



**MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
OF DENMARK**

MAY 2022

EVALUATION OF THE PEACE AND STABILISATION FUND





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Production: Evaluation, Learning and Quality Department, Ministry
of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, May 2022

Graphic production: Kontrapunkt

Cover image: NGO management training, Baytna

ISBN: PDF: 978-87-94339-12-4

This report can be downloaded through the homepage of the Ministry of Foreign
Affairs or directly from the homepage of the Evaluation, Learning and Quality
Department evaluation.um.dk.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	2
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	5
1. INTRODUCTION	10
2. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT FOR THE EVALUATION	11
3. METHODOLOGY	14
3.1 Evaluation scope	14
3.2 Approach and methods	14
3.3 Challenges and limitations	15
4. ACHIEVEMENT OF RESULTS	16
4.1 Achievements on the ground	17
4.2 Long-lasting peace and stabilisation	19
4.3 Results of the WOG approach	20
4.4 Results of the regional approach	22
4.5 Sustainability of PSF funded programmes	22
5. STRATEGIC USE, PRIORITISATION AND ALIGNMENT	23
5.1 Danish strategic objectives and policy priorities	23
5.2 Prioritisation and focus within the PSF	26
5.3 PSF programmes and contextual challenges and needs	28
5.4 Coherence and complementarity among danish efforts	28
5.5 Coordination and complementarity with other donors	30
6. DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION	32
6.1 Programme design – context analysis and theories of change	32
6.2 Implementation modalities	34
6.3 Programme monitoring	37

7. GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT	38
7.1 Strategic direction, guidance, and leadership	38
7.2 The PSF management set-up	39
7.3 Programming and financing procedures	41
7.4 Knowledge exchange, learning, communication, and visibility	41
8. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	43
8.1 Overall conclusion	43
8.2 Specific conclusions	43
8.3 Overall recommendation	45
8.4 Specific recommendations	45
9. BIBLIOGRAPHY	48

The following annexes to the Evaluation Report can be downloaded as separate PDF files from evaluation.um.dk.

Annex A: Portfolio analysis

Annex B: Progress against 2014 evaluation recommendations

Annex C: Benchmark - uk cssf

Annex D: List of interviewees

Annex E: Overview of regional programme results

Annex F: Overview of results to psf thematic priorities

Annex G: Regional case studies

Annex H: Terms of reference

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AJACS	Access to Justice and Community Security (programme in Syria)
AMG	Aid Management Guidelines
AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
AML/CFT	Anti-Money Laundering/Counter Financing on Terrorism
APP	Africa Programme for Peace
CDSP	Community Dialogue and Societal Peace Committee
CIJA	Commission for International Justice and Accountability
CIMIC	Civil Military Cooperation
CITAC	Civilian Casualties Identification, Tracking and Analysis Cell
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
CP	Conflict Pool
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSSF	UK Conflict, Stability and Security Fund
CVE	Countering Violent Extremism
DCD	Defence Command of Denmark
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration
DFID	Department for International Development
DIIS	Danish Institute for International Studies
DKK	Danish Kroner
DSF	Defence and Security Forces
DSIS/PET	Danish Security and Intelligence Service
EASF	East Africa Standby Force
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ELK	Evaluation, Learning and Quality Department
ERG	Evaluation Reference Group
EU	European Union
EUAM	EU Advisory Mission
EQ	Evaluation Question
FATF	Financial Action Task Force
FCDO	Foreign Commonwealth & Development Office
FCO	Foreign Commonwealth Office
FFS	UNDP Funding Facility for Stabilisation

G5S JF	G5 Sahel Joint Force
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GoG	Gulf of Guinea
HDP (Nexus)	Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus
HMT	HM Treasury
HO	Home Office
HoA	Horn of Africa
HQ	Head Quarter
HRBA	Human Rights Based Approach
HRCF	Human Rights Compliance Framework
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
ICAI	Independent Commission for Aid Impact
IDP(s)	Internally Displaced Person(s)
IED	Improvised Explosive Device
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
IIIM	International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism
IMSC	Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee
IRP	Integrated Reconciliation Project
ISIL	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
JACS	Joint Analysis of Conflict and Stability
JFU	Joint Funds Unit
LPC	Local Peace Committees
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
MDA	Ministries/Departments/Agencies
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MENA	Middle East and Northern Africa
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoD	Ministry of Defence
MoI	Ministry of Interior
Moj	Ministry of Justice
MTR	Mid-Term Review
NAP	National Action Plan

NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NCA	National Crime Agency
NCG	Nordic Consulting Group
NCPPB	Network for Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NMI	NATO Mission in Iraq
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NSC	National Security Council
NUPI	Norwegian Institute of International Affairs
OCSM	Office for Conflict, Stabilisation and Mediation
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD/DAC	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development/ Development Assistance Committee
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
P/CVE	Preventing/Countering Violent Extremism
PEA	Political Economy Analysis
PET	Politiets Efterretningstjeneste (English: Danish Security and Intelligence Service)
PMO	Prime Minister's Office
PSED	Peace and Stabilisation Engagement Document
PSF	Peace and Stabilisation Fund
PSP	Peace and Stabilisation Programme
R2P	Responsibility to Protect
RDE	Royal Danish Embassy
SAMSEK	PSF Inter-Ministerial Secretariat
SCD	Syrian Civil Defence
SDR	Strategic Defence Review
SDSR	Strategic Defence and Security Review
SRTF	Syria Recovery Trust Fund
SSF	Somalia Stability Fund
SSG	Salaam Support Group
SU	Stabilisation Unit

TDA	The Day After
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
TP	Thematic Programme
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNAMA	United Nations Mission in Afghanistan
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDPPA	United Nations Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs
UNMAS	United Nations Mine Action Service
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
US	United States
WANEP	West Africa Network for Peacebuilding
WOG	Whole of Government
WPS	Women, Peace and Security

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The Evaluation of the Peace and Stabilisation Fund (PSF) encompasses the period 2014-2020, covering the full portfolio of programmes and engagements during the period. Since PSF was established in 2010, a diverse range of peace and stabilisation programmes have been implemented in some of the world's hotspots – from Afghanistan, the Horn of Africa, and the Middle East, to the Sahel region and Eastern Europe. Over the past decade, financial resources for stabilisation programmes funded under the framework of the PSF have increased from DKK 155 million in 2010 to approximately DKK 500 million in 2020. The PSF takes a whole of government (WOG) approach which brings relevant actors, policies and tools together in an integrated and holistic manner and has gained traction among bilateral donors engaged in fragile and conflict affected contexts. The Fund includes four partners: the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and the Ministry of Justice (MoJ). The Governance of the PSF includes the Inter-ministerial Steering Committee (IMSC), which serves as the main decision-making body. The MFA and the MoD provide the funding and are the main members of the IMSC, the MoJ has in practice delegated its engagement in the field and its presence in the steering committee to the Police. The Steering Committee is supported by the WOG Secretariat (referred to as SAMSEK) with staff from the MFA and MoD.

The evaluation asked four main questions (EQs): 1) What have been the achievements both through **results** "on the ground" and in terms of Danish policies and inter-ministerial collaboration? 2) Use of the PSF in a sufficiently **strategic** manner, i.e., in terms of relevance of PSF funded programmes in relation to the given contexts; relevance to and alignment with Danish policies and priorities; coherence with and added value in comparison to other Danish and international efforts? 3) To what extent have programmes been **designed, implemented, and monitored** in a conducive manner to ensure effective interventions with maximum impact? 4) Have the arrangements for PSF **governance and management** been appropriate and adequate to facilitate the optimal and strategic use of the PSF, stronger inter-ministerial collaboration, appropriate leadership and guidance in implementation, knowledge exchange and learning?

This evaluation report is based on a portfolio analysis and three case studies: in (i) the Horn of Africa (Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia), (ii) Syria and Iraq; and (iii) the Sahel (Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger), and a light touch

desk analysis in the Gulf of Guinea and Ukraine; and benchmark analysis of the UK's Conflict Stabilisation and Security Fund (CSSF).

Overall conclusion

The PSF has been a relevant instrument for Denmark's engagement in fragile and conflict affected contexts, both at policy and programme level, in the period covered by the evaluation. The programmes have provided openings to engage together with partners in protracted crisis situations, and seek to stabilise conflict situations, address root causes and conflict drivers whilst supporting peace efforts. Such engagement signals Denmark's values towards democracy, peacebuilding, support security and the rights of conflict affected populations even when overall contexts have deteriorated.

Specific findings and conclusions

Evaluation Question 1: Results

There are short-term and medium-term results of PSF programmes. Short-term results include direct stabilisation efforts such as life-saving support, initiation of institutional reform steps, capacity building accomplishments, knowledge generation, documentation of human rights abuses, promotion of democratic processes, establishment of peace committees, creating spaces for public participation in policy making, and delivery of equipment and training. Regarding medium-term results, the picture is more mixed, but some results were achieved, such as the return of Internally Displaced Populations (IDPs) in Iraq, reduced piracy threat and greater readiness of the East Africa Standby Force in the Horn of Africa and strengthened local conflict resolution practices in Liptako-Gourma region in the Sahel.

The crises situations in which Denmark has engaged through the PSF have, in most cases, deteriorated despite Danish and international efforts. The degree to which PSF programmes have been able to contribute to long-term peace and stability have remained modest. The Sahel crisis and the Danish military departure from Mali, the expanded territorial position of Al Shabaab in Somalia and the takeover by Taliban in Afghanistan, and not least the acute conflict in Ukraine bear witness to the complexity of contributing to peace and stabilisation. Denmark, with its likeminded allies and partners have had high, and at times unrealistic expectations, which have been challenging to meet.

The PSF has provided an institutional platform for a WOG approach, which is a key value addition in the Danish toolbox for engaging in international peace and stabilisation. The value of the WOG approach has been demonstrated in the regional programmes, not least because of the doors it opens to security mandated institutions. A major strength of the PSF is its regional dimension and coverage, although it has not yet been systematically capitalised on. Nevertheless, the understanding of regional often seems to host different interpretations among the

stakeholders involved which weakens the clarity of objectives and the potential achievements.

The collaboration between the MFA and MoD has been consistent at governance level, and there are good examples where they have worked together. However, most work has been done separately, and the opportunities for complementarities have not been fully exploited. The MoJ has been a missing actor, despite its potential value addition. The presence of police advisers has strengthened the WOG approach in the programmes. However, the range of criminal activities and the need for capacity building of the security services, research and investigations of criminal network activities, strengthening of rule of law etc., have allowed for strategic gaps in the WOG approach of the PSF, due to the absence of the MoJ and its institutions.

Evaluation Question 2: Strategic use, prioritisation, and alignment

The PSF has been used in a strategic manner. The PSF regional programmes as well as other one-off engagements have been aligned with Danish development policies and foreign and security policies and interests. The programmes have been prepared in line with Danish interests while also being relevant in terms of addressing the needs and priorities in the targeted contexts. Over time, PSF programmes have paid greater attention to cross-cutting priorities on human rights, gender, and more recently the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda. In line with Denmark's multilateral ambitions, Denmark has been well placed in coalitions and alliances and has thereby contributed to international efforts. The PSF has demonstrated its value as a flexible instrument that can quickly respond to emerging issues and address Danish interests. Yet, responses have at times been ad-hoc without consideration for longer-term strategic priorities and focus.

The absence of clearly defined terminology has allowed for flexibility and context-specific programming, but also reduced the precision of the Fund's purpose. Some further clarification of key concepts and terminologies could strengthen a shared understanding of what the PSF does and does not do.

The regional programmes and engagements have been coherent and aligned with those of international like-minded actors. There are good examples where Denmark, through the PSF, has been able to provide added value compared to the efforts of others. While broadly coherent with- and complementary to other Danish efforts and programmes, the synergies among PSF and other Danish assistance programmes across the Humanitarian Development Peace (HDP) nexus have remained limited. The opportunities for synergies and mutual reinforcement between PSF programmes and policy dialogue have been recognised, but not always utilised.

The WPS agenda (and the body of UN Security Council Resolutions underpinning it) has only recently become a priority for the PSF and cannot be traced as a priority in implementation in the period covered by the evaluation.

There are some examples where complementarities between WOG partners reinforced results, demonstrating the real value addition of the PSF as an instrument. The approach enables analysis of different drivers of complex crises and opens for a broad palette of experience and interventions.

Evaluation Question 3: Design and implementation

The PSF programmes have been designed based political economy descriptions that remained quite broad which did not always pay sufficient to security aspects, and interlinkages between different conflict drivers. Across the board, analyses could have been deeper. The work of researchers has not systematically been shared at senior management level (IMSC) and been used strategically to inform programmes. It is also unclear as to what extent the analyses (conducted in connection with programming) have been shared and discussed by the WOG partners prior to making decisions on programming.

The Theories of Change (ToC) have mainly focused on contextual and programmatic pre-conditions for the programmes, which has limited the usefulness of ToCs. Some of the implicit, untested causal assumptions in the ToCs were unrealistic and overoptimistic. They revolved around the ability of capacity building interventions to generate behaviour change and the assumptions of linear progression from military liberation of areas. This was through the (re)-introduction of the state to regulate or deliver basic services, to be able to keep an area stable, and for development programmes to “take over” and start a peaceful trajectory of long-term positive development actions.

The choice of implementing partners was appropriate considering resource constraints, the continuation of existing relations and contextual dynamics. In all programmes, there was relatively limited choice in terms of potential implementing partners with the right expertise. The direct implementation by MoD and the Police gave Denmark valuable entry points into national government institutions and access to decision-makers in the security sector.

The outcomes of programmes were not captured adequately, and the M&E put more emphasis on activities and processes.

Evaluation Question 4: Governance and management

The Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee did not sufficiently take up its role in terms of providing strategic direction and was not sufficiently used as a forward-looking strategic steering platform. In particular, the

need to adjust approaches and reassess risks of engagement, has not been addressed sufficiently.

The human resources available for the monitoring and management of PSF, considering its regional coverage and involvement in a substantial number of programmes (as well as one off engagements) seem insufficient.

The PSF programmes by and large demonstrated a high in-built risk tolerance capacity. PSF procedures have allowed for a sufficiently flexible and adaptive implementation with significant room to revise, discontinue, or expand engagements throughout the programming cycle to reflect emerging challenges and opportunities.

There has been limited facilitation of learning across all programmes. A feedback loop has not been established, and reporting goes towards central level, with sporadic horizontal exchanges. There has been little visibility of the Fund and its programmes due to lack of a developed external communication strategy.

Overall recommendation

The scale and complexity of crises and Denmark's priorities of engaging in fragile and conflict affected setting (both in low- and middle-income contexts) calls for the PSF to be a central instrument in Denmark foreign policy and security engagements. For the PSF to strengthen its relevance, effectiveness, complementarity and coherence, the WOG partners should urgently prioritise deep-dive strategic-level discussions among senior level representatives in the PSF, and key stakeholders on the objectives, scope, and priority areas for PSF 2.0, in order to sharpen focus, priorities and delivery of results taking note of the following:

Specific recommendations

Achievement of results

1. Conduct independent, in-depth context and stakeholder analyses that precede programming, and are updated at regular intervals. The purpose is to set realistic objectives which draw on Denmark's added value, deliver engagements that focus on key conflict drivers, and major opportunities for peacebuilding. This will also enable the PSF to draw on the most relevant and the best possible expertise, and to continuously reassess risks, the need for adaptation, and potential exit points. Action: IMSC/SAMSEK/Implementing Units.
2. Strengthen the PSF's WOG approach between MFA and MoD and engage the MoJ both at strategic level and in implementation in order to draw on MoJ institutions' expertise. The active role of MoJ calls for a budget for international engagement or a close cooperation with MFA on priorities and financing support. Action: MFA/MoD/Moj/PMO.

Strategic use, prioritisation, and alignment

3. Strengthen a shared understanding of the scope, aims and boundaries of the PSF, and revise the PSF guidelines to place greater emphasis on conflict prevention and sustaining peace. Reflect on how peace and stabilisation are understood in the Fund, and the spectrum of interventions that they encompass, noting that peacebuilding and stabilisation are not opposing terms. New and different challenges, such as climate change related conflicts also call for a consideration of current and future issues to be addressed. Action: SAMSEK with approval by IMSC.
4. Continue to balance long-term programming and emergency response, while keeping emphasis on the long-term programming in regions and enhance the strategic use and complementarity of ODA and non-ODA funding at programme level. Ensure that one-off engagements are aligned with the Fund's strategic objectives. Action: Embassies and IMSC.
5. Ensure that Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) is mainstreamed into PSF programmes. One option would be to establish that a certain proportion of engagements must have a WPS focus at the level of overall or thematic objectives. Ensure that WPS engagement is more clearly integrated into monitoring and results frameworks. Action: Embassies and IMSC.
6. Continuously improve complementarity with country programmes and other Danish and international programmes and modalities, and, in particular, see the PSF through the lens of its contribution in nexus approaches. Action: Embassies and SAMSEK.

Design, implementation, and monitoring

7. Develop realistic ToCs, taking a more comprehensive range of assumptions and risks into account and see interventions as a non-linear progression towards positive outcomes. Use ToC analysis in the course of implementation to assess changes and adjustments. Action: Embassies and SAMSEK.
8. Enhance the focus on outcome level monitoring and evaluation in close collaboration with partners. This includes more strategic use of external knowledge/research capacities and strategic level annual reviews with a greater focus on and barriers; Action: Embassies and SAMSEK.

Governance and management

9. Strengthen the strategic and interactive role of IMSC, both vis-a-vis political decision makers and other staff of the ministries involved.

This includes:

- playing a role at the conceptualisation of programmes and communicate the overall strategic value of the PSF to external stakeholders;
- engaging in policy dialogue in the Danish context and ensuring this is reflected at programme level;
- drawing on research and implementation experiences in strategic discussions at the IMSC level to ensure these inform decision-making.

Action: IMSC and SAMSEK.

10. Restructure the role of SAMSEK vis-à-vis the IMSC, to allow room for the latter to engage at a more strategic level in line with Recommendation 9. This entails reducing the reporting approval related tasks that the IMSC currently undertakes, if and when these can be carried out by SAMSEK instead. In the same vein, reassess the review and monitoring tasks of SAMSEK and the representations in the field with a view to reducing the time spent at each level, e.g., on partner administrative monitoring. Action: IMSC and SAMSEK.
11. Increase sharing and management of knowledge among programmes (horizontally) and between field and Denmark (HQ). In addition, ensure that there are platforms or mechanisms for applied research to be shared and integrated into strategic discussions and planning. Action: SAMSEK, embassies and IMSC. Disseminate knowledge and experiences to the public through events, written/ video material to increase the visibility of PSF activities and results. Action: SAMSEK, embassies and IMSC.
12. Increase human resources (both at HQ and in the field) and ensure the workload of staff goes beyond processing and allows time for proper analysis of programmes and learning across programmes. Action: MFA, MoD and MoJ.

1. INTRODUCTION

Nordic Consulting Group (NCG), together with Ecorys Netherlands, was commissioned by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) to undertake the evaluation of the Danish Peace and Stabilisation Fund (PSF), focusing on the period 2014-2020. The PSF is a flexible funding mechanism aimed at contributing to enhanced peace and stability in some of the world's most vulnerable and conflict-affected "hotspots".

The evaluation has three objectives that span across policy level, operations, structure, organisation, and learning from performance assessments:

- To document the achievements and main results of PSF programmes with respect to their objectives and theories of change, both in terms of outcomes "on the ground" and in terms of overall policies adopted and carried out through the Whole of Government (WOG) approach;
- To analyse critical issues in peace and stabilisation and responses as demonstrated by the PSF programmes;
- To synthesise main lessons learned and to propose recommendations for improved operation of the Fund.

The current evaluation is the first major assessment since the PSF was evaluated in 2013-2014.¹ Prior to the current PSF Evaluation, the Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS) prepared a Scoping Study² which set an important strategic frame for the evaluation³. The evaluation has an encompassing scope spanning the full portfolio and global coverage of the PSF with in-depth analysis in three regions (Sahel, Horn of Africa, and Iraq/Syria).

1 Danida, 2021, Appendix 1 Scope of Services, p. 4.

2 Danish Institute for International Studies (2021). Scoping Study for an Evaluation of the Peace and Stabilisation Fund. How to strengthen Danish stabilisation engagement. Copenhagen, Denmark: Danish Institute for International Studies., p. 2. (Henceforth referred to as DIIS Scoping Study).

3 Ibid, p. 3, and DIIS Scoping Study, p. 5.

The evaluation was carried out between July 2021 and April 2022. The evaluation team included Anne-Lise Klausen (team leader), Evelien Weller, Alessandra Cancedda, Ayla Yurtaslan, and Tobias Broich supported by Assoumane Maiga, Sampala Balima, Judith Omondi, and Abdeta Beyene. Peter Viggo Jakobsen, Associate Professor Royal Danish Defence College, acted as adviser and peer reviewer. The evaluation was overseen by the Evaluation, Learning and Quality (ELK) Department of the MFA, with support, quality assurance and additional oversight by an Evaluation Reference Group (ERG).

The evaluation has benefitted greatly from the support by the evaluation management, the Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee, and the secretariat and staff of the MoD and MFA. The embassies and advisers in the regions visited were very helpful in connection to the fieldwork. Thanks also to all those interviewed who gave freely of their valuable time. The evaluation is independent, and the report does not express official views of the MFA or the MoD.

Copenhagen, May 2022

2. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT FOR THE EVALUATION

Over the last two decades, whole of government (WOG) approaches which bring relevant actors, policies and tools together in an integrated or holistic manner, have gained traction among bilateral donors engaged in fragile and conflict affected contexts. In the Danish context, a comprehensive WOG approach was introduced as part of the 2005-2009 Defence Agreement seeking to improve collaboration between Danish humanitarian actors and the Danish military. More specifically, the need for a WOG approach and framework grew from challenges observed in the Danish engagement in Iraq and Afghanistan, which made the civil-military cooperation (CIMIC) model no longer viable due to the non-permissive environment, which presented obstacles in getting civilian experts and organisations to support the work of the Danish military.⁴

In 2010, efforts to improve the Danish WOG approach culminated in the establishment of an inter-ministerial, flexible funding mechanism, the Peace, and Stabilisation Fund (PSF), drawing on inspiration from the UK Stabilisation Unit. The Fund includes four principal WOG partners: the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and the Ministry of Justice (MoJ). At the heart of the PSF is the Inter-ministerial Steering Committee (IMSC) which serves as the main decision-making body. The MFA and the MoD provide the funding and are the main members of the IMSC. The committee monitors the coherence of policies and strategies and approves programmes and appropriations. The Steering Committee is supported by the Whole-of-Government Secretariat (referred to as SAMSEK) with staff from the MFA and MoD. Box 2.1 provides further detail on the institutional set-up of the PSF.

4 Bertelsmann Stiftung, WGA 2020 Country Report – Denmark-Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2020.

**TABLE 2.1: MFA/MOD BREAKDOWN OF PSF SPENDING FROM 2014-2020
(DKK MILLION)⁷**

Year	MFA (ODA)	MFA (non-ODA)	MOD (non-ODA)	Total
2014	186.3	23.7	80.1	290.1
2015	324.5	18.6	70.2	413,3
2016	223.3	24.8	69.6	317.7
2017	259.1	22.1	69.9	351.1
2018	379.6	11.1	85.3	476
2019	399.9	10.5	74.6	485
2020	408.2	11.2	80.4	499.8

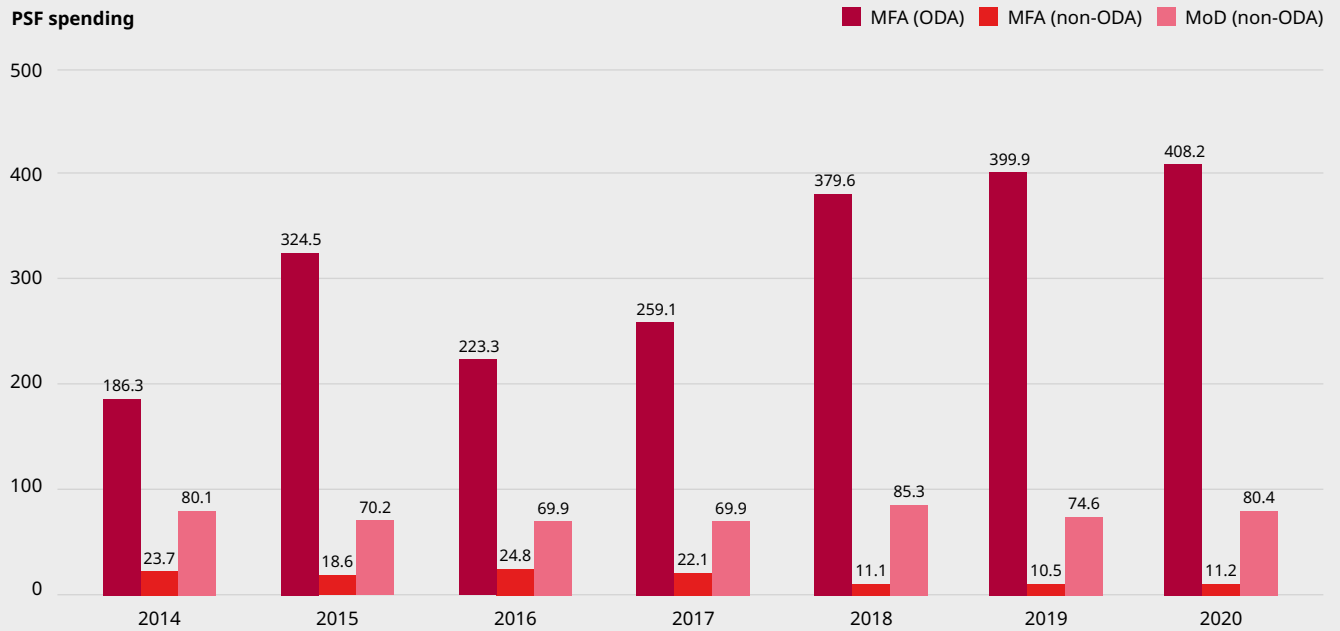
Since it was established, the PSF has carried out a diverse range of peace and stabilisation programmes in some of the world's hotspots – from Afghanistan, the Horn of Africa, and the Middle East, to the Sahel region and Eastern Europe. Over the past decade, financial resources for stabilisation programmes funded under the framework of the PSF have increased from DKK 155 million in 2010 to approximately DKK 500 million in 2020.⁵ In particular, MFA funding has increased significantly, as illustrated in Table 2.1 and Figure 2.1 below, constituting roughly 80% of the total funding.⁶

5 It should be noted, however, that the Ministry of Defence is planning to increase its share of funding, as the 2018 Defence Agreement raised allocations to the Fund to DKK 150 million by 2023, www.fmn.dk/globalassets/fmn/dokumenter/forlig-danish-defence-agreement-2018-2023-pdf-2018.pdf

6 Ibid, p. 7.

7 Table source: PSF Annual Reports 2014-2020.

FIGURE 2.1: MFA/MOD BREAKDOWN OF PSF SPENDING FROM 2014-2020 (DKK MILLION)



Note on terminology: Official development assistance (ODA) is defined by the OECD/DAC as government aid that promotes and specifically targets the economic development and welfare of developing countries. The boundary of what constitutes ODA has been carefully delineated to exclude e.g. military aid, most peacekeeping expenditures, nuclear energy, and cultural programmes, with the exception of some closely-defined developmentally relevant activities.

Source: PSF Annual Reports 2014 – 2020 & OECD/DAC definitions of ODA/non-ODA.

BOX 2.1: OVERVIEW OF THE DANISH PEACE AND STABILISATION FUND (PSF) SET-UP

Constitution: The Fund is made up of the PMO, the MFA, MoD and the Moj. MFA and MoD provide the funding, and are the main members of the decision-making body, the IMSC. The Moj is not active in the IMSC but has requested the Police to represent them.

Implementation: MoD implements many stabilisation and capacity development activities 'in-house' through subordinate agencies (Defence Command, Home Guard, etc.). The MFA usually uses external implementing partners such as UN agencies, regional organisations, NGOs, think tanks, consultants, etc. The Police are also engaged in PSF programmes.

Programming focus: The PSF combines a programmatic regional long-term perspective with a mechanism enabling it to provide funding for PSF a wide range of mostly three-year programmes have been carried out across Africa, the Middle East and Eastern Europe with a diverse set of partners. Activities funded include mine clearance; the provision of basic services; training of police and security forces; preventing and combatting violent extremism (P/CVE); various forms of capacity development through support for United Nations peacekeeping operations and NATO; and the provision of advisory services for conflict resolution and strengthening maritime security. Contributions have also been given to the UN Peacebuilding Fund and to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Thematic priorities: The PSF Guidelines identify six thematic priorities for programming: (i) directly stabilising efforts; (ii) preventing/countering violent extremism; (iii) conflict prevention and resolution; (iv) security and justice sector efforts; (v) countering transnational organized crime and illegitimate financial flows; and (vi) strengthening maritime security.

Guiding principles: The PSF Guidelines identify 11 guiding principles for engagement: Whole of Government; regional focus; Danish interests; partnerships and alliances; Danish influence; achievements of results; innovation and flexibility; risk tolerance; emphasis on programmatic approach; administrative resources basis; and complementarity with other efforts.

After more than a decade of activity – and seven years after the last evaluation – it is time to assess the relevance, effectiveness and coherence of the Fund, and its use and range of engagements. The global landscape of fragility and conflicts include protracted crisis situations, where a multitude of conflict drivers and interests intertwine with no obvious pathways towards a positive development trajectory. The World Bank notes that up to two-thirds of the world's extreme poor could live in fragile, conflict affected and violent settings by 2030. Key challenges include “climate change, rising inequality, demographic change, new technologies, illicit financial flows and other global issues that may also create fragility risks”⁸. Covid-19 has added an additional layer of fragility particularly in poor countries.

Political attention towards the use of the PSF has declined. Critical voices now question the validity of an integrated approach which was key to the conceptualisation of the Fund. Others see the need for integrated/complementary approaches in new forms, such as a humanitarian development peace (HDP) nexus approach, now becoming more essential than ever. Some see the PSF as a useful instrument in its current form and with only minor adjustments needed. Other views suggest that the experience of the PSF could be “mainstreamed” in Denmark's international engagements and not continue as an instrument with its own management structure. The evaluation is therefore seen as timely, and aims to provide valuable insights on the performance, results, and learning from the Fund to inform decision making on the future of the Fund. In the seven years since the last evaluation, the PSF has developed significantly. However, some of the recommendations from the previous evaluation remain relevant despite progress. Therefore, the current evaluation has also assessed the uptake of the recommendations of the 2013-14 evaluation which can be found in Annex B.

8 Fragility, Conflict and Violence Overview (worldbank.org).

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Evaluation scope

The Evaluation of the Peace and Stabilisation Fund encompasses the period 2014-2020, covering the full portfolio of PSF programmes and engagements during the period at a strategic level – but takes the conclusions and recommendations of the former Evaluation 2010-2014 into consideration (Annex B). Three case studies of PSF programmes were undertaken to provide in-depth analysis of the results as well as barriers and opportunities that have been encountered. The three regional case studies cover (i) the Horn of Africa (Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia), (ii) Syria and Iraq; and (iii) the Sahel (Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger). Additionally, a light-touch desk analysis has been conducted for the Gulf of Guinea (GoG) and Ukraine. Finally, the evaluation looked at the UK's Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF) in order to “benchmark” key features of the Danish PSF.

The four key evaluation questions (EQs) are:

- EQ 1:** What have been the **achievements** of PSF-funded programmes since 2014, both through results “on the ground” and in terms of Danish policies and inter-ministerial collaboration?
- EQ 2:** To what extent has the PSF been used in a **sufficiently strategic** manner, i.e., in terms of relevance of PSF funded programmes in relation to the given contexts; relevance to and alignment with Danish policies and priorities; coherence with and added value in comparison to other Danish and international efforts?
- EQ 3:** To what extent have PSF programmes in the period 2014-2020 been **designed, implemented, and monitored** in a conducive manner to ensure effective interventions with maximum impact?
- EQ 4:** Have the arrangements for PSF **governance and management** been appropriate and adequate to facilitate optimal and strategic use of the PSF, stronger inter-ministerial collaboration, appropriate leadership and guidance in implementation, knowledge exchange and learning?

3.2 Approach and methods

In line with the Terms of Reference (ToR), the Evaluation has been carried out in accordance with the Danida evaluation Guidelines⁹ and the updated (2019) OECD/DAC evaluation criteria¹⁰ and methodology. The process was carried out in three main phases: (i) the inception phase; (ii) the main study phase (including field visits); and (iii) the synthesis and reporting phase. The evaluation applied a mixed-methods approach drawing on a combination of data collection methods to support triangulation and corroboration of key findings. The methods were predominantly qualitative in the form of key informant interviews and desk reviews, supplemented by quantitative data collected and consolidated into the portfolio analysis.

The evaluation drew on five key methods:

- 1 Desk review** of literature and documentation related to PSF programmes and engagements, (over 200 documents); research and policy documents on peace and stabilisation from Denmark and other donors; and other relevant evaluations (such as the Evaluation of the Africa Programme for Peace (APP) and of Danish engagement on the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (WPS)).
- 2 Portfolio analysis**, on the basis of documentation provided by the MFA, covering the entire portfolio of PSF programmes and engagements from 2014-2020 including the breakdown of ODA and non-ODA and MFA/MoD funding contributions, choice of partners, and spending by thematic priority per year and region/country. See the full Portfolio Analysis in Annex A.
- 3 Key stakeholder interviews**, throughout the evaluation process, both at the strategic level in Copenhagen, in the case study regions, and in other regions of PSF presence, Danish MFA and MoD staff from HQ, and embassies, PSF advisers, defence attachés and civilian/police advisers in the regions, implementing partners (multilaterals, bilateral, NGOs), representatives from UN agencies, other embassies, NATO Mission Iraq (NMI), EU Advisory Mission (EUAM), government officials in case study countries, and independent civil society representatives in country. A List of Interviewees can be found in Annex D.
- 4 Regional case studies** in the Horn of Africa, Syria-Iraq, and the Sahel region. For the three regions, the evaluation a) reviewed key documents from the PSF programmes and engagements, including

9 Evaluation Guidelines (Danida/MFA, 2018), can be accessed [here](#)

10 See here: www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/revised-evaluation-criteria-dec-2019.pdf

programme documents and appraisals, implementation reports, reviews, evaluations; b) interviewed relevant stakeholders at HQ and field level; and c) identified and examined more closely the selected engagements. For more information, see the Regional Case Study Reports (with a more detailed methodology) attached as Annex G.

- 5 **Benchmarking/comparative assessment** focusing on CSSF. See a comparative brief covering the CSSF put together by the evaluation in Annex C.

3.3 Challenges and limitations

The evaluation yielded sufficiently robust findings, enabling the Evaluation Team to answer all evaluation questions. There were, however, some limitations due to the evaluation design (ToR) and implementation challenges.

Primary data collection was conducted in three regions selected for case studies, meaning that information on other regions or countries, where important lessons were learned recently (Afghanistan, Ukraine), was included to a lesser extent.

Even in the regions chosen as case studies, only few locations could be visited by the evaluation. Furthermore, the time for the field visits was often not sufficient for an in-depth understanding of the engagements. In the MENA region, it was not possible to visit Syria, which was compensated by visits to Istanbul and Beirut and third-party monitoring data of implementing partners. In the Sahel, it was not possible to visit the Liptako-Gourma area where many projects were implemented. In the Horn of Africa, it was only possible to visit Mogadishu, but not go to projects outside the capital. These accessibility issues meant that the point of view of direct beneficiaries of interventions could, in many cases, only be captured indirectly through available reports and evaluations.

Furthermore, due to high staff turnover and limited institutional memory within PSF, interviewees tended to focus on the most recent part of the evaluation period. Coverage of earlier years was therefore only possible to a lesser degree.

Finally, the limited availability of documentary evidence on policy dialogue and on programme outcomes reduced the possibility to triangulate findings from interviews. The overall spending and trends in the portfolio were well documented through annual reports, but some information gaps at the engagement level, e.g., on funding to specific thematic priorities, partners, and ODA/non-ODA funds, affected the analysis at times.

4. ACHIEVEMENT OF RESULTS

EQ 1. What have been the achievements of PSF-funded programmes since 2014, both through results “on the ground” and in terms of Danish policies and inter-ministerial collaboration?

SUMMARY RESPONSE TO EVALUATION QUESTION 1:

The examined programmes contributed both to short- and to mid-term results. A range of factors (contextual, and programme-related) have influenced and thereby either enhanced or reduced the potential achievements of results on the ground. The degree to which PSF programmes have been able to contribute to long-term peace and stability has been modest. There are adverse factors which influence long-term peace that are way beyond what the PSF interventions can influence. From a more generic viewpoint, the evaluation findings underscore that addressing root causes of fragility and conflict is a slow and a non-linear process which is not easily addressed by short-term interventions that are led and delivered in isolation by different ministries, organisations and partners.

The sustainability of programmes has been moderate and mainly in the areas of capacity building and local/national ownership. Sustainability was not always a main aim of programmes or engagements. Nevertheless, considerable efforts have been made by partners and programme management to enhance institutional and financial sustainability at engagement level.

The PSF has provided an institutional platform for a WOG approach, which is a key value addition in the Danish toolbox for engaging in international peace and stabilisation. The value of the WOG approach has been demonstrated in the regional programmes, not least because of the doors it opens to security mandated institutions. The MoJ has been a missing actor in the WOG approach.

A major strength of the PSF is its regional dimension and coverage, although it has not been systematically capitalised on. Denmark has stood out among donors for having a regional approach. Nevertheless, the understanding of regional, seems often to have different interpretation among the stakeholders involved which weakens the clarity of objectives and the potential achievements.

BOX 4.1: NOTE ON HOW THE EVALUATION USES RESULTS TERMINOLOGY

Results are defined as the outputs, outcomes or impacts of development interventions, with each element contributing to the next change process.

- **Outputs:** The products, capital goods and services which result from a development intervention; may also include changes resulting from the intervention which are relevant to the achievement of outcomes.
- **Outcomes:** The likely or achieved short-term and medium-term effects of an intervention's outputs, such as changes in behaviour of targeted actors.
- **Impacts:** Positive and negative, primary, and secondary long-term effects produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended, or unintended.

Source: OECD/DAC (2010) Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management.

4.1 Achievements on the ground

The examined programmes¹¹ contributed to both short- and medium-term results.¹² Results at output level include direct stabilisation efforts such as immediate life-saving support, initiation of institutional reform steps, capacity building accomplishments, knowledge generation, documentation of human rights abuses, promotion of democratic processes, establishment of peace committees, creating spaces for public participation in policy making, and delivery of equipment and training. At the outcome level, the picture is more mixed; however, some results were achieved, including for example the return of internally displaced people (IDPs) to newly liberated areas, a reduction of piracy threats in the Horn of Africa (HoA), capacity of the East Africa Standby Force (EASF) to be deployed, and strengthened local conflict resolution practices in the Liptako-Gourma region.

11 Overview of overall objectives, thematic objectives and engagements (projects) are found in Annex G.

12 In most engagements Denmark works in partnerships, alliances and through pooled funding mechanisms and hence results cannot solely be attributed to the PSF.

In Syria/Iraq, the PSF programmes implemented in the period 2014-2021 have contributed to immediate recovery and stabilisation, strengthened civil society, community resilience and social cohesion. The programmes have produced a range of outputs and achieved some positive outcomes, including immediate (and to a lesser degree mid-term) improvements to civilian stabilisation, in line with the efforts of the Global Coalition against Daesh/ISIL.¹³ Denmark was able to contribute to the civilian stabilisation efforts by the Global Coalition as well as respond to various other requests (e.g., from the US, UN, and the Government of Iraq), which could be considered as important achievements in themselves, in line with Danish multilateral ambitions.

The engagements have made fair strides in contributing to immediate and medium-term civilian stabilisation efforts and have led to tangible results in an extremely challenging context. While a political solution in Syria has remained elusive, programmes have been important in strengthening moderate actors, enabling them to play a role in the political process and in an eventual peace process. Tangible results were also achieved through the work of the White Helmets and the Syria Recovery Trust Fund (SRTF), which has led to improvements on the ground in terms of immediate recovery and life-saving support in northern parts of Syria. In Iraq, the engagements have contributed to enhancing conditions for a more stable environment (e.g. through demining, security sector reform and social cohesion) and the return of IDPs (see Annex E for an overview of results by thematic programme).

In the Horn of Africa, the PSF programmes have built capacities of partners, supported local level democratic processes in Somalia, contributed to the EASF becoming ready for deployment, and started to address transnational crime. Programmes have delivered on outputs, but not always achieved their expected outcomes. Only a few engagements have not delivered on the expected outputs.¹⁴ With regard to outcomes, there is a mixed picture: the EASF has become ready for deployment and possesses both military and civil capacities. The significant decline in the level of piracy threats and establishment of rule of law framework related to piracy was an outcome from Phase I of the programme, which has been consolidated in the two programme phases covered by this evaluation. Local and national governance capacities (institutions of democracy) and peace dividends, i.e. service delivery outcomes were enhanced through the Somalia Stability Fund (SSF). It

13 The Global Coalition against Daesh/ISIL was formed in September 2014 and consists of 84 members. Together, the Global Coalition's 84 members are committed to degrading and ultimately defeating ISIL on all fronts, to dismantling its networks and countering its global ambitions. Denmark has been part of the Coalition from its start in 2014 through diplomatic and military support and support to civilian stabilisation efforts.

14 Engagement to support AMISOM civilian stabilisation in Somalia.

is difficult to verify whether the reintegration of Al-Shabaab fighters into society has been achieved. Nevertheless, the Al-Shabaab defection programme is important because it offers an interim alternative that is critical for signalling formal pathways away from Al-Shabaab. Regional and governmental capacities to curb transnational threats across land and sea borders have increasingly been supported. This has added value to Denmark's engagement in the region, however, major outcomes have not yet been achieved.

In Sahel, the funded engagements have contributed to the strengthening of local conflict resolution practices in the Liptako-Gourma area and to improved relations between local population and defence and security forces. Yet, the achievements appear fragile. Results to be noted include local communities' involvement in conflict prevention and resolution through mediation practices; greater democratic control of the security sector; increased trust and cooperation of population with defence and security forces in border regions; greater compliance of security services with human rights and international humanitarian law; more accessible, efficient and accountable criminal justice systems; improved countering of violent extremism and organised crime and strengthened regional security forces (see Annex E for an overview of results).

From a more generic viewpoint, the evaluation findings underscore that addressing root causes of fragility and conflict is a slow and a non-linear process. Positive trajectories and solutions are a result of complex political processes which involve local, national, regional and international actors and donors. The Sahel crisis and the departure of Denmark (and other European actors) from Mali, the increased territorial position of Al-Shabaab in Somalia and the continued destabilisation, the acute war in Ukraine, and the Taliban takeover in Afghanistan all underscore the complexity of contributing to peace and stabilisation. Long-term outcomes are also highly dependent on political will and broad alliances towards peace and stabilisation, which are difficult to establish in the current fragmented political and security contexts. Nevertheless, it should be underscored that Denmark and its like-minded partners have had high and unrealistic expectations, which have been challenging to meet.

BOX 4.2: PARTNERSHIPS AND ALLIANCES

The PSF Guidelines emphasise the importance of partnerships and alliances: "The PSF's efforts ought, where feasible and relevant, to be implemented in partnerships and/or alliances with other relevant countries or international and regional actors, where 'likeminded' interests with Denmark exist, or where Denmark has an interest in strengthening the relationship."

Results were achieved in all six thematic priority areas of the PSF. The categorisation of PSF interventions across the six thematic priority areas is not clear-cut. While some interventions are clearly responding to one category, other types of interventions cut across several priority areas. Moreover, for some programmes the overall objective corresponds to one of the six categories and as such the entire programme could be considered as relevant for a priority area. Despite these caveats, Annex F provides a run-down of the case study programme contributions to the six categories.¹⁵

A range of factors have influenced and thereby either enhanced or reduced the potential achievements of results on the ground. Table 4.1 below presents an overview of some of the major factors identified.

TABLE 4.1: FACTORS OBSERVED IN THE CASE STUDIES THAT HAVE AFFECTED THE ABILITY OF THE PSF TO ACHIEVE RESULTS (TRAFFIC LIGHT INDICATING POSITIVE (GREEN) / NON-CRITICAL OBSTACLES (ORANGE), NEGATIVE FACTORS (RED))¹⁶.

Contextual factors

Limited government ownership or contested regimes	●	Authoritarian regimes, reliance on international partners with limited grounding
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Covid-19 (2019-2021)	●	Delays because of interruption of activities or virtual activities.
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Programme related factors

Alignment	●	Denmark has aligned with international efforts in all regional programmes, Denmark has also taken lead and strong coordination roles.
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Long-term approach	●	PSF programmes have benefited from long-term approach, not only in terms of 3–4-year programming, but from continuation of programmes through different phases (PSP I, PSP II, PSP III). However, the programme cycle is still short given the challenges. Work with trusted partners.
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15 The evaluation is discussing the role of the thematic priorities in the design of PSF programmes in Section 6.2.

16 The factors mentioned in the table are at cursory level, and do not do justice to the complexities of each programme.

Regional approach	● Conflicts are not confined within national boundaries, PSF can work with trans-border issues, with transnational drivers of fragility (crime), spill-over effects (migration and CVE).
Design	● Emphasis in context/conflict analysis being influenced a priori by programming in earlier phases and not being conducted independently from programming, mainly conducted at start of programme phases and with focus on issues already identified as possible programme interventions.
Coherence	● Synergies with Danish country programmes vary.
Flexibility and adaptivity	● 20% of the funding is flexible. Challenges and trade-offs in terms of investing in certain areas in the long-run and allowing PSF to respond to newly emerging challenges or new geographic locations. PSF too dependent on programming of phases and mid-term reviews to make adaptations.
WOG approach	● Programmes have benefited from the WOG approach, but this could have been better exploited.
Combined use of ODA/ and non-ODA	● Both funding types available, but limited complementarity.
Organisation and human resources	● Decentralised management and posted advisers have enabled coordination, partner monitoring and synergies and coherence (with other programmes and in coalitions). In some programmes there seem to be sufficient staffing (in the regional programmes); shortage of staff in HQ and in the GoG programme.

4.2 Long-lasting peace and stabilisation

The degree to which PSF programmes have been able to contribute to long-term peace and stability has been modest. There are adverse factors which influence long-term peace that are way beyond what the PSF interventions can influence. In all regions, the efforts have been part of broader international engagement, and thus the contribution of the PSF towards long-term impacts cannot be judged in isolation from the role of other donors and international efforts. In the regional PSF programmes, there is considerable focus on strengthening long-term peace efforts, especially at the local level (community/district)

and through civil society actors (discussed in Section 6.2 and Annex E). The last year has seen dramatic changes in the international community's role in conflict situations (Afghanistan, Mali), which have raised the question of "stop/go" approaches, which are problematic, because leaving a conflict situation has severe humanitarian and development cooperation consequences for civilians. The "stay engaged" approach is associated with contribution to long-lasting peace and stabilisation, and the PSF can draw on a recent example from Afghanistan where Denmark (through contingency funds in the PSF together with other partners) has continued engagement in national level peacebuilding/peace negotiation efforts in Doha. The support to the United Nations Mission in Afghanistan's (UNAMA), Salaam Support Group (SSG) peace negotiation efforts, has been continued (through a no-cost extension) with a degree of discretion. This example could be a way forward for the PSF in other situations, where it is important to stay engaged in a challenging and hostile context.

- In the case of Syria and Iraq, the main focus of programming was on immediate to mid-term stabilisation. The direct threats posed by ISIL have been significantly reduced, even though ISIL remains active as insurgents/guerrilla fighters and shows a strong recruitment potential. Syria is considered to be in a state of impasse, with no long-term political solutions in sight, while Iraq is more on a "weak-positive" trajectory out of conflict.¹⁷ Despite the lack of a political solution in Syria, the PSF programme has been important in strengthening moderate actors, to help them play a role in the political process and in an eventual peace process. In Iraq, PSF engagements have contributed to enhancing conditions for a more stable environment (e.g., through demining, SSR, social cohesion) and the return of IDPs. The PSF has contributed to reducing protracted displacement and irregular migration in Iraq (i.e., return of IDPs). There is less evidence to suggest that this is the case for Syria. There is limited evidence that the PSF programmes have contributed to reduced regional insecurity and terrorism.
- In HoA, contributions to long-term peace and stability have remained modest in the overall picture of the conflicts in the region, although there are positive contributions. There are areas of relative stability (Somaliland, Puntland), where the international community has contributed to stability and building of government institutions. The overall programme objectives of the PSPs have focused specifically on contributing to (long-term) peace and stability through various thematic programme areas. However, Somalia is highly dependent on the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) to keep key areas free from Al-Shabaab control. While there is relative peace and some

17 PSP Syria-Iraq Mid-Term Review (MTR) 2021, p. 2.

progress in service delivery and institution-building, the territorial advances of Al-Shabaab continue, and illegal activities financing their presence seem unabated.

- In the Sahel, despite localised achievements and some intermediate results, it can be concluded that the contribution of these efforts to peace and stability in the subregion has been modest, particularly in light of recent developments. However, the lack of impact concerns the efforts of the international community as a whole, and not solely the Danish contribution.

4.3 Results of the WOG approach

The PSF has provided an institutional platform for a WOG approach, which is a key value addition in the Danish toolbox for engaging in international peace and stabilisation. The Fund has facilitated a WOG approach at the central level (Copenhagen) and established a formalised forum for coordination and exchanges among staff and management from MoD and MFA, and with the Police. However, as also discussed in relation to EQ 4 (see Chapter 7), the WOG approach and the inter-ministerial collaboration is perceived to have several weak points. The WOG partners have, to a considerable extent, operated in isolation under the auspices of the PSF and the political interest in the WOG approach appears to be waning. In most cases, programmes consisted of individual engagements per WOG partner, rather than joint or complementary efforts.¹⁸ There are few examples where programme results were mutually reinforcing and created a multiplier effect. Such examples include building both defence and civilian capacities of the EASF, addressing the piracy threat and establishing rule of law in the HoA, and strengthening the Joint Force of the G5 Sahel. Similar challenges can be observed in the UK's WOG approach under the CSSF (see Box 4.3).

18 Out of 164 engagements mapped by the evaluation, at commitment level 13 engagements were co-funded in the period covered by the evaluation.

BOX 4.3: WOG APPROACH UNDER THE UK'S CSSF

The CSSF has acted as a catalyst for a more integrated UK government response to instability and conflict and promoted cross-government working. It has incentivised different government departments and agencies to respond to National Security priorities in a more collaborative way.

A wide range of different Government Ministries/Departments/Agencies (MDAs) are involved in the CSSF. The largest spenders of CSSF funding have been the Foreign Commonwealth Office (FCO), Ministry of Defence (MoD) and the Department for International Development (DFID). Other main Department/Agencies that are involved in the funding and implementation of the CSSF are the Home Office (HO), HM Treasury (HMT) and the National Crime Agency (NCA).

The Joint Funds Unit (JFU) provides the day-to-day oversight and management of the CSSF and ensures that the Fund drives and delivers a whole-of-Government approach to Ministerial priorities whilst yielding value for money. It also sets the operating framework that underpins CSSF programme design and delivery and ensures that strategic concerns relating to risk, impact or financial management are appropriately managed. The JFU provides the governance structures for programme design and management to the CSSF network and is able to mobilise wider technical and operational support to regions and projects through the Stabilisation Unit.

However, coordination problems can also be observed under the CSSF, as the CSSF is not "owned"/"led" by a specific government department. Departments also have their own objectives; challenges remain in facilitating cooperation on activity that may fall outside of the purview of a single department, but which can bring about wider effect through synergies, and use of each Department's expertise, e.g., on Security Sector Reform.

The value of the WOG approach has been demonstrated in the regional programmes, not least because of the doors it opens.

Through the WOG, military and police advisers are strategically placed in institutions where development actors do not typically have access. As such, technical training of uniformed services in human rights and women, peace and security have been enabled through the programme. These engagements have had positive spill-over effects more broadly on Denmark's engagement. Denmark has accessed a broader range of dialogue partners and has gained important information on criminal issues that disrupt development, providing valuable insights for future policy and programming. The WOG institutional set-up has made Denmark a "natural partner", for example for the UK and France when it comes to peace and stabilisation. However, actual collaboration on concrete engagements seems to have been decreasing in the period of the evaluation – the result being that WOG partners mostly work in parallel (see Footnote 21).

The MoJ has been a missing actor in the WOG approach. From the outset, the MoJ delegated its involvement in the PSF to the Police, whose presence as police advisers has been a clear asset in the WOG approach. However, the range of criminal activities, and the need for capacity building in the security services, research and investigations of criminal network activities, strengthening of rule of law etc. calls for greater MoJ involvement in the PSF.

The mix of non-ODA and ODA funding has been an advantage of the PSF, and the availability of non-ODA funding, in particular, has proven to be an asset for example in Mali where the use of MoD (non-ODA) funding made it possible to support the G5S Joint Force, aligning Denmark with the international stabilisation efforts in the Sahel led by France and the EU.

4.4 Results of the regional approach

A major strength of the PSF is its regional dimension and coverage, although it has not been systematically capitalised on. The added value and the results have been in terms of regional analysis and understanding of drivers of peace, stability and violent extremism; support to regional programmes and efforts (supporting regional organisations e.g., support to the JF G5 Sahel), or funding cross-border projects (for example in Syria/Iraq border region, and Liptako-Gourma area). In the Syria/Iraq programme, the regional focus has made sense in terms of holistic analysis of regional context/conflict drivers and there have been some cross-border engagements. However, country-specific approaches (and theories of change) have remained in high need. In HoA, the regional approach has been formulated with particular emphasis on Somalia, and the approach has enabled regional stakeholder engagement

and addressing conflict drivers from a regional perspective, such as preventing maritime crimes, piracy, and violent extremism.

Denmark has stood out among donors for having a regional approach. Nevertheless, the understanding of regional, seems often to have different interpretations among the WOG partners, among staff within institutions, and partners, which, in turn, weakens collaboration, clarity of objectives and the potential achievements.

4.5 Sustainability of PSF funded programmes

The sustainability of PSF programmes has been moderate and mostly in the area of capacity building and local/national ownership. However, sustainability has not necessarily been the main aim of programmes or engagements. Nevertheless, considerable efforts have been made by partners and programme management to enhance institutional and financial sustainability at engagement level. A good example in this regard is the construction of prisons in Somalia in connection with the piracy interventions, where adherence to international standards is questionable if donors do not continue to provide basic financial support and monitor whether international human rights standards are adhered to. In Iraq and Syria, the immediate stabilisation efforts were not designed with an intention to generate sustainability, but rather to respond to immediate needs as identified by local actors. Some of these programmes have gradually moved more towards sustainability/local ownership, as context allowed it over time. For example, United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) and UNDP Funding Facility for Stabilisation (FFS) programmes in Iraq are increasingly focusing on building up local capacities through local government, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and contractors. The Government of Iraq has shown a moderate degree of ownership in SSR, allowing for some sustainability of efforts in this area.

5. STRATEGIC USE, PRIORITISATION AND ALIGNMENT

EQ 2. To what extent has the PSF been used in a sufficiently strategic manner, i.e., in terms of relevance of PSF funded programmes in relation to the given contexts; relevance to and alignment with Danish policies and priorities; coherence with and added value in comparison to other Danish and international efforts?

SUMMARY RESPONSE TO EVALUATION QUESTION 2:

In the period under evaluation, the PSF has been used in a strategic manner. The PSF regional programmes as well as other one-off engagements have been aligned with Danish development policies and foreign and security policies and interests. The programmes have been prepared in line with Danish interests while also being relevant in terms of addressing the needs and priorities in the targeted contexts. Over time, PSF programmes have shown increased attention to cross-cutting priorities on human rights, gender, and more recently the WPS agenda.

The political interest in the PSF and its programmes has varied over time, the recent trend suggests that political interest overall has fluctuated. The PSF has shown its value as a political instrument that can quickly respond to emerging issues and address Danish political interests. Yet, political responses have at times come at the expense of prioritization and long-term strategic focus. At Fund level, the PSF has also had an increasingly wide scope of engagement, both thematically and geographically. This has reduced prioritisation and focus at Fund level.

The absence of clear terminology and definitions has allowed for flexibility and context-specific programming, but also reduced the sharpness of the Fund's purpose. At Fund level, some further clarification of key concepts and terminologies could strengthen a shared understanding of what the PSF does and does not do.

The regional programmes and engagements have been coherent and aligned with those of international like-minded actors. There are good examples where Denmark, through the PSF, has been able to provide added value compared to the efforts of others. Internally, PSF programmes have been coherent, although room remains to further explore the synergies among different PSF engagements in specific regions or countries. While broadly coherent with and complementary to other Danish efforts and programmes, the synergies among PSF and other Danish assistance programmes across the HDP nexus have remained limited. The opportunities for synergies and mutual reinforcement between PSF programmes and policy dialogue have been recognised, but not always utilised.

5.1 Danish strategic objectives and policy priorities

PSF funding choices have been aligned and consistent with Danish development, foreign and security, and defence policies and interests, considering shifting policy agendas over time. The PSF programmes and engagements have corresponded to Danish policy commitments towards peace and stabilisation as laid out in key policy documents underpinning the PSF¹⁹, as well as in two Foreign and Security Policy Strategies covering the period 2017-2018 and 2019-2020 and relevant development cooperation policies (The World 2030 and The World We Share).²⁰ Over time, the PSF has followed evolving Danish policy orientations towards greater focus on irregular migration, violent extremism and the fight against organised crime. These shifting priorities are also reflected in the way PSF programmes have spread globally, in HoA and in Syria/Iraq with focus on threats of terrorism, and Ukraine (focusing on Europe's immediate neighbourhood) and addressing irregular migration in the case of Syria/Iraq. The PSF stand-alone engagements to specific countries also largely fit with Danish/PSF geographic priority areas, focusing on the MENA region and the Danish neighbourhood (e.g., support to NATO in Georgia and programming in Libya). PSF funding choices have corresponded to Danish ambitions to collaborate internationally on common security threats such as in the case of supporting the Global Coalition against Daesh/ISIL in relation to Syria and Iraq and strengthening its alliance with France in the Sahel. Priority has also been given to specific areas of strategic importance to Denmark which are not included in the regional programmes such as the contribution to increase maritime security in the GoG, and contributions to multilateral and international organisations including NATO and the UN. For example, the PSF has financed a considerable contribution to the UN Peace Building Fund (DKK 118 million from 2016 to 2020), to show Denmark's commitment to multilateral peacebuilding efforts.

PSF programmes have been important for building political relationships and furthering Danish political aims. Apart from programming results on the ground (discussed in EQ 1), the PSF has been used to achieve political results that are important for Denmark. The PSF has been instrumental in translating Danish ambitions towards contributing to

19 MFA, MoD, MoJ, Peace and Stabilisation: Denmark's Policy Towards Fragile States 2010-2015, 2010; Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Justice, Denmark's Integrated Stabilisation Engagement in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Areas of the World, 2013.

20 MFA, The World We Share: Denmark's Strategy for Development Cooperation, 2021; MFA, The World 2030: Denmark's strategy for development cooperation and humanitarian aid. Denmark presented a new Foreign and Security Strategy in January 2022. The new strategy emphasises values, and Denmark's core values of freedom, democracy and human rights are at the core, as well as close collaboration with likeminded partners. The strategy priorities strengthening of Denmark engagement in EU, NATO, UN, Arctic and Africa. The focus on the Arctic has been strengthened compared to earlier strategies.

multilateral efforts and strengthening its affiliation with global alliances (e.g., in the case of Sahel, Syria-Iraq). The WOG approach has helped to facilitate access to national government institutions, such as in the case of the HoA, where MoD involvement facilitated good access to the Kenyan Navy. The existence of PSF has also been quite instrumental in demonstrating Denmark's commitment to peace and stabilisation globally and providing access to international fora, such as the Stabilisation Leaders Forum.

BOX 5.1: WOMEN, PEACE, AND SECURITY, AND YOUTH

While gender has been treated as a cross-cutting issue in the PSF, the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda has been taken up in varying degrees in the programmes during the evaluation period.

MENA. Denmark is one of the key donors advocating for the WPS agenda. While Denmark has emphasised the importance in policy documents, programming documents and in dialogue with partners and other key stakeholders, limited efforts have been made to operationalise the WPS agenda in programme implementation. WPS is a sensitive subject in the region and hence the implementation and results have been approached with a degree of modesty in terms of intent and expectations on progress.

HoA. The WPS is not mentioned at the strategic level, but there is increasing attention to the WPS agenda in the Somalia Stability Fund (SSF), and in engagements supported by MoD. This includes training in UN SCR 1325, paired with a focus on human rights more generally. The SSF has a strong focus on women as peacebuilders and enhancing women's engagement in political life.

Sahel. The WPS agenda has not been very prominent in the theories of change and adequately included in result frameworks. In PSP II, some partners have delivered outputs with a gender focus. However, none of the engagements have produced significant change in behaviours of security and defence forces, at the level of gender-based violence (GBV), or on the empowerment of women in conflict resolution.

Gulf of Guinea. The agenda has been taken up in Denmark's Maritime Security Programmes I and II. Applying WPS considerations in maritime security engagements is increasingly recognised as a gap to be addressed. While the ECOWAS Integrated Maritime Strategy provides an entry point for alignment on WPS, current UN SCR 1325 National Action Plans of Nigeria and Ghana do not provide immediate opportunities for alignment.

PSF programmes have only recently shown increased attention to cross-cutting priorities of gender, and lately the WPS agenda.²¹ At programme level the mainstreaming of gender issues (including a focus on boys and men) and operationalisation of gender issues and WPS have been limited (See Box 5.1 below).²² It is only recently that the WPS agenda (and the body of UN Security Council Resolutions underpinning it) has become a priority for the PSF, as evidenced in the PSF Guidelines²³, the recently elaborated implementation plan, and the establishment of a Working Group on UNSCR 1325 under the PSF.²⁴ Moreover, the recent Guidance Note on Women, Peace and Security (2021) includes a section on Danish peace and stabilisation programmes, introducing a practical tool for implementers that provides entry points for designing interventions that overcome key barriers to women's meaningful participation (called the "REPCA Framework" because it covers barriers related to Roles, Environment, Protection, Capacity, and Analysis).²⁵

A Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA) has been strong, both on paper and in implementation. Over time, the PSF as a whole and PSF programmes have dedicated increasing attention to a HRBA. The importance of the HRBA is acknowledged in programme documents for the examined case studies. Various engagements have focused on supporting CSOs that are working on rule of law, transitional justice, and human rights (e.g., through human rights monitoring and direct support to victims etc.), such as in the case of Syria. Human rights dimensions have also featured in engagements that have focused on capacity building of security institutions and uniformed individuals, and the monitoring of prisons (e.g. in Somalia).

21 Denmark has since 2005 developed four National Action Plans (NAP) on UNSCR 1325. Attention to WPS has varied across Danish PSPs, as was concluded by the evaluation of the Danish National Action Plans for the Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (October 2019).

22 Evidenced by case study analysis and concluded in the evaluation of the Danish National Action Plans for the Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (October 2019): "Regional peace and stabilisation programme (PSP) results from a gender and WPS perspective were generally weaker than bilateral and multilateral engagements." (p. 41), and "Several stakeholders in Copenhagen noted that although attention to 1325 and gender mainstreaming has, for some time, been acknowledged as important to Danish peace and stabilisation efforts, this has not translated to concrete action on the ground (p. 70).

23 In the recently developed 'Guidelines: The Peace and Stabilisation Fund' (MFA and MoD 2018b), there is a greater emphasis on WPS and SCR 1325 language, with reference made to the different impacts that violent conflicts have on men and women. The guidelines include a section on human rights, gender and youth as cross-cutting priorities.

24 Under the PSF, a working group on SCR 1325 has recently been established. Its four members are from the MFA, the MoD, the National Police, and the Defence Command. Earlier this year, an implementation plan on SCR 1325 under PSF was adopted. In 2022, the work has been transferred to SAMSEK to ensure the anchoring and long-term mainstreaming of SCR 1325 in the Ministry and in PSF.

25 MFA; MoD, and MoJ. (2021) Women, Peace and Security Guidance Note: Support to Implement the WPS Agenda (draft version). Copenhagen, Denmark.

While an important policy focus, limited attention has been given, in PSF programmes and engagements, to addressing the impacts of climate change in developing countries. The Danish ambitions to be a leader on the fight against climate change is underscored in the Danish Foreign and Security Policy Strategies 2017-2018 and 2019-2020. The more recent context analyses for the regional programmes make brief references to climate change as an important consideration for stability in all regions, however none of the programmes address conflict and security aspects of climate change in the programmes or engagements. This appears to be an omission considering the importance of the issue in view of Danish objectives and ambitions in this regard.

The degree to which youth issues have been addressed in the context analyses and the PSF engagements varies. Linkages on youth issues with other Danish programmes have remained limited. The regional programme documents acknowledge the relationship between youth marginalisation and vulnerability to migration, organised crime, and violent extremism as a key concern for stabilisation in varying degrees. The HoA programme has focused on youth in relation to Al-Shabaab disengagement and defectors' rehabilitation and support under the Somalia Stability Fund (SSF) where youth have been involved in peace processes or economic activities. In Syria-Iraq, youth issues have received some attention through livelihoods/job creation activities under the Funding Facility for Stabilisation. In Sahel, the G5 Sahel has adopted an action plan on the inclusion of youth in security and development processes with support from Denmark and the EU. Danish country programmes, where Denmark has such engagement, increasingly address youth issues from socio-economic perspective and seem more suited to take on these aspects, while the PSF is suited to address youth issues from a conflict prevention and P/CVE perspective.

5.2 Prioritisation and focus within the PSF

The political interest in the PSF and its programmes has varied over time, and by region, in line with shifting geopolitical interests. In general, policymakers and politicians have primarily engaged with the PSF's stabilisation activities in areas of military conflict, as in Iraq and Syria, or when the PSF is used for one-off pledges.²⁶ Further, the DIIS Scoping Study for the evaluation found that political interest in the Fund has decreased overall, particularly felt in areas where Denmark is not engaged militarily.²⁷ MFA and MoD also have varying degrees of interest in certain geographic areas, such as the Horn of Africa, which is a long-time priority area for MFA, but no longer a focus area for the MoD. This has hampered the WoG approach. The interest of MoJ and the PMO have remained limited overall.

²⁶ DIIS Scoping Study, 2020, p. 15.

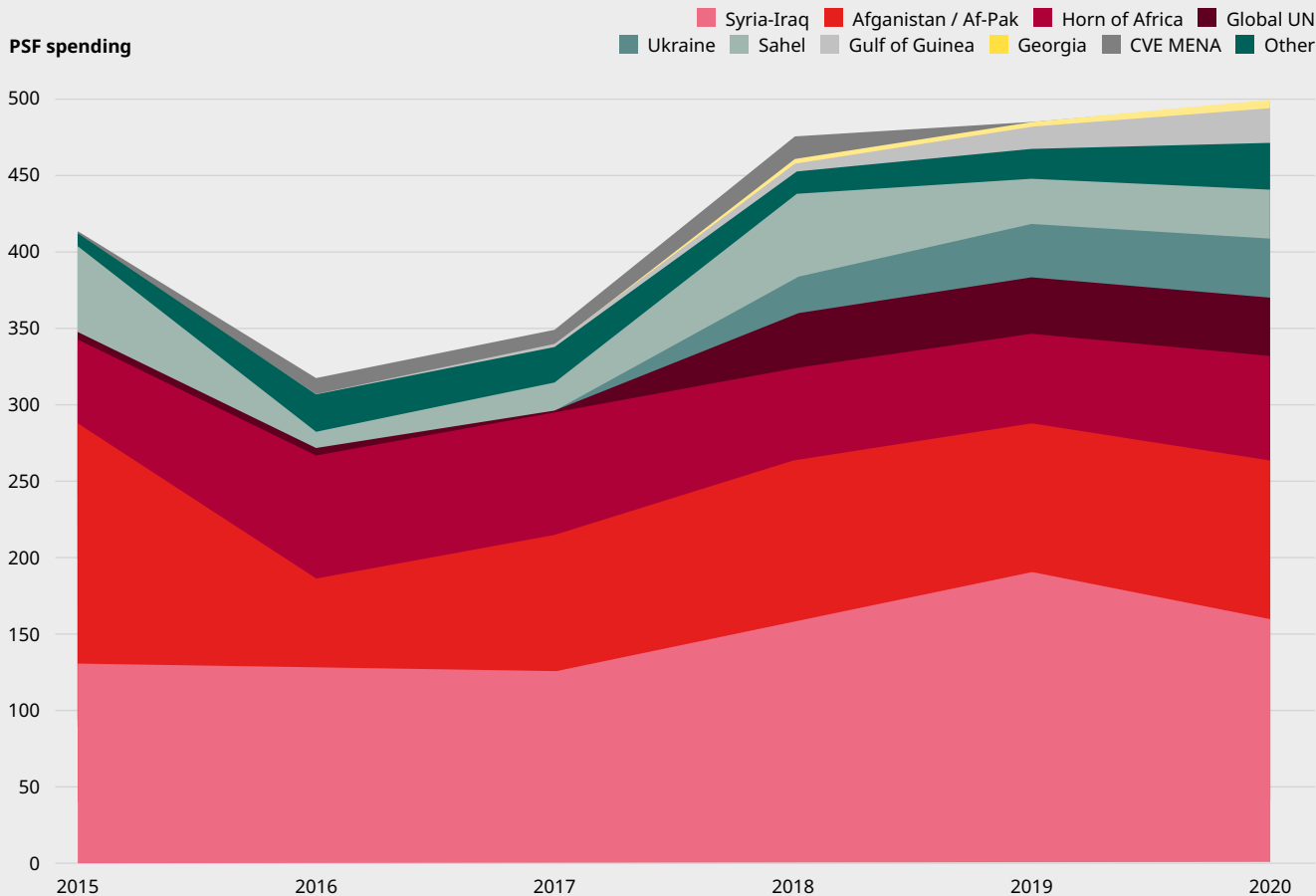
²⁷ Ibid, p. 10; 15.

The PSF has shown its value as a political instrument that can quickly respond to emerging issues and address Danish political interests. The PSF has provided Denmark with the opportunity to respond in a quick and flexible manner to ad hoc political issues or emergencies, for example to the Italian Red Cross during the pandemic, and to aid Lebanon after the August 2020 Beirut explosion. The flexible and politically driven nature of the PSF has however come with various points of criticism: 1) the intense demand and pressure to respond to political issues has not always been coupled with a strong focus and interest on outcomes; and 2) the ease with which funds can be freed up for political issues has led to what some interviewees from MFA believe to be a risk of 'random' allocation of funding (following the 'policy of the day'). The use of the PSF as an 'emergency tool' to show political action has not always been sufficiently coupled with a strategic vision to achieve actual results in peace and stabilisation or to note that such intervention simply is a one-off engagement.²⁸

At Fund level, the PSF has had an increasingly wide scope of engagements, both thematically and geographically. The period under evaluation shows both a substantial increase in financial resources dedicated to the PSF from the MFA, as well as an increase in the number of programmes and engagements (see Figure 5.1 below). In the early years, the PSF funded two large regional programmes (Af-Pak and HoA), whereas over time the PSF has become engaged in five regional/country programmes, in addition to a broad range of stand-alone engagements (country-specific programmes and global or one-off engagements). Beyond a wider geographic scope, the PSF has focused on an increasingly broad range of topics covering the six thematic priority areas in the PSF Guidelines, but also outliers such as the bio-security programme in Kenya and the one-off support to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The diverse range of engagements have arisen due to different interests and priorities by the MFA and MoD, (e.g., strong interest by MoD to support NATO in Georgia, and strong MFA interest in Yemen and Libya). The broad focus has allowed for flexibility to engage in a range of areas but has also posed risks of spreading the few resources too thinly in view of overall limited financial and human resources.

28 The CSSF has experienced a similar criticism. For more information, see the UK Benchmarking Study in Annex C.

FIGURE 5.1: PSF PORTFOLIO BY YEAR AND REGION (DKK MILLION)



The absence of clear terminology and definitions has allowed for flexibility and context-specific programming, but also reduced the sharpness of the Fund’s purpose. The lack of a clear definition is however also an enabler for mission/scope creep and fund dilution. At Fund level, some further clarification of key concepts and terminologies could strengthen a shared understanding of what the PSF does and does not do. The Danish government does not have clear conceptual definitions for its peace and stabilisation agenda. The absence of clear definitions was a deliberate choice as it allowed for a high degree of flexibility to tailor programmes to contextual needs, and the PSF guidelines have provided very broad thematic terminology descriptions. This has also allowed Denmark to align with the stabilisation concepts of international actors (e.g., in the case of Global Coalition against ISIL in Syria/Iraq, or the Sahel Alliance) or with governments (e.g., on P/CVE concepts) where appropriate. Nevertheless, there is room for further reflection on defining peace(building), stabilisation and related topics (e.g., preventing/countering extremism (P/CVE), especially considering the evolving global context, evolving Danish interests/needs and recent global experiences

(e.g., in Afghanistan) which have demonstrated a need to sharpen focus and priorities. A case in point is the need to clarify that stabilisation and peacebuilding do not constitute opposing terms and types of engagement. A further clarification on PSF's role in conflict prevention and its role in relation to the operationalisation of the HDP nexus approach would serve to sharpen the PSF's options for strategic considerations for longer-term impact.

At individual programme level there has been a good balance between seeking a niche role (and more visibility) and aligning Danish support with other international efforts (in line with Danish policy priorities). As a relatively small donor, Denmark/PSF has for a large part been guided by what other likeminded partners are doing and at the same time Denmark has sought to identify specific areas of engagement for a niche Danish role. For example, in Syria/Iraq, Denmark aligned its efforts with the Global Coalition against ISIL's strategy, but it also took the lead in specific areas, such as on SSR (in particular on local police reform) and in the area of social cohesion. In the Sahel, Denmark supported international efforts (such as the UNODC Sahel programme and the contribution to the EU African Peace Facility to support the G5) while at the same time prioritising certain geographic areas (e.g., the Liptako-Gourma region).

5.3 PSF programmes and contextual challenges and needs

PSF regional programmes have been relevant and flexible in relation to challenges and needs in the specific contexts. The programmes have been underpinned by context analyses, which have become more comprehensive over time. There is however a tendency, when new phases are designed, to follow-up on areas already identified and to work with already identified partners. This influences and possibly skews the understanding of conflict drivers and their relative importance (see Section 6.1). Programming choices have been based on a combination of 1) prioritisation based on Danish interests, e.g., the wish to fund certain regional organisations (e.g. NATO, UN), to align with global partners and alliances, to contribute to multi-donor efforts, and 2) bottom-up analysis and identification of opportunities by PSF management, advisors, defence attachés, implementing partners or requests from government stakeholders. The programmes have to some degree been informed by ongoing analysis and adjustments have been made along the way to align with changes in contexts with regard to how conflicts have evolved. Both at programme and engagement level, the evaluation finds good levels of flexibility to changes in the context, including most recently in response to the Covid-19 crisis.

As resources are limited, maintaining a balance between remaining for sufficiently long time in a programme or region to have an impact, while at the same time adapting the geographic/thematic focus to shifting security threats, remains as a major difficulty to be addressed.

This is a common issue for international donors and the subject of ongoing discussions on what stabilisation means and how it differs from peacebuilding, development, and peacekeeping.

5.4 Coherence and complementarity among Danish efforts

Programme level objectives and the thematic objectives underpinning these were broadly coherent and complementary. The inter-programming linkages and synergies (among various thematic programmes and engagements) have been less evident, nonetheless together they signal direction towards the overall objectives of the programmes. PSF regional programmes have shown broad coherence in terms of how the various strands of work contribute to the overall objective, even if the linkages among thematic level objectives and individual engagement objectives were not always evident. Only a few examples were found where the individual engagements clearly mutually reinforced one another. In the case of Iraq for example, synergies were achieved through the combined approach of demining work (e.g., through UNMAS) and rehabilitation efforts through the UNDP-implemented Funding Facility for Stabilisation (FFS). The counterargument to more synergies within the thematic programmes and among the engagements is that such synergies are less important, if and when the individual engagements contribute to joint outcomes under the programme's overall objectives, and with other donors (and where relevant with existing government plans), which was often the case.

PSF programmes have only in some cases been complementary to other Danish programmes in the regions. In other cases, they operate quite isolated from other Danish programmes, such as the country programmes in Ethiopia, Kenya, Burkina Faso and Niger, although according to interviewees, the coherence among these Danish efforts have gradually improved over time. Box 5.2 provides an overview of the complementarity between the PSF and bilateral development programmes in the Sahel.

BOX 5.2: COMPLEMENTARITY BETWEEN PSF AND BILATERAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES IN THE SAHEL

In the Burkina Faso/Niger Strategic Framework 2021-2025, it is stated that Denmark will continue to be engaged in countering cross-border threats such as terrorism and organised crime in the Sahel region through military engagement and strong stabilisation efforts, such as the PSF, which is mentioned as one of the instruments. At the same time, the bilateral programme has among its strategic objectives to enhance security, rule of law, human rights and effectiveness of national institutions. "The geographical targeting of bilateral development engagements will be based on opportunities to strengthen conflict prevention efforts that can contribute to tackling underlying risks and drivers of conflict, fragility and instability. If the security situation in a given area becomes too critical to apply a development approach, we will consider other instruments". Thus, other instruments such as PSF are expected to intervene when and where the conflict prevention approach of the development programme does not succeed, and the situation becomes critical from the security point of view. There are however no specific indications on how the switch from development to other instruments will be decided upon; such guidance would have helped to enhance complementarities in practice.

Synergies between the PSF and other Danish development programmes have remained modest and deserve further exploration. The concrete synergies on the ground have remained limited and the PSPs have mostly been implemented as stand-alone programmes. The lack of synergies is not necessarily a negative point, as the focus of programmes is often different (in content and/or geographic scope) thus leaving limited room for closer alignment. Nonetheless, there are cases where stronger synergies could have been useful to explore with the aim of mutually reinforcing programme results. This has been the case with the Africa Peace Programme (APP) and the Sahel PSP, which have worked with the same partner West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP). There has been no connection between the Syria-Iraq programme and the MENA-CVE programme.²⁹

29 The PSF-funded CVE MENA programme (2015-2018) focused on Lebanon, Iraq, and Jordan and ended in 2018 mainly for management reasons. The conclusion by the MTR was that the programme lacked a clear direction and long-term perspective on what Denmark was aiming towards. Mid-term review of the CVE MENA Programme 2015-17 Final Review Aide Memoire, Copenhagen, Denmark: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark.

(also through the PSF), which was a missed opportunity for possible synergies and sustainability. Synergies have also not been sufficiently explored in the context of the HDP nexus (discussed below). Inhibiting factors for stronger synergies include different timelines (programming cycles) and management structures as well as the absence of joint context analysis and/or shared country strategies.³⁰ The inhibiting factors have also raised questions with regard to the value of PSF being an instrument, and not a mainstream modality for Denmark. The counter argument has been that the PSF's WOG approach is secured by its distinct organisational structure.

In the period covered by the evaluation there has been limited explicit exploration on the role and contribution of the PSF as part of a HDP nexus approach.³¹ PSF programme documents for the period 2014-2021 do not shed explicit light on the inter-linkages especially with humanitarian action and to some degree with development cooperation engagements. The clear messages on the PSF programmes paving the way for establishment of immediate security through demining and being an enabler for state building, private sector activities, productive livelihoods in safe conditions, social service delivery, and establishment of a degree of law and order could have been more explicit. Nevertheless, some of the programmes and engagements have worked with a nexus approach in practice, such as with the case of Iraq (see Box 5.3 below).

30 The comprehensive country strategies and task forces to be established (and in some cases already established) as part of the implementation of a Doing Development Differently approach will provide new opportunities for co-ordination and adaptive management at country level. OECD/DAC Peer Review Denmark, 2021.

31 The HDP nexus has increased in importance especially among international donors since the World Humanitarian Summit (2016) and the Secretary General's launch of the Agenda for Humanity (2016). OECD/DAC donors and adherents issued the DAC Recommendation (February 2019), to create a common understanding among stakeholders. Denmark played a role in the formulation and is paying considerable attention to nexus approaches in strategies and programmes. The new PSPs are therefore quite explicit about instituting HDP approaches. The OECD/DAC Peer Review on Denmark has also recommended better articulating and integrating of the peace component of the HDP nexus at global and country level including its interventions through, among others, the PSF. OECD/DAC Peer Review, 2021.

BOX 5.3: HDP NEXUS IN THE SYRIA-IRAQ PROGRAMME

PSF programmes in Syria and Iraq have to some extent operationalized a HDP nexus approach, even if not made explicit in programming documents. Through helping to stabilise areas and enabling access, the programmes have helped to facilitate the provision of humanitarian aid and lay the foundations for development programmes (including services) and peace building and reconciliation. Some engagements have directly worked at the intersection of humanitarian aid, recovery and peacebuilding. This PSP has complemented humanitarian initiatives, specifically through its support for civilian demining in Syria and Iraq (through UNMAS, Tetra Tech, and Janus). The Funding Facility for Stabilisation (FFS) has provided humanitarian/early responses, has worked on local development by engaging local actors in reconstruction efforts and has a peacebuilding component through the social cohesion part. In Syria, the White Helmets project is a key example of working at the nexus. It has focused on providing lifesaving, humanitarian support, while gradually moving towards working on issues such as municipal civilian service delivery and supporting transitional justice mechanisms and efforts to hold the Syrian regime and ISIL accountable for its atrocities against civilians.

The opportunities for synergies and mutual reinforcement between PSF programmes and policy dialogue have been recognised but have not always been fully utilised. PSF programmes have been instrumental in gaining access to a broader range of institutions, which is mostly done together with others EU, NATO, Nordic countries, for example regarding dialogue on complex reform agendas, such as security sector reform. The degree to which PSF programmes have been matched with policy/political dialogue has varied across the examined regional programmes. Moreover, it is difficult to gauge the effect of policy dialogue. For example, in Somalia, the political leadership has, over time, taken less interest in policy dialogue with Denmark and its like-minded partners. In the evaluation period, voices of disagreement with the political leadership's interest have been declared "Persona Non Grata", and others have not been granted access to speak to the leadership about peace and security issues. Similarly, some regimes are neither recognised nor wanted as dialogue partners, and therefore not approached. Nevertheless, dialogues do work at other levels. In the HoA, the country programmes and policy/political dialogue on the one hand and the PSF engagement on the other hand have shown clear mutual reinforcement in terms of gaining entry points to security institutions in the region. In the Sahel, the synergies between the PSF and diplomatic activities have not been strong which was in part because the PSF programmes were managed by

a separate unit in Mali, with limited connection to the embassy in Burkina Faso, which also covers Niger. The political importance of the PSF in this region is that it enabled Denmark to get politically closer to the EU and France in Mali. In Syria-Iraq, the linkages between the PSF programme and Denmark's political engagement with the Government of Iraq were fairly well established, as part of wider multilateral dialogue together with like-minded donors.

5.5 Coordination and complementarity with other donors

The PSF has been implemented in close coordination and complementarity with allies and development partners. PSF programmes and engagements (including stand-alone engagements) have demonstrated strong coherence with the efforts of like-minded partners. This is achieved through the choices of modalities such as working through international coalitions and multi-donor funding arrangements which require a level of regular coordination on priorities. The examined case studies illustrate that Denmark has played an active role in donor coordination. In some areas, Denmark has also taken up a leadership role, e.g., on coordination on social cohesion in Iraq. Some exception to strong donor coordination were also identified, but these are attributed to the role of the wider international community and not just Denmark (e.g., in the area of support in the Liptako-Gourma area). Some donors have acknowledged that Denmark, with its PSF, has clearly brought added value as it brings a unique integrated peace and stabilisation instrument with a regional perspective.

6. DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

EQ 3. To what extent have PSF programmes in the period 2014-2020 been designed, implemented and monitored in a conducive manner so as to ensure effective interventions with maximum impact?

SUMMARY RESPONSE TO EVALUATION QUESTION 3:

The PSF programmes have been designed based on sound yet broad political economy descriptions but with insufficient attention to security aspects, and interlinkages between different conflict drivers. The analyses have not described and analysed the structural drivers of conflict in an in-depth manner. The Aid Management Guidelines provide an extensive checklist of issues, which also leads to a very broad coverage rather than an in-depth approach. The work of researchers has not systematically been shared at senior management level (IMSC) and not necessarily brought into a mainstream of information flows.

The Theories of Change (ToC) have mainly focused on contextual and programmatic pre-conditions for the programmes, which has limited the usefulness of ToCs. Some of the implicit, untested causal assumptions in the ToCs revolved around the ability of capacity building interventions to generate behavioural change through the actual use of acquired notions. The ToCs have not been sufficiently used as 'living tools' for analysis and adaptation.

Regarding the implementation modalities, the choices were appropriate in light of resource constraints, continuity in programming and the need for specific expertise and robustness to work in crisis environments. In terms of risk appetite, the PSF programmes by and large demonstrated a high in-built risk tolerance capacity.

Considerable efforts have gone into M&E and efforts have increased over time, but processes placed too much emphasis on compliance with reporting rules at the expense of learning. Programme Monitoring did not systematically capture outcomes. Engagement-level monitoring has also been difficult, partly due to security constraints and lately because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

6.1 Programme design – context analysis and Theories of Change

The PSF programmes have been designed based on sound yet broad and cursory political economy descriptions, with insufficient depth and attention to interlinkages between different conflict drivers. In the Syria/Iraq programme, PSF programming documents contain context analyses which are broad and comprehensive in terms of identifying regional and country-specific factors and consequences of instability/conflict and violent extremism and migration. In the Sahel programme, context analyses identified the drivers of conflict and key security issues, and the programme document (for Phase II) pointed out crucial factors such as the weakness of state institutions, the difficult civil-military relations, and the widespread human rights violations. In the HoA, the analysis benefitted from Denmark having several other programmes in the region. It updates former programme analysis and builds on inputs from think tanks and academic research. In the Afghanistan programme, a conflict and stability analysis identified underlying drivers of conflict, proximate causes, stability drivers and implications.³²

However, the analyses have not sufficiently described and analysed the structural drivers of conflict in an in-depth manner, and the Aid Management Guidelines provide an extensive check list of issues, which also leads to a very broad coverage rather than an in-depth approach. The analyses have also been influenced by predetermined programming choices, because of the interest in continuing ongoing engagements.³³

32 The findings are very similar to those for the CSSF as evidenced by the CSSF's strong approach to conflict sensitivity and analysis of conflict. The conflict analyses are often supported by academic research, though academic research provides little input for policy guidance. In many of the countries in which CSSF operates, the Stabilisation Unit delivers a Joint Analysis of Conflict and Stability (JACS) to understand the needs and interests of key actors and the underlying drivers of conflict and violence. The purpose of JACS is to develop a shared understanding of drivers of conflict across the different government organisations and departments (e.g., DFID, FCO, MoD, HO).

33 According to Aid Management Guidelines (AMG), context analyses should “draw on existing international, joint and Danish research and analysis to (...) covering overall development challenges, opportunities and risks; fragility, conflict, migration and resilience; HRBA and gender; inclusive sustainable growth, climate change and environment; capacity of public sector, public financial management and corruption; Danish strengths and interests, engaging Danish actors, seeking synergy, and stakeholder analysis”. AMG also mentions that “in some cases, especially in larger and/or complex programmes, it may be necessary to carry out additional analysis and preparatory studies (e.g., political economy analysis, human rights assessments, drivers of change analysis, analysis of the role played by the business community, civil society actors etc.) to sufficiently inform the preparation of the Programme or Project” (p. 17).

Across the board, context analyses could have been deeper and included analysis of the power and networks of spoilers, more security aspects, potential risks and be less general and broad. An example of this would be a population's attitude towards interventions by international coalitions/alliances, were only given limited attention in some programmes. This became crucial in the escalation of the crises in Sahel, and Afghanistan. Context analyses have been written for a public audience which is also likely to have limited the candour of the analysis. On a final note, it is unclear the extent to which the analyses have been shared and discussed by the WOG partners before decisions on programming were taken.

The work of researchers has not systematically been shared at the senior management level (IMSC) and not necessarily brought into a mainstream of information flows. While researchers work with programmes (Sahel, GoG and HoA), it is a missed opportunity their independent assessments, findings and conclusions have neither been included in, nor used to inform planning, design and implementation more systematically. One reason is that the research conducted by different institutions has been insufficiently linked with the IMSC, and therefore the uptake of findings and cross-learning has been limited.

The Theories of Change (ToC) have mainly focused on contextual and programmatic preconditions for the programmes, which has limited the usefulness of ToCs. Throughout the period under evaluation, PSF programming documents have increasingly used ToCs. This has been in line with evolving practices at MFA and following the recommendations on the use of ToCs in the 2014 PSF evaluation.³⁴ There were challenges and dilemmas in all programmes regarding the appropriate level to develop the ToCs (e.g., regional programme versus thematic programme level; regional versus country level ToC). The solutions found by planning and management teams have varied. The Syria/Iraq programme has had an overall programme ToC and recently moved to country level ToC, while the Sahel and HoA Programmes have produced ToC at the thematic programme level.

Some of the implicit, untested causal assumptions in the ToCs revolved around the ability of capacity building interventions to generate behavioural change through the actual use of acquired notions. This includes assumptions of linear progression from military liberation of areas, through (re)-introduction of the state to regulate or

34 In the case of the CSSF, there are diametrically opposed viewpoints when it comes to the usefulness of ToCs and log frames in solving challenges in the field of international development. The UK MoD and Defence Command staff do not work with a ToC/log frame approach as these are alien concept to them. DFID, however, considered ToCs and log frames as highly beneficial for maximising development impact.

deliver basic services, to be able to keep an area stable and development programmes to “take over” (for example small infrastructure) was assumed, while the conditions on the ground in reality slipped back to the earlier stage of conflict (this happened especially in HoA and in the Sahel; in the MENA region the co-presence of different “stages” was better recognised and dealt with). See also Boxes 6.1 and 6.2.

BOX 6.1: ASSUMPTIONS ON STABILISING AREAS IN SOMALIA

The HoA programme seeks to strengthen regional conflict management capacity and efforts of the actors engaged in promoting stabilisation and security in Somalia. The programme strengthens AMISOM’s civilian capacity and the East Africa Standby Force (EASF), as well as related training institutions.

The implicit assumption was that if AMISOM was able to stabilise some of the areas under its mandate and effectively train government security forces, then this would allow for a transition and handover of security operations to national authorities. While this assumption may be solid on a technical level, it ignores the politicization of Somali security forces and the problematic informal links to Al Shabaab influence within local communities, as well as the general weakness of AMISOM in clearing and holding territories.

The Al Shabaab group has proved to be a resilient and highly adaptive force, emerging stronger despite the major setbacks from counter terrorism strategies implemented both inside Somalia and at the regional level. This challenges the assumption that a set of well targeted initiatives to liberate, stabilize and enhance government legitimacy in affected areas will lead to the weakening of the organisation. There are key questions about the dynamics of the continued allure of Al Shabab inside Somalia that need to be addressed in the TOC in order to explore further interventions that can effectively contribute towards the discrediting of the organisation in the next programme phase.

The ToCs have not been sufficiently used as ‘living tools’ for analysis and adaptation. There is limited evidence that ToCs were actively used for continuously reassessing conditions of implementation, validity checks of causal assumptions, adapting of activities accordingly and changing risk mitigation measures, based on an updated political economy analysis, updated stakeholder analysis, and updated analysis in changes in drivers of conflict and peace. There is some evidence in PSF progress reports that assumptions and risks have been checked; however, with many assumptions (in particular the causal assumptions) not being identified, this exercise has remained too narrow in scope.

BOX 6.2: CAUSAL LINKAGES IN THEORIES OF CHANGE

The causal linkages between different levels in the ToCs should be explicit and tangible in order to help to explain the pathways of change, because without assumptions about causal linkages, the analysis on whether ToCs are valid is limited and the project intervention logic is too implicit.

In the PSF programmes, examples of causal linkage assumptions that do not always hold up are:

- Improved housing, infrastructure and demining will lead to renewed use of land, which lead to people returning home and not join violent extremism.
- Strengthened civil society actors will continue to apply their increased capacity beyond project ending.
- The activities undertaken by strengthened civil society actors will contribute to making communities more resilient to withstand recruitment by violent extremist groups.
- Capacity building of security and defence forces on human rights will lead to fewer violations.
- Equipment delivered to a national army member of G5 will automatically be transferred to the G5 Joint Force.

6.2 Implementation modalities

In the three regions chosen for the case studies, the choice of implementing modalities were appropriate in light of resource constraints, continuity in programming and the need for specific expertise and robustness to work in crisis environments. To a large extent, MoD implemented engagements directly, while MFA implemented primarily through partners. In all programmes, there was limited choice of possible partners with the right combination of mandate, expertise, organisational size, capacity, track record and presence on the ground. Within these restrictions, the programmes did include a variety of organisations and mechanisms such as pooled funds appropriate for implementation of the programmes.

Over half of the engagements in the portfolio were channelled through UN organisations in countries, in particular UNDP, UNMAS, and UNODC. However, there was considerable variation between regions (see Box 6.3 below). Delegation to multilateral agencies was often decided based on realistic considerations of conditions on the ground and Denmark's limited management capacities. The considerable dependence on UN agencies to deliver on the PSF programmes has been questioned by different stakeholders. However, there is a strong rationale for UN engagement; namely that the UN has boots on the ground, provides security and access issues for others, possesses specific expertise (e.g., UNODC), and that the UN has a strong capacity to handle considerable volumes of funding. Working through the UN has also been a way to minimise programmatic risks because Denmark has well established relationships and channels of communication when implementation has been problematic.

Pooled funding modalities have generally worked well. Examples include multi-donor trust funds managed by either the UN or NATO (for example in Afghanistan and in the Syria-Iraq programme) or multi-donor funds like the Syria Stabilisation Fund. The SSF is managed by UK FCDO on behalf of the participating bilateral donors and contracted to a consultancy company. In HoA, a significant proportion of the portfolio has gone through delegated cooperation especially with the UK FCDO. Civil society organisations have been implementing because of their unique expertise in conflict resolution, civil-military relations, security issues and delivered very important work contributing to the outcomes achieved.

BOX 6.3: IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS OF PSF PROGRAMMES

The PSF programmes draw on a wide array of implementing partners. However, it is evident that UN agencies in country are a preferred partner for the instrument, as illustrated in Figure 6.1 below.

FIGURE 6.1: SPENDING BY PARTNER TYPE FROM 2014-2021 (DKK MILLION)

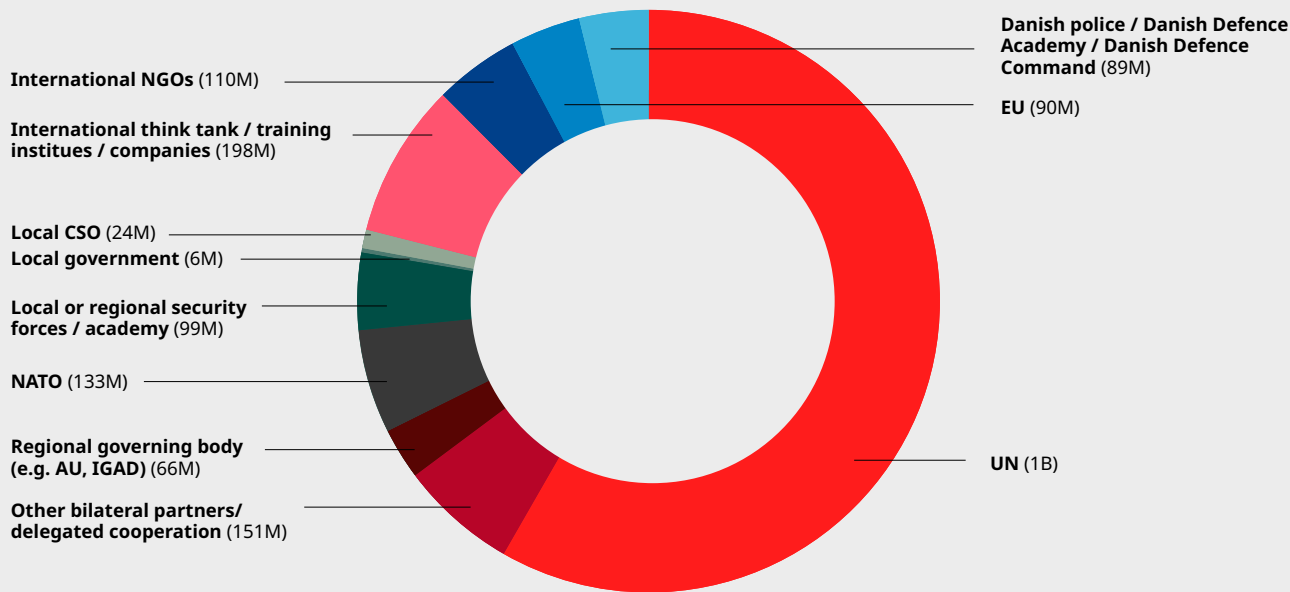
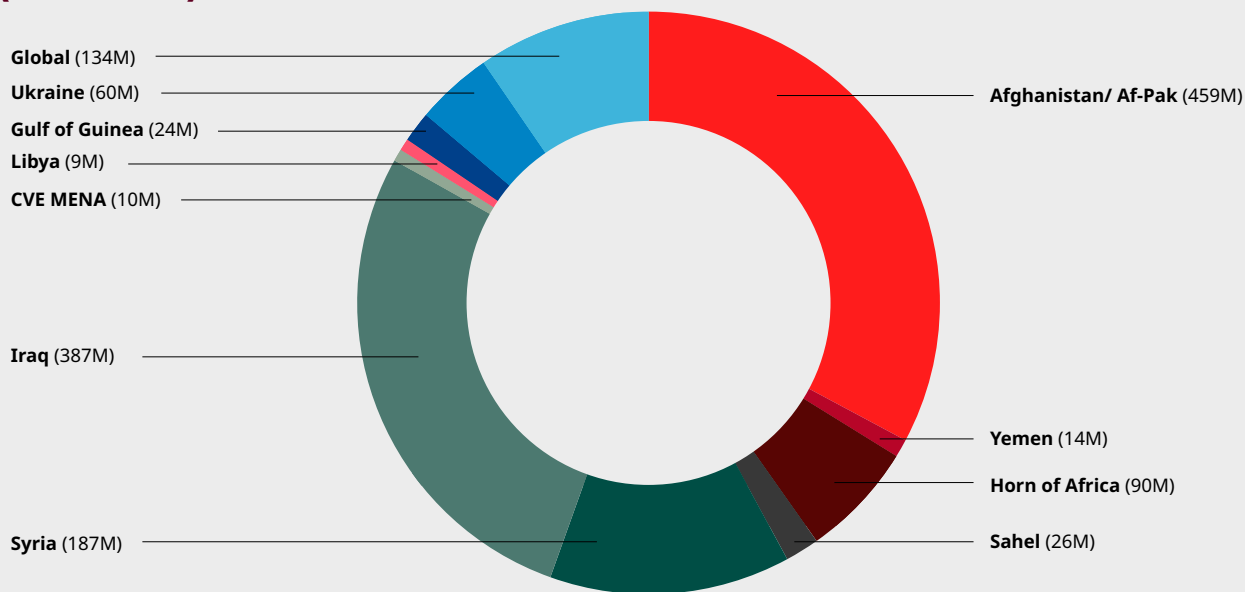


Chart: Note: In some cases the ‘implementing partner’ refers to ‘contractual partners’ who may sub-contract to other organisations.

Use of multilateral partners varied by region (as illustrated in Figure 3.8). The largest portion of multilateral spending was seen in the Syria-Iraq and Afghanistan/ Af-Pak programmes, while the Sahel region and Horn of Africa saw significantly less use of multilateral partners (volume).

FIGURE 6.2: USE OF MULTILATERAL PARTNERS BY PROGRAMME / REGION FROM 2014-2021 (DKK MILLION)



Source: NCG/ Ecomes based on portfolio analysis of funding commitments.

In terms of risk appetite, the PSF programmes by and large demonstrated a high in-built risk tolerance. A high-risk awareness (and tolerance) in PSF programming was pertinent considering the difficult and volatile context in which programmes were implemented. There was a high level of risk awareness and actions to reduce risks by programme management.³⁵ The implementing partners and programme management were sufficiently aware of the potential risks and negative effects of contextual factors on programmes and adjusted implementation accordingly. The deeper contextual knowledge ensured by the decentralised management (or by PSF advisors on the ground such as in the case of Syria and Iraq) enabled partial mitigation of risks in the context. Part of the mitigation consisted of risk-sharing with other development partners, by taking part in wider efforts through pooled funding.

BOX 6.4: INNOVATION

Innovative elements have been introduced in the portfolio for example through sub-granting to additional organisations taking advantage of the PSF's flexibility. The Joint Force, G5 Sahel has adopted the Civilian Casualties Identification, Tracking and Analysis Cell (CITAC or MISAD in French) tool. PSF contributed to the implementation of the Human Rights Compliance Framework (HRCF), being led in partnership with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and CIVIC, funded by the European Union (EU). The HRCF framework recommends, in the sixth pillar, a mechanism for monitoring and reporting conduct during operations, especially in incidents that affect civilians. Once operational, the CITAC is expected to become the Joint Force's internal tool to analyse patterns of civilian harm and provide the command with options to mitigate civilian harm in its area of responsibility. The adoption and training on the CITAC was possible thanks to a new partnership developed by OHCHR, lead partner on the HRCF support, with PSF funding.

35 In a similar vein, the CSSF shows a high degree of risk tolerance and risk-appetite allowing CSSF programming to act in unstable or uncertain environments and working as a test bed to address rapidly evolving challenges. For more information, see the UK Benchmarking Study in the annex.

6.3 Programme Monitoring

Programmes did not manage to systematically capture outcomes.

Challenges in measuring the achievement of outcomes were at least partly due to the difficulty of defining appropriate indicators for objectives and end goals related to peace and stabilisation as well as unrealistic and overoptimistic expectations and timelines. While results frameworks at programme level were developed, they were not always internally consistent and coherent. Implementing partners had their own M&E set-up and systems. Programmes oscillated between building results frameworks by aggregation of individual engagements' results frameworks (e.g., Sahel), with all the related risks of inconsistency, and developing programme level results frameworks which were never really owned by implementing partners (e.g., HoA) and were only partially reported against.

Programme- and engagement-level monitoring was also difficult, partly due to security constraints and the Covid-19 pandemic.

Security constraints limited the possibility to conduct field visits (this was in part remedied through third-party monitoring, e.g., in Syria). Covid-19 related restrictions on travel added challenges in the last two years. In most cases the programmes have relied on the implementing partners for monitoring individual engagements.

Considerable efforts have gone into M&E and efforts have increased over time, but processes placed too much emphasis on compliance with reporting rules at the expense of learning.

Programme managers spent considerable time clarifying reporting requirements with implementing partners, sometimes with frustration from both sides. This was especially observed in the case of delegated partners of multi-donor trust funds and facilities who would prefer an overall reporting for all donors. Decentralised programmes were in a better position to compensate for this. An improvement in monitoring practices with more emphasis on learning could be observed in the last phase, for instance in the Sahel Programme (see Box 6.5 on the following page).

**BOX 6.5: MONITORING AS JOINT LEARNING:
IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS' MEETINGS IN THE HOA AND
IN THE SAHEL**

The programme management of Sahel and HoA PSPs introduced useful practices such as periodical monitoring meetings with implementing partners to discuss implementation issues and reporting, as well as joint meetings of all partners to learn and exchange information. In the Sahel PSP, every three months individual meetings have been held by programme management with all implementing partners, followed by joint meetings. Starting from December 2018, three meetings have been held until Covid-19 emerged. Each partners made a presentation, and exchanges with a view to possible collaboration took place. In HoA there are regular meetings between programme management and partners and learning between phases, and from other Danish and partner programmes.

7. GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

EQ 4. Have the arrangements for PSF governance and management been appropriate and adequate to facilitate the optimal and strategic use of the PSF, stronger inter-ministerial collaboration, appropriate leadership and guidance in implementation, knowledge exchange and learning?

SUMMARY RESPONSE TO EVALUATION QUESTION 4:

The Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee (IMSC) has provided a formal mechanism for inter-ministerial collaboration and exchange that did not exist prior to the establishment of the PSF. However, IMSC meetings have mainly focused on information sharing on programmes, on programme approval and progress reporting (compliance) with little emphasis on strategic issues. While the PSF Guidelines have been helpful and remain a key document for ensuring a strategic use of PSF, they are often not sharp/detailed enough to solve dilemmas and issues concerning funding choices and the definition of the PSF “niche”.

There has been a considerable gap between the level of ambition and the human resources available for the monitoring and management of the PSF, especially considering its involvement in a substantial number of programmes as well as one-off engagements. There were relatively few dedicated human resources in SAMSEK, in the ministries as well as for the management of the respective programmes in the field.

PSF procedures have allowed for a sufficiently flexible and adaptive implementation. The programme budgets and actual spending have matched well and there has been limited under-spending.

A vertical feedback loop between IMSC and programme management level has not been established. Structured learning across programmes and regions was limited. While there has been sufficient use of knowledge resources at the level of programmes, the PSF has struggled to showcase its achievements and there was limited visibility of the Fund and its programmes. This can be partly attributed to the fact that the PSF has not had an external communication strategy.

7.1 Strategic direction, guidance, and leadership

The Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee (IMSC) has provided a formal mechanism for inter-ministerial collaboration and exchange that did not exist prior to the establishment of the PSF.³⁶ As such, the IMSC has been an instrumental forum for regular coordination on PSF programmes for involved WOG partners (the MoD, MFA and the Police). The MoJ has hardly engaged, and the Ministry delegated its seat to the Police. The fourth WOG partner, the Prime Minister's Office, was never expected to participate in the steering committee on a regular basis.

IMSC meetings have mainly focused on information sharing on programmes, programme approval and progress reporting (compliance), with little emphasis on strategic issues. Strategic and context analyses were sometimes reported or shared but hardly gave rise to true strategic discussions among IMSC participants and follow-up actions. The IMSC was not in a position to make high-level policy decisions going beyond PSF but could still influence them and find its own level of strategic decision-making in order to raise issues above the level of programming and information exchange. By increasing strategic dialogue between ministries, the PSF steering body could have facilitated more coherence and complementarity across different Danish instruments and with partners. Many issues related to approval of reports which were discussed at IMSC level, and thereby filled up agendas at these meetings, could have been handled at the level of the joint secretariat SAMSEK.

The PSF Guidelines have been helpful and remain a key document for ensuring a strategic use of PSF. The Guidelines provide an introduction to the PSF, including the rationale for the WOG approach, the WOG Steering Committee and Secretariat and the financial structure of the Fund. Then, current principles and priorities of the Fund (thematic and geographic priorities) are presented, as well as some cross-cutting issues. Finally, instructions are given for programme and project preparation, approval, management and completion in full consistency (for ODA funding) with the AMG.

36 In the UK, the lack of strategic direction and the lack of a strategic goal under the CSSF can be partly attributed to the highly different organisational cultures in the UK. UK Ambassadors, (as Her Majesty's representatives overseas), consider themselves to be "primi inter pares" (i.e. the most influential and important stakeholder in the field of international development). British Armed Forces should be a "force for good in the world" whereby national security and prosperity are highly dependent on the promotion of international stability. DFID staff (now UK FCDO), in turn, considered themselves as a global network of leading development experts and practitioners.

The Guidelines are extensive but at the same time not sufficiently sharp to solve dilemmas and issues concerning funding choices and the definition of the PSF “niche”. The “current principles” therefore give a loose guidance which has been used in programming, but there are engagements that contradict them. For instance, not all engagements have a regional focus, or follow a whole-of-government approach. Despite the intention to identify thematic areas that ensure an added value compared to other Danish instruments, some of the areas clearly overlap with bilateral programming. This is the case for the “security- and justice- sector efforts” where the national institutional dimension clearly is very relevant. The part on the justice sector is not clearly defined, the reference to Responsibility to Protect (R2P) is insufficient. Moreover, there is some overlap between conflict resolution and other areas, requiring stronger conceptual clarity. In general, several other thematic areas overlap with “security and justice sector efforts”. Furthermore, the presentation of cross-cutting issues like gender, HRBA and anti-corruption is too generic and does not provide clear guidelines on how these should be mainstreamed into the PSF projects and programmes. Another aspect on which guidelines are insufficiently clear is about demarcating ODA from non-ODA funding, which is important as the AMG only apply to ODA funding. It is a sensible guideline that each programme should be clearly anchored, e.g., within one designated department or representation in either the MFA or the MoD, and that that unit should lead the context analysis. However, as noted elsewhere in this report, an independent analysis would be necessary prior to drafting the concept note, in order to strengthen the WOG cooperation and ownership.

7.2 The PSF management set-up

There has been a considerable gap between the level of ambition and the human resources available for the monitoring and management of the PSF, especially considering its involvement in a substantial number of programmes as well as one-off engagements. Effective delivery of support in fragile and conflict-affected settings requires strong analytical underpinnings, flexibility and agility, attention to the high-risk environment and strong and diverse partnerships. SAMSEK was tasked with providing strategic and technical guidance and quality assurance to PSF programmes. The evaluation in 2014 pointed to the shortage of staff resources in the PSF. Since then, there have been further reductions in staff, while PSF financial resources have increased over time with a variety of new programmes launched in different geographical areas.

There were relatively few dedicated human resources in SAMSEK, in the different ministries as well as for the management of the respective programmes in the field. SAMSEK relied only on two full-time resources from MFA (and currently only one) and one from MoD. The shortage of human resources has affected the time available for SAMSEK staff to conduct more in-depth analyses and reflections and to promote knowledge sharing among PSF stakeholders. It also limited the available time to identify opportunities to strengthen the integrated approach and complementarity with other Danish instruments, to operationalise the HDP nexus, and to mainstream WPS into the PSF agenda. Additionally, in MoD approximately ten people work with PSF programmes, but only for a limited share of their time since they have the military engagements as their focus. Both in MoD and MFA, staff turnovers have also limited the degree of institutional memory on the PSF.

BOX 7.1: GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE OF THE UK CSSF

The National Security Council (NSC), which is chaired by the Prime Minister and attended by senior cabinet ministers, set the CSSF's strategic direction. It is guided by the priorities set out in the 2021 Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy.

Like the PSF, the CSSF has a management body, the Joint Fund Unit (JFU). The JFU provides the day-to-day oversight and management of the CSSF through JFU advisors.

Similar to SAMSEK, these JFU advisors have specific expertise in programme management, monitoring and evaluation, gender, conflict, governance and security and key thematic areas. The support provided includes training, guidance and technical assistance. These advisors also help to collate all the results and are responsible for fund level reporting. Based on the direction of the National Security Council, the JFU sets the "rules" determining the kinds of themes that projects may address.

Regional Boards have been created under the JFU. These Regional Boards consist of HQ staff (policy and programming officers) and their job is to set the direction of what is to be funded in their region based on JFU guidance. The advantage of having Regional Boards is that the strategic guidance is tailored to the particular crises and situations of each region. The embassies are then free to propose – through a bottom-up process – projects and programmes within these frameworks.

While the majority of the CSSF's programmes are multiyear, the CSSF reviews its spending through an annual budget allocation 're-profiling' process. HM Treasury requires a comprehensive review of the CSSF each year to ensure that funds are allocated to the highest strategic priorities and deliver value for money.

Some differences between SAMSEK and JFU can be noted: while SAMSEK is basically a joint venture between two main WOGA actors – MoD and MFA – and responds to the IMSC, the JFU is placed under the Cabinet Office, and has responsibility for all CSSF funds, which all UK Departments may bid for. The UK does not have a dedicated governance body equivalent to the IMSC, as the National Security Council (NSC) provides the strategic directions.

Decentralised management was an enabler for the regional programmes. One of the strong points of the decentralised programme management of the PSPs is the proximity to the context, allowing for a more in-depth understanding and regular collaboration with partners, including close monitoring of progress on engagements. Decentralised management helped to maintain a strategic focus and to avoid diversion to emergencies and ad-hoc responses aimed at delivering quick wins without a long-term vision. However, decentralised management of regional programmes also gave rise to certain challenges. When one embassy in the region was in charge of managing the PSF programme, other embassies had a more limited ownership of the programme. This has only in part been mitigated by setting up programme committees with representations from all concerned embassies; the day-to-day knowledge of the programme implementation continued to differ, reducing opportunities for synergies between country and regional programmes.

Hybrid management between HQ and regions worked to a variable extent. The MENA region had a hybrid management set-up, where HQ management was coupled with having advisers in the region. This worked well in the interim with limited to no representation in Syria and Iraq. The management of the GoG programme has been transferred back and forth between the embassy in Accra and Copenhagen. One argument has been that the embassies in the region are not staffed to manage ODA funded peace and stabilisation engagements.

7.3 Programming and financing procedures

PSF procedures have allowed for a sufficiently flexible and adaptive implementation. There has been flexibility within the allocated funding and adequate room for allocating more of the budget to crises when they arise. The regional programming approach (being able to transfer funds across engagements and across countries) and the increase of unallocated funds to 20% in the 2020 PSF Guidelines facilitated further flexibility at programme level, although this portion was used to varying degrees across the different programmes. At the engagement level, extensions (in some cases with costs) were granted to implementing partners in order to catch up with the implementation of activities delayed by the Covid-19 pandemic or due to security issues.

The programme budgets and actual spending have been well matched and there has been limited under-spending. At Fund level, there was an average of 2% of commitments unspent in the evaluation period. There was a noted difference between MoD and MFA: 7% of MoD commitments were left unspent, whereas only 1% of MFA commitments were unspent. A caveat is needed when assessing the level of spending within programmes: disbursements are made on the basis of partner

requests, which means that funding disbursed to partners has not necessarily already been spent by them on the ground, whereas the funds appear spent at programme level once disbursed to the partners.

7.4 Knowledge exchange, learning, communication, and visibility

A vertical feedback loop between IMSC and programme management level has not been established. Reporting from management of individual programmes went to the IMSC, but what the IMSC decided or recommended did not often feed back to the lower levels of programme management.

Structured learning across programmes and regions was limited. The evaluation has found good examples of learning that has taken place within certain regional programmes. In the HoA programme, for example, implementing partners were gathered on a regular basis to stimulate learning and this learned knowledge has fed into the new phase of programming. Some of the programming experience in HoA was considered useful by the Sahel PSP. More systematic exchange and mutual learning between PSF programmes has not been well supported by SAMSEK and the IMSC, which was in part due to shortage of resources in SAMSEK. Since 2016 there has been no thematic learning event organised by the IMSC/SAMSEK and learning reviews have not been conducted across the programmes for example on specific themes or processes. The Mid-Term Reviews have not had a deliberate learning function but have mainly focused on assessing programming progress on the ground.

BOX 7.2: MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND LEARNING (MEL) UNDER THE UK CSSF

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) processes have considerably improved over time even though significant challenges remain. The delivery of Joint Analysis of Conflict and Stability (JACS) by the SU helps to understand the needs and interests of key actors and the underlying drivers of conflict and violence in a country. The use of knowledge in the JACS helps to design programmes that respond to conflict drivers. However, there are ongoing challenges with results reporting: the 2018 ICAI Review of the CSSF found that the Programme Design documents and project reporting often fail to distinguish accurately between activities (such as training security forces), outputs (the skills that are acquired) and intended outcomes (people using their new skills in useful ways). Frequent staff turnovers in the different ministries and at field level have also limited the institutional memory/learning.

In 2019/2020 the JFU started to place an even stronger emphasis on lesson learning and sharing of best practice to ensure the continuous improvement of CSSF programmes. The JFU established a new Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) strategy to enable Fund-level learning and ensure the Fund overall is aligned to and delivering effectively against Ministerial objectives. The Fund takes a unique decentralised approach to delivering this new MEL strategy. This is achieved by “incentivising portfolios to manage their own MEL activities and ensure they are situated within the local and regional context in which each project and programme is operating. Each team has access to dedicated internal and external technical support to enable a tailored approach. Across the CSSF network, in 2019/20, there were 16 CSSF MEL Advisers, each focusing on a specific portfolio, and nine external MEL suppliers covering most CSSF portfolios and offering dedicated MEL support to related programmes”.

There has been sufficient use of knowledge resources at the level of programmes. Research institutions have provided in-depth analysis of particular issues in some programmes and have conducted independent assessments where required. Research promoted by implementing partners have also accompanied the HoA, the GoG and the Sahel programmes. This has led to studies on, among others, (i) factors and conditions of violent extremism and radicalisation; (ii) securing pastoral lands in the Sahel; (iii) the status of the security sector, and iv) on piracy. While knowledge generated by these studies has informed some of the specific engagements and programmes, the findings have not been shared widely within PSF. The use of research inputs has neither been systematic nor been brought to IMSC for presentation and strategic level discussions (including the possible implications of such knowledge).

The PSF has struggled to showcase its achievements and there was limited visibility of the Fund and its programmes. The PSF has not had an external communication strategy. Both the MFA and the MoD have a section dedicated to peace and stabilisation engagements on their websites where the PSF Annual Reports are available, and in the regions of presence the PSF interventions have not been given adequate visibility. Mentions of PSF have been rare in the MoD and MFA social media accounts. One possible objective of a visibility strategy could have been to support the Danish candidature to the UN Security Council in 2023-2024; however, contributions to the UN and especially the engagement with the UN Peacebuilding Fund were so far not adequately showcased to this purpose. At programme level, visibility of Danish support to the public in the targeted regions was prioritised to a variable extent. Communications strategies, when attached to programme documents, have been low profile. The Danish embassy Facebook pages publicised PSF activities, but often without mentioning the PSF itself. Overall, the visibility efforts of PSF are scattered, relying on already existing communication agents (including individuals active on social networks) and structures in MFA, MoD and embassies. Communication with the public, both in Denmark and in the countries of implementation, was not subject to adequate specific PSF investments, thereby reducing the visibility of the Fund as a whole and therefore its public diplomacy potential.

8. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Overall conclusion

The PSF has been a relevant instrument for Denmark's engagement in fragile and conflict-affected contexts, both at policy and programme level, in the period covered by the evaluation. The programmes have provided openings to engage together with partners in protracted crisis situations, and seek to stabilise conflict situations, address root causes and conflict drivers whilst supporting peace efforts. Such engagement signals Denmark's values towards democracy, peacebuilding support security and the right of conflict affected populations, even when overall contexts have deteriorated.

8.2 Specific conclusions

Achievement of Results

There are short-term and medium-term results of PSF programmes. **Short-term** results include direct stabilisation efforts such life-saving support, initiation of institutional reform steps, capacity building accomplishments, knowledge generation, documentation of human rights abuses, promotion of democratic processes, establishment of peace committees, creating spaces for public participation in policy making, and delivery of equipment and training. Regarding medium-term results, the picture is more mixed, but some results were achieved, for example the return of IDPs in Iraq, reduced piracy threat and greater readiness of the EASF in the HoA, and strengthened local conflict resolution practices in Liptako-Gourma in the Sahel.

The contribution of PSF programmes to longer-term peace and stability has been modest. The crises situations in which Denmark has engaged through the PSF have in most cases deteriorated despite Danish and international efforts. The Sahel crisis and the Danish military departure from Mali, the expanded territorial position of Al Shabaab in Somalia and the takeover by Taliban in Afghanistan, and not least the acute conflict in Ukraine all witness the complexity of contributing to peace and stabilisation and the fragility of any gains made. Long-term outcomes have proven difficult to predict and plan for. Denmark and its likeminded allies and partners have, according to the programme documentation, had high and at times unrealistic expectations, which have not been met.

The WOG approach, including the MFA, the MoD, the MoJ, and the PMO has functioned to some degree. The collaboration between the MFA and MoD has been consistent at governance level, and there are good examples where the actors have worked together. However, most of the work has been done in isolation, and the opportunities of complementarities have not been fully exploited. The MoJ has been a missing actor, notwithstanding the role of the Danish police, whose presence in the form of police advisers has strengthened the WOG approach and added value to the programmes. Nonetheless, the wide range of criminal activities and networks, point to a need to strengthen the rule of law focus within the fund, making the absence of MoJ and its institutions a strategic gap in the WOG approach. MoJ can contribute to capacity and institution building of security and intelligence services, as well as research and investigations of criminal network activities.

Strategic use, prioritisation, and alignment

PSF funding choices have been aligned and consistent with Danish development, foreign and security, and defence policies and interests, taking into account shifting policy agendas over time. PSF programmes have shown increased attention to cross-cutting priorities on human rights, gender and youth, however gaps remain on operationalising the WPS and youth agenda. In line with Denmark's multilateral ambitions, Denmark has been well placed in coalitions and alliances and thereby contributed to international efforts. The PSF has shown its value as a flexible instrument that can quickly respond to emerging issues and address Danish interests. Yet, responses have at times been ad-hoc without consideration for longer term strategic priorities and focus.

At Fund level, the PSF has also had a wide scope of engagements, both thematically and geographically. The absence of clear terminology and definitions of the thematic priorities of the Fund has allowed for flexibility and context-specific programming, but also reduced the sharpness of the Fund's purpose. Some further clarification of key concepts and terminologies could strengthen a shared understanding of what the PSF does and does not do.

The regional programmes and engagements have been coherent and aligned with those of international like-minded actors. Internally, programmes have been coherent, although room remains to further explore the synergies among different PSF engagements in specific regions or countries. The synergies among PSF and other Danish assistance across the HDP nexus have remained limited. The opportunities for synergies and mutual reinforcement between PSF programmes and policy dialogue have been recognised, but not always utilized.

The Women Peace and Security (WPS) agenda (and the body of UN Security Council Resolutions underpinning it) has only recently become a

priority for the PSF and was found to be sorely downgraded in the period covered by the evaluation.

There are some examples where complementarities between WOG partners reinforced results, which demonstrates the real value addition of the PSF. The approach enables analysis of many drivers of a complex crisis and opens for a broad palette of expertise and interventions. The regional dimension and coverage are a strength of the PSF. Internally the regional coverage has been associated with differences of interpretation because regional covers different ways of engaging in the same programme.

Design and implementation

The PSF programmes have been designed based on political economy descriptions that remained quite broad and did not always pay sufficient attention to security aspects and interlinkages between different conflict drivers. Across the board, analyses could have been deeper. The work of researchers has not systematically been shared at senior management level (IMSC), nor used strategically to inform programmes. It is also unclear to what extent the analyses conducted in connection with programming have been shared and discussed by the WOG partners, prior to decisions on programming have been taken.

The Theories of Change (ToC) have mainly focused on contextual and programmatic pre-conditions for the programmes, which has limited the usefulness of ToCs. Some of the implicit, untested causal assumptions in the ToCs were unrealistic and over-optimistic. They revolved around the ability of capacity building interventions to generate behaviour change and assumptions of linear progression from military liberation of areas. This was through the (re)-introduction of the state to regulate or deliver basic services, to be able to keep an area stable, and for development programmes to “take over” and start a peaceful trajectory of long-term positive development actions.

The choice of implementing partners was appropriate considering resource constraints, the continuation of existing relations and contextual dynamics. In all programmes, there was relatively limited choice in terms of potential implementing partners with the right expertise. The direct implementation by MoD and the Police gave Denmark valuable entry points into national government institutions and access to decision makers in the security sector.

The outcomes of programmes were not captured adequately, and the M&E put more emphasis on compliance than learning. An improvement in monitoring practices with more emphasis on learning could be observed in the last phase.

Governance and management

The Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee did not sufficiently take up its role in terms of providing strategic direction and was not sufficiently used as a forward-looking strategic steering platform. In particular, the need to adjust approaches and reassess risks of engagement has not been addressed sufficiently.

The human resources available for the monitoring and management of PSF, considering its regional coverage and involvement in a substantial number of programmes (as well as one-off engagements) seem insufficient.

The PSF programmes by and large demonstrated a high in-built risk tolerance capacity. PSF procedures have allowed for a sufficiently flexible and adaptive implementation with significant room to revise, discontinue, or expand engagements throughout the programming cycle to reflect emerging challenges and opportunities.

There has been limited facilitation of learning across all programmes. A feedback loop has not been established, and reporting goes towards central level, with sporadic horizontal exchanges. There has been little visibility of the Fund and its programmes due to lack of a developed external communication strategy.

8.3 Overall recommendation

The scale and complexity of crises and Denmark's priorities of engaging in fragile and conflict affected setting (both in low- and middle-income contexts) calls for the PSF to be a central instrument in Denmark foreign policy and security engagements. For the PSF to strengthen its relevance, effectiveness, complementarity and coherence, the WOG partners should urgently prioritise deep-dive strategic-level discussions among senior level representatives in the PSF, and key stakeholders on the objectives, scope and priority areas for PSF 2.0, in order to sharpen focus, priorities and delivery of results taking note of the following:

8.4 Specific recommendations**Achievement of results**

1. Conduct independent, in-depth context and stakeholder analyses that precede programming, and are updated at regular intervals. The purpose is to set realistic objectives which draw on Denmark's added value, deliver engagements that focus on key conflict drivers, and major opportunities for peacebuilding. This will also enable the PSF to draw on the most relevant and the best possible expertise, and to

continuously reassess risks, the need for adaptation, and potential exit points. Action: IMSC/SAMSEK/Implementing Units.

2. Strengthen the PSF's WOG approach between MFA and MoD and engage the MoJ both at strategic level and in implementation in order to draw on MoJ institutions' expertise. The active role of MoJ calls for a budget for international engagement or a close cooperation with MFA on priorities and financing support. Action: MFA/MoD/MoJ/PMO.

Strategic use, prioritisation and alignment

3. Strengthen a shared understanding of the scope, aims and boundaries of the PSF, and revise the PSF guidelines to place greater emphasis on conflict prevention and sustaining peace. Reflect on how peace and stabilisation are understood in the Fund, and the spectrum of interventions that they encompass, noting that peacebuilding and stabilisation are not opposing terms. New and different challenges, such as climate change related conflicts also call for a consideration of current and future issues to be addressed. Action: SAMSEK with approval by IMSC.
4. Continue to balance long-term programming and crisis response, while keeping emphasis on the long-term programming in regions and enhance the strategic use and complementarity of ODA and non-ODA funding at programme level. Ensure that one-off engagements are aligned with the Fund's strategic objectives. Action: Embassies and IMSC.
5. Ensure that Women, Peace and Security (WPS) is mainstreamed into PSF programmes. One option would be to establish that a certain proportion of engagements which must have a WPS focus at the level of overall or thematic objectives. Ensure that WPS engagement is more clearly integrated into monitoring and results frameworks. Action: Embassies and IMSC.
6. Continuously improve complementarity with country programmes and other Danish and international programmes and modalities, and, in particular, see the PSF through the lens of its contribution in nexus approaches. Action: Embassies and SAMSEK.

Design, implementation and monitoring

7. Develop realistic ToCs taking a more comprehensive range of assumptions and risks into account and see interventions as a non-linear progression towards positive outcomes. Use ToC analysis in the course of implementation to assess changes and adjustments. Action: Embassies and SAMSEK.

8. Enhance the focus on outcome level monitoring and evaluation in close collaboration with partners. This includes more strategic use of external knowledge/research capacities and strategic level annual reviews, with a greater focus on opportunities and barriers.
Action: Embassies and SAMSEK.

Governance and management

9. Strengthen the strategic and interactive role of IMSC, both vis-a-vis political decision makers and other staff of the ministries involved.

This includes:

- playing a role at the conceptualisation of programmes and communicate the overall strategic value of the PSF to external stakeholders;
- engaging in policy dialogue within the Danish context and ensuring this is reflected at programme level;
- drawing on research and implementation experiences in strategic discussions at the IMSC level to ensure these are inform decision-making;

Action: IMSC and SAMSEK.

10. Restructure the role of SAMSEK vis-à-vis the IMSC, to allow room for the latter to engage at a more strategic level, in line with Recommendation 9. This entails reducing the reporting approval related tasks that the IMSC currently undertakes, if and when these can be carried out by SAMSEK instead. In the same vein, reassess the review and monitoring tasks of SAMSEK and the representations in the field with a view to reducing the time spent at each level, e.g., on partner administrative monitoring. Action: IMSC and SAMSEK.
11. Increase sharing and management of knowledge among programmes (horizontally) and between field and Denmark (HQ). In addition, ensure that there are platforms or mechanisms for applied research to be shared and integrated into strategic discussions and planning. Action: SAMSEK, embassies and IMSC.
12. Disseminate knowledge and experiences to the public through events, written/video material to increase the visibility of PSF activities and results. Action: SAMSEK, embassies and IMSC.
13. Increase human resources (both at HQ and in the field) and ensuring the workload of staff goes beyond processing and allows time for proper analysis of programmes and learning across programmes.
Action: MFA, MoD and MoJ.

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ISBN: PDF: 978-87-94339-12-4

