the evaluation, it is not appropriate to specify a single "data analysis approach and method" of the type listed as examples in UNDP IEO's evaluation guidance (e.g. Contribution Analysis, Qualitative Comparative Analysis, Process Tracing/Bayesian Updating, etc).

³ The evaluator has tailored example UNDP evaluation templates and normative methods to the specific subject and context of the Insider Mediation project, and to what was needed to produce a final evaluation report that identifies and presents the most important evidence-based findings and recommendations.

Evaluation matrix: criteria and questions

The evaluation has used the six standard OECD DAC evaluation criteria – relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability – and (as cross-cutting criteria or themes) gender equality and disability. The evaluation addressed the following overarching questions for each of the evaluation criteria and cross-cutting themes. These questions, framed by the evaluator, speak to the project as a whole, the overall goal of the project, and the three contributing objectives (discussed in section 1.1 above).⁴

Table 1: Evaluation overarching questions

Criterion	Overarching questions	Means for answering question <i>Key data/source; method for analysing data/source (if applicable)</i> ⁵
1. Relevance	How relevant is insider mediation in Jordan, Lebanon and Sudan, and how relevant is the idea of a regional platform to support insider mediators in the Arab States region?	Combined sources, especially contextual analysis; qualitative.
2. Coherence	How coherent was the project in its design, concepts and objectives?	Combined sources, especially project documentation; qualitative.
3. Effectiveness	How effective was the project at achieving its overall goal and the three contributing objectives?	Combined sources, especially interviews/survey/field visit; qualitative.
4. Efficiency	How efficient was the project as a whole, in terms of implementation efficiency? (i.e. were the resources used for the project proportional to the results?)	Combined sources, especially project documentation and financial analysis; qualitative and quantitative.
5. Impact	How much impact did the project have?	Combined sources, especially contextual analysis and interviews; qualitative.
6. Sustainability	How sustainable were the project as a whole and its results and outputs?	Combined sources, especially interviews/survey/field visit; qualitative.
Cross-cutting themes / criteria:		
Gender equality	To what extent did the project contribute to the goal of gender equality, in the project's design, implementation and results?	Combined sources, especially interviews/survey/field visit; qualitative.
Disability	To what extent did the project contribute to the goal of inclusion of persons with disabilities, in the project's design, implementation and results?	Combined sources, especially interviews/survey/field visit; levels of inclusion; qualitative.
Human rights more broadly	To what extent did the project uphold the principle of 'leaving no one behind', and did it make positive contributions in regards to any other aspect of human rights or human rights more broadly?	Combined sources, especially interviews/survey/field visit, and contextual analysis; qualitative.

⁴ The evaluator takes note of the example evaluation matrix template contained in the 2021 UNDP Evaluation Guidelines (pp. 50-51). The categories of that matrix are contained in the matrix/table here. They are not presented as separate columns, as that would unnecessarily fragment and obscure the task of answering the overarching questions and relevant subsidiary questions.

⁵ A 'success standard' is not stated separately, as what would constitute relevance, coherence, effectiveness etc will be conveyed or implicit in the answers to the evaluation questions.

Below the level of these overarching questions, the evaluation considered the following list of subsidiary questions suggested in the ToR (30 in relation to the core evaluation criteria, and a further seven in relation to the two cross-cutting themes/criteria). Some of these merited prioritisation and being discussed with more interlocutors, while others were less relevant and informative.

Table 2: Subsidiary questions

Criterion	Questions
1. Relevance	<p>7 questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>To what extent was the project in line with priorities in the countries directly engaged in implementation, including the communities and localities specifically targeted by the project?</i> - <i>To what extent was the project in line with the UNDP regional programme outcomes and outputs, the UNDP Strategic Plan, and the SDGs?</i> - <i>To what extent was the project in line with France's priorities (Loi no. 2021-1031 du 4 août 2021 de programmation relative au développement solidaire et à la lutte contre les inégalités mondiales, 'preventing and tackling crisis and fragility', France's strategy on Prevention, Resilience and Sustainable Peace)?</i> - <i>To what extent does the project's theory of change remain relevant for the regional, national priorities?</i> - <i>To what extent were perspectives, needs, and priorities of men and women who could affect the outcomes, taken into account during project design and implementation processes?</i> - <i>Were the inputs and strategies identified, and were they realistic, appropriate and adequate to achieve the results?</i> - <i>Was the project relevant to the identified needs?</i>
2. Coherence	<p>4 questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>To what extent did the collaboration between UNDP Regional Programme and Country Offices provide added value to the project?</i> - <i>To what extent did UNDP adopt gender-responsive human rights-based, and conflict-sensitive approaches?</i> - <i>To what extent is UNDP engagement a reflection of strategic considerations, including the role of UNDP in a particular development context and its comparative advantage?</i> - <i>To what extent was the method of delivery selected by UNDP appropriate to the development context?</i>
3. Effectiveness	<p>5 questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>To what extent did the project achieve its overall objectives?</i> - <i>What and how much progress has been made towards achieving the overall outputs and outcomes of the project (including contributing factors and constraints)?</i> - <i>Was the project effective in delivering desired/planned results? Could a different approach have produced better results? and what would be the best approach for future phases?</i> - <i>How effective were the strategies and tools used in the implementation of the project?</i> - <i>How effective has the project been in responding to the needs of the beneficiaries, and what results were achieved? What are the key areas that could be scaled up for a second phase presenting a significant value to the region?</i>
4. Efficiency	<p>7 questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>To what extent was the project management structure as outlined in the project document efficient in generating the expected results?</i> - <i>Was the process of achieving results efficient? Specifically did the actual or expected results (outputs and outcomes) justify the costs incurred?</i> - <i>Were the resources and financial management processes effectively utilized?</i> - <i>Did project activities overlap and duplicate other similar interventions (funded nationally and/or by other donors? Are there more efficient ways and means of delivering more and better results (outputs and outcomes) with the available inputs?</i> - <i>To what extent did the Project's M&E mechanism contribute in meeting project results?</i> - <i>How was the project's collaboration with the UNDP, national institutions, development partners, and the Steering Committee? Any suggested partnerships for future phases?</i>

	- <i>What are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats and risks of the project implementation process?</i>
5. Impact	2 questions: - <i>What is the overall direct and indirect impact of the project, considering positive and negative, as well as intended and unintended effects by the project implementation?</i> - <i>What could have been done differently to achieve a more transformational change?</i>
6. Sustainability	4 questions: - <i>To what extent are the benefits and outcomes of the project likely to be sustained after the completion of this project?</i> - <i>To what extent are lessons learned documented by the project team on a continual basis and shared with appropriate parties who could learn from the project?</i> - <i>What are the key factors that will require attention in order to improve prospects of sustainability of Project outcomes and the potential for replication of the approach?</i> - <i>How were capacities strengthened at the individual and organizational level (including contributing factors and constraints)?</i>
Cross-cutting themes / criteria:	
Gender equality	3 questions: - <i>To what extent have gender equality and the empowerment of women been addressed in the design, implementation and monitoring of the project?</i> - <i>Is the gender marker assigned to this project representative of reality?</i> - <i>To what extent has the project promoted positive changes in gender equality and the empowerment of women? Did any unintended effects emerge for women, men or vulnerable groups?</i>
Disability	4 questions: - <i>Were persons with disabilities consulted and meaningfully involved in programme planning and implementation?</i> - <i>What proportion of the beneficiaries of a programme were persons with disabilities?</i> - <i>What barriers did persons with disabilities face?</i> - <i>Was a twin-track approach adopted?</i>

Rating system

The evaluation has used the four-point rating scale used by the UNDP Independent Evaluation Office.⁶ This, in brief, is:

- 4 = Fully achieved / exceeds expectations: intended outputs and outcomes fully achieved or exceeding expectations. High performance.
- 3 = Mostly achieved: most of the intended outputs and outcomes delivered. Moderate, but good, performance.
- 2 = Partially achieved: intended outputs and outcomes only partially achieved. Moderate performance overall, but less positive.
- 1 = Not achieved: limited or no achievement of intended outputs and outcomes. Poor performance.

2.3 EVALUATION CONDUCT

The evaluation was conducted during September-November 2024. Full and appropriate support for the evaluation conduct was provided by relevant staff in RBAS in Amman, the project focal points in the three relevant UNDP Country Offices, and the project implementation partners. This included:

- *Support for accessing project documentation:* documentation was provided through a UNDP Sharepoint set up for the evaluation. Additional documentation was provided by e-mail where requested.
- *Assistance with setting up online interviews:* provision of contact details, introductions by e-mail.
- *Facilitation of field visit:* assistance with arrangements for a field visit to Jordan (to Amman and Zarqa).

⁶ UNDP IEO, '[Country programme performance rating system manual](#)', pp. 5-6.

The main constraints on the overall ability of the evaluation to ensure the reliability of findings and conclusions was the level of dependence on remote research. It should be noted too that some project activities, including some initiatives by IMs in Lebanon and Sudan, and a project publication, had not been completed at the time of the evaluation research. However, with the multiple types of source used, combined with contextual and thematic understanding, the evaluator is confident that the overall accuracy of findings and conclusions is good.

A list of the interviews conducted for the evaluation is contained in Annex B. A total of 36 people were interviewed (12 men, 24 women), including 15 IMs (8 men, 7 women). Interviews included two small focus group discussions with IMs (one online with three people, and one in-person with five). Interview notes were reviewed and sorted (manually coded) by the evaluator. These notes, along with findings from the survey and review of documentation, were used to inform the evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations contained in sections 3, 4 and 5 of this report.

3. EVALUATION FINDINGS

3.1 THEORY OF CHANGE

The original project document presented an impact-level theory of change, in which the intended impact (or overall outcome) was “more inclusive and sustainable conflict resolution”.⁷ This theory of change was logical. Perhaps the most significant observation that can be made about it is that it concerned only general intended changes, common across all three countries, rather than, for example, changes specific to each country that would be sought through the project. On this point, it is relevant to note that the situation analysis in the project document (contained in section I, “Development challenge”) did not contain analysis of the specific situation in each country where the project aimed to work.⁸

Beyond this main observation about the project’s theory of change, it is reasonable to observe (and project hindsight would support this) that some of the assumptions which the project document presented as the implicit basis for the theory of change were optimistic, while others were realistic. The following table summarises the evaluation’s observations about the assumptions.

Table 3: Theory of change assumptions

Project assumptions (as per project document) Evaluation observations about the assumptions (in light of evidence during 2022-2024 project implementation)
<p><i>Assumption: UNDP’s relationships with government would help to ensure the ‘required level of political support’ for the project is secured.</i></p> <p>➤ ‘Political support’, for example through government relationships in each country, was not really relevant or essential to the project. If project implementation had sought to support higher-level mediation, or mediation directly on armed conflict, ‘political support’ might have been more relevant and required.</p>
<p><i>Assumption: UNDP has capacity to work cross-sectorally and actors within the HDP nexus are receptive to insider mediation and willing to commit conflict-sensitive support to IMs and be part of a platform convened by UNDP.</i></p> <p>➤ This assumption does not appear to have been meaningfully relevant to the project as implemented. (The concept of or pursuit of a humanitarian-development-peace nexus did not figure significantly in the project, nor did interaction with humanitarian organizations, besides interaction with one small NGO with some background in humanitarian aid.)</p>
<p><i>Assumption: IMs are open to receiving psychosocial support and understand the importance of it for the sustainability of their work.</i></p> <p>➤ This assumption was broadly correct. At least some IMs were receptive to the mental health and psychosocial support provided during the project; the evaluation did not find examples of rejection or criticism of the support. However, it may still be an overstatement to say that IMs ‘understood the importance of it for the sustainability of their work’.</p>
<p><i>Assumption: Technical and financial support enhances IMs’ ability to seize opportunities as they emerge.</i></p> <p>➤ This assumption was broadly correct. Skills training and small grant support from the implementing partners contributed to IMs undertaking initiatives they proposed under the project. However, the idea of ‘seizing opportunities as they emerge’ risks overstating likely IM action: expectations about IM initiatives should be realistic, not least as there are other factors besides technical and financial support which determine their ability to pursue initiatives.</p>

⁷ UNDP project document for regional project to support insider mediation, Oct. 2022, pp. 6-7.

⁸ Needs assessments were conducted early in the project, in each country, to support and inform the setting up of the IM networks. These assessments did not include analyses of the current wider situation in each country regarding conflict, peace and mediation. For Jordan, a paper was prepared which covered part of the situation: UNDP, “An overview of the societal and institutional status of mediation in Jordan”, undated.

<p><i>Assumption: IMs' ability to respond rapidly and effectively will incentivize demand.</i></p> <p>➤ This assumption is not appropriate: it encourages an inaccurate idea about potential IM initiatives and 'incentivizing demand'.</p>
<p><i>Assumption: Involving IMs and stakeholders supporting IMs will decrease competition and improve collaboration, thereby increasing the sustainability of IMs' engagement.</i></p> <p>➤ This assumption is not very clear and does not seem appropriate: it is not clear what 'involving' was meant to refer to, and it does not seem appropriate to talk of 'competition' here.</p>
<p><i>Assumption: The project team has the necessary technical knowledge to conduct conflict sensitivity and inter-sectional power analysis and can use the analysis programmatically.</i></p> <p>➤ This assumption is correct but should not be taken to mean that technical knowledge is sufficient for analysis and programming to be good. Contextual knowledge and understanding are also necessary for analysis and programming to be good or better than good. Hierarchies of knowledge (and power) between the international and the national / local are a common problem in aid and peacebuilding.⁹ If project assumptions address technical knowledge (which international organizations commonly value), it is appropriate for project assumptions also to address the value of contextual and local knowledge.</p>

3.2 SURVEY OF IM PERCEPTIONS

The survey of IM perceptions of the project found:

- A generally positive level of IM engagement in the project, from men and women, of widely varying ages and situations.
- A generally favourable IM view of the training and networking opportunities provided by the project, and the relevance of the project.
- IM support for and recommendations about follow-up to the project.

Counterbalancing this, three points should be borne in mind. Firstly, the survey did receive responses to some questions that were constructively critical, rather than only favourable. Secondly, a liability of online optional surveys is that they result in biased response patterns, with the types of questions being a determining factor. And thirdly, a number of IMs did not respond to the survey. This supports the caveat that it is not known what those IMs' perceptions of the project were.

The response rate to the survey was moderate. The survey received 37 responses out of a potential maximum of 62, a response rate therefore of 60%. Of the survey responses, 16 were from Jordan (out of a potential maximum of 20); 11 were from Lebanon (out of a potential maximum of 25); and 10 were from Sudan (out of a potential maximum of 17).

Therefore, of the total responses to the survey, 43% were from Jordan, 30% from Lebanon and 27% from Sudan. This was slightly different from the share of all IMs by country, and from equal thirds if weighting the networks equally.¹⁰ Of the total 62 IMs active in the three networks (as of the end of the project), the share by each of the three countries was 32% Jordan, 40% Lebanon and 27% Sudan.

Table 4: IM survey response figures

⁹ On "knowledge hierarchies" and the valuing of generic thematic competency and expertise over local knowledge, see Severine Autesserre, *Peaceland: Conflict Resolution and the Everyday Politics of International Intervention* (Cambridge University Press: 2014), p. 72.

¹⁰ All percentage figures are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Country	Total number of IMs	% of all IMs	Number of IM responses	% of all survey responses
Jordan	20	32%	16	43%
Lebanon	25	40%	11	30%
Sudan	17	27%	10	27%
<i>total</i>	62	100%	37	100%

Of the 37 responses:

- 21 were from men, 16 from women (57%:43%).
- 5 were under 25 years old, 15 were aged 25-39, 14 were aged 40-59, and three were 60 or over (14%:41%:38%:8%).
- 12 were in full-time employment, 8 self-employed, 7 part-time employed, 4 unemployed, 4 students, 1 retired.

A large majority of respondents indicated that they had participated a lot in the project and rated the training and networking opportunities provided by the project very favourably; a similarly large majority of respondents gave favourable ratings to questions about what they had learnt or benefited from the project, and about the clarity and relevance of the concept of insider mediation:

- 70% of respondents said they had participated *a lot* in the online and in-person training and networking opportunities provided by the project, and 19% said they had participated in *some*.
- 73% of respondents rated the training and networking opportunities provided by the project as *good or excellent*, and 24% rated them as *adequate or ok*.
- 76% of respondents said they had learnt or benefited *a lot* from the project (*it would make a significant difference to what they do to help deal with tensions and conflicts where they live*), and 24% said they had learnt *some things* (*it would make a limited difference to what they do*).
- 76% of respondents said that they felt the concept of insider mediation was *very clear*, 22% said they felt it was *somewhat clear*. 89% felt that the concept was *very relevant* in their country, and 11% felt it was *somewhat relevant*.

The following table presents examples of responses to several open questions in the survey:

Table 5: IM survey example responses

Q10: What can the IM network do in your country?	
	Contribute to reducing conflict, peacebuilding, and communication.
	Lots, especially for building peace in the current context, to break existing stereotypes.
	Promote participation, problem solving and advocacy.
	Awareness workshops, conflict resolution and mediation services, training and capacity building.
	Promote peace through mediation, positive communication, and resolving tensions and conflict; foster social cohesion and dialogue; raise awareness about importance of mediation as a peaceful way to resolve conflicts.
	Resolve some existing conflicts, avoid others, enhance community cohesion, reduce violence and extremism, provide financial resources.
	Contribute to reducing the development of conflicts, notice and treat problems before they occur, and spread peace.
	Form a link between individual mediation and traditional mediation, which positively reflects on society by enhancing community peace and the language of dialogue.
	Encourage correct awareness of the idea [of mediation].
	Reducing disputes before they reach the courts.

	It has a lot to do if its members are empowered, trained and its capabilities are supported to be effective.
	Reducing disputes, helping people to forgive and reconcile, and working to provide an atmosphere of love and security to a large extent.
	It can make a big difference, support the community and promote inner peace.
	Strengthen measures for social cohesion, promote community peace and security, and contribute to addressing social, economic, and development challenges.
	It can work to promote dialogue between different social and political groups, which contributes to resolving conflicts and promoting peace. It can also help build trust between the community and the government by facilitating communication and information exchange. In addition, it can organize workshops and events to raise awareness about specific issues and promote social cohesion.
	It can organize more workshops and awareness campaigns, provide ongoing training, and support local mediation efforts by connecting mediators with community leaders.
	Trainings, raising awareness, facilitating dialogues, reducing tension and ensuring de-escalating and even working on current conflicts within our communities and offering mediation services.
	Playing their role as effective mediators in their places of residence and work and working to spread the idea of communication and listening through joint activities and workshops in which all members of the network unite to exchange experiences and spread the idea of security and peace in our country.
	Reducing tensions; raising awareness about the rights and duties of community members; promoting positive communication and active listening; creating active and trained cells that promote cooperative and humanitarian work; school mediation; family mediation; mediation in municipalities.
	Help in one way or another to achieve peace.
	It can solve many of the dilemmas that the war is now leaving behind, reduce the severity of the effects of displacement, and address many of the problems that are expected to occur, such as conflict over resources between the displaced and host communities, and reduce hate speech.
	It can carry out individual mediation between individuals and families, group mediation between clans and other entities, and it can train and educate communities about local mediation, create mediation networks, and work in the field of community peace.
	Q11: What would you recommend in a future project?
	[Address] women's issues and spread the concept of internal mediation in society.
	Forming community committees from influential community leaders. Building the capacity of these committees. Enhancing communication between these committees and official bodies. Raising awareness in the local community in this regard.
	Integrating mediation into educational activities.
	To equip the network members with more skills that enable them to have a significant impact on the conflicts they deal with, and also to travel to learn from experiences in different countries.
	Extend the project to all governorates.
	Sustainability of the community mediation network.
	Focus on developing training programs for local mediators to enhance their negotiation and conflict resolution skills. In addition, it is important to integrate local media into the project to raise awareness and enhance community participation in mediation processes.
	Increase the frequency and diversity of training programmes, and involve more local and community organisations to disseminate mediation skills more widely.
	Achieving professional visibility on social media and securing media coverage will significantly enhance the promotion of our skills and initiatives. This exposure will not only allow us to demonstrate the positive changes we are already making within our communities but also provide us with greater opportunities. Increased visibility will help build trust with the public, encouraging more people to reach out for assistance in raising awareness and resolving conflicts. Collaboration with other NGOs, municipalities, youth organizations, and religious groups to strengthen our connections with communities and gain a deeper understanding of the conflicts they face. Working together will allow us to be more effective in addressing local issues and providing support where it is most needed.
	The successful initiatives implemented by the mediators gave the mediators momentum and encouragement to continue to establish activities and projects targeting women, youth and children in order to bring about positive change in society. Therefore, the network, with its diverse and distinctive ideas and formation, can establish centers in the Lebanese regions for mediation to apply and spread the idea of mediation, communication and listening.
	Involve academics and the traditional administration.

	Focus intensively on negotiation and negotiation skills.
	Implementing training projects on mediation and community peacebuilding.. Carrying out [reconciliation] initiatives between different parties or providing technical support for existing or emerging reform initiatives.
	Evaluating and monitoring peace programs. Integrating people with disabilities into the peace program. Children's participation. Participation, training and rehabilitation on the importance of peace. Working on special slogans for peace.
	Sustainability of the IMs and expand in different areas and locations in the country.

“[The network] can carry out individual mediation between individuals and families, group mediation between clans and other entities, and it can train and educate communities about local mediation, create mediation networks, and work in the field of community peace.”

————— IM survey respondent

3.3 FINDINGS BY EVALUATION CRITERIA

The evaluation findings and ratings relative to the specified evaluation criteria and overarching questions under each criterion, are as follow:

3.3.1 Relevance

Overarching question: *How relevant is insider mediation in Jordan, Lebanon and Sudan, and how relevant is the idea of a regional platform to support insider mediators in the Arab States region?*

Finding: Insider mediation, or local mediation (as it is more often called), is certainly very relevant in Jordan, Lebanon and Sudan, as it is in all countries but especially in countries which are suffering from or at risk of violent conflict or community tensions. A regional support “platform” – meaning essentially opportunities to share experience, learning and moral support – can be rewarding to individuals participating in it. But its utility should not be overstated, and should not overshadow the potential benefit of other in-country actions (such as facilitation of interaction with other local and national actors relevant to mediation and peacebuilding) which can have more effect and impact.

Rating: 3

Detail

UNDP regarded the project as relevant in the countries and region, and within its portfolios of programming, given the governance and peacebuilding themes that UNDP works on among its other priorities globally. UNDP considered the project to be aligned with outcome 2 and output 2.2 in UNDP’s regional programme in the Arab States.¹¹ The project’s relevance to the former was limited (as the project did not directly address governance accountability) but to the latter it was fully relevant (as the project supported local capacities for peacebuilding). Of the UN Sustainable Development Goals the project was relevant primarily to goal 16 (promoting peaceful and inclusive societies).

Within UNDP the project was complemented by experience of past projects supporting insider mediation elsewhere and thematically. In parallel with the regional project, UNDP has been implementing a three-year global project on insider mediation (2023-2026), funded by the EU, working in seven countries, one of them (Yemen) in the Middle East. From interviews it is

¹¹ In the “UNDP regional programme document for Arab States (2022-2025)”, intended outcome 2 was “Governance accountability increased to foster more resilient communities”, and output 2.2 as “Capacities for conflict prevention, resilience and peacebuilding strengthened at regional, national, and subnational levels and across borders”. See regional programme document, p. 15.

evident that the two projects have been useful to each other, allowing exchange of experience and advice. Evidently the project donor, France's Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs, regarded the project as relevant both in the countries concerned and within its own programming priorities and strategy.

The concept for the regional support platform articulated in the project document could be considered to be relevant, but really at only a theoretical level.¹² In practice, envisaged structures such as a regional-level IM secretariat and national-level IM secretariats were unrealistic with the project's limited resources and time. They were also unnecessary given the scale of the IM groups or networks set up by the project, and the level and type of initiatives that the IMs could pursue.

Interviewees in Sudan expressed some mixed opinions about the project, with some saying that it was very relevant, but others (or the same individuals) expressing doubts about usefulness. In the opinion of some IMs, the selection of Sudanese IMs was good, and those selected could both benefit from the project and deliver some benefit to the community. However, some interviewees did not feel that the relevance of the project in the wider situation of the current war in Sudan was very clear. One interviewee remarked that mediation in Sudan is traditionally led by men from tribes, not by women and youth. The IMs, said the interviewee, were therefore working mainly on relations between IDPs and host communities (meaning the interviewee did not expect the IMs to work on mediation where the conflict or tension being addressed was inter-tribal to a degree that would prompt mediation by tribal figures).

In the view of one Jordanian interviewee, the project was small but nonetheless important: it was a way to regenerate existing capabilities and practices in Jordan, albeit with a new term or new language to describe this. Some of these capabilities and practices had perhaps weakened over the past decades while state systems and institutions of law and order strengthened. Some interviewees in Jordan felt that Jordan did not have a strong history of "insider mediation", in those words (rather than "local mediation"), but that it could be a useful concept and could be adapted to the context.

Lebanese IMs in interviews and the survey indicated that they saw the project as very relevant. Nonetheless, some IMs said that they had found the online platform a bit abstract and not very related to Lebanon and the region: they could see that the platform was rich in content about practices elsewhere, and that it was user-friendly, but they felt that its relevance to their context was lacking. Others more readily saw links between micro- and macro-level conflicts and conflict risk. In the view of one Lebanese IM interviewee, conflicts in Lebanon range from simple things, such as cuts to water, rubbish collection problems, and land disputes: such conflicts were many and small, but the risk was that they could transform into bigger conflicts.

"[In Sudan] we need to teach the new generation what peacebuilding is and what mediation is."

————— *IM interviewee*

"It's a very difficult time in Lebanon now, but it was still good to work on this project. We need it."

————— *IM interviewee*

¹² UNDP, "Sustaining peace through insider mediation in Arab States", project document, signed October 2022, p. 8.

3.3.2 Coherence

Overarching question: *How coherent was the project in its design, concepts and objectives?*

Finding: The project had a high level of internal coherence. The design, concept and objectives of the project were maintained and articulated consistently from the outset of the project through implementation, including modifications to the project's intended results framework. However, the coherence between the project's vision and the reality of the contexts in the three countries was less. The weakness in that coherence did not prevent constructive action and good arising from the project; but it has contributed to mixed and uncertain expectations about the project's goals and impact.

Rating: 3

Detail

Intended outputs were re-phrased during the first year of the project, making them slightly more proportionate to the modest scale of the project, while maintaining the internal coherence of the project.¹³ The orientation of this adjustment – towards more realism – was not explicitly stated in the project's end-of-first-year review report, which focused on the operating and contextual difficulties during 2023 (in particular the war in Sudan and the start of the Israel-Gaza war, with its ramifications regionally) and, implicitly, the types of delays that are common in starting projects. However, as an interviewee for the evaluation put it, the donor and UNDP realized that the objectives in the initial stages of the project were too wide.

It was not new for UNDP to do a project supporting insider mediation, as UNDP has a global project on insider mediation, managed from headquarters. That project works with a broad or elastic concept of insider mediation. Reflecting on what the regional project brought in the Arab States region, one UNDP interviewee felt suggested that the concept of insider mediation brought a more holistic approach to what was otherwise done under the heading of social cohesion. Previously, UNDP initiatives for social cohesion were focused on relations between host communities and IDPs and refugees: insider mediation, the interviewee felt, encourages broader thinking about social cohesion.

Given the lack of country-specific detail in the project's design, concepts and objectives, it is not surprising that there was a gap between these and the realities of the contexts and IM networks in each country. In the three countries of implementation, IMs had pursued a wide range of modest and small-scale initiatives. The aim of some of these initiatives (for example addressing very local issues, and one to address inter-family disputes) suggests there is a risk that looseness in concepts about mediation and insider mediation may lead to too wide a range of activity under the banner of insider mediation.

One Sudanese interviewee said that their understanding was that in Sudan the aim had been for the Sudanese IMs to contribute on the wider conflict, but the experience had been that the IMs "can't do anything regarding the current conflict". The aim for IM activity in Sudan had therefore been adjusted to focusing on improving relations between host communities and IDPs. This aim is still relevant and coherent in the context.

One interviewee, with a good understanding of mediation and peacebuilding, considered that the national implementing partner and the IM network in one country both lacked a clear picture about insider mediation and the scope of the project, and that this contributed to IMs proposing unrealistic or inappropriate ideas for initiatives under the label of insider mediation.

¹³ Modifications to intended outputs can be seen in comparing the October 2022 project document and the end-2023 first-year project review report.

The interviewee felt that most IMs were well-motivated but was still uncertain about whether the whole fitted together well. In interviews, some of the Sudanese IMs remarked that the initiatives they had done under the project were the type of activities that they would anyway do in one way or another in their communities. Nonetheless, it is reasonable to judge that the training and experience-sharing elements of the project stand to have benefited some IMs and increase their motivation and readiness to pursue further initiatives of a local mediation and peacebuilding character, with or without the future support of an insider mediation project.

“For the [Sudanese] IMs it was a bit difficult to understand the concept of insider mediation and the goal of the project. In time they began to understand it and they became enthusiastic.”

————— Sudanese interviewee

“I have some questions about UNDP’s way of working on this. It’s as though UNDP wants to start IM networks everywhere, and people may think ‘Why? Why me?’ Are these people really going to do insider mediation work. There is some tension between fostering IMs and the existence already of IMs or local mediators”

————— Interviewee

3.3.3 Effectiveness

Overarching question: *How effective was the project at achieving its overall goal and the three contributing objectives?*

Finding: The overall goal of the project was to support insider mediation at local and national levels in the Arab States region by “establishing a dedicated regional platform” and piloting this platform and activities in three countries. This goal and three contributing objectives were retained in the 2023 revision to the project results framework. The project produced a regional platform, albeit not matching the ambitious scale and detail envisaged in the original project document. The project had limited success on the three contributing objectives, the first two of which were also over-ambitious.¹⁴ However, the project also had considerable positive effect on the ground, and this achievement should be recognized. The fostering of three small networks of individuals under the shared banner of IMs, the training opportunities and interaction between these networks, and the small initiatives that the IMs pursued, were all positive achievements in a short timeframe. Moreover, this was done with comparatively modest overall financing, and across three countries, with all the contextual differences and complications that entailed.

Rating: 3

Detail

The project contracted the UN System Staff College (UNSSC), under a small contract, to develop learning platforms based on a needs assessment, aimed at building the capacity of the IMs. UNSSC developed one platform for each country, each with a tailored module (in Arabic) on conflict analysis, and a module on conflict sensitivity. It also developed a module on insider mediation, which was put on a regional platform. The regional platform was designed to be in Arabic and English (and was the first time UNSSC had set up a platform in the two languages). The modules were reviewed by RBAS and the Country Offices.

¹⁴ The first contributing objective was to “[c]reate an enabling environment for insider mediators to play a more effective role in preventing and resolving conflict”; the second was to “[f]oster a shared understanding ... of the processes in which IMs are engaged that require support for sustainable peace and reconciliation to emerge”. UNDP project document, 2022, p. 6.

UNSSC also held online webinars, for each country, on conflict, peace, violence and the linkages between conflict analysis and insider mediation. UNSSC aimed to hand over management of the modules to the project focal points in the UNDP Country Offices and the RBAS. Interviews indicated that the Lebanese IMs made most use of the online learning platforms. Understandably the situation in Sudan, including the electricity and internet access shortages, impacted on the scope for Sudanese IMs to use the online platforms.

Complementing the UNSSC online platforms, trainings were provided by partner organizations in Jordan, Lebanon and Sudan. UNDP Jordan conducted a needs assessment for forming the Jordanian IM network and contracted a national implementing partner, IDare, which organized three workshops for the IMs during 2024. These were on conducting a conflict and development assessment, youth and women, and communication and advocacy. According to interviews, some of the older Jordanian IMs found it difficult to use the online resources, and younger IMs were encouraged to help them. One Jordanian interviewee said that the regional experience sharing aspect of the project had been very important, given that other countries such as Lebanon had much more experience of insider mediation. Some Jordanian IMs expressed particular appreciation for the training, saying that before the training they had felt behind in this field, relative to the other IM networks.

UNDP Lebanon similarly conducting a needs assessment for forming the Lebanese IM network, and contracted the international NGO, Search for Common Ground, as its implementation partner to support the network. As a specialist peacebuilding organization, with extensive experience in Lebanon, Search was a good partner. Lebanese IMs interviewed for the evaluation spoke favourably about the training and support it provided.

Interviews with IMs indicated that across the three networks there was naturally a range of experience and opinion about the online platforms and the in-person trainings (e.g. on conflict analysis, conflict sensitivity, and analytical tools and methods). On balance, it appears that:

- People in the network had different needs and familiarity with the subjects, therefore the online platform helped more for some, while others found that it didn't add value for them.
- Some felt that the online courses were not so good for linking theory with practice, while the in-person courses were more practical. IMs found some trainers very good, some average and some perhaps not so good. Some IMs weren't used to using online platforms, and would generally prefer in-person training.

The evaluation looked at the online platforms and example content in these. The platforms were evidently well-designed, technically, and are typical examples of online learning platforms prepared by organizations. The evaluation noted examples of content (such as about how to do a "conflict and development analysis") that are tailored to users who are staff in (aid) organizations, rather than being tailored to people who are aiming to contribute in local or higher-level mediation.

In Sudan, after the war in Sudan began in April 2023, the project plan had to be revised, and a decision was taken to focus on eastern Sudan, this being a region which was (largely) free of armed conflict but was nonetheless affected by an influx of large numbers of Sudanese displaced from other parts of the country. UNDP Sudan conducted two mappings to support setting up the Sudanese IM network, and contracted a Sudanese NGO, the Building Resilience Development Organization (BRDO) as a local implementing partner. Given limitations to BRDO's ability to train on local mediation and peacebuilding topics, the project partnered with an external organization, the Clingendael Institute, to provide support – Clingendael being a

specialist peacebuilding and peace support organization, and Sudan being a priority country for Dutch aid. Clingendael organized two online trainings, the first for BRDO in January 2024, and the second for the Sudanese IMs in September 2024. A third training, focused on practical case studies and negotiation and mediation role playing, was held in November 2024 and was followed by a workshop for reflecting on the project and what IMs could do beyond it. The evaluation finds that Clingendael and UNSSC were good choices of international partners for training purposes.

The project used a Results Framework with a set of indicators, baselines and annual targets for the project's four intended outputs. All indicators were quantitative and none were qualitative. Examples of indicators were "number of project events ...", "number of IMs ...", "number of communication materials ...", and "% of IMs that ...". The dependence on exclusively quantitative indicators, and the absence of qualitative indicators and assessments, was a weakness in monitoring, given that the intended outputs were not essentially quantitatively measurable.

3.3.4 Efficiency

Overarching question: *How efficient was the project as a whole, in terms of implementation efficiency? (i.e. were the resources used for the project proportional to the results?)*

Finding: The project showed high levels of efficiency in its use of financial resources and its management, relative to its outputs. Overall financial efficiency was represented by what the project achieved with a budget of €994,436 (just under US\$1.2m) at the outset, and an eventual expenditure within that ceiling figure. This is modest expenditure for outputs comprising the establishment of three small networks across three countries, training and support resources for those networks, and local initiatives pursued by IMs. Overall management efficiency is represented by the fact that the project achieved good levels of implementation and quality, despite the difficulties posed by the situations in Sudan and later Lebanon, and within a little over two years (including no-cost extension). Shortcomings in efficiency certainly occurred, but these were mainly to do with factors outside the control of the project (such as the difficult country operating contexts, and UNDP structures) which caused delays at times but were not of a scale that outweighed the overall positive efficiency.

Rating: 4

Detail

The project was managed by RBAS, based in Amman, Jordan. It was led and managed by one full-time project manager, and was under the oversight of two units in RBAS (the governance and peacebuilding unit, and the regional programme unit). Staff from RBAS's governance and peacebuilding team were involved in providing quality assurance for the project, from the phase of design and project document development, through implementation. RBAS's Management Support Unit provided administrative and operational support for project implementation. Individual staff in UNDP country offices in Lebanon, Jordan and Sudan spent time on the project as part of their wider portfolios of responsibilities. The project had the support of one UN Volunteer in the UNDP Lebanon Country Office who was allocated to work on the project full-time. Interviews indicated that the UNDP Jordan and Sudan country office focal points for the project spent around 10% of their time on the project.

Interviews with RBAS staff indicated consistently that staff had sought to learn from project implementation difficulties and adjust project management accordingly on the way, and that the project was a good example of adaptive management. In interviews, the donor focal point for the project expressed that the ministry was content with how the project had gone, even

though the project had faced delays. UNDP had been very responsive to the donor throughout the project and interaction with the project manager had been good.

Project monitoring and evaluation during the project appears to have followed UNDP conventions well. The revision of the project's results framework was a positive step in monitoring. Weaknesses in the results monitoring framework have been noted in 3.3.3 above. A detailed final financial statement for the project was not available during the evaluation, but it was understood from UNDP that total expenditure was within the project's budget.¹⁵

Events in two countries impacted efficiency. The outbreak of war in Sudan in April 2023 necessitated revision of the project's plans in Sudan, entailing a shift in geographic focus within the country and delays to project work. Israel's war in Lebanon, during October-November 2024, coincided with a period when the Lebanese IMs were due to be implementing their planned local initiatives.

Project focal points at UNDP country offices in Jordan, Lebanon and Sudan supported project implementation in each country. At an early stage in the project, a question had been raised about the ability of the Lebanon component of the project to find an effective national partner. But that question was satisfactorily answered and resolved once the implementing partner Search was secured: although an international rather than a national NGO (which was the preference of the project), Search has extensive experience in Lebanon. In Jordan the implementing partner, NGO IDare, had a background of work on behavioural change and had previously worked with UNDP. It was contracted for less than a year and was not involved in the mapping and selection of IMs. The project's Sudanese implementing partner, Building Resilience Development Organization (BRDO), began its role in February 2024. It did not have a background in peacebuilding but was the best NGO partner the project could find at the time in eastern Sudan.

The project's use of Clingendael and UNSSC as external training support providers appears to have been efficient. UNSSC was contracted for six months (the second half of 2023), and a no-cost extension of three months was added to this. The original timeline seemed appropriate to UNSSC, but the extended timeline was more realistic. Clingendael's involvement was in 2024 and it did not have interaction with the UNSSC platforms.

Interviews with IMs indicated some inefficiencies in the in-person and online training provision. Several interviewees felt there was repetition in the trainings and workshops. Some interviewees said that the notice given before some trainings were held was short, making it difficult to arrange to be able to attend. Several Lebanese said that the compressed schedule for training events during summer 2024 was difficult: some IMs couldn't attend because of family commitments and the short notice. According to Search, this did mean that engagement with the IMs in Lebanon was sometimes difficult, and in-person trainings were usually attended by 12-16 IMs out of the initial total of 28.

"The project shows a lot of results from modest resources. This type of project should be part of UNDP conflict prevention efforts."

————— RBAS Regional Hub manager

3.3.5 Impact

Overarching question: *How much impact did the project have?*

¹⁵ A final financial statement can be appended to the evaluation report when available and if needed.

Finding: The project had moderate impact in that it established three IM networks in three countries, a platform to support them, and aspirations in those networks to pursue further initiatives of a local mediation and peacebuilding type. The limitations to this impact were primarily scale and level: the networks were small (in number of members) and partial in their geographic focus (in the case of Jordan and Sudan); and the levels of mediation and peacebuilding that they could operate at were very local. Nonetheless, the positive impact of the project, within the limitations of the project's capability, deserves to be recognized.

Rating: 3

Detail

The online platform, and the training and networking provisions of the project, evidently had impact on the IMs. According to interviews for the evaluation, the project's online platform (in Arabic and English) was more developed than the online platform UNDP has been developing (in English and French) under its global project for insider mediation. In interviews and the survey, many IMs said they had benefited a lot from the project and that it had raised their abilities. IMs commented that experience sharing between younger and older IMs was good; and that the in-person meetings of the networks in Amman had helped to build the identity of their respective networks and provide a basis for working collaboratively. Several Lebanese IMs said they had particularly appreciated hearing the Sudanese IMs' experience and that the attitude of the Sudanese network was very impressive

Within the limitations of project potential, impact was constrained by the situation in Sudan and Lebanon. In Sudan, internet connectivity constraints made it difficult for Sudanese IMs to reliably access and use the online learning and experience sharing platforms. Visa and travel constraints prevented any Sudanese IMs from attending in-person the project events in Amman. In Lebanon a three-day workshop ("camp") planned with UN Women and an NGO for late 2024 had to be postponed because of the war. It was changed to be an online event, discussing the future as well as the past and present. Each of these factors can be considered to have constrained the benefit IMs drew from those elements of the project.

IM initiatives were diverse and were examples of local impact. Initiatives in the three countries included: developing a code of conduct for the Jordanian IM network; organizing a football friendly in an area with community tensions; a podcast with IMs talking about what they do; a workshop for women on leadership, teamwork and analysis; an initiative to combat inflammatory rumours and hate speech; local football games with more inclusive community participation; a group discussion bringing together people from three different communities in Red Sea State; a two-day meeting for people from two neighbouring Lebanese villages where estrangement from each other had grown since the civil war, rather than decreased; and visits to IDP shelter centres in Lebanon (during October–November 2024) to identify what support could be helpful.

Another example of local impact was the Jordanian network's centre. The local authorities in Zarqa provided the network with a venue which the network, with a small grant from the project, was able to set up as a centre for the network, available for the local community to use. This was welcomed locally. The centre does not have a sign to indicate the role of the project (or UNDP and the donor) in bringing about the centre: this is a positive thing, as it is not necessary to draw attention locally to the contribution of the project and to do so would not enhance the centre's identity as a facility for the IM network and the local community. In interviews, the implementing partner in Jordan, IDare, said it kept the visibility of the project low, because of the novelty of work on insider mediation in Jordan and to minimise the risk of

complications for participating IMs. According to the project management, care was similarly taken in all three countries regarding communications, project visibility and the IMs.

The project management felt that the project resulted in positively changing or influencing some attitudes and behaviours among IMs, and that this constituted a form of impact from the project. Indicators from IM interviews and survey responses (as mentioned above) provide some support for the view regarding IM willingness or confidence to pursue local mediation and peacebuilding activities in the future, and a follow-up survey of IMs in the future could assess this.

“For us it was a great project. It has led to products which are examples of the localisation approach – speaking the language of the people who use them. ... The partnership with the UNDP [RBAS] Regional Hub was really good.”

————— UNSSC interviewee

“The [Lebanese] IMs had initiatives planned before the crisis [the 2024 war]. Now they are organizing a crisis response cell which looks at how to help on the ground between host communities and IDPs. So they are acting individually and as a whole, and finding roles in this crisis.”

————— UNDP interviewee

“For the young [Sudanese] IMs it’s a new subject and new skills. For the older, more experienced IMs the project is helping to change their thinking and attitudes about young people and local mediation.”

————— UNDP interviewee

3.3.6 Sustainability

Overarching question: *How sustainable were the project as a whole and its results and outputs?*

Finding: During its implementation the project did not have an assurance of further financing or a fixed exit strategy, with an expectation that arrangements would be in place by the end of the project under which the support platform and the networks could continue to operate fully in a self-sustaining way. However, it is reasonable to judge the sustainability of the project’s results and outputs as moderately good. An intrinsic part of the project’s ideas was that at least individuals in the networks (if not the networks themselves) would be more motivated and more able, thanks to the project, to pursue further constructive local mediation and peacebuilding activities in the future, independent of whether the project continued. Feedback from the IMs, and from the implementing partner organizations, indicated that this motivation and ability was present. Furthermore, the online support platform has potential to be sustained and used beyond the project with limited additional inputs or costs, for example if it is made available in some form to other projects or organizations.

Rating: 3

Detail

One constraint on achieving sustainability in project results and outputs was the short duration of the project, combined with the contextual difficulties, especially in Sudan and to an extent in Lebanon, where the conflicts in those countries complicated project activity. The provision of a no-cost extension in late 2024 to complete project activities appears to have been very justifiable. Many interviewees remarked that the timeline was very challenging, and this was clearly the case in Sudan and to an extent Lebanon. Numerous interviewees recommended that a project on insider mediation should ideally have a longer timeframe, for

example three years: in the words of one implementing partner, a longer timeframe would help to produce incremental progress.

An aspect of sustainability was the individual personal ability of IMs to sustain the role of trying to mediate locally. In this regard, it was to the credit of the project that it included a provision for mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) to IMs. For this the project contracted an MHPSS consultant from the start of 2024 to the end of the project, who aimed to provide a space for IMs to air concerns and feelings, and to respond to any identified MHPSS needs. It appears that the IMs were generally very responsive to this provision, some of them having a background understanding about MHPSS, and some feeling isolated and welcoming the provision.

Interviews with the IMs and the survey of IM perceptions found much evidence of motivation and interest among IMs to continue and widen the IM network experience in each country. IM recommendations regarding continuation and future steps (discussed in 3.2 above) included:

- Involvement of relevant local research and training organizations (such as the peace studies centres at Gedaref, Kassala and Port Sudan universities) for example in data collection, documentation, and education about mediation and peacebuilding.
- Future training to include: early warning and conflict prevention; tolerance and social justice; and support on communication skills (which some Sudanese IMs felt could be valuable if their network was to contribute in future forums connected to peace talks).

IMs have also looked at what steps could help consolidate their networks, for example whether to register as a formal organization, to seek a physical premises to help with continuity and to ensure that it doesn't become subject to individual or sub-group priorities. The centre established by the Jordanian IM network, which can be used by other community organizations, has the potential to help sustain the Jordanian network beyond the project.

“It’s a very interesting group: very different backgrounds and ages, with different levels of experience of mediation. I was very impressed. It made us at Search think beyond this project. I’m sure this network will carry on beyond the project.”

————— *Search for Common Ground (Lebanon) interviewee*

On cross-cutting themes, the evaluation’s findings are as follow (sections 3.3.7-3.3.9 below):

3.3.7 Gender equality

Overarching question: *To what extent did the project contribute to the goal of gender equality, in the project’s design, implementation and results?*

Finding: The project achieved a high level of equality in women’s participation in the IM networks, and it appears that women IMs generally felt that the project supported their participation and role as IMs very well. The exact level of women’s participation varied slightly across the three countries but was in all three cases positive relative to the social contexts in which the project was operating.

Rating: 4

Detail

It is evident that the project’s design, implementation and monitoring made careful efforts to support gender equality, in line with the donor’s wish for the project to be strong on women’s participation, and in line with UNDP corporate aims. Interviews for the evaluation indicated that during the design of the project advice was sought from relevant gender specialist staff,

Within the limited scope of the project's activities and outputs, a high level of gender equality was achieved and supported. According to figures from the implementing partners, at the end of the project the three IM networks numbered a total of 62 active or engaged IMs, of whom exactly half were men and half women. Trainings and learning needs assessments included questions about gender.

Interviewees said that in training events women IMs had been able to discuss specific challenges they faced as women IMs. They had also been able to discuss issues such as inequitable access for women to land, resources and inheritances. The MHPSS provision of the project also appears to have been responsive to gender aspects: according to interviews, the MHPSS focal points for the groups of IMs were women. Some IMs noted variation in the ease of interaction between men and women IMs in each network, but ease of interaction was the product of social context not the project.

In interviews, the project manager of the UNDP global project on insider mediation spoke positively about the scope to leverage the knowledge and networks of the regional project, for example to find women speakers and participants for events; the global project has had regular contact with the manager of this project.

A second phase of the project could offer a good opportunity to build on the large number of women among the IMs.

3.3.8 Disability

Overarching question: *To what extent did the project contribute to the goal of inclusion of persons with disabilities, in the project's design, implementation and results?*

Finding: The project made positive efforts to include persons with disabilities within the IM networks and to support their participation. It is not possible to vouch for all aspects of how initiatives associated with the project were conducted. However, the evaluation found no evidence that the project had inequitable or discriminatory impacts on persons with disabilities. The project did not have outputs with the potential to cause restrictions on resources or basic services for people with disabilities.

Rating: 4

Detail

In Jordan, the IM network included two IMs with disabilities. In interviews for the evaluation, these IMs indicated that they felt they had benefited considerably from their participation in the project. Inclusion of persons with disabilities in the Jordanian IM network was helped by one of the IMs being the head of an NGO for people with disabilities. It is clear that good provision was made during the project for the IMs with disabilities, with a sign language interpreter being provided when needed.

This inclusion was clearly positive and beneficial for the participants and a good example for project planning and management. UNDP interviewees said that they felt they had learnt from the project about inclusion of people with disabilities, as well as people of different ages and generations (see below).

"The project helped us to learn how to get involved and how to resolve problems."

————— *IM interviewee*

3.3.9 Human rights more broadly

Overarching question: *To what extent did the project uphold the principle of ‘leaving no one behind’, and did it make positive contributions in regards to any other aspect of human rights or human rights more broadly?*

Finding: The project did not focus on the subject of human rights and human rights were not an explicit element of intended outputs and outcomes. The evaluation cannot vouch for all aspects of how initiatives associated with the project were conducted, but the evaluation found no evidence of the project significantly and directly impacting the human rights of a particular population or group. Given that there was not a significant human rights focus, it would therefore not be very meaningful for the evaluation to give a rating for project performance against the criterion of human rights broader than gender equality and disability.

Rating: n/a

Detail

At the project design stage, the project document was reviewed against UNDP’s Social and Environmental Standards checklist, and within this it satisfied the criteria regarding human rights and the principle of “leaving no one behind”. While human rights were not a focus of the project, by having diverse and inclusive IM networks, with a high level of women’s participation, the project was a positive example of inclusion and a rights-based approach.

It is clear that the profile of IMs in all three networks was diverse, not just in gender but in age, social identity, and professional background. The Lebanese and Sudanese networks were also diverse geographically, while the Jordanian network was geographically concentrated (within the governorate of Zarqa) but was still diverse in its members’ ages and religious and community affiliations. IMs participated in the project voluntarily, without remuneration for it. Their occupations ranged from students, recent graduates, community activists, and academics, to social workers, retirees, managers, teachers and journalists.

The IM networks were thus a good example of diversity, and in all three countries IM interviewees mentioned the diversity of their networks as a strength. Some recommended that a future project increase this diversity – for example, a Sudanese interviewee recommended that future selection of IMs be more tribally inclusive, and several Jordanian interviewees recommended inclusion of more younger IMs.

“In Jordan there is an old tradition of local or insider mediation. This hasn’t been modernised, but there is a large untapped potential among the youth. ...”

————— UNDP interviewee

“The best thing was the age diversity in the network.”

————— IM interviewee

3.4 FINDINGS ARRANGED BY EVALUATION MATRIX

Table 6: (i) Location of responses to overarching evaluation questions

Criterion	Overarching questions	Report section containing evaluation response
Relevance	How relevant is insider mediation in Jordan, Lebanon and Sudan, and how relevant is the idea of a regional platform to support insider mediators in the Arab States region?	response in 3.3.1

Coherence	How coherent was the project in its design, concepts and objectives?	response in 3.3.2
Effectiveness	How effective was the project at achieving its overall goal and the three contributing objectives? ¹⁶	response in 3.3.3
Efficiency	How efficient was the project as a whole, in terms of implementation efficiency? (i.e. were the resources used for the project proportional to the results?)	response in 3.3.4
Impact	How much impact did the project have?	response in 3.3.5
Sustainability	How sustainable were the project as a whole and its results and outputs?	response in 3.3.6
Cross-cutting themes / criteria:		
7. Gender equality	To what extent did the project contribute to the goal of gender equality, in the project's design, implementation and results?	response in 3.3.7
8. Disability	To what extent did the project contribute to the goal of inclusion of persons with disabilities, in the project's design, implementation and results?	response in 3.3.8
9. Human rights more broadly	To what extent did the project uphold the principle of 'leaving no one behind', and did it make positive contributions in regards to any other aspect of human rights or human rights more broadly?	response in 3.3.9

A set of subsidiary questions was included in the ToR, and it was agreed during the inception phase that the evaluation could consider, revise or exclude these questions as appropriate. Some of these questions are covered by the overarching questions above; some were duplicative, while others merit additional responses. The evaluation's responses are below:

Table 7: (ii) Responses to evaluation subsidiary questions, as posed in ToR

Criterion	Questions	Evaluation responses (and related section in report, if applicable)
Relevance	<p>1. To what extent was the project in line with priorities in the countries directly engaged in implementation, including the communities and localities specifically targeted by the project?</p> <p>2. To what extent was the project in line with the UNDP regional programme outcomes and outputs, the UNDP Strategic Plan, and the SDGs?</p> <p>3. To what extent was the project in line with France's priorities (Loi no. 2021-1031 du 4 août</p>	<p>1. This question does not specify narrowly enough whose priorities it wants to refer to. The "priorities" of a country, a community or a locality can be many and varied.</p> <p>2. To a large extent, and sufficiently.</p> <p>3. To a reasonable or large extent, it seems.</p>

¹⁶ To reiterate, the project's overall goal was: *to bring together insider mediators and actors supporting insider mediators from across the Arab States region, with a focus on Jordan, Lebanon and Sudan, in order to establish a "regional platform" to support insider mediators.*

The three contributing objectives were:

- (1) *Create an enabling environment for insider mediators to play a more effective role in preventing and resolving conflict, particularly by providing space to local approaches and locally-owned processes.*
- (2) *Foster a shared understanding – amongst relevant international, regional, national and local actors – of the processes in which IMs are engaged that require support for sustainable peace and reconciliation to emerge.*
- (3) *Foster stronger relationships and provide opportunities for peer-to-peer learning and exchange amongst insider mediators and those working to support them both at the national and regional levels.*

	<p><i>2021 de programmation relative au développement solidaire et à la lutte contre les inégalités mondiales, 'preventing and tackling crisis and fragility', France's strategy on Prevention, Resilience and Sustainable Peace)?</i></p> <p><i>4. To what extent does the project's theory of change remain relevant for the regional, national priorities?</i></p> <p><i>5. To what extent were perspectives, needs, and priorities of men and women who could affect the outcomes, taken into account during project design and implementation processes?</i></p> <p><i>6. Were the inputs and strategies identified [sic], and were they realistic, appropriate and adequate to achieve the results?</i></p> <p><i>7. Was the project relevant to the identified needs?</i></p>	<p>4. As with Q1.1, this question does not specify "priorities" narrowly enough to be able to give a meaningful answer.</p> <p>5. Needs assessments were conducted in each country which were aimed in various ways to understand perspectives, needs and priorities of men and women regarding insider mediation. (3.3.4.)</p> <p>6. The question is not very clear, but inputs were evidently gathered (see above) and there were strategies; they achieved some of the intended results. (3.3.1, 3.3.2 and 3.3.5.)</p> <p>7. It was relevant to what the needs assessments pointed towards. But these assessments did not contain analyses of the wider mediation and peacebuilding situation in each country. (3.3.1.)</p>
<p>Coherence</p>	<p><i>1. To what extent did the collaboration between UNDP Regional Programme and Country Offices provide added value to the project?</i></p> <p><i>2. To what extent did UNDP adopt gender-responsive, human rights-based, and conflict-sensitive approaches?</i></p> <p><i>3. To what extent is UNDP engagement a reflection of strategic considerations, including the role of UNDP in a particular development context and its comparative advantage?</i></p> <p><i>4. To what extent was the method of delivery selected by UNDP appropriate to the development context?</i></p>	<p>1. The collaboration was essential for project implementation in each country: thus it certainly added value. (3.3.4.)</p> <p>2. To a high extent the project was gender-responsive and conflict-sensitive. (3.3.7, 3.3.8, 3.3.9.)</p> <p>3. The question does not specify whose "strategic considerations". However, the project fitted with UNDP strategies, and it made good use of UNDP's regional and Country Office capabilities, which are part of the organization's comparative advantage.</p> <p>4. It was very appropriate to the context.</p>
<p>Effectiveness</p>	<p><i>1. To what extent did the project achieve its overall objectives?</i></p> <p><i>2. What and how much progress has been made towards achieving the overall outputs and outcomes of the project (including contributing factors and constraints)?</i></p> <p><i>3. Was the project effective in delivering desired/planned results? Could a different approach have produced better results? and what would be the best approach for future phases?</i></p> <p><i>4. How effective were the strategies and tools used in the implementation of the project?</i></p> <p><i>5. How effective has the project been in responding to the needs of the beneficiaries, and what results were achieved?</i></p>	<p>1. Moderately: immediate objectives partly achieved, wider objectives less so. (3.3.3, 3.3.5.)</p> <p>2. The intended outputs (e.g. networks, platform, IM initiatives) were largely achieved; the regional support platform was not as elaborate as envisaged in the original project document.</p> <p>3. Yes, it was effective, but improvements are possible. See section 4 on recommendations.</p> <p>4. Satisfactorily effective. (3.3.3.)</p> <p>5. Learning needs assessments was conducted with the IM networks. Training was responsive to those assessments, and IM feedback about training and networking opportunities was positive. (3.2, 3.3.3.)</p>

	<p>6. <i>What are the key areas that could be scaled up for a second phase presenting a significant value to the region?</i></p>	<p>6. Question is too wide, but section 4 contains recommendations about follow-up.</p>
Efficiency	<p>1. <i>To what extent was the project management structure as outlined in the project document efficient in generating the expected results?</i></p> <p>2. <i>Was the process of achieving results efficient? Specifically did the actual or expected results (outputs and outcomes) justify the costs incurred?</i></p> <p>3. <i>Were the resources and financial management processes effectively (sic) utilized?</i></p> <p>4. <i>Did project activities overlap and duplicate other similar interventions (funded nationally and/or by other donors)? Are there more efficient ways and means of delivering more and better results (outputs and outcomes) with the available inputs?</i></p> <p>5. <i>To what extent did the Project’s M&E mechanism contribute in meeting project results?</i></p> <p>6. <i>How was the project’s collaboration with the UNDP, national institutions, development partners, and the Steering Committee? Any suggested partnerships for future phases?</i></p> <p>7. <i>What are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats and risks of the project implementation process?</i></p>	<p>1. The structure appears to have been very suitable and efficient for implementation and results. (3.3.4.)</p> <p>2. Yes (3.3.4.)</p> <p>3. Yes, they appear to have been used efficiently and effectively. The evaluation did not include a full financial analysis, as final figures were not available. (3.3.4.)</p> <p>4. Project activities did not duplicate simultaneous other initiatives supporting exactly the same goal in the same countries. But initiatives in complementary or similar areas existed.¹⁷ On potential better ways, see recommendations in section 4.</p> <p>5. Project M&E was exemplified by revision to the results framework, progress reports (by implementing partners and the RBAS Regional Hub), and responsive management. (3.3.4.)</p> <p>6. The project was very collaborative: the RBAS Regional Hub worked with three UNDP country offices, three NGOs, and two other training partners. See 3.3.4 and section 4.</p> <p>7. Question addressed by other answers.</p>
Impact	<p>1. <i>What is the overall direct and indirect impact of the project, considering positive and negative, as well as intended and unintended effects by the project implementation?</i></p> <p>2. <i>What could have been done differently to achieve a more transformational change?</i></p>	<p>1. See 3.3.5.</p> <p>2. A small project, with short duration, across three countries, cannot really achieve “more transformational change” in just two years. See 3.3.5 and 3.3.1 and section 4 on ways to improve.</p>
Sustainability	<p>1. <i>To what extent are the benefits and outcomes of the project likely to be sustained after the completion of this project?</i></p> <p>2. <i>To what extent are lessons learned documented by the project team on a continual basis and shared with appropriate parties who could learn from the project?</i></p> <p>3. <i>What are the key factors that will require attention in order to improve prospects of sustainability of Project outcomes and the potential for replication of the approach?</i></p>	<p>1. See 3.3.6.</p> <p>2. To the extent that progress reports and public communications were produced, and a knowledge-product report was being prepared towards the end of the project.</p> <p>3. See 3.3.6 and section 4.</p>

¹⁷ For example, a GiZ project “[Strengthening the resilience of vulnerable groups in Jordan](#)”, 2017-2026, has aimed to support people to “participate in processes of social change to deal with tensions and to resolve conflicts peacefully”; and a GiZ project in Lebanon, “[Improving civil conflict resolution and social participation in Lebanon through community work and mediation](#)”, 2022-24, aimed to support a “Civil Peace Service”.

	4. <i>How were capacities strengthened at the individual and organizational level (including contributing factors and constraints)?</i>	4. See 3.3.3 and 3.2 on effect on capacities of IMs. Capacities of NGO partners may have benefited from the project, but this was not a priority or requirement.
Cross-cutting themes / criteria:		
Gender equality	<p>1. <i>To what extent have gender equality and the empowerment of women been addressed in the design, implementation and monitoring of the project?</i></p> <p>2. <i>Is the gender marker assigned to this project representative of reality?</i></p> <p>3. <i>To what extent has the project promoted positive changes in gender equality and the empowerment of women? Did any unintended effects emerge for women, men or vulnerable groups?</i></p>	<p>1. To a good extent. (3.3.7.)</p> <p>2. Yes. The marker was 2 (on a scale from 0 to 3), which was appropriate.</p> <p>3. See 3.3.7. The evaluation did not find unintended effects in this regard.</p>
Disability	<p>1. <i>Were persons with disabilities consulted and meaningfully involved in programme planning and implementation?</i></p> <p>2. <i>What proportion of the beneficiaries of a programme were persons with disabilities?</i></p> <p>3. <i>What barriers did persons with disabilities face?</i></p> <p>4. <i>Was a twin-track approach adopted?</i></p>	<p>1. Some were involved in programme implementation. (3.3.8.)</p> <p>2. Approximately 4% of IMs (direct beneficiaries).</p> <p>3. Good support was given to help IMs with disabilities participate fully.</p> <p>4. Yes, to the extent that disability was included with gender as a cross-cutting issue in the project, and targeted support was provided.</p>

4. CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the evaluation found project performance to have been good. The ratings against the DAC criteria and specified cross cutting themes were:

Table 8: Summary of evaluation ratings

DAC criteria	
Relevance	3
Coherence	3
Effectiveness	3
Efficiency	4
Impact	3
Sustainability	3
Cross-cutting themes	
Gender equality	4
Disability	4
Human rights (more broadly)	n/a

The mean average rating against the six core criteria was therefore 3.2 out of a maximum of 4 (on a continuous four-point evaluation scale). Including gender equality and disability, the average rating was 3.4 out of 4.

The evaluation draws the following overall conclusions:

Conclusion (i): The project’s performance against the criteria of relevance and coherence was moderately good. Within the understandable limitations of what a small two-year project spread across three countries could do, the coherence was relatively good. The gap was between this and the aspiration and implication in the project’s concept to contribute to addressing violent conflict and “sustaining peace”. Some over-promising and over-estimation is common in development projects (and projects in other fields), both at the outset and during implementation. To increase the relevance and coherence of a future project, it would be beneficial to make some adjustments in **strategy**.

Conclusion (ii): The project’s performance against the criteria of impact and sustainability was moderately good. The project’s small scale and duration limited impact, as did the levels of mediation and peacebuilding that the networks could operate at. It was understandable too that the project did not have assured sustainability arrangements. To increase the impact and sustainability of a project of this nature in the future, it could be helpful to make some changes regarding **partners and stakeholders**.

Conclusion (iii): The project’s performance against the criteria of effectiveness and efficiency were, respectively, moderately good and very good or high; its performance regarding the crosscutting themes of gender and disability was also very good or high. The main shortcoming in effectiveness was in the scale of the regional platform produced by the project, and in results relative to two of the three contributing objectives in the project’s overall goal statement. Ambition is not a mistake. But effectiveness relative to goals and objectives can be helped by increasing clarity and consultation. To maintain or improve performance against the criteria of effectiveness and efficiency, and on gender and disability, in a future project, certain actions or measures in project **implementation and management** may be helpful.

Conclusion (iv): The project produced constructive outputs and some results in the field of local mediation and peacebuilding. However, the trajectory of events in two of the three

countries where the project was implemented is a reminder of the enormous challenges some countries face to build or maintain peace. For this reason, one general overall conclusion about the project should be that sustained support and collaboration are important for peacebuilding and peace support initiatives to meet the scale of challenges and needs.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions, the evaluation report makes the following sets of recommendations.

Strategy

Recommendations to UNDP and donors, relating to Section 4 conclusions (i) and (iv) and the findings on which they are based:

a) Build on the project

A follow-up or second-phase project, with little gap in activity, would be the ideal means for consolidating and building on the project. If a follow-up or second-phase project is not possible, it would be good if UNDP completes documentation of and communication about the project as far as possible. Documentation of the project (in the form of written reports available online, and website pages) can be valuable for sharing knowledge about the project, for the IMs and NGOs that were involved, as well as for UNDP, and can increase the chance that other initiatives will complement or build on this project.

b) Increase role of national partners

A follow-up project would do well to increase the involvement of local NGOs and research, training and higher educational institutions. These should ideally be local NGOs with a record of or commitment to working on peacebuilding, and centres in local universities or institutions which work on peace and development (if present).

Such involvement can help to build those centres' and organizations' capabilities, expertise and standing as local or national contributors to peace. Centres in local universities can have advantages of greater sustainability, access to facilities and local recognition, compared with NGOs. Their capability and sustainability advantages can also offer activity cost savings for a project.

In seeking to increase the role of national partners it should be remembered that ultimately the best and most successful peacemaking and peacebuilding is led and shaped by the people whose country it is. The best contribution that external actors (be they international organizations, donors or mediators) can make is to support and facilitate local peacemakers and peacebuilders in ways that they would recommend.

c) Increase clarity about types of mediation

It may be helpful for a follow-up project to increase clarity in the project plans, and in interactions with partners and beneficiaries, about the different levels and domains of mediation. Mediation has numerous meanings and can signify different types and levels of activity even within the context of peacemaking and peacebuilding. It can mean actions to reduce or resolve armed conflicts and disputes at international, national, regional or sub-national, local and community levels. It can mean actions to reduce or resolve family, organizational and business disputes (and thus is associated also with the terminology of alternative dispute resolution and family mediation). Peacemaking and peacebuilding mediation can occur at different political, societal and organizational levels (as reflected in the concept of three "tracks"). It should be remembered too that the term "insider mediator" essentially came into use to differentiate between mediators who are from the country concerned and those who are from outside (external or international mediators). In contexts where external mediators are not present and not expected, it may often be better to say simply "local mediator" rather than "insider mediator".

d) Maintain realism about outcomes

Mediation, peacebuilding and peacemaking understandably prompt high expectations about intended results or impact at a level of “peace”. Mediation on very small and confined issues can achieve results in a short time. But successful peacemaking and peacebuilding are much larger and longer processes. A follow-up project would do well to be encourage realistic and proportionate expectations about project impact. Clarity about what types of mediation the project aims to support may help to ensure appropriate expectations about project impact.

Partners and stakeholders

Recommendations to UNDP and donors, relating to Section 4 conclusions (ii) and (iv) and the findings on which they are based:

e) Explore ways to engage with community structures and political actors

It could be beneficial for impact if a follow-up or second-phase project explores ways to include or interact with more people who have formal roles in, or identify as members of, community structures, political parties and groups whose aims relate to local or national peace. This could perhaps be by IM networks conducting some initiatives that aim specifically to include representatives and members of political parties or civic organizations, or by arranging skills and experience-sharing opportunities between the IM networks and peace-related community organizations and groups.

f) Encourage collaboration with complementary initiatives

On its own, the IM project was very small. Collaboration with complementary initiatives can help to increase the impact of a follow-up project. Collaboration can take the form of holding joint events on aspects of peacebuilding, co-sponsoring initiatives organized by community groups, or simply experience sharing with other organizations and structures that support local mediation. Experience can be shared by exchanging project communications and materials, or by meetings. Peacebuilding and local mediation projects have not been common in Jordan, but complementary initiatives are certainly present and will be in the future. Complementary initiatives may also be found in Lebanon and Sudan, as community-level peacebuilding has been pursued in both countries in various forms and ways for many years. Peacebuilding projects should look at complementarity and collaboration as beneficial to common goals.

g) Broaden donor engagement

Broadening donor engagement can help to attract additional project financing, which may help with constructive expansion or extension of a project supporting insider mediation. Besides this project benefit, raising donor awareness of the project and the project’s approach, can potentially have a constructive influence on other aid and funding decisions by donors. It may also help with making mutually beneficial connections between the project and other complementary projects, initiatives or organizations.

Implementation and management

Recommendations to UNDP, relating to Section 4 conclusions (iii) and (iv) and the findings on which they are based:

h) Involve national partners and IMs in planning

To optimise project design and planning, it is recommended that national partners and IMs are consulted and involved. Inclusion can be beneficial both to project designs and plans and to the national partners and IMs’ support for the project. For comparison, a guiding principle in the UNDP global project on insider mediation has been that “processes designed to support

IMs must be designed in partnership with IMs and as much as possible owned by them”.¹⁸ National implementing partners should be involved too in selecting IMs.

i) Revisit and update analyses of situations

The project document for this project lacked an analysis of the conflict, peace and insider mediation situations in each of the three countries. Including country-specific analyses can be helpful in multiple ways: for example, it can help to clarify contextual risks and differences in the picture regarding mediation in each country, both of which should be relevant to project expectations and planning. The project document for a second-phase project should therefore include, as a central part of the context and background analysis, an analysis of the situation in each country where the project will work. That analysis should include a current and forward-looking analysis of the overall situation in each country, as relates to conflict, peace and the types of mediation that the project aims to support.

If such an analysis cannot be fully prepared before the project starts, it would be good to include it as an essential initial activity and output during the first months of the project. Country-specific sections of this analysis could potentially be a useful resource for the IM networks during the project, which they can revise and build on in whatever ways are useful for their initiatives or for those who are monitoring and managing the project.

j) Anticipate project continuity challenges

Project implementation was complicated by unexpected changes in the context, above all in Sudan and to a lesser extent in Lebanon. The project coped well with these changes, by adapting plans and schedules. To the extent possible, flexibility and robustness should be built into the management and implementation arrangements of a follow-up project. The aim should be to improve the ability of the project to cope with setbacks in the context in each country where it is being implemented, or setbacks in staffing, such as turn-over or gaps in staffing in UNDP or the implementing partner organizations.

k) Review content of online support platforms

It would be good to review the content of the online learning platforms, to ensure that all content is appropriate and well-tailored to the purpose of developing knowledge and skills relevant to local mediation. Involving some IMs and national implementing partner staff in reviewing the platforms could be valuable. For use of the platforms in a follow-up project, or otherwise, it would be good to include more country-specific and locally relatable content. Content relating to development organizations could be reduced, if the users of the online platforms continue to be individuals, be they members of IM networks or other groups aiming to contribute to local mediation and peacebuilding.

¹⁸ UNDP, “Annex 1: EU-UNDP partnership on insider mediation for conflict prevention and peacebuilding”, internal document for 2023-2025 project, p. 7.

ANNEXES

ANNEX A: REFERENCE RESOURCES

UNDP documentation

The following project documentation was provided by UNDP at the outset of the evaluation. Brief notes or description are in parentheses.

- Financial monitoring report, Sep 2024 (Sep 2024 update on Jul 2024 report, showing: \$856,676 of project's \$1.025m budget used, with balance of \$168,651).
- UNDP Regional Programme Document, 2022-2025 (programme document for UNDP regional programme for the Arab States 2022-2025, prepared in late 2021).
- Final approved IM project results framework (three-page results framework for expected/intended outputs, specifying output indicators, data sources, baselines, targets and means of data collection).
- IM project stakeholders (list of persons/contacts in donor, partners and UNDP).
- Beneficiaries list (list of IMs the project engaged with in Jordan, Lebanon and Sudan).
- IM project document (prepared for Jul 2022-Jul 2024 implementation. Signed off by UNDP in Oct 2022. PAC meeting was August 2022).
- Design and appraisal stage: quality assurance report, Sep 2022 (includes summary of Aug 2022 PAC meeting).
- IM project board meeting minutes 9 Feb 2023 (minutes of project board meeting to discuss project progress and endorse 2023 workplan).
- Project board e-mail Dec 2023 (e-mail from UNDP to donor, Dec 2023, with copy of presentation about the project).
- IM Dec 2023 Powerpoint presentation about the project (presentation at 21 Dec 2023 project board meeting).
- Insider Mediation Annual Work Plan 2024
- Insider Mediation Annual Work Plan 2023
- Jordan financial authorization amendment, Nov 2023
- IM Lebanon Annual Work Plan 2024 (internal document for project implementation and management).
- IM Sudan Annual Work Plan 2024 (internal document for project implementation and management).
- Summary status report IM project, Feb 2024
- IM annual report 2023 (annual project review report for the year 2023).
- FSPI report, Oct 2023 (French Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs technical and financial report for the project).

The evaluator gathered and consulted the following other sources during the evaluation:

Other resources related to the project

BRDO, "[Sustaining peace through insider mediation in Arab countries – Eastern Sudan 2024](#)", webpage

BRDO and UNDP Sudan, "Report of insider mediators in Eastern Sudan roundtable on conflict sensitive interventions during war", workshop 26-28 October 2024

BRDO and UNDP Sudan, "Supporting the development of a national platform for insider mediators in Eastern Sudan: training needs assessment for the insider mediators", April-May 2024

- Gerges, Jocelyne, “Supporting the development of a national platform for insider mediators in Lebanon: needs assessment of insider mediators and their supporters”, paper for UNDP, June 2023
- IDare, “[Sustaining peace through insider mediation: insider mediation network](#)”, webpage in Arabic and English
- IDare, “Conflict and development analysis (CDA) in Zarqa Governorate”, 15 October 2024
- IDare and UNDP Jordan, “Societal peace through local mediation in Arab countries: needs assessment workshop analysis”, 24 February 2024
- IDare, “Sustaining peace through insider mediation in the Arab States: progress report”, for Aug-Oct 2024
- IDare, “Progress report”, 26 May 2024
- UNDP Jordan, “An overview of the societal and institutional status of mediation in Jordan”, undated
- UNDP Jordan, “[UNDP highlights its support to regional insider mediators on International Day of Peace](#)”, 21 September 2024
- UNDP Lebanon, “From dealing with the past to dealing with the present”, concept note for digital camp (online workshop), October 2024
- UNDP Lebanon, “Sustaining peace through insider mediation in Lebanon: local actors leading the way in dealing with the past and addressing root causes of conflict”, concept note, October 2023
- UNDP Sudan and BRDO, “Report of insider mediators in Eastern Sudan roundtable on conflict sensitive interventions during war”, report of workshop held in Kassala 26-28 August 2024
- UNDP Sudan and BRDO, “Supporting the development of a national platform for insider mediators in Eastern Sudan: training needs assessment for the insider mediators”, May 2024

The UNSSC online support platforms for the project were made accessible to the evaluator.

Other relevant resources

- Clingendael, “[Needs Assessment: Enhancing Insider Mediation](#)”, 2023
- OECD, “[Evaluating peacebuilding activities in settings of conflict and fragility: improving learning for results](#)”, DAC Guidelines and Reference Series, 2012
- UN DPPA, “[UN support to local mediation: challenges and opportunities](#)”, 2020
- UNDP, “Annex 1: EU-UNDP partnership on insider mediation for conflict prevention and peacebuilding”, internal document for 2023-2025 project
- UNDP, “Insider mediation: progress report”, prepared for EU-UNDP Partnership on Insider Mediation for Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding, 2024

ANNEX B: INTERVIEWS

The table below presents summary details of the people interviewed for the evaluation. Names and identities of interviewed IMs are not included.

Table 9: List of interviewees

Category and organization	Persons (and role / position)	Dates of interview / meetings
<i>1. Donor</i>		
French Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs	Loren Leplus, Desk Officer	8 Oct.
<i>2. Partner:</i>		
Building Resilience Development Organization (BRDO)	Thoma Osman, IMs Project Manager	20 Oct.
Clingendael Peace Negotiations Programme	Izzy van Unen, Academy Programme Fellow	11 Oct.
IDARE Sustainable Development	Suha Ayyash, CEO	8 Oct.
Search for Common Ground (Lebanon)	Doha Adi, Senior Project Manager Anne Pottie, Consultant	11 Oct. 11 Oct.
UN Staff College	Rana Elbeheiry, Learning Specialist	10 Oct.
<i>3. UNDP (project and programme staff, by location)</i>		
UNDP RBAS Regional Hub, Amman	Martina Salini, Project Manager Rawhi Afaghani, Regional Advisor for Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention Giordano Segneri, Team Leader, Governance and Peacebuilding Susanne Dam-Hansen, RBAS Regional Hub Manager Maya Abi-Zeid, Reporting and Knowledge Management Specialist Rana el-Hassan, Regional Programme Senior Strategic Advisor Rania Tarazi, Gender Team Leader Barbora Sakho, Gender Specialist	29 Aug., 9 Sep., 3 Oct., 6 Nov. 9 Sep., 6 Nov. 9 Sep., 6 Nov. 17 Oct. 29 Aug., 9 Sep., 3 Oct., 6 Nov. 6 Nov. 15 Oct. 15 Oct.
UNDP Jordan	Yasmeen Zaj, Project Officer, Governance Baker al-Hiyari, Team Leader, Governance and Peace Pillar	13 Oct. 6 Nov.
UNDP Lebanon	Jana Slim, Project Assistant, Peacebuilding Team	11 Oct.
UNDP Sudan	Samah Ahmed, Project Officer, Rule of Law	14 Oct.
UNDP Crisis Bureau, New York	Laura Wenz, Project Specialist (UNDP Global Project on Insider Mediation)	8 Oct.
UNDP consultant	Wahba Nour, UNDP consultant for mental health and psychosocial support to mediators	22 Oct.
<i>4. Beneficiaries (insider / local mediators), by country</i>		
Jordan	5 IMs interviewed (4 men, 1 woman)	7 Nov.
Lebanon	5 IMs interviewed (2 men, 3 women)	28 Oct., 1 Nov.
Sudan	5 IMs interviewed (2 men, 3 women)	24 Oct., 29 Oct., 30 Oct.

Interview guide

As planned in the evaluation methodology, interviews for the evaluation were mostly semi-structured and tailored to the interviewee, meaning that relevant questions (not all questions) were asked in each interview. Questions were taken from the two sets of evaluation questions, namely (i) overarching questions and (ii) subsidiary questions. Questions were asked consistently to each category of interviewee. The same approach was used in the two small focus group discussions. Notes recorded during all these interviews are excluded here.

The IM interviews broadly maintained a gender parity in line with the overall ratio of men to women among the IMs. IM interviews included people with disabilities.

ANNEX C: QUESTIONS IN SURVEY OF IM PERCEPTIONS

The survey questions in English (Arabic not included here), and options for responses, were as follows:

1. Please indicate which country you live in:
Jordan/Lebanon/Sudan
2. Are you:
Female / Male / Prefer not to say
3. How old are you?
under 25 / 25-39 / 40-59 / 60+
4. What is your employment status?
Full-time employed / Part-time employed / Self-employed / Unemployed / Full-time student / Other
5. How much did you participate in the online and in-person training and networking opportunities provided by the project?
A lot / Some / A little / None
Optional comment
6. How good were the training and networking opportunities provided by the project?
Good or excellent / Adequate or ok / Poor / Other
Optional comment
7. How much have you learnt or benefited from your participation in the project?
A lot (it will make a significant difference to what I do to help deal with tensions and conflicts where I live) / Some things (it will make a limited difference to what I do) / Little (it won't make a difference)
Optional comment
8. Do you feel the concept of "insider mediation" is clear?
Very clear / Somewhat clear / Not clear / Other
Optional comment
9. Do you feel the concept of insider mediation is relevant in your country?
Very relevant / Somewhat relevant / Not relevant / Other
Optional comment
10. What can the mediators network do in your country?
[box for responses]
11. What would you recommend in a future project?
[box for responses]
12. Is there anything else you would like to say, that we may be missing?
[box for responses]

ANNEX D: PROJECT RESULTS FRAMEWORK

Associated footnotes are at the end of the table.

EXPECTED OUTPUT	OUTPUT INDICATORS	DATA SOURCE	BASELINE		TARGETS			MEANS OF COLLECTION
			VALUE	YEAR	2023	2024	TOT	
<p>Output 1 Insider mediation is advocated for as a prominent practice¹ among key stakeholders²</p>	<p>1. # of project events where the approach of insider mediation is presented.</p> <p>2. # of IMs³ that are members of the established regional IM network that shared their experience as mediators during engagements. (Disaggregated by country, gender, age)</p> <p>3. # of communication or knowledge materials produced as part of this project to socialize the practice of IM (publications, blogs, case studies, podcast, social media posts exc.)</p>	Project Report	1. 0 2. 0 3. 0	1. 2023 2. 2023 3. 2023	1. 1 2. 3 3. 2	1. 3 2. 9 3. 5	1. 4 2. 12 3. 7	<p>1. Insider Mediation Project Team; Project Reporting.</p> <p>2. Insider Mediation Project Team; Project Reporting.</p> <p>3. Insider Mediation Project Team; Project Reporting.</p>
<p>Output 2 Insider mediators' capacities developed and their access to supporting resources increased in pilot countries</p>	<p>1. # of IMs that receive support as part of this project (disaggregated by gender, country, age and type of support)</p> <p>2. % of IMs tested demonstrating improved knowledge following capacity building activities (online and offline). (Disaggregated by country, gender, age)</p>	Project Report	1. 0 2. 0 3. 0 4. 0 5. 0	1. 2023 2. 2023 3. 2023 4. 2023 5. 2023	1. 0 2. 0 3. 3 4. 0 5. 0	1. 74 2. 80% 3. 3 4. 80% 5. 70%	1. 74 2. 80% 3. 6 4. 80% 5. 70%	<p>1. Project Reporting, Project Team</p> <p>2. Pre-post knowledge assessment/survey through IM platform.</p> <p>3. Project Reporting, Project Team</p>

(Lebanon, Jordan, Sudan)	<p>3. # of online and offline learning materials developed and learning events held;</p> <p>4. % of IMs who perceive that support services provided by the project have improved their capacity to mediate effectively. (Disaggregated by country, gender, age, by type of support)</p> <p>5. % of surveyed community members involved in cases mediated by project IMs who perceived the IM interventions performed as part of this project as beneficial and of quality (Disaggregated by country, gender, age, displacement status)</p>							<p>4. Perception Survey-IM platform.</p> <p>5. Implementing Partner-UNDP CO focal points, Perception Survey with Secondary Beneficiaries to be conducted by Implementing Partner-UNDP CO focal points with secondary beneficiaries (community members)</p>
<p>Output 3 Peer-to-peer learning/exchange opportunities are established and utilized by IMs in pilot countries (Sudan, Lebanon, Jordan)</p>	<p>1. # of regional IMs online and offline initiatives (e.g., events and platforms) set up to facilitate exchange of knowledge, challenges and opportunities among IMs.</p> <p>2. % of participating IMs that perceive a positive benefit from peer-to-peer opportunities and knowledge exchange (disaggregated by country, gender, age).</p>	Project Report	<p>1. 0</p> <p>2. 0</p>	<p>1. 2023</p> <p>2. 2023</p>	<p>1. 1</p> <p>2. 0</p>	<p>1. 3</p> <p>2. 80%</p>	<p>1. 4</p> <p>2. 80%</p>	<p>1. Insider Mediation Project Team; Project Reporting.</p> <p>2. Perception Survey through IM platform.</p> <p>3. Perception Survey-IM platform.</p>
<p>Output 4 Women and youth supported to take up leadership roles</p>	<p>1. # of women and youth IMs, by country, at the start and end of project (disaggregated by country).</p>	Project Report	<p>1. 27⁴</p> <p>2. 0</p> <p>3. 0</p> <p>4. 0</p>	<p>1. 2023</p> <p>2. 2023</p> <p>3. 2023</p> <p>4. 2023</p>	<p>1. 27</p> <p>2. 0</p> <p>3. 0</p> <p>4. 80%</p>	<p>1. Min 27</p> <p>2. 6</p> <p>3. 80%</p>	<p>1. Min 27</p> <p>2. 6</p>	<p>1. Insider Mediation Project Team; Project Reporting.</p>

<p>in insider mediation in piloting countries (Lebanon, Sudan, Jordan)</p>	<p>2. # of initiatives targeting or lead by women and youth IMs carried out (disaggregated by country/type of initiative)</p> <p>3. % of women/youth IMs reporting that support provided by the project have empowered them as IMs in their communities (disaggregated by gender, age, country, and type of support).</p> <p>4. % of surveyed community members involved in mediation case who perceived the youth/women-led IM interventions performed as part of this project as beneficial (Disaggregated by country, gender, age, displacement) (cumulative)</p>				<p>4. 70%</p>	<p>44. 70%</p>	<p>3. . 80%</p> <p>4. 70%</p>	<p>2. Perception Survey through IM platform (only for women and youth IMs)</p> <p>3. Perception Survey with Secondary Beneficiaries, Implementing Partner-UNDP CO focal points, Project Reporting.</p>
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¹ While the practice of Insider Mediation is common across the Arab States region and beyond, this project will focus on raising awareness around the benefits of insider mediation as a tool for conflict prevention building on examples from the pilot countries (Lebanon, Jordan and Sudan) as related to the project.

² This includes donors, practitioners, academics, international-regional and national non-governmental organization.

³ For the purpose of this Results Framework, the term IMs refers to IMs who have been selected to become part of the regional network of insider mediators established as part of this project.

⁴ This number only includes IM women in Lebanon and Jordan (Sudan to be added)

ANNEX E: TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR EVALUATION

INDIVIDUAL CONSULTANT PROCUREMENT NOTICE



Date: 29 May 2024

Post Title:	End-of-Project Evaluation Specialist
Starting Date:	June 2024
National or International IC:	International IC
Duration:	5 months
Location:	Remote
Project:	“Sustaining Peace Through Insider Mediation in the Arab States”
Requisition Number:	
Is this a LTA (yes/no):	

Terms of Reference

Final evaluation of the regional project on “Sustaining Peace Through Insider Mediation in the Arab States”

(December 2022 – 31 November 2024)

1. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Recent trends around the world keep raising questions around the effectiveness of conventional peacebuilding tools frequently used by the international community to address conflicts. This is particularly the case in the Arab States region, where the international peace and security “toolbox”— and its underlying mediation framework—have shown their limitations in a number of circumstances. This prompted a growing consensus, recently reindorsed by the New Agenda for Peace around the need of supporting local conflict prevention efforts, such as insider mediation.

¹

According to UNDP’s definition, Insider mediators (IM) are “an individual or group of individuals who derive their legitimacy, credibility, and influence from a socio-cultural and/or religious – and, indeed, personal - closeness to the parties of the conflict, endowing them with strong bonds of trust that help foster the necessary attitudinal changes amongst key protagonists which, over time, prevent conflict and contribute to sustaining peace. IMs are driven by personal” conviction and dedication to the cause and have a vested interest in the outcome².” Insider Mediation efforts are not new to the Arab States; however, those initiatives currently remain overlooked and isolated from each other, compromising their sustainability and limiting their ultimate potential³.

¹ <https://dppa.un.org/en/a-new-agenda-for-peace>.

² <https://www.undp.org/publications/engaging-insider-mediators-sustaining-peace-age-turbulence>.

³ UNDP, "Sustaining Peace Through Insider Mediation - A Regional Framework" (publication to be available online soon).

Against this background, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), with contribution from the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs (MEAE), has launched the "Sustaining Peace through Insider Mediation in the Arab States" project for the period of 2022-2024. This regional initiative, the first of its kind in the region, is currently being piloted in Sudan, Lebanon, and Jordan. The three countries were chosen in agreement with the donors to explore the value and manifestation of Insider Mediation in three different country contexts: 1) relatively stable context (Jordan); 2) crisis context (Lebanon); 3) post-crisis/conflict context (Sudan). The country context dramatically changed during project implementation (i.e., eruption of the war in Sudan in April 2023).

The primary objective of the project is to bring together, support and strengthen diverse local insider mediation efforts at the local, national level and across the region by establishing a dedicated regional platform. This platform-both online and offline- does not only serve as a centralized hub for learning, communication, and peer-to-peer exchange and support but also plays a pivotal role in elevating the insider mediation agenda from the local level to a broader regional context, thereby ensuring the sustainability of these efforts.

The project contributes to the Regional Programme Outcome 2 "Governance accountability increased to foster more resilient communities." and more specifically to its output 2.2. "Capacities for conflict prevention, resilience and peacebuilding strengthened at regional, national, and subnational levels and across borders (Strategic Plan 3.2.)" by ensuring:

1. Insider mediation is advocated for as a prominent practice among key stakeholders;
2. Insider mediators' capacities are developed and their access to supporting resources increased in pilot countries (Lebanon, Jordan, Sudan);
3. Peer-to-peer learning/exchange opportunities are established and utilized by IMs in pilot countries (Sudan, Lebanon, Jordan);
4. Women and youth supported to take up leadership roles in insider mediation in piloting countries (Lebanon, Sudan, Jordan).

The project primarily and directly contributes to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 "Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels". By empowering women insider mediators, the project additionally contributes to SDGs 5 on Gender Equality. The project might indirectly contribute to a number of other SDGs including SDG3 on Good Health and Wellbeing, SGD6 on Clean Water and Sanitation and SDG 10 on Reduced Inequalities.

The project was launched with contribution from the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs (MEAE) in December 2022 for a duration of two years. This initiative-with a total budget of €994,436 distributed in two tranches by the donors-is currently being piloted in Sudan, Lebanon, and Jordan.

Its primary objective is to bring together, support and strengthen diverse local insider mediation efforts at the national level and across the region by establishing a dedicated regional platform. For this purpose, three national networks were established in Sudan (13 Insider Mediators from El Gedaref, Red Sea State and Kassala: 75% women; 25% youth) Lebanon (28 Insider Mediators from (North, South, Beirut, Beqaa, and Mount Lebanon: 70% women, 35% youth) and Jordan (21 Insider Mediators from Zarqa Governorate: 42% women, 42% youth and 14 % People with Disabilities). By supporting (with capacity building, coaching and mentoring, mental health and Pshyco-social support, logistical and financial support) these mediators and their grassroot efforts, the project indirectly benefits the community in which those mediators are active.

During the first year of implementation, a number of challenges arose to the focus countries under this project. From the outbreak of the conflict in Sudan in April 2023 to the recent unfolding events in Gaza, West Bank and Lebanon, these events-among others-resulted in delays and a temporary suspension of the project's activities in Sudan. Additionally, this ripple effect extended to activities that were designed to have a broader regional focus.

The project is managed by a Project Manager sitting at UNDP RBAS Regional Programme, in coordination with three Country Offices focal points in Lebanon, Jordan and Sudan respectively and with operational support of the Regional Programme Support team in Beirut. Activities on the ground are implemented by three different implementing partners: namely I DARE for sustainable development⁴ in Jordan, Building Resilience Development Organization (BRDO)⁵ in Sudan and Search for Common Ground⁶ in Lebanon. Their activities, feedbacks and concerns should be part of this evaluation. It is the first time a regional project of this kind is being piloted in the Arab States: this evaluation should elaborate on opportunities, challenges and lessons learned which will inform follow-up phases of this project.

UNDP-Regional Bureau for Arab States (RBAS) as part of the Regional Project “Sustaining Peace Through Insider Mediation in Arab States,” is seeking to recruit a consultant to conduct an evaluation. This evaluation is part of the project’s commitment to assess the achievements and results against the initial expectations and objectives set forth. This process is fundamental to ensuring transparency, accountability, and effectiveness in the implementation of the project.

PROJECT/OUTCOME INFORMATION		
Project	Sustaining Peace Through Insider Mediation in the Arab States	
Quantum ID	00133147	
Corporate outcome and output	Regional Programme Outcome 2 and Output 2.2	
Country	Jordan, Lebanon, and Sudan	
Region	Arab States	
Date project document signed	27.10.2022	
Project dates	Start	Planned end
	01.12.2022	31.11.2024
Project budget	994.436 €	
Project expenditure at the time of evaluation	Tbd	
Funding source	France MEAE	
Implementing party⁷	UNDP	

2. EVALUATION PURPOSE, SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES

Purpose of the evaluation:

The overall purpose of the evaluation is to assess the relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability of the project following the OECD-DAC criteria and generate recommendations around them. It should assess the project’s success against its initial goals and reviewed monitoring framework, allowing for learning, accountability, and decision-making. It should document achievements, identify areas for improvement, and inform stakeholders-mainly UNDP and the donors- about project outcomes for future planning and implementation.

⁴ <https://www.i-dare.org/>.

⁵ <https://www.brdo-sudan.org/>.

⁶ <https://www.sfcg.org/>.

⁷ This is the entity that has overall responsibility for implementation of the project (award), effective use of resources and delivery of outputs in the signed project document and workplan.

The evaluation should be forward looking and capture effectively lessons learnt and provide information on the nature, extent and where possible, the potential impact and sustainability of the project. It will assess the project theory of change, design, scope, implementation status and the capacity to achieve the project objectives. It will additionally meticulously examine the allocation and utilization of funds, assessing their effectiveness in supporting project activities and achieving desired outcomes. In addition, the evaluation must address how the intervention sought to mainstream gender in the development efforts, LNOB, considered disability issues and applied the rights-based approach. The evaluation will benefit both the donors and UNDP and inform future interventions emerging from this project.

Scope of the evaluation:

The evaluation will cover the total duration of the project, which was officially launched in December 2022 and it has started implementation in April 2023, with activities to be finalized in November 2024. This final evaluation will cover all project outputs implemented in the three countries Lebanon, Jordan and Sudan, as well as outputs with a regional nature.

The evaluation should follow a **phased approach**:

- **The first phase** will generate preliminary findings, lessons learned, and recommendations, based on results achieved until the evaluation period. This will be captured in an interim report to be also presented to the donors (MEAE) in September 2024 for decision-making related to a potential subsequent phase. In particular, in that context, the donors will decide whether they would be interested and willing to fund a follow-up phase of the project.
- **The second phase** will then complete the evaluation of remaining project activities, which will be finalized by November 2024. The final report, will build on the interim one and it will be comprehensive of all results achieved by the project, also reflecting on additional challenges that might emerge in the last months of implementation. The consolidated findings, lessons learned, conclusions, and recommendation will be used to inform the eventual second phase of the project and other similar initiatives within UNDP.

The report findings should be communicating clearly what worked as planned and what did not; including the main reason why that happened and how to mitigate those challenges and improve in the future.

3. EVALUATION CRITERIA AND KEY GUIDING QUESTIONS

The evaluation will be based on an indicative list of questions based on the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee's evaluation criteria as defined and explained in the UNDP evaluation guidelines.⁸ It will seek to report on the relevance and coherence of the project to the priorities and needs of its recipients and the consistency with the attainment of its overall objective on the effectiveness of the project in achieving its objectives; the efficiency of the project, in particular, to evaluate how the inputs and resources (funds, staff, time) were utilized in achieving the outputs, and its sustainability and potential impact. Lastly, the evaluation will report on cross-cutting themes namely gender equality, women empowerment, and disability inclusion.

The questions have been formulated to give the users of the evaluation the information they seek in order to make decisions, take actions, and increase knowledge.

The evaluator shall focus on the following areas, critically reflecting on the questions presented below. These questions will be further refined and broadened by the evaluator and agreed upon by UNDP and the project stakeholders during the inception phase.

⁸ [See section 1 of UNDP Evaluation Guidelines \(2021\).](#)

Key questions that the evaluation seeks to answer include:

(1) Relevance:

To what extent was the project in line with priorities in the countries directly engaged in implementation, including the communities and localities specifically targeted by the project?

To what extent was the project in line with the UNDP regional programme outcomes and outputs, the UNDP Strategic Plan, and the SDGs?

To what extent was the project in line with France's priorities (LOI n° 2021-1031 du 4 août 2021 de programmation relative au développement solidaire et à la lutte contre les inégalités mondiales, 'preventing and tackling crisis and fragility', France's strategy on Prevention, Resilience and Sustainable Peace)?

To what extent does the project's theory of change remain relevant for the regional, national priorities?

To what extent were perspectives, needs, and priorities of men and women who could affect the outcomes, taken into account during project design and implementation processes?

Were the inputs and strategies identified, and were they realistic, appropriate and adequate to achieve the results?

Was the project relevant to the identified needs?

(2) Coherence:

To what extent did the collaboration between UNDP Regional Programme and Country Offices provide added value to the project?

To what extent did UNDP adopt gender-responsive human rights-based, and conflict-sensitive approaches?

To what extent is UNDP engagement a reflection of strategic considerations, including the role of UNDP in a particular development context and its comparative advantage?

To what extent was the method of delivery selected by UNDP appropriate to the development context?

(3) Effectiveness

To what extent did the project achieve its overall objectives?

What and how much progress has been made towards achieving the overall outputs and outcomes of the project (including contributing factors and constraints)?

Was the project effective in delivering desired/planned results? Could a different approach have produced better results? and what would be the best approach for future phases?

How effective were the strategies and tools used in the implementation of the project?

How effective has the project been in responding to the needs of the beneficiaries, and what results were achieved? What are the key areas that could be scaled up for a second phase presenting a significant value to the region?

(4) Efficiency

To what extent was the project management structure as outlined in the project document efficient in generating the expected results?

Was the process of achieving results efficient? Specifically did the actual or expected results (outputs and outcomes) justify the costs incurred?

Were the resources and financial management processes effectively utilized?

Did project activities overlap and duplicate other similar interventions (funded nationally and/or by other donors)? Are there more efficient ways and means of delivering more and better results (outputs and outcomes) with the available inputs?

To what extent did the Project's M&E mechanism contribute in meeting project results?

How was the project's collaboration with the UNDP, national institutions, development partners, and the Steering Committee? Any suggested partnerships for future phases?

What are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats and risks of the project implementation process?

(5) Impact:

What is the overall direct and indirect impact of the project, considering positive and negative, as well as intended and unintended effects by the project implementation? What could have been done differently to achieve a more transformational change?

(6) Sustainability:

To what extent are the benefits and outcomes of the project likely to be sustained after the completion of this project?

To what extent are lessons learned documented by the project team on a continual basis and shared with appropriate parties who could learn from the project?

What are the key factors that will require attention in order to improve prospects of sustainability of Project outcomes and the potential for replication of the approach?

How were capacities strengthened at the individual and organizational level (including contributing factors and constraints)?

Cross-cutting themes

Gender equality

To what extent have gender equality and the empowerment of women been addressed in the design, implementation and monitoring of the project?

Is the gender marker assigned to this project representative of reality?

To what extent has the project promoted positive changes in gender equality and the empowerment of women? Did any unintended effects emerge for women, men or vulnerable groups?

Disability

Were persons with disabilities consulted and meaningfully involved in programme planning and implementation?

What proportion of the beneficiaries of a programme were persons with disabilities?

What barriers did persons with disabilities face?

Was a twin-track approach adopted? ⁹

⁹ The twin-track approach combines mainstream programmes and projects that are inclusive of persons with disabilities as well as programmes and projects that are *targeted* towards persons with disabilities. It is an essential element of any strategy that seeks to mainstream disability inclusion successfully. Also, see chapter 9 of

4. METHODOLOGY

The consultant is expected to develop a detailed methodology and agree on a plan for the assignment as part of the application process. The methodology will be further updated after the selection process is completed, and the inception report is developed.

In general, the consultant should adopt an inclusive, participatory and gender-responsive evaluation methodology along with using a mixed-method approach collecting both quantitative and qualitative data to validate and triangulate data.

The evaluation should begin with a desk review of key documents related to the project. The IM project team will provide all necessary documentation:

1) document review including:

Project document (contribution agreement).

Theory of change and results framework.

project quality assurance reports.

Annual workplans.

Activity designs.

Consolidated quarterly and annual reports.

Results-oriented monitoring report.

Highlights of project board meetings.

Technical/financial monitoring reports.

The consultant is expected to follow a participatory and consultative approach that ensures close engagement with the project team, in addition to stakeholders and counterparts. A list of stakeholders will be provided by UNDP to the evaluator, who can suggest to expand it to ensure inclusion.

As part of the inception report, the consultant should develop an evaluation matrix (see Annex 4). It includes the evaluation questions aligned with the tools, data sources and collection methods, and analysis plan for each question. This ensures that a multitude of data sources are considered and the triangulation of data for each question. The data collection tools can include, but not be limited to, the following elements:

1) Semi-structured interviews and meetings with key informants (men and women) selected from all key stakeholders' categories listed below:

UNDP teams engaged (Regional & Country Offices)

French Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs (MEAE)

Insider Mediators

Implementing partners

Community Members

Local and National counterparts

in the form of one-to-one interviews or focus-groups discussions:

Focus Group Discussions with people benefitted from the capacity development activities (men and women).

Interviews with the project team, representatives from France Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs and UNDP management.

2) Survey with a representative random sample of the directly targeted communities (men and women) to assess the project's outcomes and impact. The sampling approach needs to be detailed in the inception report.

3) Field visits and on-site validation of key tangible outputs and interventions-if needed, and as feasible based on the situation on the ground. Virtual meetings can be set up when missions cannot take place.

4) Data review and analysis of monitoring and other data sources and methods. To ensure maximum validity, reliability of data (quality) and promote use, the consultant will ensure triangulation of the various data sources.

The evaluator will need to clarify the overall approach (theory of change approach, contribution analysis, etc.) that will be followed and propose the evaluation methodologies and techniques (sample population included) as determined by the specific needs for information, the objectives set out in this ToR, and the availability of resources. In all cases, the consultant is expected to use all available information sources that will provide evidence on which to base evaluation conclusions and recommendations.

The final detailed methodological approach (methods and tools including the survey), the interview schedule, field visits, and data for this evaluation, should be clearly outlined in the inception report and fully discussed and agreed upon.

The IM project team will assist in identifying key stakeholders and facilitate the schedule of interviews, eventual focus group discussions, and site visits when and where required.

The methodology needs to employ an inclusive and conflict and gender-sensitive approach, which needs to be elaborated in the inception report. This includes the use of disaggregated data, outreach to diverse stakeholder groups, and explicitly consider data-collection and analysis methods that integrate gender considerations.

The evaluation products need to also address disability, and human right considerations.

Data sources should be triangulated. The evaluation's findings should lead to elaborating specific, practical, achievable recommendations directed at the intended users.

The consultant would organize a meeting toward the end of the evaluation, with participation from key stakeholders, UNDP management, IM team, and partners to present and validate preliminary findings and fill in any data gaps. This will be followed by the submission of a draft report. The draft will be subject to a methodological review by UNDP. Based on the provided feedback, the final report will incorporate the necessary adjustments.

5. EVALUATION PRODUCTS (DELIVERABLES)

The expected deliverables by the consultant are explained as follows:

a: Evaluation Inception Report (10-15 pages excluding annexes)

Based on the ToR, preliminary meetings with the IM staff, relevant representatives from France Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs and UNDP management will be conducted. This will be followed by a desk review of the project documents (enlisted above). The inception report will incorporate a final set of questions and determine the stakeholders of key informant interviews (KII), focus group discussion and survey. The consultant is expected to develop an inception report of a maximum of 15 pages (plus annexes) to introduce the assignment, clearly define the methodology, review the theory of change, propose the evaluation matrix, data collection and analysis methods, as well as anticipated limitations, as well as present a workplan detailing milestone deliverables and their updated timeline. The inception report will be reviewed by UNDP. The consultant is expected to incorporate received feedback and comments.

This would include:

Developed detailed work plan for the phased approach.

Review of the theory of change and Evaluation design and methodology to be used.

Assessment of the provided stakeholders list

b: Interim Report with preliminary findings and conclusions (25-30 pages)

In line with the phased approach described above, a preliminary evaluation should be submitted by end of August to the donors for decision-making purposes.

This would include:

Submit an interim report on outputs delivered and activities implemented since project's start date until the beginning of August 2024;

Debriefing and presentation of Interim Report by mid-august;

Submission of the interim report to the donors by September;

The outline has to be consistent with the outline presented in the IEO guidelines.

c: Draft Evaluation Report (35-40 pages without annexes) and validations:

The consultant is expected to submit a draft report (max. 50 pages, including a draft executive summary of no more than 5 pages), expanding on the interim report to cover the last months of implementation. The final report will include findings, lessons learned, and recommendations of the evaluation. Findings and recommendations will be validated with UNDP and France Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs, in addition to relevant stakeholders. Comments and changes provided in response to the draft report should be retained by the evaluators to show how they have addressed comments (audit trail).

d: Final Evaluation Report (max. 50 pages, excluding annexes):

The consultant should revise the draft report and provide the final report incorporating UNDP comments and stakeholders' feedback. The final report should be max 50 pages and include an executive summary of max. 4-5 pages describing key findings and recommendations. The structure of the report should follow the UNDP evaluation guideline:

Introduction — Summarizes the context, review purpose, and questions.

Evaluation methodology — includes the data collection sources, tools and process, and analysis approach.

Findings and conclusions — Evidence-based findings for each question.

Recommendations — Propose a feasible number of relevant and actionable recommendations and lessons learned derived from the findings and conclusions.

The report should be well written, edited and has no language or grammatical errors.

The minimum content that needs to be included in the inception and evaluation reports is provided in the annexes 7 and 8. The reports should address all the quality criteria mentioned in the UNDP Evaluation Guidelines.

It is recommended that the consultant quality assures his/her draft evaluation report against the quality check list as part of quality assurance before submitting the draft to UNDP. Please note that all evaluation reports commissioned by UNDP go through a Meta-evaluation quality assessment process by UNDP Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) through a pool of expert

quality assessment reviewers after the finalization and submission of the final report. This is important for the organization to ensure the quality and utility of the final evaluation product.

6. EVALUATION TEAM COMPOSITION AND REQUIRED COMPETENCIES

The consultant aiming to be considered for the service described herein should have and prove the following qualifications:

Required Qualifications

- An advanced university degree in law or political science, or equivalent background in peacebuilding, conflict prevention, governance, with specialized training in areas such as evaluation, project management, social statistics, advanced statistical research and analysis;
- At least 7 years of professional experience in monitoring and evaluation analysis in UN agencies or similar international development and/or humanitarian organizations, including 3 years' experience in fragile and conflict affected countries in areas relating to development or peacebuilding;
- Adequate experience in programme or project evaluations in the development field, with proven accomplishments in undertaking evaluation for international organizations;
- Proven accomplishments in undertaking evaluations in the Arab States region.

Technical Competencies:

It is expected that this assignment will be implemented by a consultant with previous qualifications in the areas of field research and evaluations. As a minimum, the consultant needs to have the following qualifications:

- Previous working experience in the Arab States region context;
- Previous experience in data analysis and evaluation report writing, end line assessments, preferably for a UN agency;
- Previous experience in leading assessments including quantitative and qualitative methods including MSC technique;
- Demonstrated experience in gender-sensitive evaluation and analysis;
- Demonstrated understanding of issues related to gender equality and other cross-cutting areas such as disability issues, rights-based approach, and capacity development.

Language skills:

Fluency in English and French are required.

Arabic is an asset.

Previous evaluation reports produced can be submitted as work samples. The evaluator should be independent from any organizations that have been involved in designing, executing, or advising any aspect of the intervention that is the subject of the evaluation.¹⁰

7. EVALUATION ETHICS

"This evaluation will be conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the UNEG 'Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation'.¹¹ The consultant must safeguard the rights and

¹⁰ For this reason, UNDP staff members based in other country offices, regional centres and headquarters units should not be part of the evaluation team.

¹¹ UNEG, 'Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation', 2020. Access at: <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/2866>

confidentiality of information providers, interviewees, and stakeholders through measures to ensure compliance with legal and other relevant codes governing collection of data and reporting on data. The consultant must also ensure security of collected information before and after the evaluation and protocols to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of sources of information where that is expected. The information knowledge and data gathered in the evaluation process must also be solely used for the evaluation and not for other uses with the express authorization of UNDP and partners.”

The evaluator will be asked to sign the pledge of ethical conduct before starting the consultancy. Evaluators will recuse themselves from evaluating: (i) any project, program, or activity that they worked on or had line responsibility for the work on, including preparation, appraisal, administration, and completion reporting, or that they had a personal influence or financial stake in, in a previous capacity; or (ii) an entity that they had a significant decision making, financial management or approval responsibility for or personal influence or financial stake in, or in which their future employment is a significant possibility.

2) Evaluators will similarly recuse themselves when there is such involvement in a project, program, activity, or entity on the part of immediate family members. They should inform the CO management of any such potential conflict of interest, or potential perception of conflict of interest, before evaluator assignments are finalized.

3) If a former staff member or consultant is being considered for a consulting assignment in an CO evaluation, particular care will be exercised by the concerned professional staff to ensure that the concerned person was not involved, directly or indirectly, in the subject of the evaluation during his/her past term as staff or consultant of the CO.

8. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

The consultant will be reporting to the Regional Programme Coordinator of UNDP-RBAS who is located at the Regional Hub, in Amman. The team will work in close coordination with the Evaluation Manager (EM) who will oversee the overall evaluation process. The EM together with IM project team will also be responsible for liaising with the consultant to set up stakeholder interviews, desk review, conduct the quality assurance of the inception and evaluation reports, etc. An ‘Evaluation Focal Team’ composed of stakeholders, representatives from the donors and UNDP relevant staff will be set-up in order to provide technical inputs to enhance the quality of the evaluation. This team will review the inception report and the draft report to provide detailed comments related to the quality of methodology, evidence collected, analysis and reporting. It will also advise on the conformity of processes to the UNDP evaluation guidelines.

The Regional Programme Coordinator will take responsibility for the approval of the final evaluation report.

The consultant is required to maintain close communication with UNDP on the regular and needed basis at any period throughout the assignment to monitor progress. In the event of any delay, the firm will inform UNDP promptly so that decisions and remedial action may be taken accordingly.

Should UNDP deem it necessary, it reserves the right to commission additional inputs, reviews, or revisions, as needed to ensure the quality and relevance of the work.

UNDP and the project team will not attend interviews with key stakeholders.

The focal team will review the inception and the draft evaluation reports, providing detailed comments related to the quality of methodology, evidence collected, analysis and reporting. It will also advise on the conformity of the evaluation process to UNDP and UNEG standards. Detailed comments will be provided to the firm in an audit trail within the agreed timeframe. Comments and changes by the evaluator in response to the draft evaluation report should be retained to show how they have addressed comments. UNDP will develop the management response to the evaluation within two weeks of report finalization.

9. TIMEFRAME OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS:

The evaluation is expected to take (40) working days extended over a period of 5 months from contract signature date starting on 20 June 2024.

DELIVERABLE	ESTIMATED # of DAYS	DATE OF COMPLETION	RESPONSIBLE PARTY
Evaluation Inception Report (10-15 pages)	5 days	01 July	Evaluation Team
Interim Report with preliminary findings and conclusions (25-30 pages)	15 days	31 August	Evaluation Team
Draft Final Report (35-40 pages)	15 days	20 October	Evaluation Team
Final Evaluation Report	5 days	15 November	Evaluation Team

10. APPLICATION SUBMISSION PROCESS AND CRITERIA FOR SELECTION DOCUMENTS TO BE INCLUDED WHEN SUBMITTING THE PROPOSALS

Interested individual consultants must submit the following documents/information to demonstrate their qualifications:

1. Proposal:

(i) Explaining why they are the most suitable for the work

(ii) Provide a brief methodology on how they will approach and conduct the work (if applicable) in addition to a proposed workplan

2. Financial proposal

3. Personal CV including past experience in similar projects and at least 3 references and a sample of previous work

5. FINANCIAL PROPOSAL

[The procuring UNDP entities will choose among one of these two mechanisms. The lump sum approach is the preferred method, as it clearly links deliverables and payments transferring any unforeseen risks for the completion of the deliverable to the consultant. Once the mechanism has been selected, the other one shall be deleted to avoid any misunderstanding]

- **Lump sum contracts**

The financial proposal shall specify a total lump sum amount, and payment terms around specific and measurable (qualitative and quantitative) deliverables (i.e. whether payments fall in installments or upon completion of the entire contract). Payments are based upon output, i.e. upon delivery of the services specified in the TOR. In order to assist the requesting unit in the comparison of financial proposals, the financial proposal will include a breakdown of this lump sum amount (including travel, per diems, and number of anticipated working days).

- **Contracts based on daily fee**

The financial proposal will specify the daily fee, travel expenses and per diems quoted in separate line items, and payments are made to the Individual Consultant based on the number of days worked.

Travel:

All envisaged travel costs must be included in the financial proposal. This includes all travel to join duty station/repatriation travel. In general, UNDP should not accept travel costs exceeding those of an economy class ticket. Should the IC wish to travel on a higher class he/she should do so using their own resources.

In the case of unforeseeable travel, payment of travel costs including tickets, lodging and terminal expenses should be agreed upon, between the respective business unit and Individual Consultant, prior to travel and will be reimbursed

[The procuring UNDP entities will choose among one of these two evaluation methods prior to submit the have the Individual Consultant Procurement Notice. Once the evaluation method has been selected the other one shall be deleted to avoid any misunderstanding]

Individual consultants will be evaluated based on the following methodologies:

1. Lowest price and technically compliant offer

When using this method, the award of a contract should be made to the individual consultant whose offer has been evaluated and determined as both:

a) responsive/compliant/acceptable, and

b) offering the lowest price/cost

“responsive/compliant/acceptable” can be defined as fully meeting the TOR provided.

2. Cumulative analysis

When using this weighted scoring method, the award of the contract should be made to the individual consultant whose offer has been evaluated and determined as:

a) responsive/compliant/acceptable, and

b) Having received the highest score out of a pre-determined set of weighted technical and financial criteria specific to the solicitation.

** Technical Criteria weight; [To be determined]*

** Financial Criteria weight; [To be determined]*

Only candidates obtaining a minimum of XXX point would be considered for the Financial Evaluation

Criteria	Weight	Max. Point
<u>Technical</u>		
• <i>Criteria A</i>		
• <i>Criteria B</i>		
• <i>Criteria C</i>		
• <i>Criteria [...]</i>		
<u>Financial</u>		

11. TOR ANNEXES

Annex 1: Project document

Annex 2: List of key stakeholders and partners

- France MEAE
- UNDP CO Sudan
- UNDP CO Jordan
- UNDP CO Lebanon
- UNDP HQ CPPRI Team (including UNDP Global Insider Mediation Project)
- UNDP Regional Programme
- UNDP Programme Support Unit and Monitoring Support UNIT
- Insider Mediators from the Regional Networks
- Implementing Partners for Phase I (BRDO, I DARE and Search for Common Ground)
- Local Municipalities
- Insider mediators
- Selected Community Members

Annex 3: List of documents to be consulted:

- Partnership/Contribution agreement.
- Budget.
- Theory of change and results framework.
- Annual project reports.
- Annual workplans.
- Minutes of project board meetings.
- Technical/financial monitoring reports.
- Knowledge products

Annex 4: Sample evaluation matrix (Pg. 113) - to be included in the inception report, accessible here:

http://web.undp.org/evaluation/guideline/documents/PDF/UNDP_Evaluation_Guidelines.pdf

Table 2. Sample evaluation matrix

Relevant evaluation criteria	Key questions	Specific sub-questions	Data sources	Data collection methods/ tools	Indicators/ success standards	Methods for data analysis

Annex 5: Other documents to be consulted

UNDP Evaluation Guidelines (2021), accessible here:

<http://web.undp.org/evaluation/guideline/>

UN Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation, accessible here:

<http://www.unevaluation.org/document/download/547>

Annex 6: Code of conduct forms, accessible here:

<http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/100>

UNDP will request each member of the evaluation team to read carefully, understand and sign the the “UN Code of Conduct” and “Pledge of Ethical Conduct in Evaluation of the United Nations system”

Annex 7: Suggested minimum content/ guidance on Inception Report Template

[Inception report template](#) (section 4)

Annex 8: UNDP evaluation report template and quality standards (pages 117-121), accessible here:

http://web.undp.org/evaluation/guideline/documents/PDF/UNDP_Evaluation_Guidelines.pdf

Annex 9: [UNDP Evaluation quality checklist](#) (page 8-21)

<http://web.undp.org/evaluation/guideline/section-6.shtml>

Annex 10: [Applying a Human Rights and Gender Equality Lens to the OECD Evaluation Criteria](#)
