

# Conducting United Nations Programme Criticality Assessments

## **Practitioners' Handbook** **for PC Facilitators and PC Coordinators in the field**

Programme Criticality Secretariat

*This document provides tips and guidance on some of the key steps of a Programme Criticality (PC) Assessment. It is primarily based on lessons learned and good practices from past PC Assessments.*

*This Handbook draws on, and should be read in conjunction with, the PC Framework which is the official reference document on PC.*

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# Purpose of this Handbook

The Programme Criticality (PC) Framework is a common United Nations system policy for decision-making on acceptable security risk. It puts in place guiding principles and a systematic, structured approach in using Programme Criticality in the United Nations Security Risk Management (SRM) process to ensure that programmes and mandated activities implemented by UN personnel can be balanced against security risks. PC is mandatory in environments of high or very high security risk. The criticality levels of all UN tasks and programme activities are determined through a PC Assessment which takes place at regular intervals at country level (at least every 12 months in mandatory settings).

PC Assessments can be a complex, UN system-wide exercise involving multiple stakeholders and decision points. They are therefore often supported by an external, inter-agency team of trained PC facilitators who are deployed by the UN system's PC Coordination Team (PCCT) at the request of the UN's senior leadership in country.

This Handbook offers practical advice and tips for each step of the PC process to those UN personnel who are tasked with organizing, coordinating and facilitating the PC Assessment. Therefore, the main audience for this Handbook are those colleagues who are usually part of a PC core team<sup>1</sup> for the PC Assessment. These include:

- Coordination and Planning Specialists in UN Resident Coordinator's Offices RCO and in Mission Chief of Staff Offices where UN field missions are deployed.
- The core team can also include trained PC facilitators from other UN entities who are entrusted with coordinating the process on behalf of the UN in country.
- Members of a PC facilitation team who temporarily deploy to the country to support the PC Assessment peer review workshop.

Due to its comprehensiveness, this Handbook is not meant to be distributed to the wider group of PC focal points of the different UN entities who participate in a PC Assessment workshop. Those elements of this Handbook which are relevant to the broader group of PC participants at country level (notably segments on "Formulating Strategic Results" and "Formulating Outputs") have been reproduced as stand-alone guidance notes that can be circulated widely.

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<sup>1</sup> These will be referred to summarily as the "PC core team".

## Structure of this document

The Handbook follows the eight steps of the PC process which can be grouped into three phases:

1. Preparatory phase at country level (steps 1-3)
2. PC Assessment phase: PC peer review workshop, senior management validation (steps 4-7)
3. PC Implementation phase, keeping the PC Assessment under review and conducting light reviews (step 8). *Note that the various implementation steps and decisions are covered in detail in a separate guidance document.*

Throughout this document, regular references are made to the official PC Framework.

If you would like to refresh your basic knowledge of Programme Criticality, access the PC Framework and take the PC online training, please visit:

[www.programmecriticality.org](http://www.programmecriticality.org)

# PREPARATORY PHASE

Credit: UN Photo/Albert Farran



## **Preparatory Phase**

The completion of the preparatory phase is a key a prerequisite for a successful PC Assessment. The coordination is usually delegated to the Resident Coordinator's Office and, in integrated mission contexts, to the mission's Chief of Staff Office (the PC core team).

### **Agreeing on a realistic timeline for the PC process**

Depending on the size and complexity of the UN presence and of the programmatic footprint, the PCA preparations can be a complex and time-consuming undertaking, in particular in settings involving a UN field mission alongside a UN Country Team. The PC core team should develop a realistic timeline for the completion of the three preparatory steps. They usually take a number of weeks to complete, in particular as several rounds of consultations among the UN family in country are often necessary. A good practice is to develop a PC roadmap that identifies the timelines and benchmarks for each step of the PC process. The PC core team should make sure to include a sufficient "time cushion" to allow for unanticipated delays and complications.

### **Why is this so important?**

The eight steps of the PC process are strictly sequential and build on one another. Therefore, the main part of the PC assessment (steps 4-6) can only take place once all three preparatory steps have been completed. In a number of past PC assessments, a PC facilitation team arrived on the ground when the preparations for the PCA were not yet finalized. In most of these cases, the list of Outputs and Enablers was still incomplete and not sufficiently consolidated, thus forcing the PC facilitators to allocate some of their limited time on the ground to help complete this work. This sometimes resulted in unnecessary stress and frustration among UN entities and PC facilitators before the PCA workshop had even begun. Ultimately, poor preparations will likely lead to suboptimal PCA results.

### **"What if we are not ready in time?"**

The PC core team should aim to complete all three preparatory steps at least one full week before the PC assessment. They should also keep the PC Secretariat and the team of PC facilitators regularly updated on the progress made. If it emerges that the PCA preparations will definitely not be completed on time for the PCA workshop, the PC core team should immediately liaise with the PC Secretariat in order to decide a) whether additional support can be provided to expedite the preparations, or b) whether to postpone the PCA workshop and the mission of the PC

facilitation team. That said, a postponement should remain the last resort to avoid costs related to cancellations and re-bookings.

### **Tips and guiding questions to determine the required timeframe for PCA preparations**

- Are all strategic planning frameworks (UNDAF, HRP, ISF, etc.) completed and available to everybody? How much time is needed to develop Strategic Results for the PCA and get them endorsed by the UN's senior leadership on the ground?
- Are the UN leadership (RC and/or SRSG) as well as the majority of UNCT members and (in mission contexts) section chiefs available during the envisioned dates?
- Avoid peak vacation periods, national & UN holidays, and other high-level activities that might conflict with the PCA (e.g. inter-agency planning workshops, high-level visits).

### **Please see the annex of this Handbook for:**

- **Checklists** for in-country PC core teams on preparing for a PC Assessment, and admin & logistics for the PC Assessment and for the PC facilitation team
- Sample of a **PC roadmap** outlining a typical time span for a PC process.



## PC Step 1: How to establish geographical scope and timeframe

### *What the PC Framework says:*

The first step establishes the geographical scope/area and timeframe for the Programme Criticality Assessment.

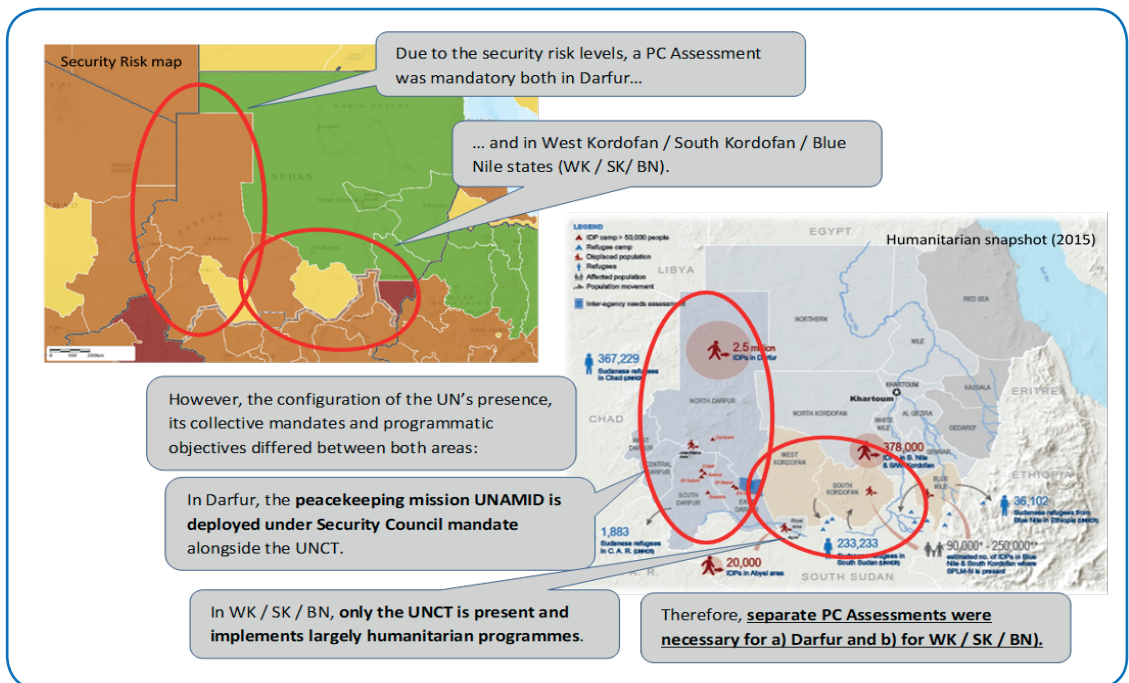
- The geographical scope/area of a Programme Criticality Assessment should be the same as the geographical area of coverage in the SRM, where possible, since this will make it easier to compare the result of the Assessment to the present security risk in that area. Any differences in the areas should be noted and changes to either the PC area or SRM area should be reflected in the next regular Programme Criticality Assessment.
- If the portfolio of United Nations Outputs varies considerably between different geographic areas in a given country, then separate Programme Criticality Assessments should be carried out for these areas.
- A Programme Criticality Assessment can be valid for up to 12 months before it must be reviewed and possibly revised. If the operating environment and programmatic context are volatile and fast-changing, then a shorter timeframe for the Programme Criticality Assessment should be envisaged. Likewise, a shorter timeframe may be warranted for the duration of a special event of country-wide magnitude, for example an election. (see Step 8 below on the review of a Programme Criticality Assessment)
- Scope and timeframe must be agreed before the next steps of the Programme Criticality Assessment are initiated.

Source: CEB/2016/HLCM/23, Programme Criticality Framework (2016)

### Geographical scope

- The geographical scope for a PC Assessment should be established based on the programmatic priorities of the UN and the configuration of the UN field presence.
- Separate PC Assessments **should be carried out** if the UN's strategic & programmatic priorities vary considerably between different geographic areas.
- Separate PC Assessments **may be needed** if the configuration of the UN presence varies between different parts of the country

## Example: Establishing the geographic scope for PC Assessments in Sudan in 2017 (Darfur, West Kordofan/Blue Nile)



## Agreeing on the timeframe

- A PC Assessment can be valid for up to 12 months before it must be reviewed and possibly revised.
- A shorter timeframe for the PC Assessment **should be envisaged** if the UN is operating in a volatile and fast-changing environment. It **may also be warranted** for the duration of a special event of country-wide magnitude, for example an election.
- During the chosen timeframe, there should be **no** expected major change in programmatic context and mandate.

## Examples from the field

| Country & year        | Timeframe of the PCA | Reason  |
|-----------------------|----------------------|---|
| South Sudan, PCA 2017 | 12 months            | No major change in the UN's Strategic Results or in the operating environment was foreseen for the coming 12 months.  |
| Iraq, PCA 2016-18     | 6 months             | Given the volatility of the situation, the UN in Iraq decided to review and revalidate its PC Assessment every six months since its last full PC exercise in April 2016.  |
| Kenya, PCA 2017       | 4 months / 12 months | The UNCT in Kenya carried out a PC Assessment of shorter duration as part of its preparedness planning for the run-up to national elections and their aftermath. In addition, a regular PC Assessment was conducted to cover UN operations in high-risk areas along to border to Somalia. |

## PC Step 2: How to formulate Strategic Results

### *What the PC Framework says:*

The second step is to confirm and list the Strategic Results (SR) that the United Nations will collectively work towards in the geographical area and in the agreed timeframe.

- The Strategic Results are derived from the various existing planning documents that the United Nations system uses, such as the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), the Integrated Strategic Framework (ISF), the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) or other strategic planning documents. The methodology allows for entering up to six (6) Strategic Results by geographical area.
- It is of critical importance that the set of agreed Strategic Results reflects an accurate balance of the United Nations' collective priorities for the geographic area and specified timeframe.
- Additional, situation-specific Strategic Results may be devised in certain situations that are of high importance for the timeframe of the assessment which are not captured in multi-year plans, such as upcoming elections or peace negotiations. Such a Strategic Result could capture, for example, the United Nations' short-term measures for support to the local population and actors.
- In order to allow for a smooth assessment process, Strategic Results should be formulated clearly and concisely. Results should be described in 'change' language, which describes a change in the situation of an affected population, the performance of a service, the allocation of national resources, the existence of needed policies or any other observable change.

Source: CEB/2016/HLCM/23, Programme Criticality Framework (2016)

### **A few tips for the formulation of Strategic Results**

- Use existing planning frameworks: As stated in the PC Framework, a PC Assessment is not a planning process but draws on existing strategic documents. Accordingly, the identified Strategic Results should be agreed by the UN presence in country prior to commencing a PC exercise. In order to keep within the maximum allowed number of 6 Strategic Results and/or to ensure the correct balance in the objectives of the UN, certain similar results from different documents may need to be combined into one.

- Ensure an appropriate balance of Strategic Results: While building on existing planning frameworks, the Strategic Results should represent an accurate picture of the UN's current strategic priorities for the geographic area, in the timeframe of the PC Assessment. In the event that one Strategic Result is substantially more urgent or important to the UN than others during that timeframe, it should receive an appropriate weight in the list of Strategic Results. If, for example, a major emphasis of the UN's current programmatic engagement in a country is humanitarian in nature, this should be reflected in the list of Strategic Results, e.g. by having more than one humanitarian result, or by stating the most critical strategic result twice. Such an approach should always be agreed upon by the UN presence by consensus.
  
- Language matters: Strategic Results should be clear. They need to be kept concise but must be specific enough to articulate the intended end state and to ensure a clear-enough delineation to other Strategic Results, thereby enabling peer reviewers to better understand which Outputs contribute towards this Strategic Result and to what degree.
  - Note that if you define Strategic Results too broadly or too succinctly, many Outputs may be rated as contributing to this Strategic Result (thus receiving a higher PC rating) even though in reality this is not the case.
  - It may help to use indicators or sub-targets to further define the programmatic range under each Strategic Result. See the example from the field below.
  
- Devise new, situation-specific Strategic Results if need be: It may make sense to define additional Strategic Results in certain situations that are of high importance for the timeframe of the assessment which are not captured in multi-year plans, such as upcoming elections or peace negotiations. Such a Strategic Result could capture, for example, the UN's short-term measures for support to the local population and actors.
  
- Conducting a PC Assessment to prepare for a crisis scenario: In cases where PC Assessments are carried out as part of contingency/preparedness planning for a crisis that has not yet materialized, it is important to define Strategic Results based on what the UN would need to do to respond to this crisis. A scenario-building exercise should be conducted to develop the most likely crisis scenario and upon which UN preparedness plans and a PC

Assessment can be based. See the separate draft “Guidance for UN field presences on scenario-based PC Assessments”, available from the PC Secretariat.

- Ensure leadership endorsement: Ensure that the final set of Strategic Results are reviewed and approved by the UN senior leadership in country. In particular in cases where it was necessary to re-formulate or re-balance Strategic Results from the original planning frameworks, the reasons for this should be explained to the leadership.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The key reason for re-balancing Strategic Results (i.e. giving some Strategic Results more weight than others) is to generate more realistic PC ratings.

Illustration: Strong and weak Strategic Results

| Step 2 List Strategic Results |  | ✓ |
|-------------------------------|--|---|
| Number of Strategic results   |  | 6 |
| SR 1                          | Peace consolidation  |   |
| SR 2                          | Coherent approaches by national and international partners to development, governance and justice to achieve a self-sustaining sovereign state, including support to enhance national and sub-national capacity to develop legitimate and accountable institutions that are capable of providing services to the population. |   |
| SR 3                          | Emergency interventions as defined by the UNCT plan for post-election violence   |   |
| SR 4                          | Humanitarian assistance, with a focus on immediate lifesaving interventions to support most vulnerable populations, and to increase community resilience and disaster preparedness   |   |
| SR 5                          | Inclusive economic growth through sustainable livelihood creation, with a special focus on women and youth, and on rural areas   |   |
| SR 6                          | Improved delivery of Basic Services nation-wide, in line with Government plans and with a focus on expanding national and sub-national capacities  |   |

Too short and unspecific; the UN's contribution is not clear

Too long and detailed, and overlap with other Strategic Results (justice, basic services)

Example of a situation-specific, short-term Strategic Result

Good examples: Concise but adding some specificity on the strategic focus of the UN's collective efforts



## Good practice from the field: Somalia

The below annotated Strategic Results from a PC Assessment in Somalia include sub-targets that were taken from the relevant UN planning documents (UN Strategic Framework and the Humanitarian Response Plan). This was seen as helpful during the PC peer review workshop as the scope of each Strategic Result was clear.

### SR 1: Deepening federalism and state-building, supporting conflict resolution and reconciliation, and preparing for universal elections

- **UNSF OUTCOME 1.1:** Somalia's state-building and federalism efforts are strengthened. (Federal Framework; Functional NFP; FMS provision of services and PFM; Constitutional Review)
- **UNSF OUTCOME 1.2:** Actual and potential conflicts are resolved or are prevented from turning violent (State capacity to resolve conflicts)
- **UNSF OUTCOME 1.3:** Preparations for 2021 universal elections are completed

### SR 2: Supporting institutions to improve Peace, Security, Justice, Rule of Law and safety of Somalis, including strategic support to AMISOM.

- **UNSF OUTCOME 2.1:** Affordable, acceptable, accountable and able Somali National Security Institutions and Forces providing security for Somalia
- **UNSF OUTCOME 2.2:** Strengthening the rule of law by building a rights-based Police service and accessible and fair Justice institutions for all Somalis
- **UNSF OUTCOME 2.3:** Strengthened local governance through provision of basic and public services will contribute to peace and stability
- **UNSF OUTCOME 2.4:** Capacities to address conflicts peacefully and prevent violent radicalization increased (P/CVE)

### SR 3: Strengthening accountability and ensuring that institutions that we support protect the people and respect human rights and gender equality.

1. **UNSF OUTCOME 3.1:** Natl. and sub-natl. policies, systems and institutions that uphold human rights, protection, gender equality and women's empowerment are established and strengthened.
- **UNSF OUTCOME 3.2:** Inclusion, transparency and accountability processes and practices at all levels of government are improved (incl. anti-corruption)

### SR 4: Strengthening resilience of Somali institutions, society and population.

- **UNSF OUTCOME 4.1:** Government capacities, institutions, policies, plans and programmes strengthened to better prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from the impact of natural and man-made shocks at Federal, FMS levels and local level

- **UNSF OUTCOME 4.2:** Resilience and cohesion of Somali society strengthened through food and nutrition security and social protection systems.

- **UNSF OUTCOME 4.3:** Provision of comprehensive and sustainable solutions for IDPs, vulnerable migrants, refugee returnees and host communities

- **UNSF OUTCOME 4.4:** Sustainable management of environment and natural resources
- **HRP Strategic Objective 4:** Resilience: Support the protection and restoration of livelihoods, promote access to basic services to build resilience to recurrent shocks, and catalyze more sustainable solutions for those affected, including marginalized communities.

### SR 5: Supporting socio-economic opportunities for Somalis, leading to meaningful poverty reduction, access to basic social services and sustainable, inclusive and equitable development.

- **UNSF OUTCOME 5.1:** The Somali population has improved access to and benefits from equitable and quality essential social services. (Health, Education, WASH)
- **UNSF OUTCOME 5.2:** Productive sectors strengthened to promote inclusive growth, employment opportunities and sustainable development.

### SR 6: Provide integrated, multi-sectoral assistance to reduce acute humanitarian needs among the most vulnerable people.

- **HRP Strategic Objective 2: Nutrition:** Reduce emergency levels of acute malnutrition through integrated, multisectoral response. Enhance integration of Nutrition, WASH, Health and Food Security programmes to strengthen nutrition sensitive programming.
- **HRP Strategic Objective 3: Protection:** Support provision of protection services to affected communities, including in hard-to-reach areas and in IDP sites, targeting the most vulnerable, especially those at risk of exclusion.

## PC Step 3: How to formulate Outputs

### *What the PC Framework says:*

The third step is to enter a list of all the Outputs the United Nations system wishes to implement in the said geographical area and timeframe, using United Nations personnel.

- Outputs are, in most cases, an aggregate of individual Activities by one or several United Nations entities. It is strongly recommended that the United Nations team in country ensures a consistent listing at Output level. Supplementary guidance is available from the PC Secretariat on how to best develop a list of Outputs for the purposes of a Programme Criticality Assessment.
- To ensure consistent rating in a Programme Criticality Assessment, similar and overlapping Outputs carried out by separate United Nations entities should, wherever possible, be consolidated into joint Outputs.
- If the Outputs do not require the presence of United Nations personnel to be implemented, they fall outside the scope of a Programme Criticality Assessment and should not be listed.

Source: CEB/2016/HLCM/23, Programme Criticality Framework (2016)

### **Why do we rate Outputs and not individual Activities?<sup>3</sup>**

PC Assessments are conducted at the level of programme Outputs (i.e. aggregates of potentially several or even many individual Activities) in order to allow for a realistic assessment of their contribution to achieving the UN's Strategic Results (PC step 4). Experience from early PC Assessments showed that it is often impossible to realistically assess the contribution of individual UN entity Activities (such as "5 transactions completed" or "3 workshops organized") to the attainment of an UN Strategic Result.

A second reason is that conducting a PC Assessment at the level of individual Activities creates a workload that is often insurmountable. In the early years of PC implementation, some UN country presences had to work through a list of hundreds of individual Activities which was time consuming and unsustainable.

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<sup>3</sup> For a definition of "Outputs" and "Activities" based on the UNDP Results-based Management Handbook, please see the Terms and Definitions section in the Annex.

## How are Outputs generated and compiled?

Some UN strategic documents such as some Integrated Strategic Frameworks (ISF) or Humanitarian Response Plans (HRP) have detailed work plans or log frames from which Outputs can be extracted. In most cases, however, Outputs need to be collated from all UN entities by the PC core team. Outputs usually originate from the annual work plans (AWPs) or similar country office planning documents of the respective UN entities. For UN field missions, the key sources are the Results-based Budget (RBB) and other related work plans.

### “Outputs” vs. “Expected Accomplishments” in UN field missions

It should be noted that in UN missions, a different terminology is used in mission RBBs: “Outputs” might refer to individual Activities (such as “3 trainings conducted”). For the purposes of a PC Assessment, “Expected accomplishment” would in most cases be the appropriate equivalent and should be used. Alternatively, several related RBB “Outputs” may need to be combined into one.

### Reviewing the list of Outputs

The PC core team (usually the RCO or mission planner) is tasked with consolidating the list of Outputs for the PC Assessment, usually by requesting inputs from the all UN entities. Once an initial list has been collated, the core team (supported by the PC Secretariat, if requested) should review the list for duplications and for separate Outputs that are substantively similar and should therefore be combined/merged. This can apply to several Outputs by the same UN entity, or similar Outputs from different UN entities. Note that combining Outputs from different UN entities is only done for the purposes of the PC Assessment – it does not imply joint delivery.

The PC core team should also ensure consistency in the level of Outputs – if one entity has submitted individual Activities then these should be combined into fewer Outputs.

A special category of Outputs are so-called Enablers. These are support Outputs (or individual Activities) that – while not directly contributing to achieving Strategic Results –serve to ensure that the UN system can remain operational. While reviewing the list of Outputs, the PC core team should already highlight any potential Enablers; the group of UN PC focal points should later agree on all potential Enablers, as they would be left out of the peer review rating process. For further explanation, see the following section below.

## Can Outputs still be changed once the PC Assessment is underway?

The PC core team should make all efforts to ensure that the list of Outputs is finalized and recirculated to all participants before the PC Assessment starts. It is therefore important to have sufficient lead time prior to the PC Assessment to ensure solid preparations.

Once the PC Assessment is underway, there is little time to make further adjustments to the Outputs. Only in exceptional cases should changes be made, e.g. where there are clear duplications or where an Output is incorrectly worded.

### In summary: A few reminders for the formulation of Outputs

#### DO...

- Focus on formulating Outputs in results language (as per RBM). Outputs can combine a range of individual Activities that contribute to their achievement. See examples below.
- Try to group similar individual Activities into one Output, including those of different UN entities. Try to merge Outputs from different UN entities that are substantively similar (even if they are not implemented jointly). This promotes consistency in the Programme Criticality ratings.
- Ensure that Outputs are formulated in a coherent manner. Varying formulation complicates the rating of Outputs against Strategic Results.

#### DON'T...

- List individual Activities (unless unavoidable) or mix Outputs and Activities.
- List Outputs whose implementation does not involve UN personnel (i.e. UN personnel will not be exposed to risk).
- Consolidate too much into one Output. Activities that are substantially different from one another must be listed separately (see examples below).

## Examples of Outputs

| Good examples of Outputs (combining several associated Activities)            |   |
|---|---|
| UNDP  | The Capacity of the DDR commission, DRA and other security sector related institutions to promote community security <u>is strengthened</u> , including through needs assessments, training workshops, monitoring and reporting.  |
| UNICEF  | At-risk boys and girls including adolescents are protected from violence, abuse and exploitation, <u>including through</u> monitoring of grave violations and direct engagement with parties to conflict.   |
| FAO   | Formation of co-operatives and other producer groups supported, with an emphasis on women and vulnerable groups.  |
| Mission Political Affairs   | Enabling environment for the achievement of national priorities is fostered, <u>through the</u> interaction with political & business community, and civil society.   |
| UNHCR   | Favorable protection environment for stateless persons, refugees and asylum seekers is enhanced, including through strengthened laws and policy frameworks, legal assistance, and improved public attitude towards persons of concern.  |
| UNWOMEN   | Capacity of government to implement women's rights and women's ability to claim rights is increased through assessment, expansion, and/or institutionalization of mechanisms to promote and protect women's rights.   |
| WHO   | The health sector's capacities for emergency preparedness, response and coordination is enhanced through technical support, supplies donation, and monitoring of Activities.  |
| UNFPA   | GBV prevention and response services to vulnerable people is enhanced through community-based protection systems, case management, clinical management of rape, GBV supplies, kits and psychosocial support.  |
| WFP   | Immediate food security and nutrition needs are assessed and responded to through emergency food assistance, and CBT to disasters affected people, IDPs/Returnees/Refugees and food insecure people.  |
| Good examples of joint Outputs that combine Activities of several UN entities |   |
| WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA  | Primary Health Care Services provided (incl. M/RH, vaccinations, disease surveillance, Diagnostics, treatment, and support for TB and HIV).   |
| UNMISS, UNDP, UNICEF, UNWOMEN   | Advocacy on awareness to human rights standards are enhanced and human rights and transitional justice mechanisms strengthened to promote and protect citizens' rights, advocacy for accountability, including through reference to emblematic cases and training of mandated institutions  |
| UNICEF, UNISFA, OCHA  | Protection concerns are identified, prevented and mitigated through consultations, coordination with and capacity building and support to traditional community forums for conflict management, reconciliation and promotion of social cohesion   |
| Example for separate Outputs that could be merged                             |   |
| FAO   | <u>Cash for work:</u> Livelihood supported through the rehabilitation of agriculture related infrastructure and improvement of communal productive assets including agriculture lands, green houses, and fruit farms/orchards.  |
| WFP   | Livelihoods of food insecure populations are strengthened through the provision of Cash for Work, in collaboration with FAO.  |
| Bad examples (too specific and long, or merged too much)                      |   |
| UN Agencies   | Advocacy interventions to create conducive conditions for durable solutions – (capacity building workshops for authorities, IDPs, host communities and humanitarian actors; verification of voluntariness of return in safety & dignity; advocacy of other actors in protection mainstreaming in their interventions; establishment/support of community-based protection networks; post return protection & humanitarian situation monitoring) |
| Peacekeeping Mission  | Mission provides <u>protection and other support to humanitarian actors to conduct operations</u> ; ensures improved protection of <u>civil and political rights by supporting democratic policing and law enforcement</u> ; and oversees <u>parties' commitments to combating sexual violence</u> against women.   |
| Bad examples (too unspecific and/or at activity level)                        |   |
| UNHCR   | Registration of asylum seekers and continuous update of registration data   |
| UNICEF  | WASH Activities   |
| UNODC   | Illicit crop monitoring   |

Use results language

Provide some examples of Activities to illustrate what falls within the scope of this output

Combine similar Outputs and Activities from different UN entities

Merge Outputs that are substantively similar or that are delivered jointly.

Don't consolidate too much – substantially different Outputs must remain separate.

Be specific enough about the Activities carried out by UN personnel

## Identifying Enablers

### *What the PC Framework says:*

- “Enablers” and support Outputs: It is advisable that the United Nations country presence jointly agrees on how to score Outputs that can be termed as ‘Enablers’ to programme and mandate implementation, such as: Coordination and assessments, management, logistics, common services, operations support, etc. It is permissible that the criticality rating of such an Enabler remains open in order to be linked, on a case by case basis, to the PC score of the respective programme or mandate Outputs that they support.

Source: CEB/2016/HLCM/23, Programme Criticality Framework (2016)

### **Working definition: An Enabler...**

- Provides direct & immediate operational, logistical, administrative or substantive support to the implementation of another output, or is crucial for the UN family to remain operational in order achieve its Strategic Results;
- Does not in itself make a direct contribution to the achievement of a Strategic Result;
- Should be defined as a clearly delineated, critical support service that supports the functioning of the wider UN family at country level. Note: UN entity-internal support Activities – such as human resources, administrative and operations support functions – should not be considered here<sup>4</sup>).

### **Typical Enablers**

The below list is compiled based on field practices. It is non-exhaustive, but Enablers should meet the criteria outlined above.

- **UN-wide air and transport logistics support**, such as UNHAS or UN mission aviation
- **Inter-agency assessment functions**, such as needs assessments or security assessments
- **Specific coordination support functions**, such as OCHA, RCO, Sector/cluster (should be specific, clearly defined functions – not “all of OCHA/RCO” as an Enabler)

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<sup>4</sup> such support is assumed to be covered by the PC level of the regular Outputs.

## Examples

| UN entity   | Output   | Category                            |
|---|--|-------------------------------------|
| O/SRSG,<br>O/DSRSG,<br>Integrated<br>Office   | Leadership and advocacy Activities (i.e. Senior leadership interventions) in order to facilitate programme delivery, including interaction with the political, security and business community, as well as civil society.  | Leadership<br>Activities            |
| WFP   | Air services provided by UNHAS to the UN system and partners in order to ensure timely and efficient assistance to vulnerable populations  | Aviation &<br>Logistics             |
| UNOCHA  | Negotiated humanitarian access and improved civil-military coordination provided, in order to allow the safe and rapid delivery of life-saving humanitarian assistance and protection to people in need.   | Humanitarian<br>Access &<br>CMCoord |
| OCHA,<br>UNHCR,<br>UNICEF,<br>WFP, FAO,<br>WHO, IOM,<br>UNDP,<br>UNFPA                  | Effective humanitarian and development response is informed by coordinated / joint needs assessments.  | Assessments                         |
| IOM, FAO,<br>UNFPA,<br>UNICEF,<br>UNOPS,<br>WFP, WHO                                    | Direct support provided to humanitarian emergency operations including management of humanitarian hubs and humanitarian logistics bases and the provision of common transport services (road and air) and common pipelines   | Common<br>Services                  |
| FAO, IOM,<br>OCHA,<br>UNDP,<br>UNFPA,<br>UNHCR,<br>UNICEF,<br>UNMAS,<br>WFP, WHO        | Emergency responses are effectively coordinated within and across sectors (FSL, health, education, WASH, nutrition, protection, CCM, logistics)  | Coordination                        |
| UNDSS   | Safety of UN personnel is improved and UN agencies are supported in implementing their programmes and projects through security assessments, training and information sharing.   | Assessments                         |
| RCO/Joint<br>Planning<br>Unit   | Coordination of UN agencies, funds, and programmes and Mission sections on development and recovery/resilience planning and programming across the country, including through support level to align Activities to mandated priorities and UNSF priorities as well as the monitoring and reporting of progresses mad | Coordination                        |
| Joint<br>Operations<br>Centre &<br>Joint<br>Mission<br>Analysis<br>Centre<br>(JOC/JMAC) | Provide regular and ad-hoc analytical products to respond to specific information requirements and support situational awareness, including monthly media monitoring reports, trend analysis as well as daily, integrated routine reporting.   | Analysis &<br>Reporting             |



## Why do we identify Enablers prior to a PC Assessment?

While Enablers are essential functions to ensure that the UN family can continue operating and delivering its programmes, based on experience from past PC Assessments it is often impossible to realistically know how strongly they contribute to the achievement to the UN's different Strategic Results (a key step to obtaining the Programme Criticality rating).

Therefore, it is recommended to keep Enablers on a separate list and to not consider them during the PC rating process. By doing this, Enablers will not have their own PC rating. Instead, they should be linked, on a case by case basis, to the PC score of the respective programme Outputs that they support.

### Example: Linking Enablers to a programme Output

In Country X, the following programme Output has a PC2 rating:

|                    |   |     |
|--------------------|---|-----|
| WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA | Primary Health Care Services provided (incl. M/RH, vaccinations, disease surveillance, Diagnostics, treatment, and support for TB and HIV). | PC2 |
|--------------------|---|-----|

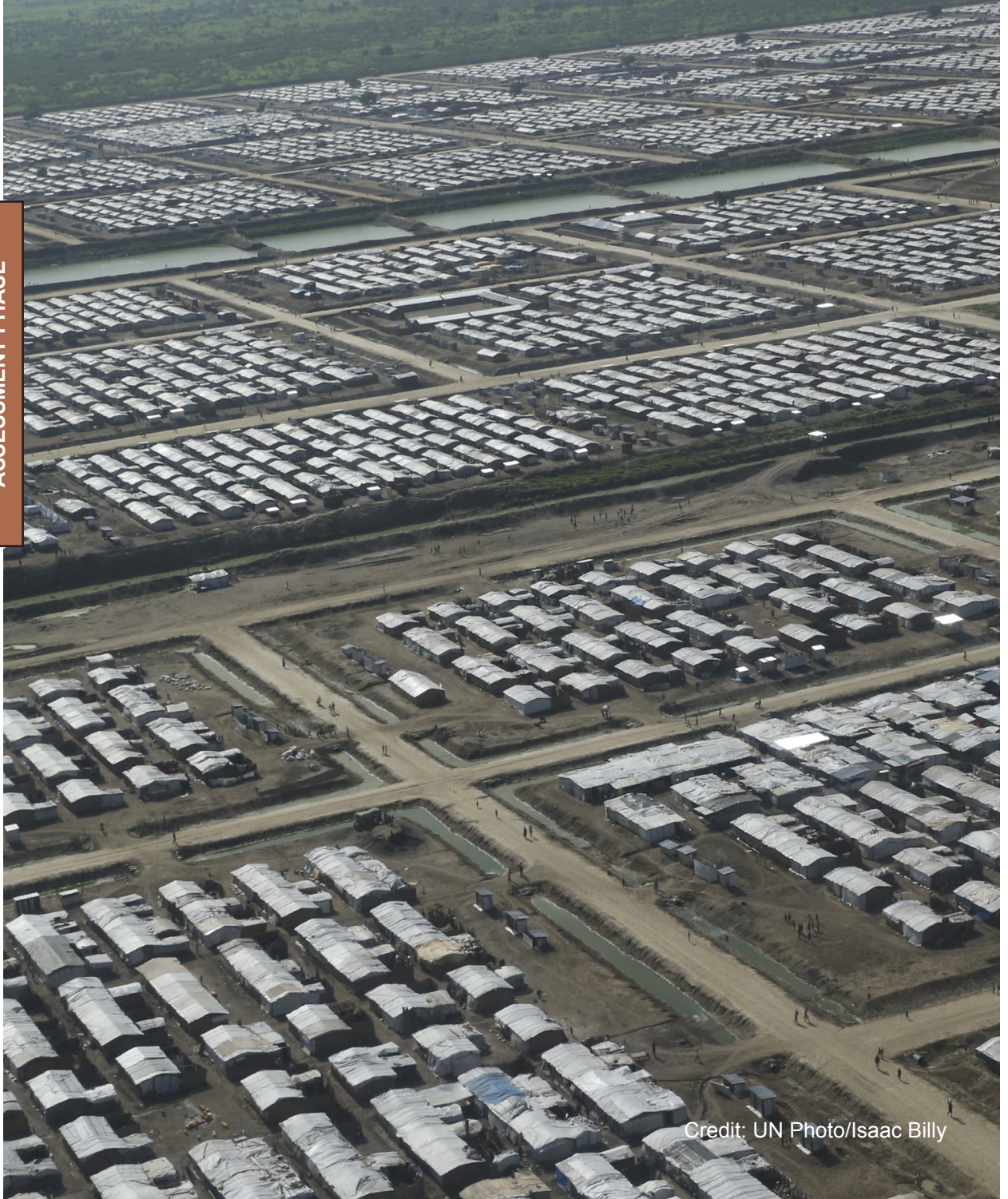
In order to deliver this output in remote Location Y, the following Enablers are required:

|            |   |     |
|------------|---|-----|
| WFP        | UNHAS flight (in order to get programme staff and supplies to Location Y and to ensure evacuation)  | PC2 |
| UNDP & IOM | Joint management of Humanitarian Hub in Location Y (includes common premises, ICT support, life support, drivers & vehicles, stress counsellor) | PC2 |
| OCHA       | Civil-Military Coordination (in order to ensure de-confliction with military operations in Location Y)  | PC2 |
| RC/HC      | Leadership Activities: Advocacy (including with parties to the conflict) to enable programme delivery.  | PC2 |

The PC level of these Enablers is pegged to that of the programme Output that they support, in the specific location.

# ASSESSMENT PHASE

ASSESSMENT PHASE



Credit: UN Photo/Isaac Billy



# **PC Assessment Phase: Peer Review**

## **Workshop & Validation**

The actual PC Assessment is usually conducted over the span of one working week. At the core of this week is the so-called peer review workshop, which brings together designated staff members from all UN entities that are covered by this PC Assessment.

### ***PC facilitation teams***

Upon request by the RC or SRSG/HoM, a team of trained PC facilitators can be mobilized by the PC Coordination Team (PCCT), through the PC Secretariat, to support and guide the PC Assessment process. A PC facilitation team is tasked with providing expert advice and impartial process facilitation, in support of the RC or SRSG.

A PC facilitation team usually consists of an experienced lead facilitator and two or three support facilitators, all of whom would be staff members in different UN entities represented in the PCCT. The team usually deploys to the country for 5 to 7 days.

### **Profile of UN staff participating in PC Assessments**

For a PC Assessment to be efficient, successful and achieve credible and jointly owned results, it is important that UN entities designate the right staff members to represent them in the exercise. Participants in the PC Assessment should possess a solid overview and sound understanding of country-level strategic priorities and programming objectives and should ideally be at the level of Deputy Country Director, Section Chief (or Deputy) of a UN mission, or other Senior Manager.

The following points should be considered by all UN entities participating in a PC Assessment:

1. PC focal points should have a full overview and understanding of their entity's Outputs that are to be assessed in the PC peer review process. UN entities should also seek to involve staff with programme planning, results-based management (RBM) and/or monitoring & evaluation (M&E) experience in the process. It is also important that UN entities aim at increasing the number of female PC focal points, in order to ensure gender parity in the PC process.

2. All PC participants need to have a sufficient understanding of Programme Criticality, for example by having read the Programme Criticality Framework and completed the e-course on Programme Criticality or attended any PC Assessment briefings organized in advance of the exercise.
3. To ensure a legitimate peer review, UN entities should ensure that their Focal Points are able to participate throughout the entire PC Assessment.
4. Understanding the link to SRM: It is useful for participants (security and programme) understand the link to Security Risk Management in advance of using the PC Framework. PC decision-making and SRM processes need to be highly interactive.
5. UNDSS and agency security focal points should be invited as observers in order to ensure consistent understanding and subsequent application of the PC results in security decision-making. It would also be helpful if all participants understand how PC relates to Security Risk Management and the concept of Acceptable Risk.
6. The Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO and (mission) planners should attend the peer review assessment throughout.
7. At least one representative from the Operations Managers Team (OMT) should be invited to observe the PC Assessment. Operations will play a key role in the implementation of the results and in ensuring that key "Enablers" are in place.

# Sample schedule of a PC Assessment

The below is a sample of a typical schedule for the PC peer review workshop and subsequent validation session.

| Time          | Day 1: 3 October 2016   | Day 2: 4 October 2016   | Day 3: 5 October 2016  | Day 4: 6 October 2016  |
|---------------|---|---|--|--|
| 08.00 – 09.00 | <b>Facilitation team meeting with SRSG</b><br><br><i>Participants:</i> SRSG, DSRSG/RC/HC, PC coordination team, Facilitation team   | <b>Plenary review of methodology, rating of outputs to establish baseline</b><br><br><i>Participants:</i> PC focal points, PC coordination team, Facilitation team, (Observers: DSS & UNCT Security focal points)                                 | <b>Brief status update in plenary</b><br><br><b>Rating of outputs in working groups, continued</b><br><br><i>Participants:</i> PC focal points, PC coordination team, Facilitation team, (Observers: DSS & UNCT Security focal points) |  |
| 09.00 – 10.00 | <b>Presentation of PC framework &amp; methodology</b><br><br><i>Participants:</i> SRSG (Chair), Mission & UNCT leadership, DSS & PC focal points, PC coordination team, Facilitation team |   |  | <b>Consolidation of results &amp; preparations for SRSG meeting</b><br><br><i>Participants:</i> PC coordination team, Facilitation team  |
| 10.00 – 11.00 | <b>Facilitation team meeting with Integrated Office</b><br><br><i>Participants:</i> PC coordination team, COS, CSA, Facilitation team   | <b>Coffee break</b><br>10.30-11.00  | <b>Coffee break</b><br>10.30-11.00   | <b>Debriefing with SRSG &amp; prep for validation</b><br><br><i>Participants:</i> SRSG, DSRSG/RC/HC, PC coordination team, Facilitation team   |
| 11.00 – 12.00 | <b>Facilitation team bilaterals with Sections/AFP (as requested)</b>  | <b>Rating of outputs contribution to strategic results and likelihood of implementation in working groups</b><br><br><i>Participants:</i> PC focal points, PC coordination team, Facilitation team, (Observers: DSS & UNCT Security focal points) | <b>Rating of outputs in working groups, continued</b><br><br><i>Participants:</i> PC focal points, PC coordination team, Facilitation team, (Observers: DSS & UNCT Security focal points)  | <b>Preparations for validation session</b><br><br><i>Participants:</i> PC coordination team, Facilitation team   |
| 12.00 – 13.00 | SSR (11.00-11.45)<br>PAD (11.45-12.30)<br>Electoral (12.30-13.15)   |   |  |  |
| 13.00 – 14.00 | <b>LUNCH</b>  | <b>LUNCH</b>  | <b>LUNCH</b>   | <b>LUNCH</b>   |
| 14.00 – 15.00 | <b>Peer review preparations and facilitation team bilaterals with Sections/AFP continued</b>  | <b>Rating of outputs in working groups, continued</b><br><br><i>Participants:</i> PC focal points, PC coordination team, Facilitation team, (Observers: DSS & UNCT Security focal points)   | <b>Finalization of ratings, PC 1 discussion in Plenary</b><br><br><i>Participants:</i> PC focal points, PC coordination team, Facilitation team, (Observers: DSS & UNCT Security focal points)   |  |
| 15.00 – 16.00 |   | <b>Coffee break</b><br>15.30-16.00  | <b>Coffee break</b><br>15.30-16.00   | <b>Validation of PC assessment results, implementation plan &amp; next steps</b><br><br><i>Participants:</i> SRSG (Chair), Mission & UNCT leadership, DSS & PC focal points, PC coordination team, Facilitation team |
| 16.00 – 17.00 |   | <b>Rating of outputs in working groups, continued</b><br><br><i>Participants:</i> PC focal points, PC coordination team, Facilitation team, (Observers: DSS & UNCT Security focal points)   | <b>PC 1 discussion continued (as needed), harmonization of PC results</b><br><br><i>Participants:</i> PC focal points, PC coordination team, Facilitation team, (Observers: DSS & UNCT Security focal points)                          |  |
| 17.00 – 18.00 |   |   |  | <b>Wrap up &amp; facilitation team departure</b><br><br><i>Participants:</i> PC coordination team, Facilitation team   |

## Opening session

The opening session should, if possible, be opened by the RC or SRSG to set the scene for the PC Assessment and be attended by Heads of Agencies (together with senior mission staff in mission-settings), in addition to the PC focal points.

If a PC facilitation team is deployed to support the process, then the lead facilitator usually leads the opening session. Otherwise, the head of the PC core team (usually the Head of RCO or Mission Planner) would lead this session.

Sufficient time should be allocated for this session; it can take up to 2 hours. It should cover:

- The purpose of Programme Criticality Assessments & using PC results; the PC methodology (standard presentation available from PC Secretariat)
- Review of the management-endorsed UN Strategic Results – ensure that everybody understands what they mean and what they cover.
- Quick review/confirmation of the geographic scope for the PCA.
- Outlook on the agenda/structure of the peer review workshop.
- Explanation of the rating scale for “contribution to Strategic Results” (PC step 4, see below)
- Explanation of the rating scale and criteria for “likelihood of implementation” (PC step 5, see below)
- Agreement on, and explanation of Enablers (see description above).
- Specific explanation of PC1 criteria (see below).
- Agreement on the peer review working groups.
- At the end of the opening session, it is critical that a few Outputs are rated in plenary to make sure that all participants have the same understanding of the process, and to apply the rating criteria for steps 4 and 5 (contribution to Strategic Results and likelihood of implementation).

### Tips on how to split into working groups and dividing up the list of Outputs

Depending on the size and programmatic footprint of the UN presence, the list of Outputs to be rated in the PC Assessment is so long that it is unavoidable to split into working groups to manage the workload within the allotted time. As a rule of thumb, with a list of 60 Outputs or more it is

recommended to split into two working groups; with 90 Outputs or more, three working groups are recommended.

Based on experience, working groups should be split up randomly (e.g. by having everyone count from 1 to 3) or by the PC core team, as this helps to avoid “coalitions”. The disadvantage is that Programme Managers need to temporarily move to another group when their agency’s Outputs are rated there.

The list of Outputs should also split up in a way that not one peer review group has to rate all Outputs of one agency, but to ensure that the different Outputs that one UN entity is involved are spread across the different working groups. This avoids any possible suspicions that one UN entity was treated unfairly by any one working group.



## PC Step 4: Rating the contribution of Outputs to Strategic Results

### *What the PC Framework says:*

The fourth step, undertaken in peer review format, is to assess how each of the Outputs contributes to each of the Strategic Results.

- This assessment is on a 0-5 scale. Final agreement on the rating scale is at the discretion of the United Nations country presence.
- The scores for an Output's contribution to each Strategic Result are averaged in the Excel-based tool to get a score for that output's total contribution to all the Strategic Results.
- It is critical that this step is undertaken by working groups representing a cross-section of the United Nations country presence to ensure peer review. The scoring is relative, and without having a common understanding among United Nations entities of the scoring level, comparison becomes futile.
- Before embarking on scoring all Activities, a number of Outputs should be jointly rated in plenary by the peer review group to set benchmarks for the scoring and establish a common understanding. (...)
- (...)
- While rating the Outputs, the agreed timeframe and geographic scope should always be kept in consideration as critical factors: What is the contribution of this Output to the Strategic Results during the timeframe and in the geographic area of this assessment?
- (...)

Source: CEB/2016/HLCM/23, Programme Criticality Framework (2016)

## Suggested Rating Criteria

Rating criteria for the PC Assessment can be adjusted based on the respective circumstances in-country. However, it is strongly suggested that the following rating criteria be used:

|                |   |
|----------------|---|
| <b>5</b>       | <u>Very high/essential contribution:</u> An Output that makes an essential contribution to the achievement of the Strategic Result. |
| <b>4<br/>3</b> | <u>Direct contribution:</u> An Output that provides a direct but possibly secondary contribution to the Strategic Result.           |
| <b>2<br/>1</b> | <u>Indirect contribution:</u> An Output that makes a smaller, indirect contribution to the Strategic Result.                        |
| <b>0</b>       | <u>No contribution:</u> The Output has no linkage or contribution to the Strategic Result.  |

### A few tips for the rating of Outputs against Strategic Results

- PC ratings should be an honest reflection of the contribution to the Strategic Result. Giving very high ratings (5) should be considered only where an Output is critical for the achievement of the Strategic Result, and has a measurable impact during the timeframe of the PCA.
- Consider the timeframe: Rate the Outputs on their contribution within the agreed timeframe. How critical is the contribution of this Output within the coming 6-12 months?
- It is important to ensure a common approach on scoring between working groups during the peer review. In case of disagreements, the PC facilitator should always seek to generate consensus among the group. “Voting” on the scored is not a recommended approach as the output “owner(s)” may feel unfairly treated and question the legitimacy of the process. Instead, if there is continued disagreement, the output “owner(s)” might be given the final say over the appropriate score; however, it is also recommended that the PC facilitator record any strong disagreements for possible review by senior management during the validation session.

- The lead facilitator should ensure that all working groups maintain the same approach on agreeing on scores (e.g. by “roving” and observing different working groups whenever possible).

### How do I rate...?

- Upstream Outputs such as support to developing a national strategy, policy or legislation:
  - Such an Output may be critical to achieving one or several Strategic Results over a longer period, but it may not lead to a measurable impact during the timeframe of the PC Assessment. To facilitate assessment within the given timeframe and scope of the PC Assessment, upstream Outputs should, if possible, be formulated in relation to expected milestones and geographic locations.
  - In this regard, peer reviewers (and senior management in the validation session) should consider whether this Output requires the exposure of UN personnel to security risk: Often, Activities related to devising a strategy, policy or legislative framework can be accomplished in safe and secure environments.
- Programme Enablers and support functions that help the UN system’s functioning, such as logistics and operational support, cluster and resident coordination, needs assessments, analysis, strategic planning, etc.:
  - It is usually difficult to independently rate such enabling Activities. In such cases it is permissible to leave the PC rating open for such Activities and to tie it to the PC rating of the particular Output that is supported on a case-by-case basis. Refer to the section on Enablers (above) for further explanation.
  - Any Enablers that are purely internal to one UN entity (e.g. supply chain management or administrative duties) should not be considered in the PC Assessment: They are assumed to be part of the regular programme Outputs of the respective UN entities.
- Cross-cutting Outputs for which no explicit Strategic Result exists:
  - Outputs related to cross-cutting, UN-wide corporate priorities such as on Human Rights or Gender will frequently contribute – to varying extent – to most or all Strategic Results. Where such priorities are mainstreamed into wider UN programme Activities, the contribution of gender and/or human rights to success of a particular Strategic Result should be factored into the rating of the particular Output. For example, such an Output may not receive scores for direct or essential

contribution (3, 4 or 5) to one Strategic Result, but might indirectly contribute to *all* Strategic Results (i.e. 2). This can still lead to a high PC rating (provided the likelihood of implementation is high).

## PC Step 5: Rating the likelihood of implementation of an Output

### *What the PC Framework says:*

The fifth step requires the assessment of each Output according to its likelihood of implementation within the timeframe of the assessment and in its geographic area.

- This assessment is conducted using a 1-5 scale identical to the likelihood scale used in the Security Risk Assessment (1: very unlikely, 2: unlikely, 3: moderately likely, 4: likely and 5: very likely).
- What is being assessed is whether the resources and capacity are available to implement the Outputs listed in the established timeframe. It is not assessing whether the Activities themselves will be successful or completed. The question 'how do you know you can do this?' is a useful pointer in this step.
- It is suggested that the assessment should be guided by such variables as acceptance (government, local community), capacity and availability of personnel, partner implementing capacity, availability of funding, logistics, physical access (roads, air strips, seasonal climatic conditions, etc.).
- This step is meant to provide a critical reality check of the ability to implement. United Nations entities should be able to justify the likelihood of implementation, and it is therefore recommended that the criteria used be as verifiable as possible. Past implementation performance and current funding levels may be used as criteria.
- All Outputs must be assessed against the same set of variables and these must be agreed ahead of scoring.
- One variable that is **not** considered in judging likelihood of implementation is the security environment, because this variable is already taken into consideration in the SRM process.

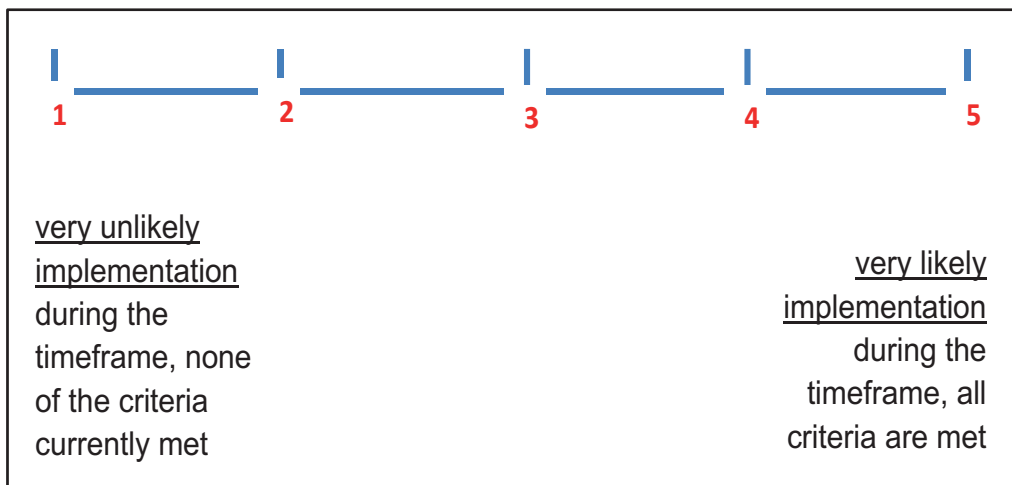
Source: CEB/2016/HLCM/23, Programme Criticality Framework (2016)

## Suggested Rating Criteria

UN Country Presences should collectively agree on the criteria to measure the likelihood of implementation within the agreed timeframe of the PC Assessment and use them consistently. Note that these exclude security as this will be considered in the Security Risk Management (SRM) process. Common criteria are:

- ☐ Funding,
- ☐ Staff capacity,
- ☐ Acceptance (government, community), etc.
- ☐ Partner implementing capacity,
- ☐ Logistics,
- ☐ Physical access (roads, air strips, seasonal climatic conditions, etc.).

**Use the entire rating scale (1-5) for the rating:**



**Consider the timeframe of the PC Assessment for assessing the likelihood**

- There may be Outputs that are expected to run for five or even ten years. Clearly these will not “succeed” in the 3-12 months of the assessment. The key here is that we are assessing likelihood of implementation (not success). Therefore, it does not matter if the Output will be successfully completed in the period of the assessment;

it is important that everything is in place to implement those steps that are planned for the period.<sup>5</sup>

*For example:*

“Community Based Conflict Resolution Mechanisms (CBRMs) to promote social cohesion and mitigate natural resource related conflicts are functioning (e.g. through peace forums, trainings, community dialogue events.)”

**...In a 12-month PC Assessment:** This is a planned 5-year programme and we are in year 1; the first year intends to develop community acceptance of the programme and identify the best locations and forums for it to be developed in following years. As long as all criteria are in place to implement the expected Activities of this year it is a 5 (or 4 if there are concerns) (and the PC of the programme is relatively high – which is good because we can accept risk when we are delivering effectively)

**...In a 3-month PC Assessment (due to expected unrest around elections):** This is a planned 5-year programme and we are in year 1; the first year intends to develop community acceptance of the programme and identify the best locations and forums for it to be developed in following years. However, in the 3 month period in the run up to the elections and post-election period it is expected that the communities will not be focused on the resolution of conflict and therefore acceptance of this programme from the period will be lost and so the expectation on implementation of the planned Activities during this time may be 1 or 2 (and the Programme Criticality rating of this programme in this period may therefore be low – which is good because we should not expose staff to risk when they cannot achieve their Activities).

**The likelihood of implementation should be treated as a dynamic score and regularly reviewed**

During the period of validity of a PC Assessment, some of the metrics underpinning the likelihood of implementation score (e.g. funding & staffing) may change. Therefore, PC facilitators should emphasize the importance of keeping this score under regular review, for example through a PC Custodian Group (see below). PC facilitators should also document the reasons as to why low likelihood scores (e.g. 1 or 2) were assigned during a PC Assessment in order to allow for a later review of the score.

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<sup>5</sup> See also page 32, “How do I rate... Upstream Outputs”

## How do we rate the likelihood of implementation of multi-agency Outputs?

If an Output involves Activities of several UN entities, the likelihood might be more difficult to establish, e.g. when one agency has all required funds, personnel etc. but others do not. In that case, go with the highest possible rating; do not use an average score. (This would unfairly 'punish' entities that are able and ready to deliver).

## Once PC Step 5 is completed...

### TIP FOR FACILITATORS

Once all Outputs have been scored for their likelihood of implementation, the PC tool would allow for the review of preliminary PC results.

However, it is recommended to not immediately show participants the preliminary PC results. This may trigger the peer review group to try to reopen the discussion and to retrofit certain PC ratings, thus undermining the credibility of the rating process.

It is recommended to present the preliminary results only once the peer review phase (including the PC1 discussion / step 6) is completed.

Overall, it is recommended that only external PC facilitators handle and populate the PC tool. Peer review participants should be provided with paper copies of the Strategic Results and of the Output list to allow them to keep track of the ratings (this also serves as a backup in case of computer failure).



## PC Step 6: PC 1 determination – criteria and procedures

### *What the PC Framework says:*

The sixth step is to evaluate each Output to see if it meets the criteria for PC1.

- There are two possible criteria for an Output to be considered PC1:
  - a. Either the output, and individual Activities thereunder, are assessed as lifesaving (humanitarian or non-humanitarian) at scale (defined as any activity to support processes or services, including needs assessments), and would have an immediate and significant impact on mortality; or
  - b. The Output or individual Activity is directed by, or receives the endorsement of the Secretary-General for this particular situation.
- If an Activity meets either of these two criteria, it could be considered a PC1 Activity and can be (but does not have to be) conducted in very high present risk, if endorsed by the Executive Head of the United Nations entity / Head of the United Nations department and authorized by the Under-Secretary-General of UNDSS.
- Care should be taken to keep Outputs identified as PC1 only to those that are so critical that exposing United Nations personnel to very high risk would be acceptable to United Nations entity Representatives and the SRSG or RC.

Source: CEB/2016/HLCM/23, Programme Criticality Framework (2016)

### **An important note on the two PC1 criteria:**

The definition of “lifesaving” in the context of PC Assessments is not limited to humanitarian relief; it is context-specific and can include a variety of Outputs/Activities across the spectrum of UN actors. Therefore, the “lifesaving at scale” definition is intentionally kept vague; the criteria must be refined further at country level based on possible context-specific scenarios.

For example, in certain contexts where a Special Representative/Envoy of the Secretary-General engages in mediation and good offices Activities, these Activities could be deemed to have an immediate lifesaving impact if outbreaks of violence are prevented or halted, or if humanitarian access is facilitated. They could therefore be designated as PC1. However, this does not mean that *all* UN mission tasks that are mandated through a Security Council resolution automatically assume a PC1 rating; each mission Output that is implemented by UN personnel must undergo the

same PC rating process as any other UN Output to establish acceptable levels of security risk exposure of UN personnel.

The second PC1 criterion indicated above also *does not* imply that mission-mandated tasks automatically assume a PC1 rating. Instead, it establishes the final accountability of the Secretary-General to determine, on a case-by-case basis, a PC1 designation of an Output for a specific situation.

It is important that these aspects are fully understood by all participants prior to launching the discussion on PC1 Outputs.

### **Important things to consider when reviewing potential PC1 Outputs:**

- PC1 is a separate rating step which is only informed by the two PC1 criteria outlined above. The other PC rating criteria applied in steps 4 & 5 (contribution to Strategic Results, likelihood of implementation) have no influence on the consideration of potential PC1 Outputs.
- Similarly, there is no requirement that only PC2-rated Outputs can be considered for PC1. The PC1 Assessment is entirely separate from the other rating steps; It is possible that Outputs with a PC3 or PC4 rating can meet the PC1 criteria in certain circumstances.
- During the PC rating process (PC steps 4 & 5), the peer reviewers may already pre-identify certain Outputs which may meet one or both PC1 criteria. These should be marked for a dedicated PC1 discussion by the peer reviewers, for a subsequent review and approval by the senior UN leadership in-country.
- When considering a PC1 rating, it should be kept in mind that this may allow for UN personnel to be exposed to very high security risk, even with existing prevention and mitigation measures in place. These cases are rare, and the threshold for accepting this level of risk is intentionally high. In light of this, even if certain Activities or Outputs meet one of the PC1 criteria, the PC1 designation should be used sparingly.
- Often, only certain individual Activities within one broader Output meet the PC1 criteria (e.g. food distribution within a larger output on food security). It is therefore permissible to mark only such individual Activities as PC1 (not the full Output).

- PC1 approvals at very high risk are situation-specific: There are no cases where PC1 Activities have been approved to be delivered at Very High risk *for the long term*. The RC or SRSG together with the UNCT may mark an Output or individual Activity as PC1, but only the Executive Head of the organizations carrying out a specific mission can actually verify that it is PC1. This will only be done a few of days before the specific mission when a specific Security Risk Assessment (SRA), Concept of Operations (ConOps) and Mission Security Clearance Request (MSCR) have been completed (i.e. a full planning process). Again, this steers the UN country presence away from deciding that whole Outputs are PC1.
- In cases where the UN team wishes to designate one or several entire Outputs as a PC1, this should, wherever possible, be consolidated into multi-entity PC1s with a focus on the nature of the Output, rather than which agency “owns” it. This avoids competition between agencies over PC1s. In other words: It should not matter for the rating who implements the PC1, only whether the output meets the PC1 criteria.
- Generic PC1 Outputs for potential crisis response: It is not a requirement for UN country presences to give any permanent PC1 designations to certain Outputs or Activities. Rather, if so decided based on the prevailing context it is possible to keep a generic “as required” PC1 that can cover a variety of possible emergency interventions, and that is reviewed and approved on a case-by-case basis. Such generic PC1 Outputs are justifiable particularly in countries where, on a routine basis, the PC1 criteria might not be met, but where there are plausible crisis scenarios that would raise the security risk levels and would require immediate, lifesaving interventions by the UN (see examples on the next page).
- If a PC Assessment results in a large percentage of PC1 Activities (especially at the Output level), this often indicates that PC was confused with “importance of mandates”, or that there was a lack of consensus and buy-in to the Programme Criticality process among senior managers at country level.

## Examples of Generic PC1 Outputs that would be activated in crisis situations

|  |   |
|--|---|
| All relevant UN agencies, UN mission                           | In the event of a crisis where the UN needs to respond immediately to save lives at scale, the UN will carry out critical life-saving protection of civilians Activities and humanitarian action in a timely manner, with decisions on specific Activities and staff required to be undertaken at the time  |
| All relevant UN agencies                                       | Emergency food assistance to severely food insecure people and prevention and treatment of acute malnutrition, including the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, FSIS, Assessments as input to the planning process  |
| FAO, UNICEF, WFP, UNHCR, UNFPA, IOM, UNDP, UN Women, OCHA, WHO | Crisis affected people receive coordinated emergency basic services during times of crisis/ shocks, including access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene, health supplies and services, malnutrition treatment and prevention, food security services including nutritious food provision, cash-based transfers in order to access to livelihood packages, basic life-saving services, education, protection and shelter services, protection of productive assets, livelihood emergency packages to IDPs, and emergency NFIs to refugees, returnees and IDPs |

## PC Step 7: Senior Management debriefing and validation session

The validation session with the UN in-country leadership and senior management is an important component of the PC Assessment. It should be chaired by the RC or SRSG (as applicable), and the facilitation team should present the results, respond to questions and record & incorporate any agreed corrections to the PC results.

### ***Prior to the meeting:***

- The PC results should be circulated to the leadership, UNCT Heads of Agencies and (where applicable) Mission Section Chiefs at least 12-24 hours prior to the validation meeting to allow them to review the results.

Note: Do NOT circulate the full PC tool. Instead, circulate either an exported XML file or PDF printouts of the PC ratings.

- The facilitation team should meet with the RC or SRSG prior to the meeting to brief her/him on the key results and to flag some contentious issues that may have emerged during the peer review. The facilitation team should also explain next steps to implement the PC results (sign-off and submission; implementation plan), and highlight available guidance and resources.

***During the meeting:***

- The session should be opened by the RC or SRSG, and be attended by Heads of Agencies (together with senior mission staff in mission-settings) and the CSA/DSS. The PC focal points who attended the peer review can also be invited.
- The facilitation team should recall the agreed Strategic Results and geographic scope; present some key results of the PC Assessment, including number of UN entities that participated, number of Outputs rated, and preliminary breakdown of PC ratings (number of PC1s, PC2s, PC3s, PC4s).
- The facilitation team should explain that while the PC peer review process offers an objective basis to assess the PC rating of UN Outputs, some ratings will almost inevitably require adjustments. The senior management (UNCT Heads and Mission management, where applicable) have the authority to collectively agree on adjustments to PC ratings, with the RC or SRSG being the final decision-maker.

Validation of Outputs: Depending on the number of Outputs, it is not recommended to review each Output individually but to focus on:

- Outputs where the PC facilitation team recorded strong disagreements among peer reviewers that could not be resolved;
- Outputs whose rating “seems off” and should be reviewed; and
- Outputs that are flagged by senior management for review/correction.

Any agreed changes should be documented by the facilitation team.

PC1 validation: The facilitation team should explain the following points:

- PC1 designation follows distinct and strict criteria which are separate from the other rating steps. It is important to explain that any Output can be designated PC1 if it meets the PC1 criteria for a certain situation (regardless of whether it is otherwise a PC2, PC3 or PC4).
- PC1 implies that certain Activities under this Output may become “lifesaving at scale”, but rarely the *entire* Output. It is therefore permissible to only designate certain individual Activities as PC1, if preferred by the group. Also, it should be emphasized that PC1 implementation at *very high current risk* requires endorsement by the Executive Head of the Organisation and final sign-off by the USG UNDSS.

At the end of the validation meeting, the facilitation team should explain next steps: Final sign-off and submission of results (using the submission note template); PC implementation at SMT level and within each entity. Note: Please refer to the separate guidance document on Implementing the Results of a PC Assessment, available through the PC Secretariat.

### **Suggested key messages for the validation session:**

- The peer review methodology of the PC Assessment and the use of the Excel tool have served to ensure that all Outputs were thoroughly reviewed and rated. The PC rating was calculated with an Excel based PC tool, based on 1) the contribution to each strategic result, and 2) the likelihood of implementation during the relevant timeframe.
- While the PC peer review process offers an objective basis to assess the PC rating of UN Outputs, some ratings may require adjustments. The senior management (UNCT Heads and Mission management, where applicable) have the authority to collectively agree on adjustments to PC ratings, with the RC or SRSG being the final decision-maker.
- The PC results have been produced, and are fully owned by the UN team in country; the facilitation team only provided process support and ensured that the PC methodology was applied in accordance with the PC Framework.
- The results of the PC Assessment are just the starting point to various management processes: They are supposed to inform decision-making at SMT level and within each UN entity.

### **A final tip for facilitators**

One of the main risks in most PC Assessments is an ensuing competition between UN entities for high PC ratings, due to the false assumption that these signify greater importance of an Output vis-à-vis others. In order to bring the discussion back to a rational basis, in some contexts it has proven useful for facilitators to apply common-sense checks throughout the peer review and in the validation.

For example, a “Board of Inquiry (BoI) test” or “parental test” may be a useful exercise here, which mean that a manager should reflect whether she/he could realistically justify the exposure of a UN staff member to elevated security risk vis-à-vis a BoI or to colleague’s parents in case of harm, injury or death of the colleague. UN senior managers should always strive to put security risk in the context of those individuals that are exposed to the risk.

## Tips for a successful PC facilitation

A simple definition of facilitation is "to ease a process": A facilitator plans, guides and manages a group event to ensure that the group's objectives are met effectively, with clear thinking, good participation and full buy-in from everyone who is involved.

In the context of PC Assessments, the following **five attributes** are critical for a successful facilitator:

1. **To be objective and impartial at all times.**
2. **To be an authoritative voice on the PC methodology and process;**
3. **To be able to listen & communicate effectively;**
4. **To be confident in dealing with conflict, and in arbitrating and mediating;**
5. **To be able to maintain a sense of humor & to create a comfortable and safe environment**



**The following tips are relevant for in-country PC core teams and external facilitators alike:**

#### **BEFORE THE PCA WORKSHOP**

- ✓ Continuously stress the need for preparation. Use PC Secretariat support, e.g. webinars, review of Strategic Results and Outputs.
- ✓ Prepare & test PC tool in advance, print list of Strategic Results and Outputs (with columns for ratings) for all participants.
- ✓ Meet with senior leadership and, as needed, head of agencies (sometimes needed to demystify exercise, alleviate misconceptions).
- ✓ For in-country PC core teams: Use the help of external facilitators!
- ✓ For external facilitators: Use the help of the local PC core team!
- ✓ Clarify participants up front, and stress that consistency of participation is important. Always invite UNDSS and agency security staff as observers in the assessment.

#### **DURING THE PCA WORKSHOP**

- ✓ Always follow the prescribed methodology – no adaptations or shortcuts are allowed!
- ✓ Never assume the basics are understood – do presentation for both senior management and focal points
- ✓ Unpack Strategic Results, and write the rating criteria for 'contribution to Strategic Results' and 'likelihood' on a flip chart. Explain PC1 criteria. Remind people this is not a planning workshop
- ✓ During the rating process, remember it's an assessment, not an evaluation exercise (don't need to get into discussions around outcomes and impact of the UN's programmes)
- ✓ At the beginning of the workshop, always run a session in plenary, rating a small number of Outputs so that groups can get a baseline and sense for how to rate. This ensures consistent ratings across groups.
- ✓ Ask the Output "owner" to propose ratings and invite others to question. Encourage dialogue.
- ✓ Stress the fact that likelihood of implementation should not be related to security
- ✓ Keep reminding participants that it's only about Outputs that involve UN personnel
- ✓ The lead facilitator should rove among groups to check that ratings are done in a harmonized way.
- ✓ Groups: 5-10 people is an optimal size. Have 2-3 entities (depending on # of Outputs) presenting Activities in each group, and the rest are peer reviewers.
- ✓ Always rely on UNDSS for security related questions, but clarify where needed.
- ✓ If lack of agreement/stalemate, let the in-country leadership take decision

#### **AFTER THE PCA WORKSHOP**

- ✓ Take time to consolidate results, train local PC core team if possible
- ✓ Always highlight the practical linkage between Programme Criticality and Security Risk Management
- ✓ Leave enough time for Heads of UN Entities to review results and prepare for senior management validation session

# IMPLEMENTATION PHASE



IMPLEMENTATION PHASE

Credit: UNOCHA/Ivo Brandau

## PC implementation Phase

### PC Step 8: Implementing and maintaining PC results

#### ***What the PC Framework says:***

Upon finalization of a Programme Criticality Assessment, the SRSG/Head of Mission or RC (as applicable) and the Designated Official should submit the results to the PC Steering Group through the Programme Criticality Secretariat.

- The submission should include a brief implementation plan that highlights some of the steps through which the United Nations country leadership intends to promulgate and implement the Programme Criticality Assessment results.
- While United Nations teams can tailor the process for implementation according to their contexts, it is generally recommended that a Programme Criticality Custodian Group (PCCG) or similar body be created at country level that regularly reviews the Programme Criticality Assessment, carries out minor adjustments or re-ratings where necessary, and advises the United Nations country leadership when a revision of the Programme Criticality Assessment is required.

The final step is to apply the results of the Programme Criticality Assessment within the relevant SRM processes to determine which programmes and mandated Activities can proceed without additional risk management based on an agreed level of acceptable risk. This entails comparing the established PC level for each output to the present risk level, as determined through the SRM process, for each operational area where the output is conducted. While this process should be led by the Security Management Team (SMT) and overseen by the DO, it also requires that each United Nations entity individually reviews that its Outputs and Activities are implemented within levels of acceptable risk. If the security risk to implementing an output is not within acceptable limits, United Nations entities can either implement additional Security Risk Management measures to lower the risk, or employ alternative delivery modalities for this output to ensure that United Nations personnel are not exposed to unacceptable risk.

Source: CEB/2016/HLCM/23, Programme Criticality Framework (2016)



### **Available resources:**

- A PC submission note template can be found in the annex
- A sample Terms of Reference for a PC Custodian Group can be found in the annex
- A separate Guidance for UN field presences entitled “Implementing the results of a Programme Criticality Assessment (PCA)” is available from the PC Secretariat.

### **Tips for in-country PC focal points and PC Custodian Groups**

The PC Assessment should be considered a dynamic document and its results should be regularly kept up to date. In particular the “likelihood of implementation” scores of Outputs can change over the course of the year (e.g. as more funding becomes available, or funds are becoming depleted) and should be adjusted if necessary. In addition, new Outputs might be developed while some others might no longer being implemented.

It is therefore strongly recommended to create an in-country PC Custodian Group (PCCG) that brings together a core group of UN entities that have committed to ensuring that the results of the Programme Criticality Assessment are regularly reviewed and updated/adjusted, if so required. It should be made up of staff at Programme Manager’s and/or Deputy Representative’s level. The PCCG can be convened by the Office of the Resident Coordinator but can also be chaired by any UN entity selected by PCCG members.

#### **Its main tasks are:**

- Finalize outstanding decisions from the PC Assessment (if relevant);
- Regularly review PC rating results and discuss potentially inaccurate ratings with the UN entities concerned;
- Make adjustments to the PC ratings in accordance with the PC methodology and in a peer review format;
- Recommend adjustments of PC1 ratings to UN senior management;
- Liaise and consult with security professionals on the use of Programme Criticality results in decision-making on staff security;
- Make recommendations to the UN country leadership (RC or SRSG) on whether to carry out a full revision of the Programme

Criticality Assessment, and support preparations for a new PC Assessment;

- Support UN country leadership in reporting to the HQ-based Programme Criticality Steering Group, if required.

**Frequency of meetings:**

The PCCG should meet, at a minimum, at mid-point and at the end of the validity of the PC Assessment. Meetings can also be called on a more regular or an ad-hoc basis.

## Keeping the PC Assessment up to date: PC “Light reviews”

### ***What the PC Framework says:***

Depending on the timeframe agreed in step 1 of a Programme Criticality Assessment, its results must be revisited at least every 12 months, and possibly revised.

- Triggers for undertaking a full Programme Criticality Assessment in accordance with this Framework are changes in existing strategic priorities or a significant change in the strategic or programmatic context.
- If the Strategic Results remain unchanged and no major shifts in the programming environment have occurred, then a technical roll-over of the existing Programme Criticality Assessment is possible. However, this needs to be documented by the UN country presence and transmitted to the Programme Criticality Secretariat for review by the PCSG.
- Since United Nations Outputs and associated Activities may change while Strategic Results remain the same, a Representative of a United Nations entity operating in-country may flag the possible change in programmatic conditions to the United Nations team on the ground at any time and ask for a review of the Programme Criticality Assessment. It is also recommended that a Programme Criticality Custodian Group, consisting of staff at senior technical level from a select number of United Nations entities, regularly reviews the Programme Criticality Assessment, undertakes technical reviews as necessary, and informs the UNCT and mission leadership (where relevant) when a full revision is required.

Source: CEB/2016/HLCM/23, Programme Criticality Framework (2016)

## A few things to consider when the validity of a PC Assessment expires:

- A full PC Assessment is only required when the strategic and programmatic context changes significantly. In other words, if the Strategic Results remain the same, no full PC Assessment is needed.
- Upon the recommendation of the PC Custodian Group (PCCG) and if there is consensus among the UNCT (and mission leadership), the SRSG or RC can extend the validity of the PC Assessment and/or request a light review. The PC Secretariat must be notified of this.
- The PCSG can then carry out a light review of the existing PC Assessment. Such a light review may entail the following steps:
  - Review the current list of Outputs and mark any PC ratings that may warrant an adjustment.
  - Add new Outputs to the list.
  - Carry out PC steps 4-6 for all new Outputs and those that have been identified for review. Note that representatives of the respective UN entities should be present.
- All changes should be documented, and the revised, leadership-endorsed PC Assessment should be submitted to the PC Secretariat.



# **Annex**

## **Checklist: Preparing for a PC Assessment**

Preparation is key to achieve a successful and efficient PC Assessment and process. During the preparatory phase of a PC Assessment, the in-country PC core team should liaise with the PC Secretariat in order to:

- Agree on a PC roadmap that covers the preparatory phase and the PCA workshop.
- Submit a formal request (email or memo/letter) for facilitation support from the SRSG or RC to the PCCT co-chairs. This request should be sent at least 8 weeks before the anticipated dates of the PC workshop.
- Arrange a preparatory VTC webinar for the UNCT (and mission management, in integrated contexts; at least 3-4 weeks prior to assessment); this can be followed up by a more specific webinar on the PC methodology with PC focal points in country)
- Request all in-country UN entities to designate a PC focal point at senior programme manager level to attend the entire PC Assessment (at least 3-4 weeks prior);
- Disseminate the PC e-course, PC Framework, and background document to all participants (at least 2-3 weeks prior)
- Advise on visa and SSAFE requirements Visa for PC facilitators (at least 3 weeks prior)
- Compile and share the relevant strategic planning documents (e.g. UNDAF, ISF, HRP, mission concept) and Security Risk Assessment/SRM report with the PC facilitators;
- Ensure that the 3 preparatory steps of the PC Assessment are completed and leadership-endorsed (at least 1 week prior to assessment), and share results with PC facilitation support team (i.e. agreed geographic scope & timeframe, Strategic Results, list of UN Outputs)
- Have a final Skype/phone call with the PC Secretariat 1 week prior to the PCA to ensure all preparations are in place.

## **Checklist: Admin & logistics for the PC Assessment and PC facilitation team**

For the arrival of PC facilitation support team, the in-country PC core team should provide an admin note with information on:

- Group hotel booking for facilitation team
- Ground transport for the team, including airport transfer (if needed)
- Ground passes (if required) for UN compound
- Security information (unless there is a separate DSS briefing note)
- Information on the venue of the PC workshop
- Key contact information (PC focal points, DSS/Security, Drivers)
- Important information on the city and any other important info as necessary.

## **Requirements for a PC peer review workshop**

- Main conference room and 2-3 breakout rooms
- PowerPoint (laptop, projector)
  - For the initial session in plenary
  - To present the preliminary results
- At least 2 laptops per working group with the PC Excel tool
- Flip chart & markers in each room
- Sign-in sheet/participant list
- Printing capacities
- Print-outs of the Strategic Results and Output list for all participants
- Skype/VTC capacity, if needed

## Roadmap for a PC Assessment


The below is a good example of a PC roadmap that was prepared by the UN in Cameroon.

| ACTIVITIES   | RESPONSIBLE                                     | TIMEFRAME        | OUTCOMES  | STATUS  |
|--|---|------------------|---|---|
| Briefing UNCT through VTC with HQ  | PC  | 27 January       | Common understanding of the process and the methodology<br>Leadership decisions on the process (timeframe, scope, coordination mechanism) | Done  |
| Designation of agencies focal points – coordination team   | UNCT  | 10 February      | Coordination team established and functional  | On-going: Consolidated list of focal points to be appointed by the Heads of Agencies                                    |
| Collect documentation + review of TORs for the PC mission  | Task force                                      | 10 February      | Documentation + TORs for the PC mission available and shared  | On-going: UNDAF 2013-2017 – Joint programs<br>HRP 2017 – OPS projects   |
| Briefing session<br>Coordination Team  | Task force PC                                   | 17 February      |   |   |
| PROGRAMME CRITICALITY ASSESSMENT PREPARATORY PHASE (1,2,3)   |   |                  |   |   |
| Step 1: Establish geographical scope and timeframe   | UNCT  | 27 January       | Preparatory phase finalized with the support of HQ  | Done: Extreme north, north, East and Adamou – 12-month period   |
| Step 2: List Strategic Results (derived from existing planning frameworks (UNDAF, HRP)<br>Step 3: List UN Outputs  | Coordination team                               | 17 - 24 February |   | Internal agency analysis (2 days)<br><br>One day workshop to combine and finalize Strategic Results (5 max) and Outputs |
| PROGRAMME CRITICALITY ASSESSMENT PEER REVIEW PHASE (4,5,6,7,8)   |   |                  |   |   |
| Step 4: Assess contribution to Strategic Results (peer review)<br>Step 5: Assess likelihood of implementation (peer review)<br>Step 6: Evaluate Activities/Outputs with PC1 criteria | Program Criticality mission + Coordination team | 6 – 10 March     | Peer review phase finalized   |   |
| Step 7: Presentation of the PCA results to DO  | Program Criticality mission                     | 10 March         |   |   |
| Step 8: Submission of cover note (including implementation plan) and PCA results to HQ   | DO  | 15 March         | Country is compliant  |   |

# Sample: Request for PC Facilitation Support

PC support requests should contain these key points of information:

- Planned dates & location of the PC Assessment
- In-country focal point for the exercise



**United Nations**      **Nations Unies**  
MISSION IN XYZ      MISSION AU XYZ

*Special Representative of the Secretary-General and  
Head of United Nations Operations in XYZ*

17 July 2017

Dear Mr. Butt,

The UN system in XYZ will conduct a Programme Criticality Assessment in August 2017. The Assessment will evaluate and balance programmatic and mandated priorities with security risks, in particular during the elections in October 2017 and Government transition in January 2018. This is especially important as the elections and transition are taking place against the backdrop of a significant reduction in XYZ's security presence and the end of the Mission's substantive mandate in March 2018.

A team of XYZ and UNCT focal points has been established to work on the Assessment, and its members are currently taking the online training on the programme criticality framework in order to support the preliminary stages of the Assessment. Based on discussions between the Programme Criticality Team, the United Nations Mission, the UN Country Team and the Resident Coordinator's Office, I am kindly requesting your Team's assistance to offer expert advice during the Assessment.

I would be grateful if the Programme Criticality Team could visit XYZ from 7 to 11 August 2017 to support the Peer Review Phase of the Assessment. Ms. XYZ of the Resident Coordinator's Office is our focal point for the Assessment, and can answer any specific questions you may have.

Thank you for your assistance with this critical endeavour.

Yours sincerely,

Under-Secretary-General

**Mr. Simon Butt**  
**Senior Security Advisor, Office of the Coordinator of Humanitarian Affairs**  
**Co-Chair, Programme Criticality Coordination Team**

**Copy: DSRSG-RoL**  
**DSRSG-PC/RC**  
**Chief of Staff**  
**Chief Security Advisor**

# Sample: Terms of Reference, PC Facilitation Team

## Programme Criticality Support Mission in [...]

**Location:**

**Date:**

**Duration:** 5 day in-country mission, including 2-day PC peer review workshop

**Purpose:** To provide impartial facilitation support and expert advice to senior management charged with leading the country-level Programme Criticality Assessment

**Mission participants:**

- Mr.
- Ms.

**In-country focal points:**

- Ms.

**Deliverables:**

1. **Pre-briefings:** Together with in-country PC focal point, the PC facilitation team will **brief the Resident Coordinator / SRSG, Chief Security Advisor and UN senior management on the PC assessment process.** The team may be required to provide a basic understanding of the Programme Criticality framework and its relation to the Security Risk Management to all UN personnel who will participate in the PC assessment.
2. **Preparations:** If required, the PC facilitation team will assist in-country PC focal points in **completing final preparations for PC peer review** workshop (steps 1-3 of the methodology), including by:
  - a. Ascertaining that geographical scope, timeframe and strategic results have been agreed by UN senior management before the assessment and are understood by peer review participants;
  - b. Reviewing the consolidated list of UN outputs to be rated during the PC peer review workshop;
  - c. Providing preparatory briefings and materials as required;
3. **Facilitation of peer review workshop (PC step 4-6):** The facilitation support mission will facilitate the peer review phase for the agreed geographic location(s). The peer review phase entails
  - a. PC step 4 (rating the contribution of each output to UN strategic results)
  - b. PC step 5 (rating likelihood of implementation of each output during the agreed timeframe)
  - c. PC step 6 (discuss PC1 Outputs, for validation by senior management)The facilitation team will act as impartial moderators of the PC process, and as the custodian of the preliminary PC ratings that are generated in the peer review workshop.

As such, the PC facilitation team will be responsible for handling the PC Excel tool to generate the results.

4. **Facilitation of debrief and review session (PC step 7):** The facilitation team, or the in-country PC focal point, will circulate the preliminary results to the UN senior management (UNCT) for their review. The team will moderate a review and validation session and record any potential adjustments to the PC results that are agreed by senior management. Prior to this, a separate, bilateral debriefing of the RC should be scheduled. The facilitation team will advise on next steps for senior management consideration, including in the preparation of an implementation plan and of the formal submission of the PC results to the PC Steering Group (PC step 8).
5. **End of mission report:** The facilitation team will prepare a PC end of mission report, capturing the PC results, observations, lessons learned and recommendations for in-country leadership and PC Coordination Team / PC Secretariat.

Signed by

# PC Submission Note Template

## **PROGRAMME CRITICALITY ASSESSMENT FOR [COUNTRY]**

### **COVER NOTE FOR SUBMISSION TO THE PROGRAMME CRITICALITY STEERING GROUP (PCSG)**

**To:** The Co-Chairs of the Programme Criticality Steering Group  
**Through:** The Programme Criticality Secretariat

**Date:** [please indicate date of submission]

With this note, I am / we are submitting the results of the Programme Criticality Assessment for [Country, specify region if necessary].

**Duration of validity of the PCA:** [e.g. 1 January – 30 June 2016]

**Geographic scope of the PCA:** [e.g. nation-wide / province x / region y]

**Dates of the PC Assessment workshop:** [e.g. 2 – 5 February 2016]

#### **Enclosed to this note are:**

- The overview of strategic objectives defined for this PC Assessment;
- The full PC rating table;
- The list of Activities assessed as PC1.

## **I. Comments (Optional – please delete if not relevant)**

[Please include any comments or remarks that you may have on the Programme Criticality Assessment itself, and/or its results. You may also specify any support requirements that you may have identified for the implementation and use of the PC results.].

## **II. Programme Criticality Implementation Plan**

[Please provide a brief outline, in bullet point format, on what key steps will be taken, or have already been taken, to roll-out and implement the results of the PC Assessment in your country. These can include the following, recommended steps:

- Establish a PC Custodian Group (PCCG) that regularly reviews the Programme Criticality Assessment (please also list the members of this working group).
- Convene a briefing of the SMT to brief on the outcomes of the PC Assessment, compare PC levels to the relevant Security Risk Management (SRM) process results and consider additional risk management measures where necessary to ensure programme delivery.

- Brief security focal points (DSS, mission and AFP security advisors) on the PC results and their use in decision-making.
- Maintain regular dialogue between programme and security professionals (e.g. between UNCT/PMT and SMT) to regularly review the balance between Risk and Programme Criticality, and make adjustments to security management processes if necessary.
- Disseminate PC results to all UN personnel and explain implications on programme delivery and risk-based decision-making.]

### **III. Appeal / request for support or mediation *(please delete if not relevant)***

[If the PC Assessment process resulted in an impasse or disagreement between UN entities that could not be resolved at country level, you may decide to present the matter in this submission note in order to seek the support from the Programme Criticality Coordination Team (PCCT) or, if needed, mediation from the PCSG. Heads of Agencies are free to also present the matter to the PCSG through their respective headquarters.]

#### **Signatures:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
SRSG or Resident Coordinator [specify]  
[please add name]

\_\_\_\_\_  
Designated Official  
[please add name]



# Sample: Terms of Reference, Programme Criticality Custodian Group

## Programme Criticality Custodian Group (PCCG)

### Terms of Reference

*Sample – to be adjusted as necessary*

#### **Purpose:**

An in-country Programme Criticality Custodian Group (PCCG) brings together a core group of UN entities that have committed themselves to acting as the custodian of Programme Criticality, and to ensuring that the results of the Programme Criticality Assessment are regularly reviewed and updated/adjusted, if so required.

#### **Members:**

The PCCG consists of around five UN entities that represent a cross-section of the UN presence in-country. It should be made up of staff at Programme Manager's and/or Deputy Representative's level. Members are expected to represent and consider the interest of the whole UN country presence, and not only those of their own entity. The PCCG is normally convened by the Office of the Resident Coordinator but can be chaired by any UN entity selected by PCCG members.

#### **Tasks:**

- ✓ Finalize outstanding decisions from the PC Assessment (if relevant);
- ✓ Regularly review PC rating results and discuss potentially inaccurate ratings with the UN entities concerned;
- ✓ Make adjustments to the PC ratings in accordance with the PC methodology and in a peer review format;
- ✓ Recommend adjustments of PC1 ratings to UN senior management;
- ✓ Liaise and consult with security professionals on the use of Programme Criticality results in decision-making on staff security;
- ✓ Make recommendations to the UN country leadership (RC or SRSG) on whether to carry out a full revision of the Programme Criticality Assessment, and support preparations for a new PC Assessment;
- ✓ Support UN country leadership in reporting to the HQ-based Programme Criticality Steering Group, if required.

#### **Frequency of meetings:**

The PCCG should meet, at a minimum, at mid-point and at the end of the validity of the PC Assessment. Meetings can also be called on an ad hoc basis.

# Terms and Definitions

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Activity</b>                                       | <p>Actions taken or work performed through which inputs, such as funds, technical assistance and other types of resources, are mobilized to produce specific <u>Outputs</u> (see <u>Output definition below</u>).</p> <p>(See UNDG, <u>Results-Based Management Handbook, 2012</u>.)</p>  |
| <b>Designated Official (DO)</b>                       | <p>In each country or designated area where the United Nations is present, the senior-most United Nations official is normally appointed in writing by the Secretary-General as the Designated Official for Security, and accredited to the Host Government as such. The DO is accountable to the Secretary-General, through the Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security, and is responsible for the security of United Nations personnel, premises and assets throughout the country or designated area.</p> <p>Normally, the Resident Coordinator will be appointed as the DO the Secretary-General, unless the Secretary-General appoints a more senior United Nations official who is resident in the country, on the advice of United Nations Department of Safety and Security (DSS).</p> <p>(UNSMS Security Policy Manual Chapter II Section B: Framework of Accountability)</p> |
| <b>Output</b>   | <p>Outputs are a composite of various Activities that collectively lead to a measurable change towards the achievement of Strategic Results. For the purposes of this Framework and of Programme Criticality Assessments, Outputs are defined as per the UNDG RBM Handbook:</p> <p><i>'Outputs are changes in skills or abilities and capacities of individuals or institutions, or the availability of new products and services that result from the completion of Activities within a [development] intervention within the control of the organization. They are achieved with the resources provided and within the time period specified'.</i></p> <p>(See UNDG, <u>Results-Based Management Handbook, 2012</u>.)</p>   |
| <b>Programme Criticality Coordination Team (PCCT)</b> | <p>The PCCT convenes United Nations entities at senior technical level to coordinate and provide support in the implementation of Programme Criticality (see terms of reference in annex II).</p>   |
| <b>Programme Criticality Steering Group (PCSG)</b>    | <p>Chaired at Assistant-Secretary-General level, the PCSG convenes United Nations entities at principals' level to oversee the implementation of the Programme Criticality Framework (see terms of reference in annex I).</p>   |
| <b>Present risk</b>                                   | <p>The security risk based on the threats, and the security measures and procedures <i>currently</i> in place. <i>(This is the relevant risk category for Programme Criticality Assessments)</i></p>  |
| <b>Residual risk</b>                                  | <p>The security risk remaining <i>after</i> approved security measures and procedures have been implemented.</p>  |
| <b>Results-based management (RBM)</b>                 | <p>RBM is a management strategy by which all actors, contributing directly or indirectly to achieving a set of results, ensure that their processes, products and services contribute to the achievement of desired results (Outputs, outcomes and higher-level goals or impact). The actors in turn use information and evidence on actual results to inform decision making on the design, resourcing and delivery of programmes and Activities as well as for accountability and reporting.</p> <p>(See: UNDG, <u>Results-Based Management Handbook, 2012</u>.)</p>  |

**Resident  
Coordinator  
(RC)**

The RC is the designated representative of, and reports to, the Secretary-General. The RC is accredited by letter of the Secretary-General to the Head of State or Government and acts as the primary interlocutor with them.

The RC is the leader of the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) and as such plays a central role at the country level in making possible the coordination of United Nations operational Activities for development in order to ensure alignment of United Nations assistance with national development priorities, plans and capacity building in the context of internationally agreed treaty obligations and development goals, and placing the United Nations centrally in development and international cooperation in the country.

**Risk**

The likelihood of a harmful event occurring and the impact of the event if it were to occur (Risk = Likelihood x Impact)

**Special  
Representative  
of the  
Secretary-  
General  
(SRSG)**

Appointed by the Secretary-General, often to lead a United Nations peacekeeping or special political mission. Usually the highest-ranking United Nations official in a country.

**Security  
Management  
Team (SMT)**

The SMT will consist of the DO, who acts as chair, the head of each United Nations organization present at the duty station and the Chief Security Adviser/Officer. The SMT advises the DO on all security-related matters. In peacekeeping missions, where the Head of Mission serves as the DO, the SMT may also include Heads of components, offices or sections, as specified by the DO.

(UNSMS Security Policy Manual Chapter II Section B: Framework of Accountability)

**Security Risk  
Management  
(SRM) and the  
SRM process**

SRM is the process of identifying future harmful events ("threats") that may affect the achievement of United Nations objectives. It involves assessing the likelihood and impact of these threats to determine the assessed level of risk to the United Nations and identifying an appropriate response. SRM involves four key strategies, namely controlling, avoiding, transferring and accepting security risk. Security risks are controlled through prevention (lowering the likelihood) and mitigation (lowering the impact).

The SRM process was first launched by the United Nations Security Management System (UNSMS) in 2004. A revised SRM process was promulgated through the UNDSS Policy on Security Risk Management (SRM) in April 2016. The SRM process supports valid, context-specific, and timely security risk assessments and risk management decisions to ensure that programmes are delivered within an acceptable level of security risk.

**United Nations  
personnel**

United Nations personnel is defined as:

- i. All United Nations system staff members, including temporary staff, in posts subject to international or local recruitment (except those who are both locally-recruited and paid by the hour);
- ii. United Nations Volunteers (UNVs);
- iii. Individually deployed military and police personnel in DPKO- or DPA-led missions, including, but not limited to:
  - a. United Nations police officers, military observers, military liaison officers, military advisors and staff officers; and
  - b. Military members of national contingents or members of formed police units when not deployed with their contingent or unit.
- iv. Consultants, individual contractors and experts on mission when actually employed by an organization of the United Nations system; and
- v. Officials other than United Nations Secretariat staff members and similar non-staff officials of other organizations of the United Nations system with a direct contractual agreement with a United Nations System organization

(UNSMS Security Policy Manual Chapter III: Applicability of the UNSMS)