Value-for-Money Assessment

DPPA Multi-Year Appeal

November 2020
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DPPA
Preventing Conflict. Sustaining Peace

Value-for-Money Assessment

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Disclaimer:

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PURPOSE, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY OF THIS ASSESSMENT

- This Value-for-Money assessment examines the relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency of UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA) projects funded through the Multi-Year Appeal (MYA) in 2019 and 2020. This assessment was conducted in keeping with DPPA's Learning and Evaluation Workplan for 2020, which calls for rapid assessment of MYA projects.

- The assessment methodology is modelled on the preliminary assessment phase of a public-sector Value-for-Money audit. The findings and recommendations in this report are based on confidential interviews, document review, and data analysis conducted between June and October 2020 by Dr Ian Wadley, independent consultant, in close collaboration with DPPA.

- In 2020, the MYA will provide around $40 million in voluntary funding from UN Member States to DPPA, representing around half of the annual DPPA budget,[1] and enabling the delivery of around 100 projects.

- This report takes a strategic and systemic focus, examining the MYA projects at a whole-portfolio level, while identifying specific areas for in-depth evaluation. This high-level strategic approach mirrors the focus of benchmark public sector Value-for-Money audits and inquiries in the peacemaking and conflict response sector.

- This assessment firstly analyses the strategic logic (or relevance) of the MYA, examining the clarity and coherence of the MYA portfolio, and testing the logical connection between the MYA portfolio of projects and DPPA's high-level objectives.

- Secondly, the assessment examines the effectiveness of the MYA portfolio of projects in delivering valued results. This addresses the systems used by DPPA to determine whether the MYA portfolio of projects is attaining its objectives, while also identifying priority themes in which MYA projects are delivering valued results, including topics such as Women, Peace and Security.

- Thirdly, the assessment considers questions of cost-efficiency, asking whether the MYA portfolio is applying funds in an efficient way to minimise costs, and identifying areas in which there may be scope for greater efficiencies.

1 In 2020, the total amount allocated to DPPA under the Regular Programme Budget and extra-budgetary funds under the MYA, was around $90 million. This does not include, funding for Special Political Missions, $700 million each per year.

- The primary audience for the report is the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, Rosemary A. DiCarlo, along with senior directors and managers within DPPA. In keeping with the Value-for-Money methodology adopted for this assessment, the report has been written with a broader audience in mind, including stakeholders, donors, counterpart organisations, future DPPA staff, and researchers.

RELEVANCE: THE STRATEGIC COHERENCE OF THE MYA

- The MYA is closely aligned with DPPA's strategic objectives and risk-reduction operational model. It aims to help DPPA to remain operationally focussed, to deliver rapid and responsive interventions to prevent and reduce violent conflict, and to foster more sustainable peace.

- By supporting DPPA's capacity in the Headquarters and in the field, the MYA strengthens the UN peacemaking role, linking peace-supporting initiatives across organisational and operational boundaries.
- The MYA value-proposition in 2020 may be summarised as follows:

  In pursuit of DPPA's objectives to prevent conflict and sustain peace, the MYA portfolio demonstrates distinctive value through projects that respond rapidly and adapt flexibly to the risk of violent conflict, and by filling gaps in DPPA's operational reach under the Regular Budget allocation.

- In operational terms, the MYA portfolio allows DPPA to fulfil its high-level objective of conflict prevention, peace-making, and catalysing sustained peace. With the MYA, DPPA supports over thirty Special Political Missions, multiple 'good offices' initiatives of the Secretary-General including Special Envoys and Special Representatives, mediation processes including 'Track 1' diplomatic initiatives, technical support for peaceful elections, and strategic partnerships with regional organisations.

- The allocation of funds within the MYA portfolio demonstrates a clear alignment with DPPA's high-level goals: peacemaking, partnerships, and a learning, innovative culture.

- MYA portfolio prioritisation could be further supported through the use of a simple portfolio mapping tool, showing the degree to which MYA projects are serving the central value-proposition of the fund.

- The MYA is also an essential source of funding for DPPA, in the face of a stagnant Regular Budget allocation gradually eroded by inflation in recent years.

EFFECTIVENESS: THE RESULTS OF THE MYA PORTFOLIO

- Apart from providing case-study examples, DPPA does not yet report on interim operational results in the MYA portfolio, such as when projects access the right stakeholders, engage them in dialogue, and begin to exert influence towards peace and away from violence. Including these interim results would move the MYA reporting focus towards the operational results that reflect the core value claim of the MYA. This could be accomplished through a low-burden and self-reported results register, as a first step.

- DPPA's concept of risk-reduction underpins the MYA, but the MYA lacks the means to measure the 'risk responsiveness' of its portfolio. DPPA may be able to better demonstrate effectiveness and prioritisation within the MYA portfolio by forecasting and documenting in advance where suitable risk-responsive opportunities are most likely to arise in the UN system, and then measuring its ability to seize these opportunities. Several indexes of global conflict scale and intensity could also provide a useful guide to determine whether MYA has been effective in its risk-response role.

- The MYA allows DPPA to gain days and sometimes weeks of advance deployment time, helping Envoys and Special Political Missions to deploy with a speed that is impossible if DPPA awaits the approval of an official UN mandate and the release of Regular Budget funds. Despite the centrality of this value-claim, DPPA does not yet report on the extent to which the MYA accelerates these kinds of deployments, either in days gained, or in costs avoided.

- MYA funding is effective in supporting innovative initiatives which would otherwise not be feasible with Regular Budget funding alone. The use of innovative methods has helped DPPA continue to fulfil its mandate during the COVID-19 pandemic, and to fully support the Secretary-General's call for a Global Ceasefire.

- The introduction of a new Gender Marker, tied to MYA project approval and review steps, positions DPPA well to report on its effectiveness in inclusion – potentially also considering youth inclusion, which is identified by DPPA as a critical issue.

EFFICIENCY: THE STEWARDSHIP OF FUNDS WITHIN THE MYA PORTFOLIO

- Creeping gaps in the Regular Budget allocation have required an increasing proportion of MYA funding to be applied to core DPPA funding needs in recent years, such as staff salaries, routine staff training, and predictable travel needs. It is arguable that since these staff and travel costs are recurring and foreseeable, that they should feature in the Regular Budget of the DPPA.

- 54 percent of MYA expenses in 2020 are allocated to DPPA staff and personnel costs, while 12 percent is applied to travel. Given the nature of DPPA's work, it is reasonable that the majority of the MYA budget is directed to the employment of staff and consultants, and the transport of these people to conflict-affected areas when needed.

- Travel expenses appear to be managed efficiently within the MYA portfolio, allowing high-value rapid intervention of DPPA staff and Envoys to prevent the escalation of conflict.

- Close to $565,000 of MYA funds were applied in 2020 to training for DPPA staff. By contrast, UN Regular Budget funding for DPPA's staff training and development needs totalled just $25,000 in 2020. To make the MYA investment in training more efficient, DPPA should prioritise low-cost peer-to-peer learning, which will deliver the most valuable and immediate operational benefits for MYA projects.

- DPPA maintains a simple project proposal and funding process for the MYA, which helps reduce the costs associated with administering the MYA portfolio.

- The MYA project cycle model could potentially be improved by applying the ethos of the existing 'rapid-response' funding window across the whole portfolio. By introducing a preliminary phase for rapid assessment and scoping in all new projects, the MYA could cultivate more rapid, adaptive and risk-responsive DPPA projects, while ensuring an appropriate level of oversight and reporting for continuing projects.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **To support the strategic alignment and evaluability of the MYA portfolio, DPPA could:**

   - Adopt an MYA value-proposition as a succinct statement of the MYA's unique value.
     (See pages 8, 9, 24)
   - Adopt a simple one-line ultimate objective for the Department. (See pages 8, 9)
   - Consider adopting a schematic diagram for senior management use, showing the strategic logic of the Department's activities. (See page 17)
   - Create a one-page results 'taxonomy' showing the typical categories of DPPA's interim and final results.
     (See pages 23–25)

2. **To measure the progress and value-creation of the MYA portfolio, DPPA could:**

   - Report on the degree to which the MYA is responsive to the risk of violent conflict, which is a core element of the MYA value-proposition.
     (See page 26)
   - Report on the degree to which the MYA accelerates the response of DPPA, which is a core element of the MYA value-proposition. (See page 29)
   - Report on valued interim results.
     (See pages 23–25)
   - Consider using a simple portfolio mapping tool to support ongoing efforts to align the MYA portfolio with its value-proposition.
     (See page 15)

3. **To refine the MYA portfolio's systems and processes, DPPA could:**

- Introduce a 'low burden' assessment/scoping phase for all new MYA initiatives, designed to favour the cultivation of more rapid, adaptive and risk-responsive MYA projects, while lowering barriers for new initiatives that fall outside the usual planning cycle. This would embed the 'rapid response' rationale of the MYA more firmly in the entire project cycle.
  (See page 41)

- Consider consolidating the various criteria for MYA project selection, project quality assessment, and the various MYA funding windows.
  (See page 14)

- Continue to invest in enhancing its monitoring and evaluation processes, and consider using an Adaptive M&E model.
  (See pages 3, 23, 36, 44)

- Consider assigning the role of 'critical peer' to one or two colleagues at each meeting of the XB Committee, to promote critical reflection and the introduction of divergent perspectives.
  (See page 41)

4. **To address high-value themes in the MYA's operational focus, DPPA could:**

- Maintain its investment in innovative initiatives within the MYA, and continue to support the scaling up and launch of innovative approaches.
  (See page 32)

- Consider assigning a 'Women and Youth' advisor to each Special Political Mission to drive forward DPPA's operational goals related to inclusion in the MYA portfolio.
  (See page 34)

- Consider prioritising training and professional development activities that employ a low-cost peer-to-peer learning approach, anchored in immediate operational needs of the MYA portfolio. (See page 40)

- Consider a number of subjects for possible further evaluation.
  (See page 48)

Introduction: Scope and objectives of this Assessment

Value-for-Money Assessment
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This Value-for-Money assessment examines the relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency of UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA) projects funded through the Multi-Year Appeal (MYA). The rapid-assessment methodology is modelled on the preliminary assessment phase of a public-sector Value-for-Money or Performance audit.[2] The findings and recommendations in this report are based on confidential interviews, document review, and data analysis conducted between June and October 2020 by Dr Ian Wadley, independent consultant, in close collaboration with DPPA staff.

The assessment took a strategic and systemic focus, examining the MYA projects at a whole-portfolio level, while identifying specific areas for in-depth evaluation. This high-level strategic approach mirrors the focus of benchmark audits and assessments, including the 2012 examinations of the UK Government's Conflict Pool funding, conducted by the UK National Audit Office and the UK Independent Commission on Aid Impact.[3]

The analytical focus of this report addresses the Terms of Reference which call for 'an assessment of the value of MYA projects by examining the projects' relevance, effectiveness and cost-efficiency', while also inviting analysis and recommendations among the following topics:

- Preliminary understanding of what has worked and timely feedback to project managers
- Key insights and trends among 2020 XB projects
- Recommendations to increase value, relevance, effectiveness and cost-efficiency
- Forthcoming opportunities and risks
- Opportunities for further learning and in-depth evaluation
- Recommendations to improve XB project design
- Recommendations to increase evaluability of XB portfolio

This assessment firstly analyses the strategic logic of the MYA, examining the clarity and coherence of the MYA portfolio, and testing the logical connection between the MYA portfolio of projects and DPPA's high-level objectives.

Secondly, the assessment examines the effectiveness of the MYA portfolio of projects in delivering valued results. This addresses the systems used by DPPA to determine whether the MYA portfolio of projects is attaining its objectives, while also identifying priority themes in which MYA projects are delivering valued results, including topics such as Women, Peace and Security.

2 For further discussion of Value-for-Money and Performance Audit practice, see Lonsdale, Ling and Wilkins (Eds), *Performance Auditing: Contributing to Accountability in Democratic Government* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2011); Ling and van Dijk (Eds), *Performance Audit Handbook: Routes to Effective Evaluation*, RAND: 2009).

3 UK Independent Commission for Aid Impact, *Evaluation of the Inter-Departmental Conflict Pool*, (Report 12, July 2012); UK National Audit Office, *Review of the Conflict Pool*, (March 2012).

Thirdly, the assessment considers questions of cost-efficiency, asking whether the MYA portfolio is consistently applying funds in an efficient way to minimise costs, and identifying areas in which there may be scope for greater efficiencies.

The assessment's Value-for-Money analysis draws on the author's experience developing and implementing low-burden Adaptive Monitoring and Evaluation solutions in the peacemaking and humanitarian sector, using principles applied in public sector Value-for-Money performance audits.[4]

2015 EVALUATION FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The most recent evaluation of the MYA portfolio was conducted in 2015. That evaluation set out to determine 'what has worked and to identify key areas for improvement for the development of the next MYA round'.[5] The evaluation report concluded that, '[...] overall the MYA mechanism was found to be relevant and coherent in line with the Department's core mission, mostly effective in resource mobilization and project management, and somewhat efficient in prioritizing and allocating resources.'

The 2015 MYA evaluation further concluded that 'DPA has made significant progress in transforming itself into a more strategic organization with operational capacity, as acknowledged by donors and supported through increasing numbers of contributions since its inception. [...] Evidence indicates that the availability of XB funds multiplies the impact of DPA's engagements and operations. However, improvements can be made to become more strategic, to address issues of resource sustainability and predictability, to continue to streamline internal processes and to improve monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.'

In response to the 2015 evaluation, the Department enhanced its strategic planning and monitoring & evaluation processes, as evidenced by the commitments implemented under the UNDPA 2016–2019 Strategic Plan, and again in the DPPA 2020–2022 Strategic Plan and its accompanying results framework and risk matrix.

A summary table of key recommendations in the 2015 evaluation, and the ongoing DPPA response at September 2020 is annexed to this report. Amongst other recommendations, the 2015 evaluation called for the Department to show a direct link between the MYA projects and the DPPA Strategic Plan, which the Department has fulfilled by mapping all MYA projects to the strategic objectives in the 2020–2022 Strategic Plan.

4 See Wadley, I., *Valuing Peace: Delivering and Demonstrating Mediation Results*, HD Mediation Practice Series, November 2017, available at https://reliefweb.int/report/world/valuing-peace-delivering-and-demonstrating-mediation-results

5 See Belevich, L.M., *Evaluation of the Multi-Year Appeal 2014–2015*, (Internal UNDPA document, June 2015) at page 4.

Assessing the strategic role of the MYA: Relevance

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Relevance:
DPPA'S HISTORIC MANDATE

The pursuit and preservation of peaceful international relations lies at the heart of the Charter of the United Nations, and of the compelling vision of its founders to 'save succeeding generations from the scourge of war'.[6] The UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs springs from the pursuit of this vision by successive Secretaries-General of the UN, and exists today because of the imperative need to fulfil the UN's essential task of preventing armed conflict and sustaining peace.

Beginning in 2018, the Secretary-General of the UN carried out a series of ambitious reforms to better position the UN for its core peace-making and conflict prevention task, addressing the UN peace and security pillar, development system, and the management paradigm of the entire organization.[7] As one result of these reforms, the former UN Department of Political Affairs merged with the UN Peacebuilding Support Office, creating a unified DPPA, with global responsibility for political and peacebuilding issues. The intention of the merger was to eliminate duplication, which should increase both effectiveness and efficiency in the use of UN funds.

6 UN Charter preamble.

7 DPPA Strategic Plan 2020-2022, at p.14.

Relevance:
DPPA'S 2020 – 2022 STRATEGIC PLAN

In its 2020–2022 Strategic Plan, DPPA acknowledges its mandate 'to assist Member States in preventing violent conflict and making and sustaining peace',[8] serving as 'the lead UN entity for identifying early warning risks'.[9] This mandate, and DPPA's foundational purpose is reflected in the Department's stated 'overarching priority' for 2020–2022:

> To contribute to a reduction in the risk of outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of violent conflict globally, while also helping move towards recovery, increased social cohesion, reconstruction and development. [10]

In summary, DPPA succeeds when it helps reduce the risk of violence around the globe.

DPPA executes this strategic responsibility through seven main threads of activities, spending around $90 million in the 2020 calendar year: Political analysis; preventive diplomacy and good offices; mediation; electoral assistance; peacebuilding support; capacity building and partnerships; and support to the UN Security Council, the Peacebuilding Commission, and other Member state bodies and organs.[11]

Underpinning DPPA's activities is the following strategic logic (or 'theory of change'):

If DPPA deploys the full range of its resources based on cross-cutting analysis, in collaboration with others within the UN system and in partnerships with regional, national, and local stakeholders, drawing on an internal culture shaped by a commitment to learning and innovation, it will contribute to the prevention and resolution of violent conflict and to sustainable peace.[12]

This logic is reflected in DPPA's comprehensive 2020–2022 Strategic Plan, where the Department sets out three high-level goals, with corresponding sub-objectives.[13]

8 DPPA Strategic Plan 2020-2022, at p.11

9 DPPA Strategic Plan 2020-2022, at p.20

10 DPPA Strategic Plan 2020-2022, at p.21

11 See the DPPA Strategic Plan 2020-2022, at p.14. The figure of $90 million includes Regular Budget and MYA Budget totals, but does not include funding for Special Political Missions.

12 DPPA Strategic Plan 2020-2022, at p.18

13 DPPA Strategic Plan 2020-2022, at pp.20 and following

These are summarised below:

DPPA Ultimate Aim: Reduce the risk of violence, promote sustained peace[14]

THREE MAIN GOALS:		SEVEN SUB-OBJECTIVES / LINES OF ENGAGEMENT:
1 **Contribute to preventing and resolving violent conflict and building resilience**	1.1	Action-oriented analysis
	1.2	Inclusive peace-making
	1.3	Catalysing sustained peace[15]
2 **Strengthen partnerships for conflict prevention and resilience**	2.1	Support to UN bodies and organs
	2.2	Strengthened partnerships at the regional, national and local level[16]
3 **Achieve a learning, innovative working culture that takes forward the vision of the Secretary-General**	3.1	DPPA is a learning, innovative and flexible department
	3.2	DPPA has a collaborative work culture and an enabling work environment

14 Summarised from the DPPA 2020-2022 Strategic Plan. See the table below at page 8.

15 Author's paraphrase. The original language from the DPPA Strategic Plan 2020–2022 frames sub-objective 1.3 as 'Sustained Peace: DPPA's peacebuilding engagements across the pillar and UN system catalyse efforts to address socio-economic and other grievances and risks. They are undertaken in partnership with Governments and relevant actors such as the World Bank and other international financial institutions. Sustainability informs priority areas of support to dialogue and coexistence initiatives, peace processes, and basic services'. See DPPA Strategic Plan 2020–2022 at p.22–23.

16 This process is described as 'Expanding and deepening its (DPPA's) engagement regional and sub-regional organizations, international financial institutions and other stakeholders, as well as with Resident Coordinators and UN Country Teams'. DPPA Strategic Plan 2020–2022 at p.24.

Relevance:
DEFINING THE VALUE-PROPOSITION OF THE MYA IN 2020

This assessment found that for historic reasons, the MYA lacks a formal 'value-proposition' statement of its own: It has emerged organically since its founding in 2011 as a funding instrument to respond to the growing need for UN preventive diplomacy, while also plugging gaps in the annual Regular Budget for DPPA by harnessing the voluntary contributions of Member States in support of DPPA's conflict prevention and peacemaking mandate.

If the MYA is to be seen as more than merely a gap-funding instrument for a wide variety of DPPA needs, it must be able to articulate its own value proposition, and test the performance of MYA projects against it.

To assess the alignment of the MYA with DPPA's high-level goals, this analysis therefore firstly explored the 'value claim' or 'value proposition' of the MYA. The summary value proposition statement below was derived from statements obtained from DPPA documents and staff regarding the MYA's unique or distinctive value, and the ultimate aims that it is intended to serve.

For the purposes of this assessment, and potentially for consideration for future DPPA strategic planning and review purposes, the MYA value-proposition in 2020 is summarised as follows:

> **In pursuit of DPPA's objectives to prevent conflict and sustain peace, the MYA portfolio demonstrates distinctive value through projects that respond rapidly and adapt flexibly to the risk of violent conflict, and by filling gaps in DPPA's operational reach under the Regular Budget allocation.**

This value proposition should be regarded as a working definition rather than as a definitive statement. It provides a useful basis for this Value-for-Money analysis, and may prove helpful in sharpening discussions within DPPA regarding the MYA's core claim to value.

Relevance:
THE MYA IN SERVICE OF DPPA'S HIGH-LEVEL GOALS

The central part of the MYA's value claim goes to the heart of the UN's critical role in preventive diplomacy and peace mediation: **MYA projects uniquely enable DPPA to fulfil its high-level objective of conflict prevention, peace-making, and the promotion of resilience against violence**.

This high-level objective is set out in the DPPA 2020–2022 Strategic Plan, which contains the following statements of the Department's ultimate aim:

Formulations of DPPA's ultimate aim in the 2020–2022 Strategic Plan[17]

Reduce the risk of violence, promote sustainable peace

DPPA's overarching priority is to contribute to a **reduction in the risk of outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of violent conflict** globally, while also helping move towards recovery, increased social cohesion, reconstruction and development.

Reduce the risk of violence

The Department's degree of success should be measured by the extent to which DPPA has contributed to a **diminishment in the risks of violence** across a wide range of settings and timeframes.

Exert influence for peace, and away from violence

DPPA aims to **move countries away from violence and instability**, to improve the chances that leaders and stakeholders will adopt peaceful solutions and gradually build national resilience capacities for sustainable peace. [...] DPPA **influences settings away from violence**.

[...] With measurable impact on the ground

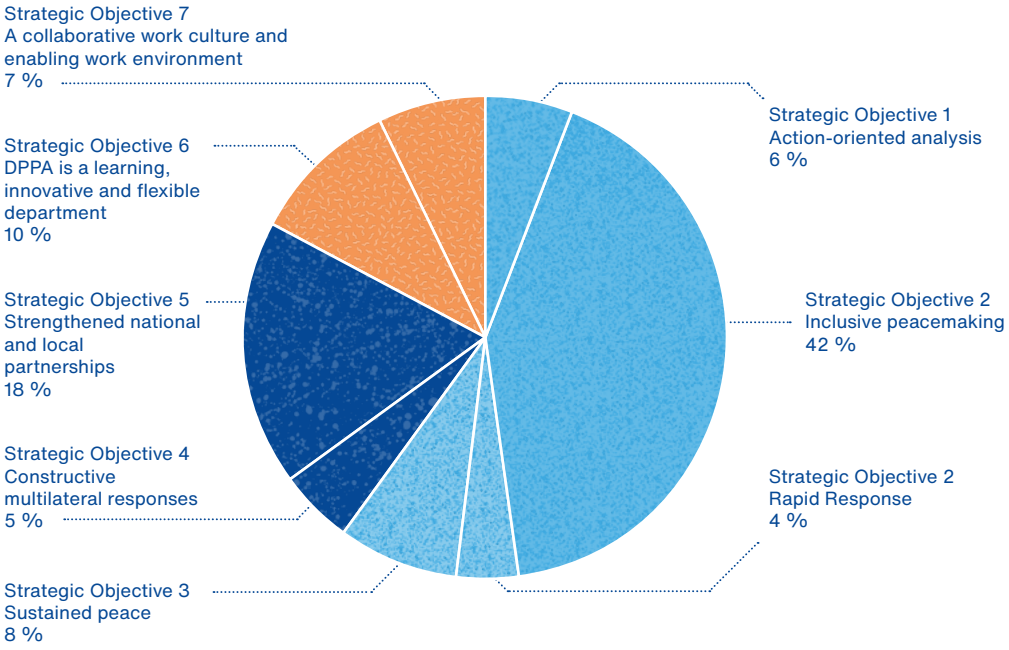
DPPA's success will be measured by impact on the ground, by the UN's ability to leverage all of its resources effectively and play a role in lowering diplomatic tensions, preventing crises from escalating, supporting national capacities, and reducing the broader range of risks associated with violent conflict.

17 See DPPA Strategic Plan 2020–2022, at p.21.

The allocation of funds within the MYA portfolio demonstrates a clear alignment with DPPA's high-level goals. DPPA's primary goal, 'Contribute to preventing and resolving violent conflict and building resilience' accounts for almost two-thirds of the Department's MYA budget in 2020, indicating the priority given within the MYA budget to operational engagement for conflict prevention and peacemaking. Goal two, regarding partnerships, accounts for 23 percent, while the third goal concerning efforts to strengthen the Department's internal culture and capability absorbs 17 percent of the available MYA funds. This allocation of the MYA budget matches the purpose and mandate of the DPPA, and the strategic hierarchy of the Department's objectives.

Proportion of budget allocated to DPPA themes. Inclusive peacemaking occupies 42 percent of the MYA 2020 budget.

MYA 2020 Budget allocation between DPPA strategic sub-objectives



It was beyond the scope of this assessment to test whether projects 'tagged' as serving goal 1, 2 or 3 of the Strategic Plan are in fact serving those purposes at the individual project level. Additional examination of the operations of each of the 100 projects would confirm the accuracy of the reported budget division between these goals.

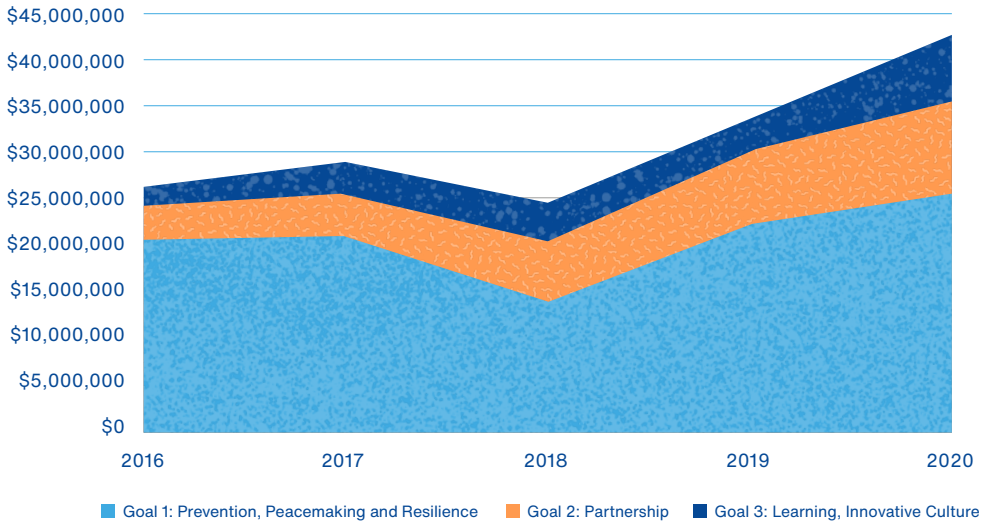
What is clear from the available evidence is that DPPA has been attracting and applying an increasing level of MYA funding towards DPPA's strategic objectives in recent years. This funding enables a distinctive 'hybrid' blend of both field-oriented and Headquarters-based initiatives, supporting UN Special Political Missions, Special Representatives of the Secretary-General, Special Envoys, and a variety of DPPA initiatives which complement projects supported by Regular Budget funding.

For example, in 2019, the number of requests for DPPA funding for rapid response initiatives increased by 25 percent from 2018 levels[18], demonstrating the ongoing relevance of the MYA's mechanism to enable a rapid and flexible response to crisis situations. DPPA's initial budget estimates for 2020, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, anticipated a similar increase of 25 percent for the entire MYA budget in 2020, compared with 2019 levels.

The relevance of the MYA to DPPA's peacemaking, prevention and resilience building objectives has been affirmed by ongoing demand and ongoing funding since 2016.

Overview: MYA expenditure by strategic theme 2016–2020*

(*2020 budget figures)



While the overall MYA budget has grown significantly in recent years, the share of the budget allocated to operational peacemaking, prevention and resilience projects (Goal 1) has fallen over the period from 2016 to 2020. DPPA's spending on operational themes in 2016 accounted for 80 percent of the MYA, falling to 58 percent in 2018, and recovering to 66 percent by 2019. At June 2020, 60 percent of DPPA's COVID-adjusted MYA budget was allocated to operational objectives (Goal 1: Prevention, Peacemaking and Resilience)[19].

This trend should not be seen as a cause for concern, given that on average two-thirds of the MYA has remained dedicated to Goal 1 over the period 2016–2020.

18 MYA Annual Report 2019 at p. 14

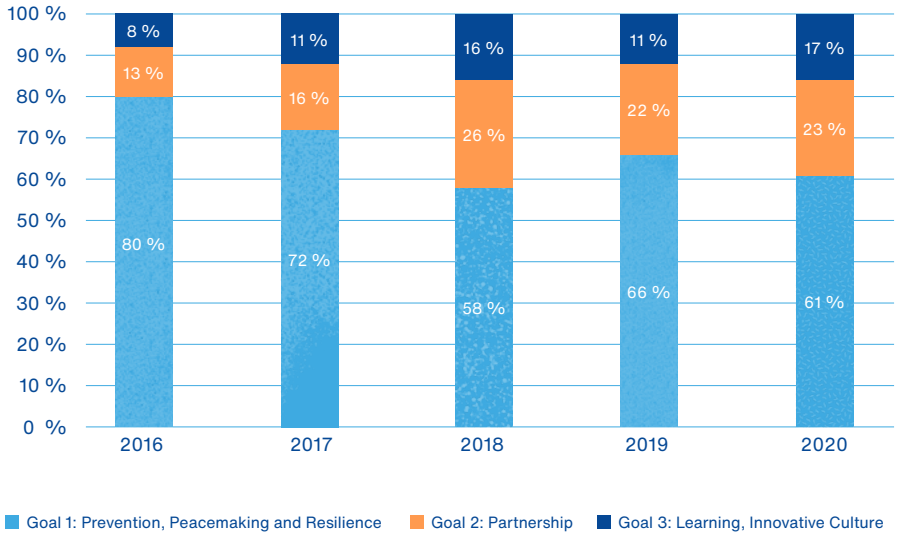
19 The financial MYA data for 2020 reflects the constraints imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic on travel and field-deployments. Given the exceptional nature of 2020, emphasis should be placed on the longer-term trend, and on the positioning of the MYA for the remainder of the 2020–2022 strategy period.

This assessment also noted that the tempering of growth in Goal 1 is due to DPPA applying an increasing share of MYA investment to its longer-term goals of investment in partnerships with UN, regional and local partners (Goal 2), which grew from 19 to 23 percent of the MYA budget over the period 2016–2020, along with building organisational capacity and culture (Goal 3), which grew from 11 to 17 percent over the same timeframe. DPPA has committed to maintaining the 'field-facing' operational character of its work under the DPPA 2020–2022 Strategic Plan.

A decreasing proportion of the MYA budget has been allocated to operational peacemaking, prevention and resilience projects over the period 2016–2020[20]

Share of MYA spending by strategic theme, 2016–2020

(2020 post-COVID revised budget figures)



20 The terminology for UNDPA/DPPA's three high-level goals changed between the 2016 and 2020 Strategic Plans, but the concepts remained broadly similar. This chart uses data supplied by DPPA showing the 'approved budget' figures for the MYA at 30 June 2020, reflecting constraints imposed by COVID-19.

Relevance:
THE MYA AS A TOOL TO HELP DPPA RESPOND RAPIDLY TO RISK

The MYA's relevance and value can also be assessed against the specific value-claim that the MYA helps DPPA to respond rapidly to the risk of violent conflict around the globe. This assessment found that **the MYA portfolio seeks to prioritise projects and seize opportunities in pursuit of DPPA's risk-reduction goal**.

Some of the defining characteristics of the MYA portfolio are drawn from DPPA's priorities for project expenditure, expressed in seven points which are intended to 'help the Department and its staff focus in areas where DPPA has a unique contribution to make'. According to its 2020–2022 Strategic Plan, DPPA's spending should prioritise initiatives that are: '**Field facing, action-oriented, harnessing regionally-driven approaches, cross-pillar** (i.e. also including UN's own Human Rights and development perspectives), **inclusive, innovative, (and) risk-tolerant**'.[21]

In addition to these seven criteria, the DPPA internal MYA Planning Manual of October 2019 provides explanatory paragraphs under ten headings to offer guidance for the Extra-Budgetary Committee tasked with responsibility for prioritising and allocating MYA funds. The Planning Manual indicates that the XB Committee should prioritise proposed projects that show evidence of: **'Links to DPPA's Strategic Plan; Strategic focus and results-oriented contribution to SDG sustainable development goals; Women, Peace and Security and inclusive approaches; South-South and triangular cooperation; DPPA's comparative advantage; Avoiding duplication with other funds; Promoting cross-pillar collaboration; Enhancing other partnerships; Compliant with enterprise risk management; and showing evidence of an appropriate exit strategy'**.[22]

Finally, DPPA seeks to ensure the alignment and prioritisation of the MYA portfolio when setting out the following thirteen indicators of quality, as described in an annex to the MYA Planning Manual of October 2019: '**Strategic (clear links to the DPPA Strategic Plan and Results Framework); Critical Gap (activities with no alternative funding); No duplication with other funding instruments; Potential for a positive outcome; Advances priorities of the Women Peace and Security policy; Sustainability; Capacity assured; Monitoring and evaluation compliance; Risks identified; Technical feasibility assured; Financial compliance; Administrative compliance; and Justification provided for extension of funding requests**'.

21 The references here are of course to the DPPA as a whole, and not to the subset of activities represented by the MYA portfolio. However, the DPPA Strategic Objectives remain critically important in determining whether the MYA is properly aligned with DPPA strategy and therefore satisfies the 'relevance' criteria of this assessment. Further, these high-level objectives assist in clarifying the MYA's own value proposition. See DPPA Strategic Plan 2020–2022, at pp. 33-35.

22 DPPA *Manual for the preparation of projects under the 2020 Multi-Year Appeal*, October 2019 at p.8. Note that the MYA planning manual pre-dates the 2020–2022 DPPA Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan should be seen as taking priority, and moves DPPA towards consolidating the breadth of available guidance.

In total, the DPPA and MYA strategy and planning documents therefore provide thirty criteria against which the alignment of MYA projects may be judged, some of which overlap. Projects are also assigned into four 'funding windows' within the MYA, which distinguish between Regular Projects, Rapid Response Projects, Local Peace Initiatives, and Technology and Innovation Projects.

This assessment concludes that these objectives and criteria position the MYA to serve DPPA's risk-reduction model of conflict prevention and sustainable peace-making. **However, there is a risk that the proliferation of criteria and categories for MYA projects may hinder, rather than help, efforts to keep the MYA portfolio aligned and coherent**, especially when combined with the additional strategic criteria applied in joint-fund settings. For example, the combined DPPA-UNDP Joint Programme planning document for 2018–2023 lists an additional 18 strategic goals against which proposed joint initiatives may be aligned, ranging from high-level objectives to cross-cutting thematic issues.[23]

This exhaustive scope of action renders more difficult the task of DPPA leadership and management when assessing the coherence of the MYA portfolio. Future assessments of the value of the MYA portfolio will be made more feasible if DPPA is able to condense the number of objectives and criteria relied upon in strategy and planning documents. To help focus the analysis of this assessment, this report has proposed a succinct value proposition for the MYA.

23 See UNDP–DPPA Joint Program on Conflict Prevention, 2018–2023, at p.8 and following.

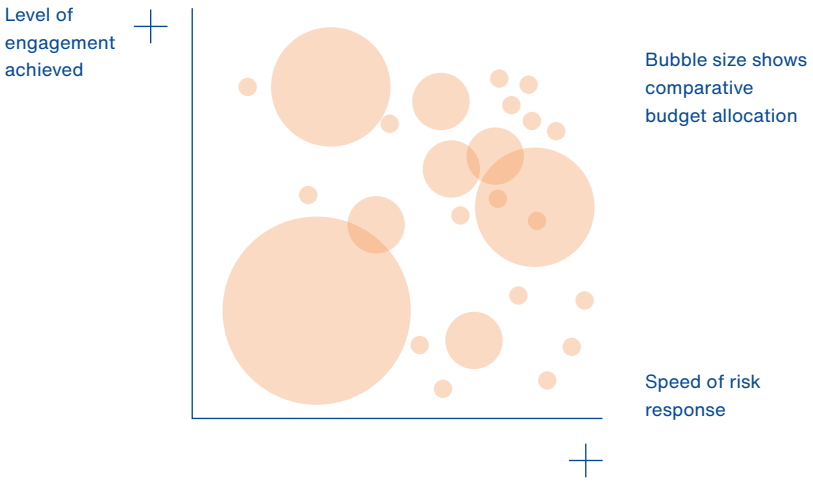
Relevance:
OPTIONS FOR MAINTAINING ALIGNMENT OF THE MYA PORTFOLIO

To support DPPA's management of the MYA portfolio, the summary value-proposition outlined above could be applied to help support decisions on prioritisation of funding. **Further analysis and decision-making on prioritisation could be supported through the use of a simple portfolio mapping tool,** showing the degree to which MYA projects are serving the central value-proposition of the fund.

For example, if DPPA agrees that the distinctive value of the MYA lies in the speed of the responses it enables, and in its operational reach for peacemaking or conflict prevention, these two factors could be used to map the entire portfolio on two axes: the horizontal axis reflecting the degree to which a project helps DPPA provide an accelerated response, and the vertical axis reflecting the degree to which a project improves DPPA's operational reach for peace-making or conflict prevention (i.e. engagement with key actors).

An indicative diagram of this kind of portfolio mapping is provided below as an illustration:

Indicative model of MYA portfolio mapping: speed, engagement, and cost



As shown in the above indicative diagram, a project would be placed high on the horizontal axis if it significantly accelerates DPPA's response time.

The same project would be placed high on the vertical axis if it successfully engages the right actors. By contrast, a project which shows no particular advantage in delivering an accelerated DPPA response would be placed towards the left of the horizontal axis, while a project that simply convenes a training workshop without engaging key conflict actors would be placed towards the bottom of the vertical axis. The process of ranking the projects in this way is not a perfect science of course, but the tool might assist senior management in identifying outlying projects, and in sharpening internal discussion regarding projects that do or do not correspond with the MYA value-proposition.

Once the MYA portfolio is mapped in this way, DPPA could then also overlay the budget of each project, providing senior management and stakeholders with a clear view of where the MYA money is being spent, and how this is serving the core value proposition of the MYA.

In this illustrative model (which is not intended to reflect the reality of the current MYA portfolio), a **simple mapping against the two criteria of *speed* and *reach* (engagement of relevant actors) might provide a useful starting point** for management discussions on resource allocation, and alignment with the MYA's core value proposition.

The illustrative diagram above would show in this hypothetical case that relatively low-cost projects feature among the MYA's most effective efforts to accelerate DPPA deployment while also achieving valued engagement with the right actors. The fictional project in the lower left quadrant of the chart would also invite further examination: this hypothetical project is absorbing significant MYA resources but does not appear to be delivering a corresponding acceleration in operational deployment, nor engagement with the right actors.

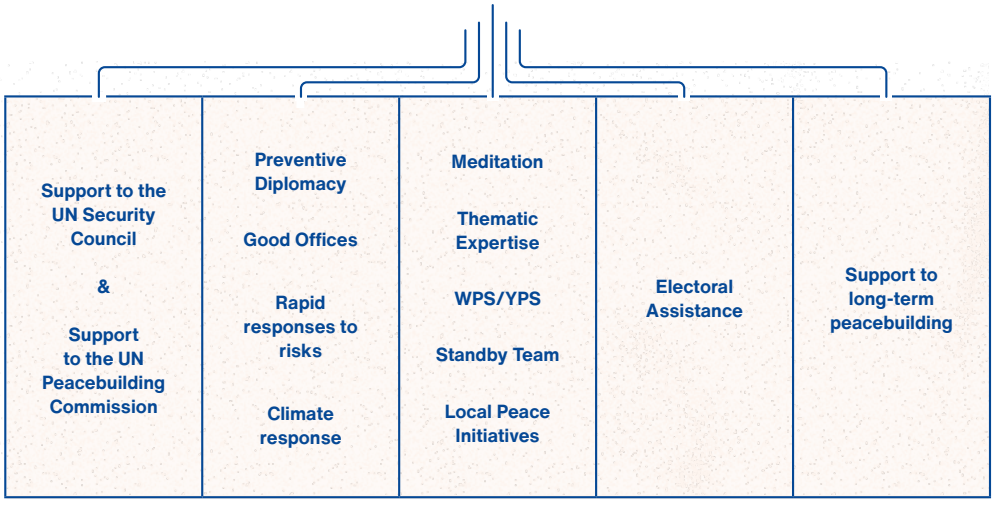
Of course, rapid, risk-responsive engagement for peace is not the only goal for which the MYA exists, as there are other institutional needs which must also be served with MYA funds. By mapping the portfolio against a narrowly-defined value-proposition, DPPA will also create an opportunity to consider the arguments justifying ongoing investment in projects that fall outside the MYA's core value-claim, and perhaps to identify alternative long-term sources of funding for these needs.

Relevance:
THE MYA WITHIN DPPA'S STRATEGIC LOGIC

For the purposes of this assessment, DPPA's strategic logic (and corresponding results, or sources of value), has been rendered into a schematic form below. This diagram is based on interviews and document review conducted for this assessment, and is not intended as a definitive model. The seven threads of engagement mentioned in DPPA's 2020–2022 Strategic Plan are represented in the central part of the diagram, showing how DPPA's actions contribute towards its ultimate goal. The categories of results generated by these actions are represented in the green chevron boxes on the right. The schematic provides an analytical tool to highlight categories of interim results which may currently be under-reported, but may also be useful as a basis for reflecting on the effectiveness of activities funded within the MYA, discussed further in the 'Effectiveness' section of this report below.

DPPA STRATEGIC LOGIC

Prevent and resolve violent conflict; build resilience



ENABLING CONDITIONS AND PRE-REQUISITES FOR DPPA SUCCESS

Analysis and innovation
DPPA analysis helps to shape peacemaking options, and to support well-informed decisions and resolutions within the UN system and beyond. DPPA's incubation of innovative approaches helps to advance the practice of peacemaking and preventive diplomacy

Partnerships and networks
DPPA develops collaborative relationships with local, national and regional organisations, and with counterpart UN agencies and other International Organisations

DPPA cultivates an enabling culture of learning and adaptation
DPPA's leadership and staff pursue the peace-making vision of the Secretary-General

DPPA RESULTS

- Impact
- Influence
- Engagement
- Access
- Analysis
- Partnership
- Capability

Relevance:
DISTINGUISHING THE MYA FROM OTHER UN FUNDS

Interviews conducted and documents reviewed for this assessment suggest **that there is a risk of the MYA being seen as a 'generic funding bucket' for peace-related projects within the broader UN system.** The MYA Planning Manual of October 2019 identifies the following funds as the principal extra-budgetary financial instruments relevant to the MYA in October 2019:

1. The Peacebuilding Fund
2. The Joint UNDP-DPPA Programme on Conflict Prevention
3. The Department of Peace Operations Extra-budgetary Funding

While stating that 'the risk of duplication between these different funds cannot be underestimated', DPPA documents affirm that the other extra-budgetary UN funds are in fact different in purpose, size, governance and beneficiaries.[24] To clarify the differences between these funding instruments, DPPA has produced a detailed table showing the distinctive elements of the MYA, compared with the UNPBF and the Joint Programme of the UNDP-DPPA.[25]

This assessment found that the MYA is indeed significantly different from the other joint funds, due to the fact that it is designed to rapidly launch and to catalyse nimble 'leading edge' responses, which may be later adopted by the larger UN funds such as the PBF. The MYA fund is characterised by small, agile, and often discreet initiatives with global scope, building the capacity of DPPA both in the field and in the Headquarters, and leveraging the capability and field presence of the larger UN agencies and funds. **This agility is served greatly by the fact that 70 percent of the MYA funds remain 'un-earmarked'**, allowing DPPA to apply these funds to the areas of greatest need or greatest risk. This attribute represents a significant source of distinctive value for the MYA, as donors typically provide 'earmarked' grants to other organisations and funds in the peacemaking sector, channelling resources towards certain projects and conflicts, and away from others. **The largely un-earmarked nature of the MYA means that DPPA retains operational discretion and independence in its peacemaking and conflict prevention role.**

DPPA staff interviewed reported that the three major extra-budgetary funds are in fact complementary, rather than redundant. In cases referred to in interviews, DPPA staff noted that PBF has used MYA projects to test concepts before scaling them up for implementation, while the UNDP-DPPA Joint Program fund has allowed DPPA staff to make use of the large field-presence of UNDP to advance DPPA's political prevention and peacemaking objectives. Through the UNDP-DPPA Joint Programme, DPPA gains access to Peace and Development Advisors who are located in the conflict-affected areas with the UN Resident Coordinator's office.

24 See DPPA *Manual for the preparation of projects under the 2020 Multi-Year Appeal*, October 2019 at p.1.

25 See the Multi-Year Appeal update document for 2019 at page 28, and the DPPA Multi-Year Appeal for 2020-2022, at p.42 ff. Note that the PBSO extra-budgetary funding is not discussed in these tables.

The MYA is also distinctive because it is designed to support UN efforts, while the UNDP-DPPA Joint Programme is designed to support the peacemaking efforts of Member States. Despite this central difference, the widely-framed theory of change for the UNDP-DPPA Joint Programme on Conflict Prevention illustrates the risk of these two funds being seen as interchangeable in practice:

> When efforts to prevent conflict and sustain peace are analysis-based, robust, inclusive, and nationally-led, and when these are supported to an appropriate extent by coherent international strategies and programmes, Member States are better equipped to mitigate the risks of conflict and fragility, and to pursue their development priorities.[26]

While an evaluation of possible duplication with other funds goes beyond the scope of this assessment, **the possibility of an overlap – as identified by DPPA's own MYA planning documents – risks eroding the MYA's distinctive value claim in the eyes of donors and stakeholders**. To better manage this risk, DPPA may wish to consider adopting a narrowly-framed value proposition for the MYA such as the one advanced in this report, while also working to narrow the scope of the other joint funds.

If DPPA wishes to evaluate whether MYA funding is in fact duplicating other UN voluntary funds or the Regular Budget, a starting point could lie with the assessments made by the Extra-Budgetary Committee of the DPPA when allocating MYA funds to projects proposed by DPPA divisions and teams. The criteria for selecting MYA projects specifically requires the XB Committee to consider whether the proposed project risks duplicating other efforts, which may help a future evaluation identify a sample of cases to study in more detail.

26 UNDP-DPPA Joint Programme Document 2018-2023 https://peaceinfrastructures.org/Home%20Documents/Joint%20UNDP-DPPA%20Programme%20-%20Prodoc%202018-2023/JointProgramme_Prodoc_2018-2023(signed).pdf

Relevance:
THE MYA AS ESSENTIAL 'GAP FUNDING' FOR DPPA'S OPERATIONS

The final element of the MYA's value-claim is stark: **The MYA must continue to provide funding to enable the DPPA to fulfil its mandate, in contexts where UN Regular Budget funding is absent or inadequate.** The UN's Regular Budget allocation to DPPA has not kept pace with inflation in recent years, requiring DPPA to increasingly rely on 'extra-budgetary' funding through the voluntary contributions of Member States to the MYA. In 2012, the inflation-adjusted Regular Budget allocation to DPPA was around $49 million, dropping to $46.3 million by 2020, a fall of around 5.5 percent.[27] By contrast, the MYA budget allocation, after adjustment for inflation, rose from $20.1 million to $40 million over the same period, effectively doubling the MYA funds available to support DPPA's response to emerging conflict risks.

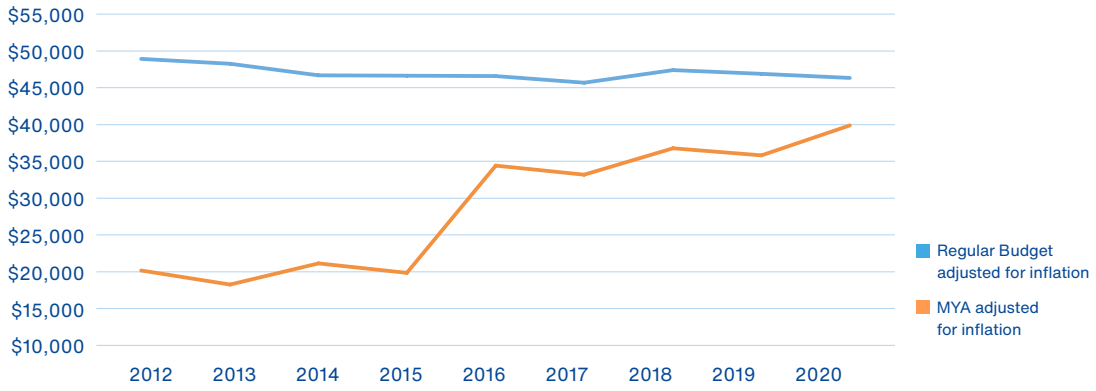
The performance of the MYA against this 'gap funding' value claim is easy to assess: **The MYA is both relevant and effective as a fundraising instrument**. In 2020 the MYA has provided around half of DPPA's operational budget, assuring DPPA's global role in conflict prevention and peacemaking. In DPPA's pre-COVID initial budget for 2020, the MYA's $45 million of voluntary contributions from UN Member States to DPPA equalled the UN Regular Budget allocation of $45 million tied to mandated activities endorsed by the UN Security Council.[28]

The MYA's fundraising role has become increasingly relevant over the last decade, as the stagnant UN Regular Budget allocation to DPPA has eroded due to inflation, requiring the MYA to play an increasingly important role in maintaining the Department's operational capacity.

Evolution of Regular Budget and MYA Budget over time, showing annual totals

(2020 MYA budget based on 2020 Q2 post-COVID-19 revision).

Regular Budget vs. MYA budget 2012–2020, after adjustment for inflation ($000's)



27 Figures adjusted for inflation, using 2020 dollar values as the comparator. The Regular Budget allocation to DPPA in 2012, without adjustment for inflation, was $43.3 million.

28 In the first quarter of 2020, DPPA revised its 2020 budget to $40 million to reflect the constraints imposed by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020. DPPA Strategic Plan 2020–2022, at p.31

According to multiple staff interviewed for this assessment, without MYA funding, DPPA would become a shadow of its current form, largely confined to a Headquarters role. DPPA staff noted that without MYA funding, DPPA would be able to engage only in those instances where it received a formal UN mandate and corresponding Regular Budget funding.

To set this in more concrete terms, **if DPPA was reliant only on UN Regular Budget funding in 2020, it would have exhausted its entire travel budget by the end of the first quarter of the year**, and with it the ability to access and engage relevant actors in conflict-affected areas. Without the MYA, DPPA could therefore expect to be operationally active in the field for only three months per year.

With the MYA, DPPA funds over thirty Special Political Missions, 'good offices' initiatives of the Secretary-General including Special Envoys and Special Representatives, mediation processes including 'Track 1' diplomatic initiatives, technical support for peaceful elections, and strategic partnerships with regional organisations. Surge staff can be deployed to temporarily support Special Political Missions, UN Resident Coordinators and UN liaison presences. In addition, the MYA also funds DPPA's essential Headquarters functions that enable operational deployments in the field, including analysis for the Security Council and Secretary-General, along with DPPA capacity building, planning and training functions.[29]

29 See DPPA Update to the MYA 2019, at page 28.

Assessing the operational results of the MYA: Effectiveness

Value-for-Money Assessment
DPPA Multi-Year Appeal
November 2020

Effectiveness:
VALUING INTERIM OPERATIONAL RESULTS

DPPA's new results framework for the 2020–2022 strategy cycle provides clear evidence of the significant steps the Department has taken to improve the way it measures and reports on its value for peacemaking and conflict prevention.

To build on this strong foundation, **DPPA could direct more attention to valuable interim results** achieved by projects during the operational interventions which lie at the heart of the MYA's value-proposition. Interim results are achievements related to the process of access, engagement and influence that underpins all efforts to reduce the risk of violence, and promote sustained peace. These interim results include successes recognised by mediation practitioners, but not always featured in traditional logframe reporting, such as making first contact with relevant actors, establishing reliable channels of communication, and beginning to exert influence on key actors through these channels.

The MYA Quarterly Reports currently report on interim results by providing examples and case-studies of selected instances of effective analysis, access, engagement and agreements brokered by DPPA teams, but the information in qualitative narrative form is difficult to digest at a glance, and difficult to compare over time.

Wherever possible, DPPA should report on the highest-value results in this 'results chain'. This would effectively **move the reporting focus away from 'capability' and 'analysis' goals, and focus instead on interim operational results, which are logically higher in DPPA's hierarchy of strategic objectives.** Wherever possible, DPPA should report on instances where this work culminates in an observable agreement, prevented conflict escalation, or changed facts on the ground, while acknowledging that these high-level outcomes are difficult to secure, and rare.

The diagram on the following page illustrates how DPPA's new results framework has positioned DPPA to report well against goals relating to institutional capability, partnerships, and analysis, but for the time being **there remains scope for more reporting on valuable operational results**:

DPPA RESULTS	OPPORTUNITIES TO ENHANCE REPORTING
Impact	DPPA could begin reporting ultimate impact wherever MYAprojects contribute to an observable outcome such as a ceasefire,humanitarian access, withdrawal of forces, or peace agreement.
Influence	DPPA could begin reporting on instances where MYA projects influence conflict actors, stakeholders, and intermediaries (using an appropriate *prima facie* standard of proof).
Engagement	DPPA could begin reporting on instances where MYA projects successfully engage conflict actors, stakeholders, and intermediaries, including women and youth.
Access	DPPA could begin reporting on instances in which MYA projects successfully reaches the right actors, including first contact with relevant leaders of governments, non-state armed groups, regional organisations, women, and youth.
Analysis	DPPA is already well-positioned to report effectively on action-oriented analysis and innovation under the 2020–2022 Results Framework.
Partnership	DPPA is already well-positioned to report effectively on partnerships at regional, national and local level under the 2020–2022 Results Framework
Capability	DPPA is already well-positioned to report effectively on efforts to achieve a learning, innovative and flexible working culture under the 2020–2022 Results Framework.

A clearer view of the MYA's effectiveness could be gained by focussing the DPPA results framework on evidence of interim operational results, including the changes achieved in each project during the access, engagement and influence phases of work. In concrete terms, this means that around seven generic categories of valuable interim results could be identified and summarised in a one-page 'taxonomy of results'. These categories could then be used to promote a **low-burden results reporting system** in which DPPA teams would provide 3-4 lines describing the highest-value achievements of each MYA project on a monthly or quarterly basis, using the interim results categories as a guide.

The MYA's list of interim results obtained from implementing teams might include categories such as the following **hypothetical examples**, subject to further consultation:

1. Trusted networks cultivated; Peace-making options explored
2. Peace architecture designed; Conflict parties prepared
3. Multiple peace initiatives aligned; Other third parties supported
4. Enabling international environment promoted
5. Peace talks mandated, convened or facilitated
6. Peace agreements, concessions, or mechanisms agreed
7. Sustainable implementation of agreements

These **simple results reports could then be aggregated into a rough quantitative measure**, allowing DPPA to report in one page at a global level, for example, how many networks were cultivated by its projects, how many conflict actors were engaged, or how many dialogue processes were opened or supported through the MYA. **If interim operational results claimed by every MYA project were aggregated into a one-page whole-portfolio view of this kind, DPPA would have a quantitative approximation of its effectiveness over time**, allowing it to report more effectively on its value and evolution, without adding an excessive reporting burden. If the self-reported data was regarded as being too self-serving or anecdotal, this could be rectified with a light validation process when needed, or with more detailed investigation in appropriate cases.

Attempting this kind of results aggregation across a portfolio such as the MYA might arguably be regarded as too onerous, because of the difficulty of establishing with certainty the contribution made by DPPA amongst a variety of actors, and the absence of reliable data to prove assertions 'beyond reasonable doubt'. **By lowering the required standard of proof to an appropriate level, and by accepting the value of more modestly expressed claims of causation or contribution, DPPA will be able to better articulate and demonstrate its value at all stages of its conflict prevention and peacemaking interventions**. In practice this means relying at first instance on plausible claims made by project teams, and then applying validation measures until the requisite standard of proof is reached, rather than applying a heavy burden of proof to every claimed result, which tends to crush reporting efforts from busy operational teams operating in difficult environments.[30]

30 See an explanation of standards of proof in M&E for mediation in Wadley, I., *Valuing Peace: Delivering and Demonstrating Mediation Results*, HD Mediation Practice Series, November 2017, available at https://reliefweb.int/report/world/valuing-peace-delivering-and-demonstrating-mediation-results, at pp. 25 and following.

Effectiveness:
MEASURING MYA RISK-SENSITIVITY

DPPA provides expert conflict analyses within the UN Headquarters, anticipating the evolution of high-risk conflicts, and helping to shape the future good offices and mediation interventions of the Secretary-General.

In practice, however, DPPA does not respond solely to these conflict risk assessments regarding the severity, scale or likelihood of armed conflict. Instead, **DPPA seeks to respond even-handedly to all opportunities for intervention** following events such as a request **from** a Special Envoy or Special Representative of the Secretary-General, a Member State, another UN agency, or requests from UN Resident Coordinators and Regional Organisations. DPPA staff stated that because DPPA seeks to give equal treatment to all Member States, a request from a State with a relatively low level of internal conflict will not be de-prioritised by in the MYA portfolio simply because another State is experiencing a major violent conflict.

With this constraint taken into account, it may be more accurate to say that DPPA responds wherever there is an *opportunity* for conflict prevention or peacemaking, rather than wherever there is the greatest *need*. The MYA allows DPPA to rapidly seize these opportunities when they arise, and wherever possible, to cultivate greater operational space for its risk-responsive role.

The evidence considered during this assessment suggests that **some of the MYA's highest value results arise from projects in which DPPA was able to respond to a risk-sensitive opportunity because of MYA funding, in ways which would have been impossible with Regular Budget funds**.

MYA RESPONDING TO OPPORTUNITIES:

Addressing obstacles to demobilisation of armed forces

MYA funds have in some cases enabled the DPPA to hand-pick suitable experts with niche experience, and deploy them to develop solutions to otherwise insoluble dilemmas. In one case provided during this assessment, an MYA project negotiated the evacuation of 3500 surrendered opposition militia, whose ongoing presence in the country was destabilising security conditions, but for whom there was no easy exit route. This MYA-funded assignment required patient and discreet engagement on politically sensitive issues that fell outside the scope of the UN country mission, and which would have been impossible without the flexible and risk-responsive funding of the MYA.

Given that the MYA's risk-response role is primarily driven by the available opportunities, **DPPA may be able to improve its effectiveness and prioritisation by forecasting where those opportunities are most likely to arise.** Some respondents interviewed during this assessment suggested that a global 'horizon-scanning' view of the forthcoming needs of Special Political Missions, Special Representatives, and Special Envoys might help DPPA in prioritising the use of MYA funds to address these windows of opportunity. This **institutional horizon-scanning** could then be complemented by an **'external environment' horizon scan**, and perhaps by a **'global trend forecasting'** exercise. By documenting these expectations at the start of a planning cycle, DPPA will have a stronger basis on which to measure its 'risk responsiveness' at the conclusion of the cycle, and also to recognise and report on instances where it responded to unforeseeable risks.

In practice, **different types of risk-response will be relevant and valuable**, for example: Risks demanding a response to maintain the credibility and positioning of the DPPA; Risks which are pre-determined to be significant due to a UNSC resolution; Risks which reflect long-term and foreseeable trends; and Risks which are foreseeable only on a short- or immediate-term basis, and which require an instantaneous crisis-response action, using a facility such as the 'rapid response' funding window.

While noting that the MYA's risk-responsiveness is primarily driven by opportunities, and is constrained by institutional needs and by the requirement to treat all requests in an even-handed manner, if DPPA wished to measure and report on its effectiveness in responding to the prevalence of violent conflict, **several indexes of conflict could also provide a useful guide to determine whether DPPA is spending its effort in the right places over time**. For example, DPPA could measure its coverage of violent conflict against the Heidelberg Conflict Barometer, which provides an independent academic assessment of the scale and intensity of armed conflict in each region and country of the world.[31]

Additional insight could also be gained by factoring in the risk of conflicts creating a broader de-stabilising effect on a regional scale. This approach would give recognition to the work of MYA projects in places such as Bolivia, Sudan, and in small but regionally significant states such as Papua New Guinea, where DPPA has played a pivotal role facilitating the UN's support for implementation of the Bougainville Peace Agreement.

31 See for example the Heidelberg Conflict Barometer, available at https://hiik.de/conflict-barometer/current-version/?lang=en

RESPONDING TO HIDDEN RISKS:

MYA support for peaceful transitions in Papua New Guinea

Members of the Hela Provincial Council joined a UN delegation on a visit to Tari Market after the opening of the UN Hela provincial office.

PHOTO: UN RESIDENT COORDINATOR'S OFFICE PAPUA NEW GUINEA | RACHEL DONOVAN

In Papua New Guinea, UN work has encompassed efforts towards the conduct of a peaceful and credible referendum on the political future of Bougainville in 2019 and now facilitation of the post-referendum consultations between the two sides which are expected to launch formally in November 2020 after the Bougainville elections, and the formation of a new Bougainville administration. United Nations support to the process, led by the UN Resident Coordinator with DPPA support, remains vital in ensuring that the consultations are as constructive as possible, and that the wider domestic and international political environment is supportive. DPPA MYA funding will also provide training on the peace process for newly-elected members of the Bougainville House of Representatives as well as support the post-referendum consultations to ensure that these vital stakeholders are fully informed and can constructively contribute to the process by holding the Bougainville administration accountable.[32]

32 Source: Interviews, and see also DPPA 2019 MYA Report at p.21, DPPA 2018 MYA Report at p.23.

Effectiveness:
MEASURING MYA SPEED AND ACCELERATION

Another key element of the MYA's value-claim is that it enables DPPA to respond rapidly, gaining valuable days of operational engagement when accelerating the launch of Special Political Missions. By using MYA funds, DPPA is able to send Envoys and their teams to conflict-affected areas days or even weeks earlier than would be possible using Regular Budget funds, which rely on a prior process of approval and mandate-issuing.

Despite the centrality of this value-claim, DPPA does not yet measure the extent to which the MYA accelerates these kinds of deployments, either in days gained, or in costs avoided.

While there may not be an exact measure possible, DPPA could consider using simple estimates to record the time advantage gained through the use of MYA funds during the launch of Special Political Missions or other DPPA interventions. A baseline for comparison could be obtained from the elapsed time between an initial DPPA decision to take action, and the release of the first Regular Budget funds to support that action. In this way DPPA would be able to report on a central value-claim for the MYA: that the MYA budget enables a faster peacemaking and conflict prevention response by DPPA.

In a number of cases noted during this assessment, use of MYA funds gained DPPA valuable days and sometimes weeks of advance deployment time, allowing DPPA to send Envoys or launch Special Political Missions with a speed that is impossible if DPPA awaits the approval of an official UN mandate and the release of corresponding Regular Budget funds. In some cases, the MYA enables a discreet and flexible DPPA response even where no UN mandate is likely to be created, due to political dynamics. In Yemen, Syria, Colombia and Sudan, DPPA's rapid engagement has been made possible through the MYA. Respondents interviewed for this assessment indicated that while there are other UN mechanisms that can access conflict-affected areas for fact-finding, these are not as rapid, nor well-suited for DPPA's peacemaking and conflict prevention goals. By using the MYA, DPPA can immediately send a team to the relevant area to begin engaging with the conflict actors, rather than waiting for the grant of a formal mandate and the subsequent release of assessed contributions.

RAPID DEPLOYMENTS USING MYA:

Bolivia, Colombia, Yemen

In the department of Meta, organizations of women victims of the armed conflict and the organization of former female combatants in this department united to raise their voices against all forms of violence against women. Villavicencio, Meta, 2019.

PHOTO: UN VERIFICATION MISSION IN COLOMBIA | CARLOS LESSER

For the deployment of the Special Envoy to Bolivia, DPPA staff interviewed for this assessment suggested that the deployment was accomplished within 2 to 3 weeks, but that it may have taken months if the Special Envoy was obliged to wait for the uncertain (or even unlikely) prospect of Regular Budget funding.

In Colombia, the UN Special Political Mission was able to support the demobilisation of the FARC by rapidly promoting small livelihood projects, which were then picked up and advanced by the PBF. This enabled a rapid pivot from the technical expertise required for weapon decommissioning to a different skillset and capability, related to livelihoods and community-level collectives. The DPPA staff interviewed for this assessment indicated that the MYA funding was significantly faster than waiting for the alternative funding sources, which were regarded as an obstacle to progress.

In the case of the UNMHA Hudaydah Mission in Yemen, using MYA funding, DPPA was able to deploy an advance team within two days of the 18 December 2018 ceasefire being signed. The team carried out an initial assessment for scaling up the UN ceasefire monitoring presence. In the view of the DPPA staff interviewed for this assessment, the MYA-funded rapid deployment of a visible UN presence was critically important for maintaining the confidence of the parties, and which would have been impossible if DPPA was obliged to wait for the release of Regular Budget funds.[32]

Effectiveness:
PARTNERSHIPS

This assessment found that the MYA provides a useful means to catalyse ongoing cooperation with other actors in the peace and conflict prevention sector, including regional organisations, but primarily with other UN agencies.

Despite the advantages of the MYA in promoting collaboration between UN agencies, this assessment also identified evidence to suggest that some of the more administrative aspects of UN partnership do not yet work efficiently.

According to some DPPA staff interviewed, **the process for DPPA to transfer funds to partner UN agencies** is onerous, and involves significant time and transaction costs for the DPPA teams. One interview identified a case in which the DPPA team had been attempting to transfer funds to a UN agency for more than four months without success. In instances such as this, the flexibility and speed of the MYA process appears to be obstructed by simple logistics constraints.

Participants at a workshop on Participation and Representation of Women in Electoral Processes, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, November 2019.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF THE AFRICAN UNION

While the scope of this assessment did not permit a detailed exploration of these cases, the available evidence suggests that **the MYA also provides creative 'silo-crossing' solutions to coordination obstacles within the UN system**. For example, MYA funding has on some occasions allowed DPPA to launch initiatives which provided useful entry points for political dialogue for peace or conflict prevention, which would otherwise have been obstructed by the silo-effect between different UN agencies and departments. In two cases referred to during interviews, DPPA staff obtained improved access and engagement with relevant local actors through MYA funded projects, enabling UN system-wide collaboration on cross-cutting issues.

Effectiveness:
LEARNING, INNOVATION AND COVID-19 RESPONSES

The MYA Innovation Funding Window, and the Innovation Cell within the Policy and Mediation Division of DPPA each demonstrate the **effectiveness of MYA funding in supporting innovative initiatives which would otherwise not be feasible with Regular Budget funding alone**.

Office of the Special Envoy for Yemen concluding its first online mass consultation, June 2020.
PHOTO: UN OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL ENVOY FOR YEMEN

Created in late 2019, **the Policy and Mediation Division's Innovation Cell has helped DPPA to pioneer a series of initiatives regarding the application of new technologies and data analysis** to the peacemaking and prevention role of DPPA. These innovative ventures have included social media sentiment analysis, data-based modelling for situation forecasts, use of satellite imagery and remote sensing technology as a support to conflict prevention analyses, and storytelling with virtual reality for Security Council briefings.[33] According to DPPA staff interviewed for this assessment, the MYA funding was essential to the launch of these innovation projects, which fall outside the available Regular Budget funding categories.

In addition, **MYA funding has enabled the development of prototype initiatives such as DPPA's innovative climate security dialogues**, in close collaboration with UN Resident Coordinators and Peace and Development Advisors. Beginning with modest MYA funding, a climate security workshop concept was first tested by DPPA in the Asia Pacific region, before being adopted and continued as a $3 million project successfully implemented by IOM and UNDP. Innovative

33 MYA Annual Report at p. 48, MYA Quarterly Update 31 March 2020 at p.13.

initiatives such as these rely on MYA funding to ensure that DPPA remains at the leading edge of responses to emerging security challenges such as climate change.

Innovation requires an increased tolerance for risk, and an acceptance of the failures which inevitably arise during the process of refining and testing new ideas. DPPA staff interviewed for this assessment noted that the MYA funding helps provide an increased risk-tolerance for these initiatives, building on strong support and commitment from senior management.

Innovative COVID-19 responses and MYA support for the Secretary-General's Global Ceasefire Call

The use of innovative methods has helped DPPA continue to fulfil its mandate during the COVID-19 pandemic, and to fully support the Secretary-General's call for a Global Ceasefire. By relying on tools such as digital focus groups, DPPA has been able to engage with diverse groups of peace-making stakeholders, even during the lock-down quarantine restrictions and travel bans that have characterised the operational environment in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. While coronavirus-related travel restrictions have limited the opportunities for direct contact between conflict parties, DPPA staff have used UN-provided technological platforms to link opposing sides for discussions on a weekly basis, allowing technical and process-oriented discussions to progress during critical junctures in political dialogue.

To maximise DPPA's ability to adapt in the face of evolving constraints and obstacles associated with COVID-19, DPPA adopted a quarterly review of projects in the MYA portfolio in 2020, accompanied by mid-year reporting against the new results framework.[34]

34 DPPA ERM Risk Register May 2020

Effectiveness:
WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY; YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

"Imagining the Future of Inclusive Mediation: Learning from Pioneering and Young Women Leaders" panel discussion, organized by the UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA), the Crisis Management Initiative (CMI) and the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) in partnership with the Ministries for Foreign Affairs of Finland and Norway in October 2020. The four panelists were Hanna Tetteh (top left), Miriam Coronel-Ferrer (top right), Emmily Koiti (bottom left) and Hajer Sharief (bottom right).

UN PHOTO: EIVIND OSKARSON

DPPA is well-positioned to track its performance on cross-cutting efforts related to Women, Peace and Security, thanks to the introduction of a new Gender Marker, which is tied to MYA project approval and review steps. In practice, this means that DPPA is ready to operationalise its commitment to the Women, Peace and Security policy of DPPA within the MYA portfolio, but operational gains have yet to be fully realised.

As new MYA projects are proposed for approval, the Gender, Peace and Security Unit (GPS) will provide feedback to ensure projects integrate a WPS focus, and each project is allocated a score using the new Gender Marker.[35] In parallel, the 2020–2022 Results Framework for DPPA provides performance targets specifically related to gender-sensitive analyses and increased participation of women in political and peacemaking efforts.

35 *DPPA Manual for the Preparation of Projects for 2020 under the Multi-Year Appeal, October 2019*, at p.9.

Interviews conducted during this assessment suggested that the MYA approval process could be widened to embrace **Youth inclusion**, which is identified by DPPA as a critical issue, given that Youth are often excluded from political dialogue, yet are often a strategically important group of actors for the success of both peacemaking and conflict prevention initiatives. Staff interviewed for this assessment suggested that **a future course of action might include assigning a 'Women and Youth inclusion' advisor to each Special Political Mission, to assist in driving forward DPPA's operational goals.**

Reporting in 2020–2022 against these targets is likely to reveal some valuable examples of situations in which the MYA helped DPPA to improve its conflict prevention and peacemaking role through the inclusion and participation of women and youth.

The MYA fostering inclusive peace processes:

The Constitutional Committee for Syria convened in Geneva by the UN Special Envoy in September 2020 featured a 30 percent participation by women, thanks to the ongoing efforts of DPPA to increase women's participation in the framing of Syria's new Constitution. Similarly, in Iraq, a women's advisory group supported by DPPA was able to give advice on the drafting of legislation, including active participation in virtual meetings convened by DPPA during COVID-19 restrictions. This has led to the introduction into Parliament of a ground-breaking Bill to prevent domestic violence, despite significant opposition. In the case of the 2016 Somali elections, a concerted effort across the whole UN system led to an increase in women's representation in Parliament from 12 percent to 24 percent.

DPPA could potentially improve its monitoring of effectiveness on the inclusion of women and youth by directing its attention to the inclusion of women and youth in initiatives over which it has most influence, such as the institutional partnerships forged by DPPA at the local, national and regional levels. By contrast, **DPPA should avoid measuring factors over which it will arguably have less influence**, such as the composition of conflict party delegations attending sensitive or preliminary peace talks.

Effectiveness:
IMPROVING ON EXISTING INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

DPPA has made significant progress in ensuring its effectiveness by developing a 3-year Strategic Plan for 2020–2022, accompanied by a 3-year results framework and Risk Matrix. However, there is room for some improvement in the measures nominated by the Department as evidence of effectiveness.

In addition to the point noted above regarding appropriate measures for inclusion, DPPA would do well to **avoid reporting on measures which essentially describe simple project activity or the rate of expenditure of MYA funds**. For example, 'project implementation rate' (elsewhere referred to as 'burn rate') is featured in the MYA Annual report for 2019 as a key measure of performance. While this is useful from a financial accounting point of view, the 'burn rate' is not a useful indicator of concrete results or value-creation for the MYA. DPPA could benefit from abandoning this measure, and instead focussing on indicators that align with the results-orientation set out in the 2020 MYA Planning Manual and the high-level objectives of the DPPA Strategic Plan.[36] This assessment makes a number of recommendations regarding how DPPA could move attention towards operational results, including interim results which are sometimes overlooked.

DPPA may also wish to consider discarding measures of performance in the existing results framework which relate to simple counts of activity, such as the number of deployments, or the number of training sessions delivered. These measures tend to increase the reporting burden on operational teams and management, without delivering valuable insights regarding actual performance or value creation for peace. Other examples of metrics which could be adjusted include the raw number of DPPA analyses produced that include recommendations for action.[37] This measure could be improved by simply mentioning the percentage of analyses that include recommendations for action, which appears to be the intention.

In the 2019 Annual Report for the MYA for example, DPPA states that the Standby Team deployed on 119 occasions, against a target of 100.[38] It is useful to know that the target was exceeded, but the level of insight could be enriched by demonstrating instead how these deployments relate to the core value proposition of the MYA: either relating to risk-responsiveness, rapidity, flexibility or adaptation. In the same fashion, the reported training of 365 DPPA staff against a target of 195 is a substantial achievement, but could be made more meaningful for external readers if the report could show how some or all of this training related concretely to risk-responsiveness, rapidity, flexibility or adaptation. **Linking these data points to the MYA value proposition will make them more meaningful as evidence of the MYA's effectiveness**.

36 See MYA Annual Report 2019 at pp.2-3, p.61; *DPPA Manual for the Preparation of Projects for 2020 under the Multi-Year Appeal, October 2019,* at p.3.

37 DPPA Results Framework 2019, regarding indicators for 'action-oriented analysis'.

38 DPPA MYA Annual Report 2019 at p. 53.

Assessing the stewardship of MYA funds: Efficiency

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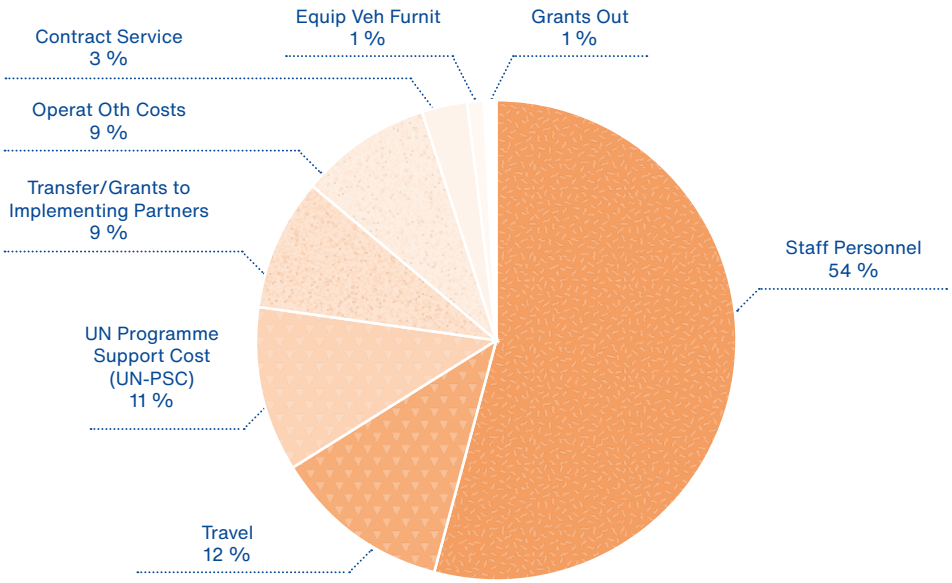
Efficiency:
RECURRING COSTS

Creeping gaps in the Regular Budget have required an increasing proportion of MYA funding to be applied to **core funding needs**, such as staff salaries, routine staff training, and predictable travel needs. More than half of the budgeted MYA funds in 2020 were allocated to staff and personnel expenses, while travel costs accounted for 12 percent of the MYA. Both of these categories of expense are predictable and recurring expenses, essential to the continuity of DPPA and its peacemaking and conflict prevention mission.

It is arguable that since these **staff and travel costs are recurring, predictable, and foreseeable**, that they should feature in the Regular Budget of the DPPA, guaranteed by the assessed contributions of Member States. Because DPPA's conflict prevention and peacemaking role lies at the heart of the UN Charter, it also seems reasonable to affirm that these costs should be among the first financial needs to be met using Member States' assessed contributions.

The majority of MYA funds in 2020 are allocated to staff and personnel expenses. Travel represents 12 percent of costs, while grants to other implementing partners absorb 9 percent of the MYA budget in 2020.

Allocation of 2020 MYA Budget, by expense category



Despite the need for a greater proportion of DPPA recurring costs to be borne by the Regular Budget, this assessment concluded that the proportional representation of the various expense categories within the MYA budget provide no cause for concern. Given the nature of DPPA's work, it is entirely reasonable to expect that the majority of the MYA budget should be allocated to the employment of experienced and highly sought-after staff and consultants, and the transport of these people to conflict-affected areas at short notice when needed.

Efficiency: TRAVEL

Travel expenses appear to be managed efficiently within the MYA portfolio. A clear delegation of authority provides that the Under-Secretary-General approves travel for her own staff, the Assistant-Secretaries-General, and the Directors reporting directly to her, with further sub-delegation of approval for the subsidiary offices of DPPA.

The MYA Planning Manual sets out four principles to be applied by decision-makers to reduce or avoid inefficient travel expenditure:

1. Limit the number of staff participating in the same event;
2. Avoid sending large delegations of Headquarters-based staff to the same event;
3. Take advantage of new technologies (such as video teleconferencing) to reduce travel;
4. Group meeting visits/conferences to reduce costs.[39]

In principle, this system should help ensure that travel expenses are allocated efficiently within the MYA portfolio. Evidence reviewed in this assessment suggests that **the travel budget is used particularly efficiently when it enables the high-value rapid intervention of DPPA staff and Envoys to prevent the escalation of conflict**. The constraints imposed by COVID-19 have limited DPPA spending on travel in 2020, while also highlighting areas in which there may be scope to reduce travel costs in 2021 and beyond – for example for events where in-person interaction is less essential. A more detailed examination of travel expenses by project or division falls outside the scope of this assessment.

39 *DPPA Manual for the Preparation of Projects for 2020 under the Multi-Year Appeal, October 2019*, at pp.8-9.

Efficiency:
TRAINING AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Close to $565,000 of MYA funds were applied in 2020 to training for DPPA staff, providing ongoing professional development and capacity building for UN employees, along with participation in UN system-wide conferences and workshops.

Staff development and training is considered an obligation owed to UN employees, and is aligned with the learning, innovative and collaborative working culture envisaged in the DPPA Strategic Plan for 2020–2022. Despite this, **UN Regular Budget funding for DPPA's staff training and development needs totalled just $25,000 in 2020**. This growing gap in Regular Budget funding has required the application of a significant amount of MYA funds for staff training purposes.

While professional development remains an essential part of DPPA's commitment to its people, 'staff training workshops' as a category of activity are more difficult to relate directly to the MYA core value proposition. Closer to the MYA's core value claim are more operationally-focussed peer-to-peer events such as the joint DPPA-DPO Conference of Chiefs of Staff of Field Missions, the Annual Strategic Planning Workshop and the joint DPPA-DPO workshop for Policy and Best Practice Officers and Focal Points in Special Political Missions and Peace Keeping Operations.

In light of forthcoming COVID-19 funding constraints, DPPA may wish to identify those elements of its 'training and conferences' budget which are most closely aligned with the MYA value proposition, and direct MYA funding to those needs. This should enable **DPPA to prioritise training and development activities that deliver the most valuable operational outcomes through peer-to-peer learning and culture-building, as opposed to simple knowledge-transfer or generic training events** for staff. DPPA may also wish to explore how it might be possible to shift the cost of generic staff training, staff workshops, and professional development back to the Regular Budget, where these institutional expenses arguably belong. In this process, DPPA will need to strike a balance between its learning and culture-building objectives, and the need for cost-savings.

Efficiency:
MYA PROJECT PROPOSAL AND FUNDING PROCESS

DPPA maintains a simple project proposal and funding process for the MYA, which helps reduce the costs associated with administering the portfolio. The Under-Secretary-General delegates the oversight and management of MYA projects to the Extra-budgetary ('XB') Committee chaired by her Chief of Office and composed of representatives from: the offices of the three Assistant Secretaries-General representing the regional divisions, the thematic divisions, and the Executive Office.[40]

Evidence collected during this assessment highlighted the weak incentive for any member of the XB Committee to oppose an MYA project proposed by a colleague, due to deference to the expertise of colleagues based in the relevant region, and the implicit expectation of future reciprocal treatment. This dynamic is not a fatal flaw, as the evidence also indicated that the XB Committee provides a reliable system of critical review for project proposals. **The collegial and consultative process of the XB Committee appears well-suited to promote a thorough dialogue on the merits of each proposal.**

The XB project cycle process could perhaps be made more efficient by **designating one or two 'critical peers' for each XB Committee meeting,** who would be requested to ask d**if**ficult questions, challenge assumptions, and seek divergent points of view. The seeding of divergent perspectives is likely to increase the level of rigour of XB Committee deliberations[41], without spoiling the prevailing collaborative and collegial approach.

Consultations during the assessment also suggested that **the MYA project cycle model could potentially be improved by creating a 'two-speed' approach, with a separate project phase for new initiatives or assessment/scoping exercises**, as distinct from projects continuing from one reporting period to the next.

40 *DPPA Manual for the Preparation of Projects for 2020 under the Multi-Year Appeal, October 2019*,at p.6.

41 Regarding suitable methods to promote critical reflection such as peer review, See Wadley, I., *Valuing Peace: Delivering and Demonstrating Mediation Results*, HD Mediation Practice Series, November 2017, available at https://reliefweb.int/report/world/valuing-peace-delivering-and-demonstrating-mediation-results, at pp. 29-38.

During the assessment/scoping phase of a new initiative, the MYA approval processes could be engineered to place minimal barriers in the path of DPPA efforts to respond rapidly to risk, while prioritising the need for speed, risk tolerance, and flexibility. Projects in this phase could receive short-term funding to rapidly launch and test DPPA initiatives in response to opportunities for intervention. Once these projects had progressed further, this would be followed by careful re-examination of the merits of further investment.

This kind of assessment/scoping funding is already in evidence within the MYA's 'Rapid Response' funding window, which accounts for 4 percent of the MYA budget in 2020, and is designed to support crisis-response initiatives. **By expanding the 'rapid response' rationale to embrace all start-up MYA projects, DPPA could potentially accelerate the launch of innovative risk-responsive projects across the entire MYA portfolio**, lower barriers for initiatives to start outside the usual planning cycle, and embed the 'rapid risk response' value claim more firmly at the centre of the MYA's mode of work.

Once a new initiative has passed the assessment/scoping phase, more stringent approval and reporting requirements could then be imposed during the 'ongoing project' phase, emphasising the need for more rigorous design, planning, and oversight. The more rigorous standards in the second phase would lead to some assessments or scoping efforts being discontinued, others being passed to partner organisations and relevant UN agencies, while others that are fully aligned with the MYA's value proposition would continue as longer-term DPPA-MYA interventions.

This 'two speed' project cycle approach would favour the cultivation of rapid, adaptive and risk-responsive DPPA projects that will continue to guarantee the MYA's core value claim, while still preserving an appropriate level of oversight and continuity.

Using Adaptive M&E to demonstrate MYA's Value-for-Money: Efficiency

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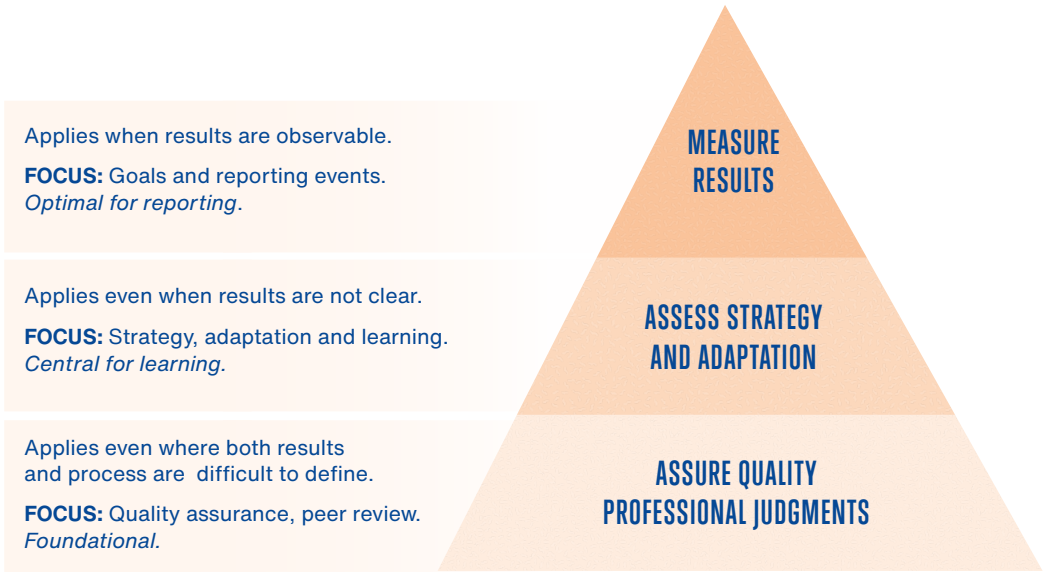
Peace-making and conflict prevention are notoriously difficult processes to measure with precision. The usual recording of 'input-output-outcome-impact' by clipboard-wielding monitoring and evaluation technicians is typically frustrated by the absence of reliable baselines and quantitative data, the sensitivity and risk of attempting to collect data in the field, the difficulty of dealing with causation and attribution, and the impossibility of definitively measuring ultimate impact in complex, volatile and rapidly evolving systems. However, **DPPA should not give up on the challenge of demonstrating the value of its work, because suitable M&E methods are available**.

Value-for-Money can be demonstrated in multiple ways, the most compelling of which is of course through showing the 'ultimate impact' of a project, as typically seen in infrastructure development projects or the delivery of life-saving humanitarian or medical assistance. DPPA will on some occasions have an opportunity to report a final peace agreement or ceasefire, and the resulting lives saved, as evidence of ultimate impact.

However, this level of results reporting is exceptional in the peacemaking sector, given that formal agreements and ceasefires are rare events, and that geo-political tensions can obstruct the conclusion of otherwise tenable peace deals.

DPPA will be better placed to demonstrate Value-for-Money if it employs an Adaptive M&E approach that addresses three levels of analysis: Firstly, reporting on any measurable results including interim achievements, wherever this is possible; secondly by assessing whether a project's strategy is fit for purpose and adapted to match the circumstances; and thirdly by assuring that the professional judgements of DPPA teams are of the highest possible quality, through a system of low-burden peer review[42]. ***This three-level approach to demonstrating value complies with accountability requirements[43], and is illustrated in the following diagram:***



This three-level Adaptive M&E model applies at the project-level, and by analogy at the whole-of-organisation level.

42 See Wadley, I., *Valuing Peace: Delivering and Demonstrating Mediation Results*, HD Mediation Practice Series, (November 2017), available at: https:// reliefweb.int/report/world/ valuing-peace-deliveringand- demonstratingmediation- results.

43 See Wadley, I., *Valuing Peace, op. cit.*, and related discussion in Day, A., *Assessment Framework for UN Preventive Diplomacy: An Approach for UN Mediators and International Policymakers*, (UNU-CPR: April 2018), at p.7 and following.

The broad base of the pyramid structure in this diagram reflects the fact that the MYA's value-claim can be supported by applying **quality-assurance measures such as peer reviews across the entire portfolio**, enabling high-quality professional judgments and the timely adaptation of strategy. This means of demonstrating Value-for-Money does not rely on an abundance of empirical data or external evaluation consultants, but makes use of the professional resources already available within DPPA and its peer organisations. Methods such as collegial peer review can enhance operationally-focussed learning within DPPA, without relying on staff training workshops and conferences.

The measurable results at the apex of the Adaptive M&E pyramid are typically more difficult to obtain in peace-making and conflict prevention projects, but should be reported and quantified wherever possible, including valuable interim results, as outlined in this report. Occasionally, available data will support longitudinal studies to demonstrate the ultimate impact of MYA projects in empirical terms, but these instances tend to be exceptional, and require participation by academic research partners over an extended time-frame if they are to be reliable.

An Adaptive M&E approach will allow DPPA to choose an appropriate level of analysis for each project, and to provide the best possible demonstration of Value-for-Money while embracing the operational constraints of DPPA's peace-making and conflict prevention mandate.[44]

44 For a full discussion of Adaptive M&E and the three levels of analysis, please see Wadley, I., Valuing Peace, op. cit., at pp. 17 and following, available at https://reliefweb.int/report/ world/valuing-peace-delivering- and-demonstrating- -mediation-results.

Recommendations

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1. **To support the strategic alignment and evaluability of the MYA portfolio, DPPA could:**

   - Adopt an MYA value-proposition as a succinct statement of the MYA's unique value. (See pages 8, 9, 24)
   - Adopt a simple one-line ultimate objective for the Department. (See pages 8, 9)
   - Consider adopting a schematic diagram for senior management use, showing the strategic logic of the Department's activities (See page 17)
   - Create a one-page results 'taxonomy' showing the typical categories of DPPA's interim and final results. (See pages 23–25)

2. **To measure the progress and value-creation of the MYA portfolio, DPPA could:**

   - Report on the degree to which the MYA is responsive to the risk of violent conflict, which is a core element of the MYA value-proposition. (See page 26)
   - Report on the degree to which the MYA accelerates the response of DPPA, which is a core element of the MYA value-proposition. (See page 29)
   - Report on valued interim results. (See pages 20–25)
   - Consider using a simple portfolio mapping tool to support ongoing efforts to align the MYA portfolio with its value-proposition. (See page 15)

3. **To refine the MYA portfolio's systems and processes, DPPA could:**

   - Introduce a 'low burden' assessment/scoping phase for all new MYA initiatives, designed to favour the cultivation of more rapid, adaptive and risk-responsive MYA projects, while lowering barriers for new initiatives that fall outside the usual planning cycle. This would embed the 'rapid response' rationale of the MYA more firmly in the entire project cycle. (See page 41)
   - Consider consolidating the various criteria for MYA project selection, project quality assessment, and the various MYA funding windows. (See page 14)

- Continue to invest in enhancing its monitoring and evaluation processes, and consider using an Adaptive M&E model.
  (See pages 3, 23, 36, 44)

- Consider assigning the role of 'critical peer' to one or two colleagues at each meeting of the XB Committee, to promote critical reflection and the introduction of divergent perspectives.
  (See page 41)

4. To address high-value themes in the MYA's operational focus, DPPA could:

- Maintain its investment in innovative initiatives within the MYA, and continue to support the scaling up and launch of innovative approaches. (See page 32)

- Consider assigning a 'Women and Youth' advisor to each Special Political Mission to drive forward DPPA's operational goals related to inclusion in the MYA portfolio. (See page 34)

- Consider prioritising training and professional development activities that employ a low-cost peer-to-peer learning approach, anchored in immediate operational needs of the MYA portfolio. (See page 40)

- Consider a number of subjects for possible further evaluation:

  a. Assess the extent to which projects 'tagged' as serving Goals 1, 2 or 3 of the Strategic Plan 2020–2022 are in fact serving those ends.
     (See pages 8–9)

  b. Evaluate the degree to which DPPA has succeeded in maintaining a 'field-facing, action-oriented' stance, noting the decreasing proportion of the MYA budget applied to operational peacemaking projects from 2016 to 2020. (See pages 9–12)

  c. Assess the degree to which the reform of the peace and security pillar has in fact eliminated duplication between different UN Departments, and between the different extra-budgetary funds.
     (See pages 7, 18)

  d. Assess the prevalence of inefficiencies caused by delayed fund transfers between UN agencies, and recommend solutions.
     (See page 32)

  e. Evaluate one or two 'success stories' of MYA projects which clearly demonstrate the value proposition of the MYA.
     (See, for example, text boxes throughout).

Methodology

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The assessment methodology adopted for this report was modelled on the **preliminary assessment phase of a public-sector Value-for-Money (or Performance) audit**. The findings and recommendations in this report are based on confidential interviews, document review, and data analysis conducted between June and October 2020, following the principal lines of enquiry of the assessment regarding relevance, effectiveness and efficiency.

To avoid becoming immersed in a detailed description of the 100-project portfolio, the assessment **focussed at the strategic and systemic level, examining the MYA projects at a whole-portfolio level**, while identifying specific areas for further in-depth evaluation. This high-level strategic approach mirrors the focus of benchmark public sector Value-for-Money audits and inquiries in the peacemaking and conflict response sector. For example, the UK National Audit Office and the Independent Commission on Aid Impact 2012 examinations of the UK Government's Conflict Pool funding directed the bulk of their attention to determining whether there was a clear connection between the Conflict Pool's high level goals, and corresponding funded activities.

In keeping with this approach, the assessment firstly examined the **strategic logic (or relevance)** of the MYA, examining the clarity and coherence of the portfolio by testing the logical connection between the MYA and DPPA's high-level objectives. This was accomplished through a process of iterative enquiry through interviews and document review, seeking to firstly clarify the core value-proposition of the MYA, and then testing that claim against the available evidence.

Secondly, the assessment examined the **effectiveness** of the MYA portfolio of projects in delivering valued results. This part of the analysis addressed firstly the adequacy of the systems used by DPPA to determine whether the MYA portfolio of projects is attaining its objectives, while also examining evidence of effectiveness on priority themes in which MYA projects are delivering valued results, including topics such as Women, Peace and Security.

Thirdly, the assessment sought to identify issues regarding **cost-efficiency**, through a high-level review of financial data, and based on insights gained during interviews with DPPA staff and management.

In keeping with the Value-for-Money methodology adopted for this assessment, the report has been written to support future decision-making by the Under-Secretary-General and her senior staff, while also communicating sufficient background information to make it understandable for an external audience, including stakeholders, counterpart organisations, and future DPPA staff.

The report draws on **evidence** obtained through more than twenty interviews with DPPA senior management, staff, and stakeholders, accompanied by a review of strategic financial, planning and reporting documents kindly provided by DPPA.

Annexes

Annex 1 - Terms of Reference

The analytical focus of this report addresses **a broadly-framed Terms of Reference** which call for *'an assessment of the value of MYA projects by examining the projects' relevance, effectiveness and cost-efficiency',* including consideration of:

- *Preliminary understanding of what has worked and increase timely feedback to project managers*
- *Key insights and trends among 2020 XB projects*
- *Recommendations to increase value, relevance, effectiveness and cost-efficiency*
- *Forthcoming opportunities and risks*
- *Opportunities for further learning and in-depth evaluation*
- *Recommendations to improve XB project design*
- *Recommendations to increase evaluability of XB portfolio'*

Annex 2 – 2015 MYA Evaluation: Summary of Recommendations, and DPPA responses

An evaluation of the MYA in 2015 set out to determine 'what has worked and to identify key areas for improvement for the development of the next MYA round'. That evaluation concluded that, '[...] overall the MYA mechanism was found to be relevant and coherent in line with the Department's core mission, mostly effective in resource mobilization and project management, and somewhat efficient in prioritizing and allocating resources.'

The 2015 MYA Evaluation further concluded that 'DPA has made significant progress in transforming itself into a more strategic organization with operational capacity, as acknowledged by donors and supported through increasing numbers of contributions since its inception. [...] Evidence indicates that the availability of XB funds multiplies the impact of DPA's engagements and operations. However, improvements can be made to become more strategic, to address issues of resource sustainability and predictability, to continue to streamline internal processes and to improve monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.'

In response to the 2015 evaluation, DPPA further enhanced its strategic planning and monitoring & evaluation processes, as evidenced by the commitments implemented under the UNDPA 2016–2019 Strategic Plan, and again in the DPPA 2020–2023 Strategic Plan. Specifically, the evaluation's recommendations have been met through the following actions at DPPA:

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS IN 2015 EVALUATION	DPPA RESPONSE
1 **Strengthen the MYA as a resource mobilization tool that links directly to the SP and promotes long-term commitments.**	One of the guiding principles of the MYA portfolio is that divisions need to demonstrate a clear link to the objectives in DPPA's Strategic Plan and contribute to the achievement of its three long-term goals. In the last few years, extrabudgetary funding (XB) has covered more than 45 percent of the Department's needs and operations, making the MYA an essential tool to finance conflict prevention work that is underfunded in the Regular Budget.
2 **Plan for the MYA at a higher, strategic level in line with the SP priorities, focusing on "programmes" rather than specific projects that could better demonstrate impact.**	The MYA is structured along the long-term three goals and seven objectives of DPPA's Strategic Plan. Given that extra-budgetary funding is available only on a yearly basis, it is not possible to develop multi-year programmes (and financial limitations imposed by UMOJA). As such, divisions design one-year projects that aim at delivering concrete results.
3 **Allocate funds at a programme level rather than at a project level to provide more flexibility to manage funds and give more authority for prioritization and reallocation at the division level.**	For reasons outlined above, XB funds are allocated at project level. Funds are allocated per division based on Department's needs, absorption capacity of divisions and Department's cash flow. During quarterly reviews, divisions have the flexibility to re-allocate funds among their own projects, as long as this is within their divisional budget ceiling. Divisions can also submit new projects throughout the year to the XB committee and/or submit rapid response requests as the needs arise.
4 **Improve the predictability of funding through a combination of trying to improve the timing of donor contributions and strengthening planning processes based on cash flow patterns**	Over the years, predictability of XB funding has steadily increased, thanks to signing multi-year agreements with donors. In 2019, 60 percent of the total received was secured from 13 multi-year agreements with donors as compared to 47 percent secured from 13 multi-year agreements in 2018. While this is a positive trend, eight of the 13 multi-year agreements have expired in December 2019, coinciding with the end of the Strategic Plan cycle. Securing the renewal of these multi-year agreements is a priority for 2020.
5 **Continue to develop new traditional and non-traditional donors to ensure sustainability and improve predictability of cash flow.**	DPPA continues to exert all efforts to expand and diversify its donor base. Since 2015, 20 new donors have joined the ranks. However, diversity between the different UN Regional Groups continues to be a challenge.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS IN 2015 EVALUATION	DPPA RESPONSE
6 **Enhance the communication strategy by strengthening partnerships with existing donors, particularly in the capitals, and making broader use of other marketing channels, social networks and media in addition to the formal MYA document and donor meetings**	DPPA has developed a roll-out strategy to disseminate and implement its Strategic Plan. This includes presenting the Strategic Plan and the MYA to donors, visits to capitals and membership at large (these were held virtually because of COVID-19). To ensure consistent engagement with field and partners, DPPA has recently launched a new 'Talking Prevention' forum to informally engage with Member States on the work of the Department. DPPA has also continued to hold its regular Donor Group meetings.
7 **Training on process and systems should be mandatory for all appropriate staff. An adequate project management system should be maintained in the new UMOJA system.**	The entire planning, submission and review process of MYA projects is centralized in NOVA, which is DPPA's main project management database. MYA focal points and project managers receive regular NOVA training and also have access to guidelines describing step-by-step cycle of MYA projects.
8 **Continue to strengthen the monitoring, reporting and evaluation mechanisms for XB by developing a common Results Framework that covers all planning instruments (SP, RB, MYA)**	The Strategic Plan, covering both XB and RB activities, is accompanied by a Results Framework to assist in the monitoring and evaluation of the Department's performance in the period 2020–2022. The Results Framework not only allows tracking of results but also supports horizontal coherent planning across all DPPA divisions. The Results Framework is updated on a bi-annual basis.

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