

Funding Framework For Action



The Funding Framework consists of a pledge, the brief Funding Women Peacebuilders: Dismantling Barriers to Peace, the Operational Guidance to Improve Grantmaking to Women's Peacebuilding Organizations and the Action Tool. This action tool accompanies the operational guidance to indicate the recommendations you implement and your commitments to additional recommendations. Please complete the action tool by checking off one of the following boxes. If you have questions or would like to request a briefing from ICAN, please contact melinda.homes@icanpeacework.org.

- ☒ Select this box if you already implement this recommendation and provide a description of your activities;
- ☐ Select this box if you commit to implement this recommendation with a description of your proposed timeframe and activities;
- ☐ Select this box if you cannot implement this recommendation with a description of the barriers which prevent it

Align Funding Priorities with Existing Commitments to Women, Peace and Security

Do not engage in peacebuilding and/or P/CVE work without allocating funding and resources to local groups with experience and expertise in gendered peacebuilding and P/CVE and that are already active on the ground.

What not to do

1.
 - Recognize that adequate funding to WPBOs active in FCV contexts is critical to any peacebuilding or P/CVE efforts.
 - Proactively seek out such local groups.
 - Recognize peacebuilding as an essential area of practice, expertise, and vocation for women and men, distinct from but related to development, human rights, and humanitarian work, that necessitates adequate resources.

What to do

How to do it

1.1 Increase total amount of funding dedicated to WPBOs globally.

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1.2 Create dedicated funding streams for peacebuilding work and adopt a broad definition for strategic peacebuilding and P/CVE that encompasses the intersections between peace, rights, development, and humanitarian interventions.

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- 1.3 Make specific mention in policy frameworks and budgeting priorities of recognition and support to WPBOs with expertise in peacebuilding and security.

- 1.4 Require funding for the implementation of WPS legislation and NAPs (where they exist) in ODA packages to governments (including through international financial institutions).

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- 1.5 Undertake local mappings and/or connect with existing global women's peacebuilding networks—such as ICAN/Women's Alliance for Security Leadership (WASL), Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (GNWP), Madre, and others—to identify potential local WPBOs.

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✗ Do not exclude local WPBOs when defining program priorities or developing interventions in FCV contexts as this leads to the marginalization of women's work and expertise, absence of a gendered understanding of the drivers of conflict and peace, duplication of efforts, and repetition of bad practices.

2

- Ensure that the contextual expertise and local wisdom of women peacebuilders is recognized, respected, and considered when assessing or analyzing any conflict and determining funding priorities.
- Recognize that women peacebuilders' local expertise and representation brings a distinctive lens to understanding the conflict, including:
 - A unique reach into communities;
 - An understanding of how conflict and violence impact women, men, girls, boys, and non-binary people differently; and
 - A way to tap into hidden sources of influence and positive local agents of change.

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2.1 Engage and work side by side with WPBOs throughout the entire process, from assessment and project design through completion of reporting.

2.2 Conduct meaningful and respectful consultations with women peacebuilders that are not extractive of their ideas and knowledge.

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2.3 Use embassies as key convenors to bring women activists and WPBOs to the table with other donors/embassies.

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2.4 Include women peacebuilders on governance, advisory, and review boards and committees.

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2.5 Ensure women peacebuilders are included in and remunerated for time spent on consultations and program development.

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✗ Do not put the burden of contextual and gender understanding on a few gender experts within the donor entity.

3

- Ensure the P/CVE and peace staff of donor organizations have expertise in gender and conflict, strong knowledge of the context/region and relevant conflict-related issues, and commitment for long-term engagement.

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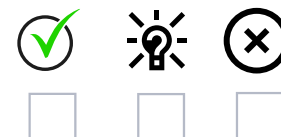
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- 4.1 Conduct an integrated and gendered peace and conflict analysis that assesses the forces that create instability and stability and provides a broader intersectional understanding of the peace and security context at that time.



- 4.2 Ensure a gender-sensitive conflict analysis and mapping from the outset of the project design conducted by local gender, peace and security experts when possible.



✗ Do not limit financial support solely to activity-based project funding in crisis settings as this restricts local WPBOs' ability to respond to new and urgent issues related to their contexts.

- 5 • Allow program flexibility to enable WPBOs to be agile and responsive to immediate changes on the ground, as exemplified by the COVID-19 crisis.

- 5.1 Develop alternative funding mechanisms to meet the needs of WPBOs, such as Rapid Response (RR) or flexible funding mechanisms, to enable rapid short-term support for urgent initiatives. Initiatives from WPBOs could include participation in peace- or decision-making processes, protection related to risks or threats faced, response to sudden humanitarian crises, or urgent psycho-social support.



✗ Do not force donor-driven agendas or Global North priorities on WPBOs by imposing pre-designed programs that have not been tailored to local contexts.

- 6 • Trust in and respect the local partners' wisdom, judgment, and assessment of the needs in their communities.

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- Recognize that each context and community, even within the same country, is unique and thus peace programming must respond to this.

- 6.1 Ask and allow partners to identify the objectives and types of interventions that are most necessary, urgent, and would have the greatest impact; conduct assessments where needed; and determine interventions based on intimate knowledge of the context and beneficiaries.


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- 6.2 Design programs to reflect the reality that no two conflicts or contexts are the same and each requires unique strategies and approaches that incorporate learnings from past challenges and successes.

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- 6.3 Avoid rigid Request for Proposal (RfP) models that impose pre- determined objectives and priorities on applicants.

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- 6.4 Engage in co-designed processes when possible, which will enable both parties to contribute expertise and develop joint understanding and vision.

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✗ Do not assume that scaling up (e.g., expanding or duplicating existing centralized programs) is the best model for peacebuilding or P/CVE work.

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- Adopt a 'scale across' strategy aimed at identifying and strengthening trusted locally rooted WPBOs in each community and learning from, adapting, and if possible, reproducing effective community-based programs.

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7.1

Identify successful local programs or methodologies that can be replicated and contextualized in other local communities.

7.2

Strengthen community structures by connecting CSOs with local government, police, media, or other institutions (e.g., local businesses, schools, religious communities).

7.3

Provide access for and help facilitate locally rooted authentic voices to be connected to each other and to be recognized at the global level (e.g., by supporting platforms such as WASL).



Do not focus funding on the large, well-established peacebuilding organizations, located mostly in the capitals.

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- Diversify funding among smaller WPBOs throughout the districts/provinces that have unique reach and access to their communities.
- Ensure money reaches local women's peacebuilding and P/CVE organizations active in communities most impacted by violence and instability.

8.1

Strengthen community-based organizations (CBOs) or smaller WPBOs that will have greater impact, resiliency, and ability to respond more quickly to crises, rather than relying on a few select larger organizations to carry out this work at the central level.

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8.2 Dismantle the monopoly of INGOs over long-term, large scale programs by providing equal opportunities for WPBOs to apply and receive funding for such programs.

8.3 Reinforce and highlight the power of locally rooted, authentic voices that are present in communities and ready to respond quickly to their evolving needs.

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8.4 Consider funding through local embassies or alternative funding mechanisms.

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8.5 Incubate (i.e., fund, mentor, and support) small community- based programs that are locally rooted and have access in key communities but don't yet have the established infrastructure to manage larger grants.

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✗ Do not silo funding by requiring programs that support WPBOs to allocate money solely for activities related to women, peace, and security.

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- Recognize that WPBOs may use different development, humanitarian, security, or human rights-based entry points to engage in their peacebuilding and P/CVE work.
- Address peace and security, humanitarian, rights, and development issues in an intersectional and gender-responsive way.
- Require all stakeholders— including donors, different divisions of government, INGOs, and regional organizations—to coordinate both with each other and with WPBOs on funding initiatives and programming to foster open and transparent dialogue.

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9.1 Give WPBOs the flexibility they need to respond to the needs on the ground and to define their own priorities without being constrained by rigid project-based funding.

9.2 Use funding to break down silos and allow local actors to respond holistically.

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Create Equitable Relationships



Do not create or perpetuate imbalanced power dynamics where the skills, expertise, and knowledge of WPBOs are not valued, and where they risk being subjected to extraction and exploitation.

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- Ensure equitable relationships between donors and all partners involved that reflect trust in and ownership of work by WPBOs.
- Establish systems that promote fiscal transparency and accountability.
- Protect partners and beneficiaries from harm, abuse, and exploitation that may arise from any contact with the donor or the implementation of its activities.

10.1 Ensure that INGOs (and other international organizations that attain government contracts) are transparent and inform WPBOs of the total programmatic budget allocated by donors.

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10.2 Ensure that there is a fair allocation of resources among all parties (especially INGOs and their local partners) and equitable resources for local staff (including competitive salaries and benefits).

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10.3 Engage WPBOs in the life cycle of the project, from needs assessments to implementation and evaluation, to ensure gender responsiveness and incorporate knowledge and experience of local stakeholders.

10.4 Foster ownership of local organizations by recognizing and resourcing sustainability and institutional/human strengthening efforts of the WPBO.

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10.5 Enable WPBOs to have a safe means of evaluating and/or providing feedback regarding the lead organization to the primary donor.

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10.6 Partnership agreements should reflect equal commitments and reference joint responsibility (e.g., both partners have equal access to one another's financial records in relation to the program).

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10.7 Develop robust safeguarding policies, which include the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, to prevent, protect partners and beneficiaries from, and respond to any harm.

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Do not claim credit and attribution for work done by local organizations or refer to them as “implementing organizations,” which can be diminishing and perpetuate imbalanced power dynamics.

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- Require fair representation and equal attribution of all the accomplishments, results, and impacts of funded programs, with adequate credit given to WPBOs.
- Create opportunities for WPBOs to gain independent recognition.



11.1

Collaborate to develop one communication strategy for funded programs.

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11.2

Ensure an agreement between both parties on the use of logos, social media, photos, and other related rights.

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11.3

With approval from the WPBOs, publicly recognize the ownership and innovation of the local organizations and their contributions to programming.

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11.4

With approval from the WPBOs, International Organizations (IOs) should reference and/or attribute their names publicly when discussing or reporting on the program.

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Do not allow international actors to allocate significant resources for the security and wellbeing of their own personnel, property, and premises without offering similar services and care for their local partner organizations and personnel.

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- Treat all partners and staff equally and value their wellbeing.
- Recognize the physical and psychological toll and the risk women peacebuilders take when engaged in this work.

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- Adopt and implement the ICAN Protection of Women Peacebuilders Operational Guidance.

12.1 Provide resources and include space in programming for local peacebuilding organizations to establish security protocols.


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12.2 Provide support and resources for psychosocial and emotional support or allow for partners to include these costs in their budgets.

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12.3 Include funding for organizational capacity development in personal, digital, and organizational security.

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12.4 Include support for risk assessments and protection mechanisms for Women Peacebuilders (WPBs) and Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRDs) when funding them.

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Value the Strengthening of Organizational Sustainability in Local Contexts

✗ Do not impose inflexible limitations on overhead or project management costs in the budget. Moreover, do not restrict funding to project activities, which prevents WPBOs from building their institutional and staff capacity.

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- Recognize the importance of institutional support of partner organizations and enable them to strengthen and improve their governance procedures and policies, including employment policies, safeguarding, etc.

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13.1 As a minimum, ensure that the funding covers all support costs necessary for project implementation. Allow the partner to determine and, where necessary, justify their financial needs.

13.2 Provide opportunities for core and flexible funding, which is critical for fostering the independence of local WPBOs and allowing them to be agile.

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13.3 Provide funding for technical assistance and organizational development—including proposal writing, monitoring and evaluation (M&E), reporting, staff salaries, and accounting—while recognizing that the requirements of each organization and each context will be unique.

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13.4 Provide funding for local organizations to collaborate with and build the capacities of national governments in FCV settings to be more gender responsive in their national planning and budget allocations.

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13.5 Provide resources if a conflict analysis or other program-related assessment by the partner is required as part of the proposal or program design process.

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✗ Do not impose donor-driven programmatic, M&E, or reporting requirements without feedback from local WPBOs or consideration for how these requirements could be structured to further build their capacities.

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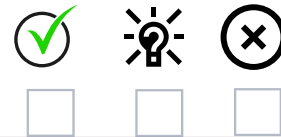
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- Encourage transparency and open dialogue in an effort to reduce undue burden placed on partners as a result of donor-driven administrative requirements.
- Ensure reporting requirements benefit the WPBO partner and further their organizational mission.
- Recognize that WPBOs are keen to build their own financial and administrative capacities.

14.1 Offer an information session prior to the start of the program to discuss deliverables, reporting requirements, procedures, and expectations.



14.2 Create two-way conversation channels that allow some level of flexibility (e.g., allowing partners to work from different reporting templates if they have their own) and provide a safe space for the WPBO partner to openly discuss challenges and obstacles with the donor. This can lead to collaboration on identifying solutions to challenges.



14.3 Narrative reports should include simple, reasonable, and targeted questions and be available for submission in several formats and languages.



14.4 Encourage project reporting that allows WPBOs to better understand their environment and the effects of their activities, validate their theory of change, and identify gaps for future action.



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Streamline Grant Processes

✗ Do not impose short one-off implementation periods for programming, which often result from donors' own pressure to work around their fiscal year, thus causing them to disburse large sums of money at once and allow short 3- to 12-month periods for organizations to absorb and undertake activities.

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- Recognize that peacebuilding and P/CVE programs take a significant amount of time to plan, implement, and report on. Short implementation periods will undermine the desired outcomes of the programs.
- Support institutional strengthening and program sustainability by not forcing organizations to be constrained by short timelines.
- Promote continuity of partnerships, which promotes sustainability and programs being rooted, owned, and developed organically by local communities.



15.1 Allow for longer implementation periods (minimum: 12 months, ideal: multi-year).

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15.2 Allow for multi-year collaborations with the partner during which programs build upon each other.

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15.3 If multi-year formal agreements are not feasible, where possible:

- Deepen and value relationships with partners (e.g., through ongoing communication after project completion).
- Prioritize continuity of programming by encouraging WPBO applications to recognize and build off achievements and lessons learned from completed projects.
- Reduce gaps between annual funding cycles.

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✗ Do not impose financial management and reporting requirements that may pose security threats to organizations working in FCV settings and/or can be extremely cumbersome to implement.

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- Financial management and reporting requirements should aim to reduce administrative costs for all parties while still ensuring accountability and the safety and security of partners.
- Recognize that WPBOs and others in the peacebuilding and P/CVE space are risking their lives to do their work. Funding arrangements should not increase this risk.

16.1 All donors, including INGOs, should engage in collaborative financial planning with WPBOs, including developing joint budgets and implementation plans.


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16.2 Allow partners to follow their own internal financial policies and guidelines (e.g., regulating submission of receipts for meals or transportation) instead of imposing regulations that were designed for larger actors or non-conflict settings.

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16.3 Consider eliminating donor pre-approval requirements for small variances at the level of individual budget positions. Instead, consider requiring donor approvals for larger (10% or more) variances at activity (or output) level.

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16.4 Consider alternative contract models that focus on outputs and impact such as a Fixed Amount Award (FAA) under U.S. law that allows for:

- A range of different means to prove expenditure of funds and completion of deliverables and activities;
- Payments to be made in fixed tranches based on the achieved milestones and pre-approved budget versus the actual expenditures.

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✗ Do not demand immediate, demonstrable impact of short-term programs and activities that are designed for peacebuilding and P/CVE programming, given that such initiatives aim for sustained behavior change.

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- Ensure the M&E methodology recognizes that impact in this field, even if achieved in the short-term, is best evident over time.
- Ensure the M&E methodology reflects the challenges of demonstrating behavior change and difficulties of proving a negative occurrence (e.g., violence did not occur).

17.1 Allow for a gap of 3-12 months between the completion of activities and impact reporting, recognizing the challenges of showing behavior change or success of a peacebuilding program, particularly in a short time frame.


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17.2 Allow local partners to co-lead when developing evaluation indicators to ensure they are reasonable for both parties and focus on impact in the communities.

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17.3 Allow evidence of increased institutional strength and organizational sustainability as demonstrations of successful programming (e.g., improved staff capacity, soliciting new donors, stronger financial accounting, etc.).

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17.4 Accept quantitative studies contextualized with observation and other qualitative methods (e.g., interviews, self-assessments) as part of reporting.

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✗ Do not design program or applicant requirements that impose undue administrative burdens or that may increase risks imposed on WPBOs.

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- Ensure that program designs and financial requirements recognize that working in FCV contexts means that many variables can affect stability and security, and thus program implementation.
- Reduce administrative burdens on the partner organization from the initial call for proposals through the final reporting period.

18.1 Allow partners to revise their project implementation and M&E plans to reflect changing conditions and lessons learned during the project.


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18.2 Balance donors' proposal and reporting requirements with the capacity of the partner organization.

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18.3 When feasible, use a solicited process for identifying organizations to fund rather than an open call for proposals, which can be incredibly labor intensive with little to no return for organizations that aren't selected.

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18.4 If an open call is necessary, reduce the burden on the grantees by, for example, only requiring a concept note or 1-pager with intentions to assess likelihood of funding.

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18.5 Adjust documentation requirements, such as proof of registration, to be consistent with local contexts.

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✗ Do not use cost reimbursable agreements where organizations are required to front their own cash and then are reimbursed after submitting a financial report and/or other financial documentation.

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- Design contractual arrangements for cash disbursement, which avoid undue financial burden to the partner organization.
- Consult with the partner to determine the most effective, fair, and risk-averse arrangement for disbursing funds.
- Shorten donor's approval process for disbursements.
- Decrease risk of foreign currency losses to the partners.



19.1 Allow for some cash to be disbursed in advance of the start of activities.

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19.2 If subsequent installments are conditional on submission of a financial report and supporting financial documentation, consider requesting a sample of documentation instead of 100% of all supporting documents. This will shorten reporting and payment approval time significantly.

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19.3 If possible, consider issuing an award in a local currency if that is partner's preference.

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✗ Do not unconditionally request that WPBOs repay all unspent funds, including interest income and/or foreign currency exchange gains, if they implemented the program with cost savings and achieved all objectives/outcomes.

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- Encourage the partner to manage their resources efficiently instead of encouraging them to spend 100% of the award.
- Consider allowing remaining funds to be used to improve organizational capacities or for other institutional needs.

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20.1 Establish or increase the existing minimum amount of unspent funds that must be returned.

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20.2 Allow foreign currency gains and any interest income associated with the award to be spent on the project activities or partner's institutional needs.

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20.3 Offer one of the following options (which may be contingent upon donor approval) for using all or some of the remaining funds:

- For institutional support (overhead);
- For post-implementation grant administrative costs, such as costs associated with final reporting or auditing (which are often considerable and not covered by the funding) or potential currency exchange rate losses on the final award installment;
- For similar program activities;
- As a bridge between different funding cycles, enabling organizational stability; or
- Towards emergency needs (e.g., protection from threats or participation in peace processes).

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Do not impose a minimum installment amount for disbursement of funds, which may pose high-security risks to partners and draw unwanted attention from local powerful elites.

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- Disbursement of funds and contract modality should be in line with policies that prioritize the safety, security, and independence of the partner.

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21.1 Allow for smaller tranches that ensure effective absorption of available funds to enable sustainable growth, function, and predictable funding that allows for planning.


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21.2 Consult with women peacebuilders on what kind of flexible and sustainable funding mechanisms they need.

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21.3 Reduce potential risks and harm by offering flexible funding mechanisms that allow for regular installments of smaller amounts of money.

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✗ Do not restrict disbursement options to traditional bank transfers.

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- Allow for alternative financial transfer mechanisms when a traditional bank transfer is not a feasible or safe option.

22.1 Determine disbursement of funds and contract modality in consultation with the organization.

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22.2 Include policies and procedures that allow options for cash payments, Western Union, and pre-paid debit cards.

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Additional space for details