



Ten-Step BEFORE Approach to Consolidate Peace in Fragile States

In order to successfully initiate effective global action to consolidate peace and prevent political violence in a country at risk, the BEFORE approach follows these ten steps:

1. Select the most appropriate country for engagement based on two criteria: i) potential of large-scale political violence, ii) chances of successful intervention in light of the magnitude of the problem in proportion to BEFORE's resources and the likelihood that BEFORE's approach will be useful in this context;
2. Send an Assessment Team to the country to determine if there is indeed an opportunity for BEFORE to make a significant contribution to peace and stability. If there is not, return to step # 1 and select another country;
3. Carry out a rigorous multi-stakeholder conflict analysis based on the preliminary findings of the Assessment Team;
4. Define a comprehensive peace-consolidating strategy based on the outcomes of the multi-stakeholder conflict analysis;
5. Explore collaboration and synergies between BEFORE and other state- and non-state organizations active in the country;
6. Create BEFORE's operational action plan including schedule, budget, and concrete indicators to measure the impact;
7. Mobilize local and international financial resources needed to carry out the action plan;
8. Implement the BEFORE action plan;
9. Review and evaluate progress and modify strategy and action plan as appropriate;
10. Disseminate information about lessons learned widely to those who might be interested.

Step 1: Country Selection

On the basis of standardized expert surveys and additional information from secondary sources provided by the Secretariat, the regional Advisory Committee recommends to the Secretariat a country for BEFORE engagement, using "the potential of large scale political violence" and "feasibility" / "chances of success" as the criteria for their decision. The choice of the regional Advisory Committee needs to be approved by the Governing Board.

Step 2: Situation Assessment

If the Governing Board approves the choice of country made by the regional Advisory Committee and recommended by the CEO, the Secretariat with the advice of the regional Advisory Committee recruits an Assessment Team and a team leader. Finally, the Secretariat draws up a budget and with the help of the team leader organizes the assessment mission.

The Assessment Team with the help of the Secretariat compiles a list of key persons to be contacted in the selected country and if possible makes appointments before the visit. The assessment visit should take 1-2 weeks, after which the Assessment Team recommends to the Secretariat whether to proceed in that country. If the recommendation is negative, the Assessment Team prepares a report, listing contacts made and the reason for the abstention. If the recommendation is positive, the Assessment Team prepares a more comprehensive report to include whatever information it has gathered that is likely to be helpful to the analysis of the local situation and the further steps outlined below.

The CEO decides whether to accept the Assessment Team's recommendation and report.

Step 3: Multi-Stakeholder Conflict Analysis

Depending on the political sensitivities and the levels of tensions existing in the society, the Secretariat organizes a multi-stakeholder conflict analysis workshop in the selected country. The conflict analysis workshop constitutes the basis for a comprehensive strategy development process. The aim of the workshop is to identify the key driving factors of potential violent conflict as well as eventual trigger events for political violence.

The attendees of the workshop should represent all important viewpoints of the society as a whole and include, as is possible: governmental representatives, political parties, military personnel, civil society, elders, religious leaders, academics, traditional communicators, members of administration related to the conflict areas and other important stakeholders. This collaborative process produces a shared analysis, which can serve as a strong incentive for all stakeholders to remain involved in the process going forward. The workshop is facilitated either by staff members of partner organization(s) or a team of facilitators recruited among consultants and staff members of partner organization(s) that are present in the country and who have conflict analysis experience. The analysis process addresses the following key questions:

- What are the key driving factors of conflict and what are causes and effects of these factors?
- What are the relationships and dynamics among factors?
- What factors (actors, issues, motives, resources, dynamics, attitudes, and behavior patterns) maintain or reinforce the conflict system; which would resist movement toward peace, and why?
- Which factors should be addressed as priorities?
- Who are key actors, particularly in relation to priority factors?
- What are the international or regional dimensions of the conflict?
- What are the key elements of a peace-consolidating strategy?

The outcomes of the workshop are summarized in a joint report of the organization / team of facilitators. The CEO accepts the report when he, in consultation with the regional Advisory Committee and with the advice of selected Governing Board members, considers it adequate. (Note: Under some circumstance, that are extremely polarized, a multi-stakeholder analysis process is not possible, in which case, facilitators collect information widely or organize a series of smaller workshops to attain a similar result.)

Step 4: Comprehensive Strategy Development

Drawing on the conflict analysis produced in Step 3, a Country Team, appointed and supported by the Secretariat, formulates a comprehensive strategy for consolidating peace. In order to guarantee a coherent process, some or all facilitators of the multi-stakeholder conflict analysis workshop participate in this Country Team. Besides local members, the Country Team is composed of international representatives. Again, the idea is to produce a shared strategy in order to encourage the stakeholders' involvement in implementation.

The strategy flows explicitly from the analysis and includes a "theory of change" that explains why the Country Team believes that addressing clearly-defined key factors will consolidate peace and reduce the potential for violence in the country. The strategy also encourages cooperation and collaborative action, to ensure that the efforts of a range of actors will have greater impact on consolidating peace than they would separately.

Among the elements to be considered are:

- Decide which key factors to address first;
- Suggest concrete activities to address the identified key factors (including programs, projects, and processes);

- Identify potential entry points for BEFORE and other peacebuilding organizations;
- Identify local organizations and individuals able to execute BEFORE activities;
- Identify outside organizational resources likely to be helpful (including not only those identified with aid, development, and violence prevention but also business interests);
- Identify potential sources of funding that local leadership may be able to tap.

The CEO informs the regional Advisory Committee and the Governing Board from time to time as the strategy is being developed. He accepts the strategy when he, in consultation with the regional Advisory Committee and with the advice of selected Governing Board members, considers it to be adequate.

Step 5: Explore cooperation and synergies

An effective long-term program to consolidate peace in a country at risk requires greater resources than are likely to be available to BEFORE. Therefore, BEFORE must collaborate with and support other organizations that are already engaged in peacebuilding initiatives, and advocate action by appropriate governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. To this end the Secretariat creates a roster of local, national and international organizations already active in the country and identifies possible ways to create synergies and ways of cooperation between them and BEFORE.

Step 6: BEFORE's Action Plan

In collaboration with the Secretariat, the Country Team prepares an action plan to implement those parts of the strategy which BEFORE wants to address.

It elaborates specific implementation actions and describes who is to do what and when. It also includes a budget for at least the first year and a monitoring mechanism that permits re-directing activities in response to changed conditions.

An important step in realizing the action plan is the selection of local implementing partners. Once that selection is made, the implementing partner (s), if not already part of the planning process, will be invited to participate fully.

The CEO accepts the action plan when he, in consultation with the regional Advisory Committee and with the advice of selected Governing Board members, considers it to be adequate.

Step 7: Fundraising for concrete Projects

The Secretariat with the support of the regional Advisory Committee helps its local partners to raise funds to implement project activities as envisaged in the action plan. To this end, a comprehensive list of potential governmental and non-governmental organizations as well as private companies operating in the country is produced. Either the CEO, the regional Advisory Committee or the Governing Board contact these potential donors.

Step 8: Implementation of Action Plan

The Secretariat, in conjunction with the regional Advisory Committee, initiates the execution of the action plan and monitors its implementation in conformance with the objectives and the budget. The implementing organization(s) provide regular written progress reports (quarterly narrative and financial reports).

Step 9: Review and Evaluation of Project Activities

The Secretariat monitors/assesses progress and informs the regional Advisory Committee and the Governing Board twice a year about project developments. On occasion, the Governing Board may decide to commission an independent evaluation by an outside organization, either in response to a recommendation by the CEO or on its own initiative.

Depending on results of the evaluations:

- The CEO, in consultation with selected members of the regional Advisory Committee and the Governing Board, may change the strategy, the action plan, and/or the composition of the implementing partner(s) ;
- The CEO, after consulting the regional Advisory Committee, suggests to the Governing Board to discontinue the BEFORE country program. Should the Governing Board decide to discontinue a program, the CEO draws up an exit strategy.

Step 10: Dissemination of Lessons Learned

From time to time, as is appropriate, the Secretariat prepares a description of the engagement and/or a summary of lessons learned. The Secretariat prepares a plan and budget for disseminating such material widely. The objective is to make this knowledge available to all who may be able to use it, so dissemination should be as widespread as possible within budgetary limitations.

Governing Board approval is needed before such information is disseminated.

Appendix: BEFORE Bodies and their responsibilities

Steps	Secretariat & BEFORE CEO	Regional Advisory Committee	Governing Board	Implementing Organization/ Team
Step 1: Selection of Country	– Prepare & advise	– Select Country	– Approve of country and give a green light to proceed	
Step 2: Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Recruit Assessment Team – Organize assessment mission – Approve / disapprove Assessment Team report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Provide names of suitable candidates – Recommend CEO to proceed or not 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Support Secretariat in organizing assessment mission – Carry out mission – Produce report for Secretariat / CEO
Step 3: Conflict Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Organize multi-stakeholder conflict analysis workshop – Select organization to carry out workshop or appoint members of a mixed team of facilitators – Approve / disapprove report 	– Advise Secretariat	– Advise Secretariat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Carry out multi-stakeholder conflict analysis workshop – Produce report for Secretariat / CEO
Step 4: Strategy Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Appoint members of the Country Team who elaborate strategy – Advise the Country Team – Inform Advisory Committee and Governing Board about process – Approve / disapprove strategy 	– Advise Secretariat	– Advise Secretariat on approving / disapproving strategy	– Formulation of a comprehensive peace-consolidating strategy
Step 5: Explore cooperation and synergies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Create a roster of organizations active in the country – Identify possible cooperation and synergies 	– Advise Secretariat		– Advise Secretariat

Steps	Secretariat & BEFORE CEO	Regional Advisory Committee	Governing Board	Implementing Organization/ Team
Step 6: BEFORE's action plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support the Country Team who prepares the BEFORE action plan - Select local implementing partner(s) - Inform Advisory Committee and Governing Board about outcome of action plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advise Secretariat 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support Secretariat in drawing up action plan
Step 7: Fundraising for concrete projects / activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create list of potential donors - Contact potential donors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advise Secretariat 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Raise funds with support from Secretariat
Step 8: Implementation of action plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Oversight of projects 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Carry out action plan - Write quarterly narrative reports on project activities and results and financial reports
Step 9: Evaluation and Adaptation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review and evaluate on-going projects - Inform Advisory Committee and Governing Board - Decide project adaptation(s) / Suggest to Governing Board discontinuation of country program and formulate exit strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advise Secretariat regarding adaptation or discontinuation of country program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Decide on external evaluation - Decide on discontinuation of country program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide self-evaluation of project activities
Step 10: Dissemination of Lessons Learnt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Compile report with major lessons learned 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Approve release of report 	