

FINAL EXTERNAL INDEPENDENT  
SUMMATIVE EVALUATION OF

**NATO-PERSPEKTIVA PROGRAMME IN  
BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA**

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## **ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

|            |  |
|------------|--|
| AF         | : Armed Forces of BiH                                |
| BiH        | : Bosnia and Herzegovina (country)                   |
| BC         | : Business Creation                                  |
| CIMIC      | : Civil-Military Co-operation                        |
| Federation | : Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (entity)      |
| HQ         | : Headquarters                                       |
| ICRS       | : Information, Counselling and Referral Services     |
| IT         | : Information technology                             |
| IOM        | : International Organization for Migration           |
| KUP        | : Personnel Command (AF)                             |
| M&E        | : Monitoring and Evaluation                          |
| NATO       | : North Atlantic Treaty Organisation                 |
| NPP        | : NATO-PERSPEKTIVA Programme                         |
| NTF        | : NATO Trust Fund                                    |
| MoD        | : Ministry of Defence                                |
| NCO        | : Non-Commissioned Officer                           |
| PfP        | : Partnership for Peace                              |
| PS         | : Professional Soldiers                              |
| RF         | : Results Framework                                  |
| RRC        | : Regional Resettlement Centres                      |
| RTC        | : Recruitment and Transition Centres                 |
| RS         | : Republika Srpska (entity)                          |
| SC         | : Steering Committee                                 |
| SSR        | : Security Sector Reform                             |
| TF         | : Trust Fund   |
| TOR        | : Terms of Reference                                 |
| UK         | : United Kingdom                                     |
| USAID      | : United States Agency for International Development |

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## **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The NATO-PERSPEKTIVA programme (NPP) has started in October 2010 and will be completed by September 2013, over a three-year implementation period. Originally targeting 2,300 discharged personnel in need of reintegration assistance, the NPP has been able to assist 2,341 persons as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013, and the projection is to reach 2,575 by the time of the NPP closing. This is in excess of the original planning figures, and also incorporates a new large caseload discharged during 2013 of 794 persons.

In qualitative terms, the NPP has shown to be very well managed with great efficiency and proving to be good value for money. All stakeholders involved, from direct beneficiaries to the MoD and the PSC donors, rated the NPP from high to excellent in relation to the results obtained.

The NPP is more than simply a programme to assist discharge personnel: it is also an investment in social peace and internal stability. At the beginning of the programme the issue of pension rights was heavily politicised as laws were past ahead of the elections to gain the votes from military personnel. However the laws were changed and some confusion on the entitlement for pensions existed. At the beginning of the NPP rumours indicated that those who would register in the NPP would not receive any pension. Time and efforts through dissemination and public information campaigns were undertaken to address the initial mistrust towards the NPP. Results show that the efforts were entirely successful, as no less than 97% of those who were released from 2010 to 2013 signed up for the NPP.

Despite the initial demonstrations in front of the parliament and anger from the discharged group, the NPP managed to implement the programme without any serious security incident. In many cases, the attentive, caring and listening capacity of IOM advisors and of the MoD/AF personnel was a key factor that was useful to neutralize the negative attitude of some of the beneficiaries.

The NPP has included as a key objective the capacity development of the MoD in line with good practices and national commitment, capacity and ownership. Special efforts were made throughout the NPP to ensure that IOM played a fundamental support role to the MoD. The coaching and learning by doing methodologies employed, including the sharing of the offices in the RTCs, all contributed to building the MoD capacity, although no initial baseline was established to accurately measure such improvement. As of today, the MoD has both at the headquarters and field levels the technical capacity to continue providing PERSPEKTIVA support to beneficiaries – however given the different procedures and requirements within MoD some aspects may not be carried over into the regular PERSPEKTIVA programme (such as the provision of a grant assistance). Be as it may, the MoD still needs to demonstrate its commitment to the process by establishing an annual budget line for transition. Another aspect that is important is the training of a new database manager as a backup and reserve person, to serve during absence of the current responsible (as was the case during the evaluation), on sick leave or moves on to another function

The NPP proved very receptive to the evaluation process and accepted nearly all of the mid-term evaluation recommendations. A key element was the inclusion of a psychosocial support to the beneficiaries, something that had been identified as a critical gap of the transition process. Beyond the questionable timeliness of the provision of this service for those discharged in 2010, the value of psychosocial support

is recognized by all respondents as one of the crucial components that should accompany the discharging process.

The NPP also produced an exit strategy in order to prepare for a hand-over of the activities to the MoD. While this has been done under a compressed time-frame given the lack of support from donors to extend the NPP further in time and given budget constraints, this has put more pressure on IOM to deliver both the assistance and the capacity development to MoD in line with the exit strategy and has been an additional challenge to maintain the quality of the services provided. From the beneficiaries interviewed during this final evaluation, it appears that the NPP was able to maintain the quality of its services unchanged, with a 4,62 average rating out of 5 regarding beneficiary satisfaction, versus a 4,70 obtained during the mid-term evaluation.

As the NPP is winding down towards its closing in September 2013, a number of activities remain to be completed and the exit strategy should be reviewed in line with any available resources to ensure that the post-NPP period will allow the MoD to apply what it has been learning over the past three years.

In order to appraise the results on the beneficiaries' socio-economic status, on the MoD's capacity to handle transition on its own, and to assess the results of the psychosocial support, an ex post evaluation should be planned one year after the end of the NPP to provide learning and accountability to NATO and donors as there are numerous innovative and creative elements that have improved the programme from its initial design of traditional assistance to discharged personnel to a comprehensive programme that is obtaining very high marks both at the beneficiaries' level but more importantly collectively as an instrument to contribute to the stability and security of the situation in the country.

## **2. Introduction and programme background**

The NPP has been developed to support the PERSPEKTIVA programme, which was elaborated by the MoD in March 2009. The original MoD programme was itself developed from the Policy on Transition and Resettlement of Redundant Personnel in the BiH Ministry of Defence and Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina of October 2008. Originally the PERSPEKTIVA programme was thought as a stand-alone programme for MoD execution. However given the lack of funding and previous implementation experience, a different implementation mode was decided. NATO, USAID and the International Community supported the NPP under the management and expertise of the International Organization for Migration, which has previous experience in this type of interventions, including in BiH with two previous projects since 2002: TAFS (Transitional Assistance to Former Soldiers) and a Nato Trust Fund project.

The current NATO-Perspektiva Programme (NPP) however uses a different approach as compared to the previous projects: First it recognized the importance of the capacity development for the MoD as a key aspect of the NPP implementation, both at the Headquarters level (e.g. with PTSU) and at the field work level in the four Recruitment and Transition Centres. This requires a specific expertise and the capacity to collaborate between civilian (IOM) and military institutions (MoD/KUP). Secondly, in line with the Paris Declaration and the needs to build national ownership, the NPP developed an exit strategy in order to define a hand-over period to the MoD as the IOM is scaling down its assistance and handing-over the responsibility to the national counterpart. Thirdly, the incorporation of a psychosocial counselling component was added into the programme as a result of the formative mid-term evaluation. Beneficiary interviews showed a critical need for psychological support as evidence was found of the widespread level of trauma, depression, anxiety and substance abuse by discharged military personnel. These critical elements are therefore the cornerstone and foundation of an approach that focused on being able to facilitate and integrate a comprehensive support during the transition process, as part of the regular human resource management cycle of the MoD. It is important to note that transition was not fully incorporated by the MoD as an integral part of its human resource management cycle, as projects were made on ad hoc basis when the need to reduce the military personnel was felt. However there was no early planning for the discharge and the manner in which the discharge would take place.

The NPP was originally planned for a period of two years, from October 2010 until September 2012, with an approximate caseload of 3,000 soldiers to be discharged, of which 2,300 were estimated to require reintegration assistance. However an additional 794 soldiers are being discharged during 2013, with the bulk in February 2013. This led to discussions amongst the different partners and donors and the project was extended twice: once until March 2013 at no cost, and an additional 6 months extension was granted until September 2013, in order to incorporate the discharges undertaken throughout 2013. By May 2013, the number of personnel that was discharged under the first caseload and the second caseload (that are still being assisted) is as follows, based on IOM database figures:

Table I. Caseload from the NPP – Discharged/Registered/Assisted

|            | 2010-2012 | % of reg. | 2013 (up to May) | % of reg. | Total       | % of reg. |
|------------|-----------|-----------|------------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|
| Released   | 1944      |           | 715              |           | <b>2659</b> |           |
| Registered | 1870      |           | 705              |           | <b>2575</b> |           |
| Assisted   | 1847      | 98,77     | 494              | 70,07     | <b>2341</b> | 90,91     |

Note: Assistance is still on going for the 2013 caseload and is expected to be fully delivered by the end of the NPP in September 2013. Actual number of discharged up to May 2013 are 715 persons with an overall caseload for the entire 2013 of 794 people.

In order to provide direct information, advice, counselling (ICRS) and assistance to the NPP beneficiaries, the programme originally used three Regional Resettlement Centres in Banja Luka, Sarajevo (Rajlovac) and Mostar. As a result of internal changes, these centres have since 2012 become integrated Recruitment and Transition Centres (RTCs), and since April 2012 the Tuzla RTC has finally been established and has become operative while in Mostar the offices were moved to Caplijina.

Each RTC is staffed with five MoD staff (one military recruitment officer as head of the office, two military staff – one officer for transition and one NCO for database and administration, and two civilians), working jointly with the two IOM staff. In total seven staff are meant to be based in each RTC (five from MoD and two from IOM), with the exception of the Tuzla office that is not yet fully staffed. The approach used in the programme is learning by doing methodology, with IOM and MoD staff going jointly to field visits to the beneficiary's dwelling and filing the Reintegration Assistance Project Proposal (RAPP) necessary to obtain the assistance chosen by the beneficiary. At the Headquarters level in Sarajevo and in line with the Exit Strategy, specific capacity building activities and trainings and workshops have been undertaken in order to enhance the PTSU staff's skills and capacities to continue the work undertaken under the NPP. However only a limited number of activities were undertaken given that the exit strategy was shortened and lack of funds did not allow completing the planned activities with PTSU.

In order to provide the psychosocial assistance to beneficiaries, since 2012 the IOM has recruited psychologists that provide counselling and referral services to the discharged personnel. The psychologist visits are done at the beneficiary's house on voluntary basis. Seven psychologists, under the direct oversight of a senior supervisor, have undertaken an impressive number of 919 first visits, 213 second visits, and 50 third visits to counsel beneficiaries since the psycho-social component started to be implemented for the old caseload of 1.944 discharged in 2010-2012.

At the headquarters level, the NPP holds regular Steering Committee meetings with all stakeholders and donors to share and exchange information on NPP implementation, progress and challenges. In addition the IOM also holds regularly monthly meetings with its field staff to ensure coherence and consistency in the approach and discuss performance to date. The IOM has produced comprehensive monitoring reports on the programme that provide very useful information on the beneficiaries' perception of the programme. The NPP budget amounts to a total of euros 4,354,064 up to September 2013 plus USAID funding for USD 2,437,206, UK funding for euros 115,301 and NATO HQ SA funding up to euros 115,000, according to the most recent IOM financial statements. The funding is obtained through a NATO Trust Fund (NTF) under various Lead Nations, co-funded by USAID and the UK for specific capacity development interventions and NATO HQ SA for visibility.

### **3. Evaluation methodology**

This is the second evaluation of the NPP. A first formative mid-term evaluation was undertaken in September 2011. This evaluation is a final, end of programme summative evaluation. As such it is looking back at the performance of the programme from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2010 until 31 May 2013 and identifying what has been accomplished. It also reports on good practices and lessons as well as constraints and difficulties in order to make targeted recommendations. The evaluation also assesses qualitatively the capacity development process from the Government side within the MOD-Perspektiva.

Purposive sampling for beneficiary selection was discussed with the IOM in order to be able to interview 20 beneficiaries from a variety of activities, first and second grants, successful and unsuccessful, male and female, and from both old and new caseloads (e.g. discharged in 2010-2012 and 2013).

Prior to the in-country field work, and during the evaluation process, the evaluator undertook an analysis of the available project documentation (bibliography included as annex).

In addition to the literature review, the evaluation carried out a number of interviews as per details hereunder:

- Four individual interviews with MoD (one with the Assistant Minister for Personnel Management, one with PTSU chief and one with PTSU staff separately, one with the Commander of Personnel Management-KUP- in Banja Luka) for 50 minutes average time;
- Six individual donor interviews of one hour (NATO HQ, USAID, UK Defence attaché, Slovenia Defence Attaché, US Defence Attaché, Czech Republic First Secretary and Deputy Head of Mission),
- Four group interviews with MoD and IOM staff in each RTC office (Banja Luka, Sarajevo, Capljina and Tuzla) ;
- 21 individual in-depth beneficiary interviews for a average time of 43 minutes per interview;
- Two internal IOM interviews with Chief of Mission and programme manager (database, finance, project management);
- Five individual interviews at field level with project partners (Faculty of Agriculture Banja Luka, Bosper in Tuzla, New Moment in Banja Luka, CRRP and the Employment Bureau in Mostar).

In total 42 interviews were undertaken during the evaluation, not counting informal sessions with project management to provide some feedback on the progress made and seek further explanation and evidence on specific issues identified by the evaluation. In total 34 hours of continuous interviews have been undertaken that lasted on average over 48 minutes each.

The evaluation also used structured observation as a source of findings, particularly given the fact that interviews were undertaken at the homes of the beneficiaries. In a number of cases, beneficiaries' wives or husbands, and more rarely children, also attended the interviews.

The evaluation criteria as set out in the terms of reference were to evaluate the efficiency, effectiveness, relevance, responsiveness, impact and sustainability of the NPP during its programming cycle.

Findings were triangulated (confirmation by three separate sources).

On 27 June 2013 the evaluator gave a debriefing to donors and to IOM and MoD stakeholders supported by a power point presentation containing the preliminary evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations.

The lead evaluator had already undertaken some eighty evaluations, of which several in the SSR sector, including the NTF project in Serbia, and the first formative mid-term evaluation of the NPP. However he does not speak the local language and worked through an interpreter for beneficiary and local interviews.

### **Potential bias and risks**

Interpretation was necessary for beneficiary interviews and some key stakeholder interviews. The IOM staff provided good interpretation service. In addition a member of the PTSU/MoD was invited to join the evaluation team in order to witness the evaluation methodology and approach in line with the capacity development of the MoD. As such he was able to attend all beneficiary interviews except two as well as the focus group discussions with the RTC staff members (both IOM and MoD).

The beneficiary sample was selected on purposive basis with specific criteria regarding the type of activity, inclusion of both success and failure cases, and interviews with women beneficiaries. It may not be statistically representative of the overall caseload. Beneficiary interviews were coded to preserve their identity and ensure confidentiality.

#### **4. Programme objectives, expected results and design issues**

The specific objectives identified in the original NPP document were:

- Approximately 3,000 released personnel assisted in their process of re-integrating into civilian life through one-on-one counselling.
- Up to 2,301 released defence personnel integrated into the workforce through employment generation, capacity building and business support initiatives resulting in sustainable income generating activities
- Up to 830 among the 2,301 released defence personnel assisted with further sustainability initiatives
- Communities of resettlement, indirectly benefit from the reintegration process by way of services provided and increased business activity at the micro-level
- Capacity of MoD/PERSPEKTIVA to conduct resettlement activities strengthened

No specific Results Framework or logic chain for the NPP was established to support these objectives.

Based on the recommendations of the mid-term evaluation, a specific results framework (RF) was developed that was approved at the 13<sup>th</sup> Programme Steering Committee (PSC) in February 2012. The RF was structured around six specific outcomes (SO) in support of the overall objective to "strengthen the MoD Policy and Strategy Document on Resettlement with technical assistance to facilitate the socio-economic integration of up to 1,968 Armed Forces released personnel", as follows:

- SO1. Assist the beneficiaries that submitted their application to reintegrate into civilian life;
- SO2. Assist up to 65% of released defence personnel integrate into the workforce through job placement, business start-up and expansion;
- SO3. Enhanced potential for socio-economic development by way of services provided and increased business activity in the resettlement areas;
- SO4. Increase the chances of self-sustainability through second grants of the business and activities of up to 15% of beneficiaries;
- SO5. Assist up to 25% of beneficiaries in their socio-economic integration into civilian life through psychosocial support;
- SO6. Strengthen capacity of MoD/Perspektiva to conduct resettlement activities

In addition to this Results Framework, the PSC also endorsed the development of an "exit strategy" to gradually hand-over all activities to the MoD/PTSU, but the period for hand-over was shortened from a recommended two years to one year only. As a result, a first phase of the "exit strategy" was developed from October 2012 to March 2013, and the second phase of the "exit strategy" that will cover the period from April 2013 until September 2013. However given the lack of funds not all of the planned activities were conducted, particularly as regards to the capacity building of PTSU and the maintaining of the operational database.

At the request of the MoD, the PSC also accepted to extend the support and assistance to those who are discharged in 2013, with a large number already discharged at the end of February 2013. The number of discharged for 2013 is 715 persons out of 794 redundant – of which 705 have already registered-, bringing the total registered caseload under the NPP to 2,575 persons from years 2010 to 2013.

## 5. Main Findings

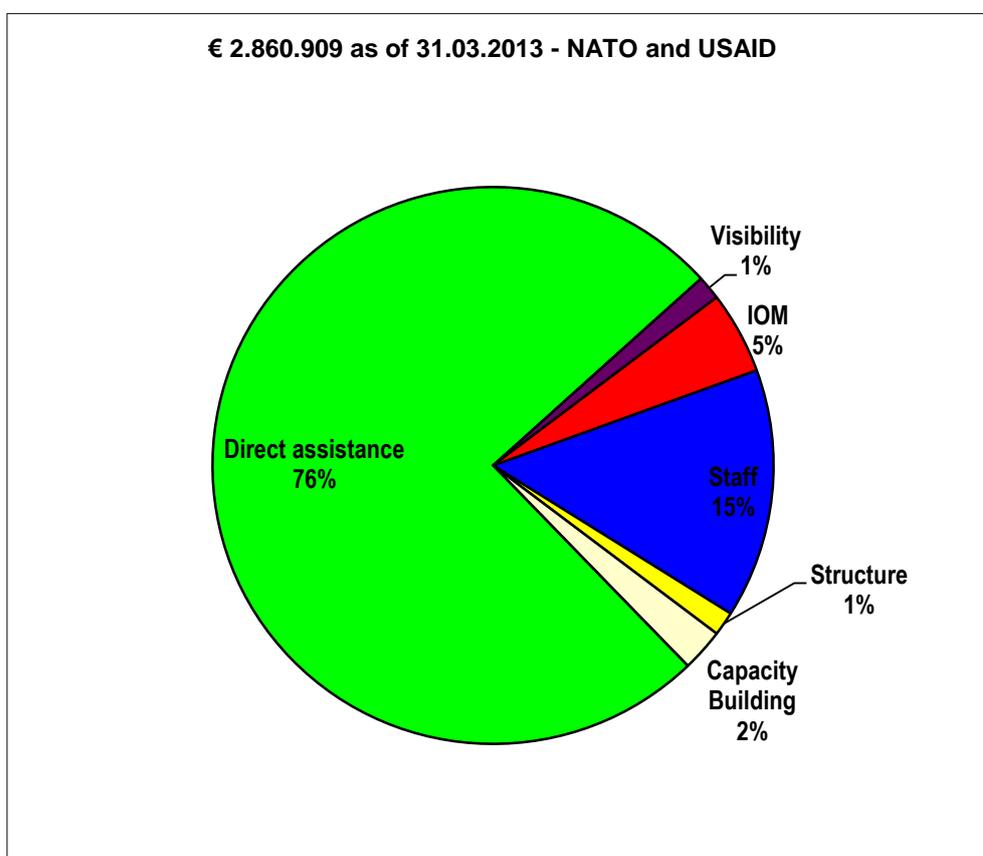
This report is structured according to the evaluation criteria as specified in the terms of reference (TOR) of this final end of programme external summative evaluation. For each criteria the information is the result of a combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis, and the figures (funding and beneficiaries statistics) that are mentioned in this report have been supplied and discussed with the IOM programme management, with the exception of the contents of beneficiaries' interviews which are the sole responsibility of the evaluator as these were transcribed in writing using interpretation services and subsequently coded for analysis. All names have been withheld to protect the identity of the beneficiaries in line with evaluation practice and code of ethics.

### I. Programme management efficiency (or how resources are converted into outputs)<sup>1</sup>

#### A. Staffing and costs - IOM

The programme has shown very good efficiency during the NPP. Eight IOM staff are currently working in the RTCs (two in each RTC) coaching and supporting the MoD staff. Under the leadership of the programme manager, four staff also support the operations from the headquarters (database, finance, procurement, and administration).

Graphic I : budget costs breakdown analysis – source : IOM project management

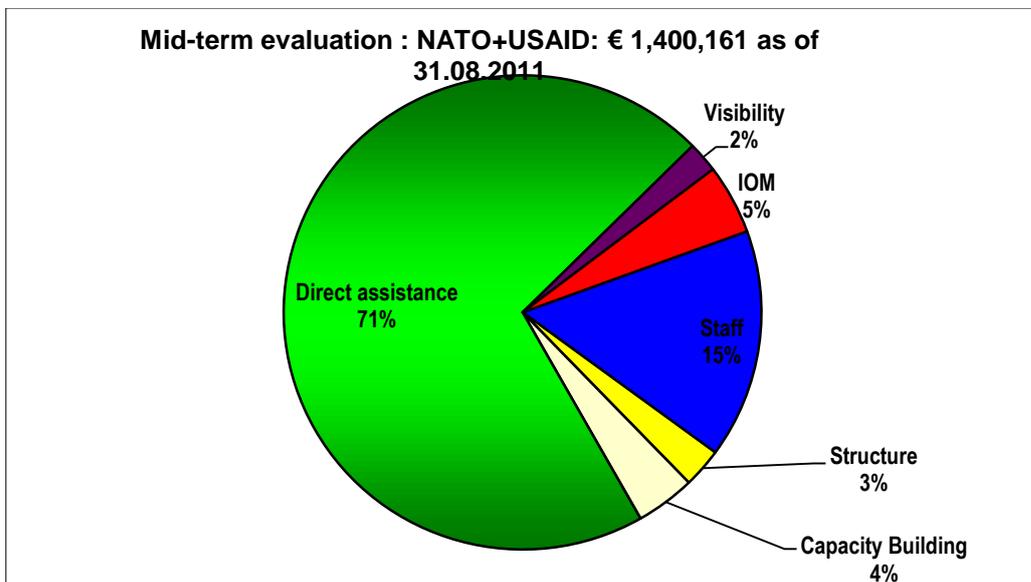


<sup>1</sup> Evaluation criteria are based on the OECD/DAC Glossary of key terms in evaluation and results based management, 2002

A very high 77% of the budget was affected to direct assistance. As compared to the financial situation during the mid-term evaluation, the NPP has increased its direct assistance by 7% (from 70 to 77%), and reduced the staff costs by 2%, despite having an additional RTC office opened in Tuzla in April 2012. However the very important work of capacity building, support to the structures and the visibility have all decreased to very low levels, with only 2% for capacity building (versus 4% in 2011), 1% for visibility (2% in 2011), and 1% for structure (versus 3% in 2011). This is due to the cost-reduction measures undertaken by IOM given the lack of secured funding to continue the NPP. Just the grant assistance for 2,500 people by itself represents a budget of € 3.8 million (based on km 3,000 per beneficiary): IOM has shown good adaptability in dealing with an unstable funding base to continue its activities with good results and apply the recommendations of the mid-term evaluation (including psychosocial support and second grants, all of which require additional funds).

The funding flows into the NPP did not go as smoothly as desired and difficulties in obtaining funds from 2012 negatively affected the programme implementation. Critical activities were therefore postponed or suspended (cf. exit strategy document). The compressed time-frame for finishing the NPP (currently set for September 2013) while the MoD has continued a large discharging process with 794 discharges during 2013 means that IOM has to both ensure assistance of the beneficiaries AND the capacity development and hand-over to RTCs and PTSU of the programme. This is done in a shortened exit strategy phase, which creates additional challenges to provide all the support, counselling, psychosocial counselling, and grant assistance, monitoring and follow-up to beneficiaries in a timely manner while maintaining the quality of the support provided to date. In the view of the evaluator, the rush to finish with the NPP runs contrary to the maintaining of the good quality results achieved so far. It is understood that the end date of the NPP (September 2013) is based on financial considerations, and not on technical or programmatic considerations. Particular attention should be given so that the quality of programme implementation does not suffer from excessively speedy withdrawal. Capacity development is a key component of the NPP, and the high quality shown by the programme should be maintained until the end – something that requires a phased approach based on technical and programmatic readiness to hand-over.

Graphic 2 : NPP budget at the mid-term evaluation



## B. Management structure and implementation

Different structures were created in order to reach the programme objectives.

A Programme Steering Committee (PSC) chaired by Norway as one of the Lead Nations of the NATO Trust Fund, with the participation of the Assistant Minister for Human Resources of the MoD as co-chair, PTSU representatives, IOM representatives and donors such as USAID, NATO HQ Sarajevo representatives as well as the Netherlands and Slovenia as co-lead nations and NATO/PfP members such as the UK, Sweden, Turkey, the Czech Republic among others are all members of the PSC. The PSC guarantees the strategy and the overall direction and supervision of the NPP. The PSC meets regularly to discuss issues and programme performance. To date nineteen PSC meetings have taken place, the first on 18 October 2010 and the last on 27 June 2013.

At the management level, the programme management and the IOM Chief of Mission ensure that the work is undertaken according to the established rules and procedures, and provide support and supervision to the RTC field office IOM staff, with the support of a small team of human resources described in the previous section.

Within the MoD/AF, the structure is a dual structure : MoD/PTSU ensures overall guidance of the NPP, through their four-staff unit placed in the MoD in Sarajevo, and provide guidance to the RTC staff and are also responsible for maintaining an updated beneficiary database. PTSU staff were actually the ones who elaborated the PERSPEKTIVA programme before the NPP was formalised. The AF/KUP Commander of Personnel Management in Banja Luka represents the other line of reporting, and all reports from the RTCs have to be sent by post through the KUP for onward dispatch to all recipients.

At the field level, the programme is implemented through the work of the five staff (five MoD/AF and two IOM) placed within each RTC, each reporting to its own constituency. The RTC MoD/AF structure has changed since the beginning of the NPP. Initially the Centres were called Regional Resettlement Centres and were staffed with three MoD/AF personnel: one civilian as head of the office, one officer and one NCO. During the life of the NPP the field office structure was changed and both recruitment and transition were placed in the same office. The RRC (regional resettlement centres) name has been changed to RTC (Recruitment and Transition Centre) and is headed by the Officer in charge of Recruitment as head of the office. The RTC structure is as follows: The office is placed under the overall responsibility of Officer for Recruitment as Head of Office, seconded by one recruitment advisor (civilian MoD staff). The Transition unit is composed of one Officer, one NCO (responsible for the database) and one civilian advisor. The RTC staff work jointly with the IOM field advisors, who are physically sharing offices in the same location. On the IOM side, there is one Programme assistant with overall responsibility for the IOM activities and responsibilities, supported by one field advisor. The integrated structure of the RTC with MoD/AF and IOM staff working alongside each other is a key component of the capacity development of the MoD/AF and allows for on the job coaching and learning through the support of the IOM staff who have already been involved in previous NTF project implementation and possess extensive experience, particularly in relation to the approach and advice and counselling given to the beneficiaries. Initially three centres were established, and a fourth RTC was established in April 2012 in Tuzla, that is not yet fully staffed. In addition, the offices in Mostar were moved to Caplijina at the same time (April 2012), some 30 kilometres from Mostar.

In order to ensure consistent and coherent application of the rules and procedures regarding the programme, an operational manual was established in December 2010 outlining procedures for providing financial assistance to applicants as defined in the NPP document.

Beneficiaries first decide if they wish to register. Based on the IOM statistics in Table I above, the percentages of people who registered versus those who were discharged are as follows:

Table II. Percentage of registration versus discharge

|            | 2010-2012 | % of released | 2013 (up to May) | % of released | Total       | % of released |
|------------|-----------|---------------|------------------|---------------|-------------|---------------|
| Released   | 1944      |               | 715              |               | <b>2659</b> |               |
| Registered | 1870      | 96,2%         | 705              | 88,8%         | <b>2575</b> | <b>96,8%</b>  |

In total for the period of 2010 until end of 2013, a total of 2,738 persons will have been released (counting with a total caseload of discharge in 2013 of 794 people). Of those registered up to May 2013, the NPP was able to have a remarkable 96,8% register into the programme, despite the demonstrations and protests over pension rights and the politicisation that accompanied the discharging process. This is a very high rating and shows that the information and dissemination efforts were useful in convincing beneficiaries to enrol into the programme. From the actual number of those who registered (mentioned above in table II), the following have actually already been assisted (e.g. beneficiaries for which the RAPP has been filled and procurement is being undertaken):

Table III. Percentage of assistance versus registration

|            | 2010-2012 | % of assisted | 2013 (up to May) | % of assisted | Total       | % of assisted |
|------------|-----------|---------------|------------------|---------------|-------------|---------------|
| Registered | 1870      |               | 705              |               | <b>2575</b> |               |
| Assisted   | 1847      | 98,8%         | 494              | 70,1%         | <b>2341</b> | 90,9%         |

At the time of the evaluation almost 91% of the total caseload has already been assisted. The percentage is of almost 99% for the caseload discharged between 2010 and 2012, while for those discharged in 2013 the percentage is logically lower with 70,1% since the assistance remains on going and is supposed to be completed within the year. At the time of the final evaluation, the NPP had a assistance rating of almost 91% of all beneficiaries, and by the end of the NPP, the projection is that virtually all of the 2013 caseload will have been assisted, leading to an overall assistance rating of some 99% of all those who registered! This is a remarkable figure as other support programmes for reintegration in the region had much lower registration and assistance figures.

When the beneficiaries register they receive counselling and advice regarding the different options available under the NPP, and some technical recommendations to support their choice. The NPP offers four different categories of assistance, which are not mutually exclusive: 1) Agricultural production, 2) Business services (start-up or expansion, 3) salary support, 4) re-training/education.

- 1) A majority of beneficiaries from the 2010-2012 caseload have opted for agricultural activities, which include a mix of different activities: greenhouses, vegetable and cereal production, machinery for ploughing, harvesting, fertilising, etc. The beneficiaries have in fact the choice to procure from the local markets the machinery that they needed most, an aspect that ensures local economic opportunities and local service provision. The process to obtain the support is that beneficiaries present three separate quotes (wherever possible) from suppliers for the desired assistance, one of which is chosen in line with the quality of the product and services offered.
- 2) Business services extend to a range of different activities, which are both formal and informal. It should be noted that almost all the businesses are micro-level individual businesses. The support is provided to both new activities and expansion of existing activities, and included a wide variety of business initiatives. The process is similar as for the support to agricultural activities, with the presentation of three quotes from local suppliers for the material that has been chosen. The quality of the materials procured is of high standards and often imported, with well-known and reputable brands such as Bosch, Stihl, Usqvarna, and others: The NPP therefore does not supply the least-expensive material available, but dependable and durable material with a minimum of a one year warranty.
- 3) Salary support is another option that is offered to the beneficiaries. In order to promote beneficiary's employment capacity, the NPP offers the incentive to any of the interested employers to obtain a salary support of up to the total grant amount. Given the high taxes and benefits that have to be paid by employers in BiH, the employer pays the agreed-upon salary to the NPP beneficiary, and receives normally on quarterly basis the grant payment from the NPP. As in the other two modalities, beneficiaries do not receive any cash into their hands. Unfortunately the negative economic environment and high unemployment are not enabling factors and at this time there are very few beneficiaries who are able to take advantage of this option.
- 4) Another option is to request re-training or education assistance up to the amount of the grant value. Here people who are interested in furthering their education and becoming more competitive on the labour market through targeted training are able to obtain a support. However as was mentioned by the different partner training institutions, it appears that discharged soldiers are not very interested in pursuing or improving their educational level and competitiveness on the labour market through specific training courses. Therefore the number of beneficiaries choosing this option is equally quite low. Here the process is to identify the type of education or training required, the training institution is contacted and the NPP ensures payment of the costs up to the grant amount.
- 5) As a recommendation from the mid-term evaluation, a limited number of second grants for the same amount (max. km 3,000) was approved by the PSC in order to ensure greater sustainability of the businesses as well as offering a social safety net for the more vulnerable cases. A list of specific criteria were established that provided a rating to enable the identification of those who would qualify for a second grant, and included both the cases that promised to be more successful with additional support and those who were in need of the second grant given their high level of vulnerability. So the second grant had

two uses: one in contributing to supporting those businesses that showed some potential for viable businesses over the longer-term, and thus also creating local economic opportunities, as well as providing a social assistance to the most vulnerable cases that met the defined criteria.

- 6) Another new component was the provision of psychosocial services to the beneficiaries. As a result of the mid-term evaluation the PSC endorsed the provision of psychosocial services to the NPP beneficiaries. IOM therefore contracted seven psychologists based in the same location as the RTCs (e.g. Sarajevo, Banja Luka, Tuzla, Capljina), and they have made individual visits at the beneficiary's home to provide counselling and assistance for up to three visits, in each case on voluntary basis as agreed with the beneficiary.

In order to qualify for any of the forms of assistance, the beneficiary has to go through a procedure of approval by the Joint Review Panel (JRP), composed of the IOM advisor and MoD Head of the office. The JRP meets as needed to review the documentation provided (Request for Assistance Project Proposal or RAPP, prepared after a visit to the beneficiary's home) for each of the beneficiaries and either approve, reject or ask for additional information if the case is not clear. To be approved, it needs to be signed by the field advisor submitting the RAPP, by the Head of the Office and by the IOM Programme Assistant. The RAPP is then forwarded to the IOM central office in order to initiate the procurement and financial process.

#### An excellent and comprehensive monitoring system

In terms of monitoring, the NPP provides two sorts of monitoring: first the monitoring of the individual beneficiaries, to ensure that the grant assistance is being properly used and in order to collect evidence and support accountability to programme management and to MoD and donors. This is done by the field staff through supervisory site visits and is a required process that must be ensured for all of the caseload to guarantee transparency and accountability. The second monitoring is done through the production of monitoring reports. As mentioned in the reports themselves, information collection is done at different levels and using different methodologies, encompassing beneficiary economic sustainability, social reintegration and MoD capacity building. The system includes several levels of operational and impact monitoring based on a) field visits of RTC staff to beneficiaries' work or business place; b) monitoring of progress towards reaching the targets and indicators of the Results Framework, and c) Feedback from an anonymous questionnaire sent to beneficiaries.

The NPP has collected a wealth of information that is analysed and used to produce these monitoring reports. The contents of these reports show a very good analysis and explanation of the findings and the quality of the reports is, in the view of the evaluator, very high. They contain relevant information regarding the achievements, the key issues and the findings of the NPP and are very helpful in addressing qualitative and quantitative aspects of the programme. These reports are also a part of the documentary analysis carried out by the evaluation. The establishment of a comprehensive, multi-level monitoring system is a good practice achievement of the NPP in addition to its usefulness in terms of informing the evaluation process and providing accountability to the stakeholders.

## II. Relevance – or how does the programme respond to the needs of the MoD and of the beneficiaries

The NPP is relevant to the needs of the MoD since PERSPEKTIVA was actually elaborated prior to and partially served as a basis for the NPP, before it was supported by NATO and implemented by the IOM, to deal with the resettlement of discharged defence personnel. The MoD is also funding the NPP and is supplying the staff and structures in order to implement the programme jointly with the IOM. The NPP is therefore fully aligned with the PERSPEKTIVA programme and the priority needs of the MoD.

From the beneficiaries' perspective, the NPP is highly relevant to their needs, as it is the only support most of them are currently receiving. This means that unlike previous downsizing exercises (e.g. previous NTF), there is no severance pay (such as the 10,000 km given under the TAFS project) provided to beneficiaries, and therefore the NPP is the only assistance that can be obtained by beneficiaries. This is even more evident in the large group discharged at the end of February 2013, since beneficiary interviews showed that some registered into the NPP on the same day as they were discharged, having been informed that they would not be eligible for any other form of assistance.

The issue of pension rights has been a challenge throughout the life of the project. While it is understood that in the RS the discharged personnel will likely not be receiving a pension, it is expected that in the Federation there will be some sort of pension given out. This has been one of the difficulties during programme implementation as the rate of registration was initially quite low in the Federation (cf. mid-term evaluation with 57% of registration in Sarajevo versus 93% for Banja Luka RTC) although the situation has now been able to overcome the difficulties with similarly high registration rates across the four RTCs as per the table hereunder:

Table IV. Percentage of assistance versus registration (IOM statistics as of 31.3.2013)

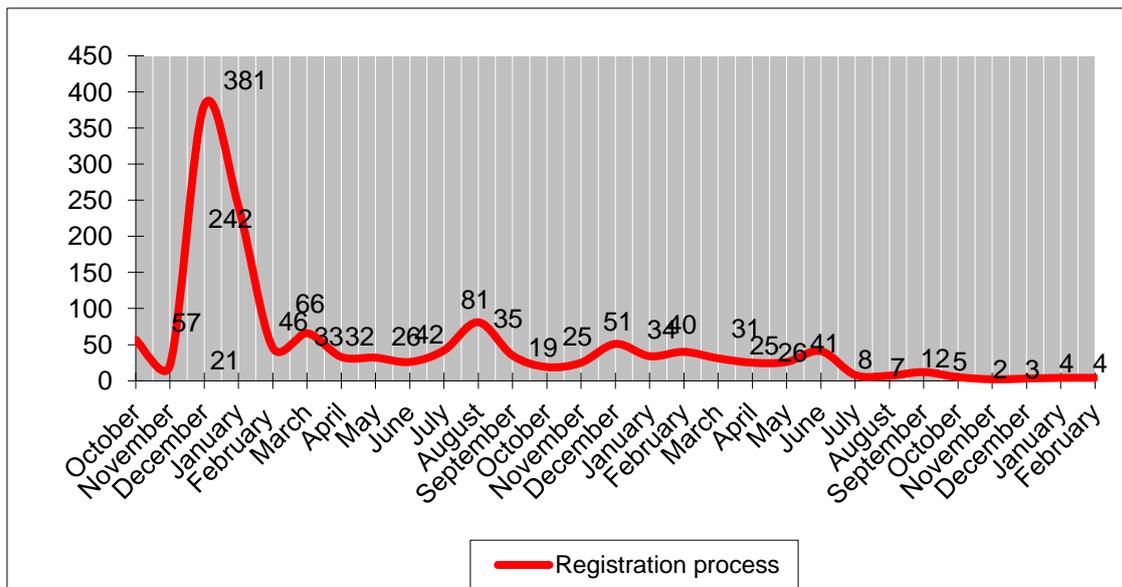
|            | RTC<br>Capljina | RTC<br>Sarajevo | RTC<br>Banja Luka | RTC Tuzla     | Total         |
|------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Released   | 320             | 698             | 335               | 591           | <b>1944</b>   |
| Registered | 301             | 661             | 328               | 580           | <b>1870</b>   |
| Percentage | <b>94,06%</b>   | <b>94,70%</b>   | <b>97,91%</b>     | <b>98,14%</b> | <b>96,19%</b> |

One important reason for this change is the opening of the RTC in Tuzla in April 2012, since a number of discharged personnel were previously included in the caseload for Sarajevo. This table above shows how useful the opening of the Tuzla office was in facilitating the registration of the remaining caseload – with an excellent efficiency as the registration of 98% of the caseload was completed within less than one year!

## III. Responsiveness –capacity of the organisation to adapt to changes keeping in focus the stated objectives

The project has had to cope with the very complex and difficult political situation in BiH as a whole. The country remains fragmented and divided into two separate entities, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republika Srpska (RS). Each entity has its own rules and laws, and separate ways to address the primary concern of discharged soldiers who are beneficiaries of the NPP: their retirement and pension rights. The Armed Forces have only recently merged the former armies into one single

army (in 2006) and they have been undertaking various downsizing of defence personnel in line with the on-going security sector reform (SSR) in order to bring the Armed Forces at the level of the Euro-Atlantic Alliance standards. The difficulty of the current process is two-fold: on one hand, while the Army has rightly chosen the path of integrating the different ethnic backgrounds of formerly opposed combatants, in the RS it appears that the retirement rights will not be assured for those soldiers, and therefore a large majority of the RS beneficiaries registered quickly to take advantage of the only current programme supporting them during their transition phase. In the Federation however, political considerations from among the discontented soldiers has fed resentment and doubt towards the MoD. Therefore a number of demonstration and incidents have taken place in front of the parliament as disgruntled soldiers came to express their anger and frustration. To offset this problem, an information campaign was launched by the MoD in order to explain publicly that participation in the NPP would no affect any of the beneficiaries' right. Media supported the campaign and proved an effective mechanism to mobilize the undecided discharged soldiers. The statistics hereunder show the direct relation with the number of registrations following the first television show on national television in December 2010. In addition to the various dissemination activities, meetings have been held by NPP management staff and the IOM Chief of Mission with groups of discharged soldiers to explain and clarify the situation, showing a clear willingness and availability to potential beneficiaries to provide transparent information on the NPP and listen to their concerns.



Source: NPP, Statistics as of 31.03.2013, provided by IOM management

It is important to note the evolution of the situation since the mid-term evaluation. At the time of this final evaluation, the issue of pension rights seems to be much less sensitive than it was 18 months ago. There are indications that there will be some pension for the discharged soldiers in the Federation, unlike in the RS. From the 2013 caseload discharged, the process is much clearer and while the issues of pensions in the Federation need to be finally decided by law, beneficiaries had no doubt about their willingness to register for the NPP since it was clear that it would not affect their pension rights. Comparatively, the caseload discharged in 2013 proved to be a much smoother process, reflecting the evolution of the situation, the responsiveness of the NPP to address the challenges and constraints, and a generally less tense political situation as regards to pension rights.

IV. Effectiveness (how effectively the different actions contributed to achieving the project objectives. To which extent beneficiaries received the expected outputs of the programme and to which extent programme results have been achieved, as well as timeliness of the support provided).

A. Effectiveness of the different actions contributing to achieving the programme objectives.

As regards to the Results Framework Specific Outcomes:

1. Assist the beneficiaries that submitted their application to reintegrate into civilian life
2. Assist up to 65% of released defence personnel integrate into the workforce through job placement, business start-up and expansion;
3. Enhanced potential for socio-economic development by way of services provided and increased business activity in the resettlement areas;
4. Increase the chances of self-sustainability through second grants of the business and activities of up to 15% of beneficiaries;
5. Assist up to 25% of beneficiaries in their socio-economic integration into civilian life through psychosocial support;
6. Strengthen capacity of MoD/Perspektiva to conduct resettlement activities

SO1: Data shows that 91% of the total caseload of registered beneficiaries from 2010 until 2013 have submitted an application and received assistance through the programme. Considering that assistance will be on-going until September 2013, and all the discharged personnel in 2013 that registered will be assisted, the overall total of assisted beneficiaries by the time of the closure of the NPP will be close to 99% of all registered beneficiaries.

SO2: Data indicates that 96% of those released in 2010-2012 and 89% of those released in 2013 have registered for the NPP, with an overall percentage of 94% of those. (cf table II, section I B). Of these 91% have been assisted, bringing the total number of assisted beneficiaries to 2,341 out of 2,575 released. This is already much higher than the initial target of 65% mentioned in the RF, and should even reach a much higher percentage by the time the 2013 caseload has been assisted by the close of the NPP.

SO3: This specific outcome is measured through the RAPP service providers and interim reports as well as support documentation for the Steering Committee. Up to the time of the evaluation 285 have been involved during the programme implementation period, very close to the target of 300 initially established.

SO4: Given the lack of sufficient funding the number of second grants was limited to 172 beneficiaries, of which 90 have been monitored according to the March 2013 monitoring report. This is half of the 15% of beneficiaries, and therefore a less comprehensive support than initially envisaged given the funding constraints.

SO 5: Psychosocial support was provided to beneficiaries after an initial contact through phone calls was made by the psychologists. As of March 2013 no less than 1,572 first calls had been made, 561 second calls and 304 third calls. The phone calls are meant to provide some background information on the counselling provided by the psychologists and also necessary in order to agree to an interview at the home of the beneficiary by the psychologist. As a result, the psychologists were able to undertake 919 first visits, 213 second visits and 50 third visits at the beneficiaries' home. Compared to the target of 25% of the beneficiary caseload, first visits represent 39% of the overall caseload and it much higher than the anticipated result.

SO 6: Support to enhanced capacity development of the MoD/Perspektiva has been a key component of the programme, already included in the design phase. A number of activities have been undertaken to support the MoD personnel as well as the PTSU in order to gradually take-over the activities provided by the NPP. While there is no global target for this outcome, the NPP has been implemented with the constant view that the MoD would have to take-over the process when the NPP would finish through a series of activities and trainings, including on the job coaching and learning by doing methodologies. The PTSU database remains a cause of concern as the responsible person was absent during the final evaluation and a trained database manager is a must for the sustainability of the process in MoD after the NPP is closed. However, qualitative evidence in the box hereunder indicates a very high appreciation from the MoD and AF/KUP regarding the support and collaboration received from IOM.

#### **Box 1: Results obtained**

The NPP structures have generally played their role well. The collaboration between IOM and MoD/PTSU and AF/KUP has been excellent throughout the period. This is supported by the ratings given by MoD/PTSU and AF/KUP to the question: "How do you rate the support and collaboration from IOM". From seven respondents, the rating given was an average of **4.93 out of 5** (on a scale of 1 minimum to 5 maximum), showing excellent support and collaboration.

At the MoD/PTSU level in Sarajevo, the capacity for PTSU to maintain the NPP database on its own remains a serious cause of concern. No data could be made available during the evaluation given the fact that the person responsible for the database was absent. Thus all statistics and information were supplied by the IOM. This is a serious cause of concern for the sustainability of the activities in MoD/PTSU after the end of the NPP, and MoD should take urgent measure to ensure that sufficient skilled support is available to ensure the maintenance and updating of the database as soon as possible by training another database manager.

#### **B. Effectiveness in providing beneficiaries services and timeliness of the assistance**

In terms of beneficiary satisfaction this report draws on the 21 in-depth individual interviews undertaken in each of the RTC areas (5 from Banja Luka, 6 from Sarajevo, 5 from Tuzla, 5 from Capljina) on purposive sampling basis. While the results are not statistically representative of the overall caseload, the sampling criteria did include failures cases and covered the range of beneficiaries' profiles and assistance requests with a specific focus on gender even though women reportedly only represent 3% of the target caseload, and also included second grants and 2013 discharged personnel, to be able to have a global perception regarding the different caseloads. While exposure to psychosocial assistance did not constitute a criterion for beneficiary selection, psychosocial assistance was also discussed during beneficiaries' interviews.

## Box 2: results obtained – Beneficiaries’ perspective

Quotes and qualitative evidence show the good quality of the work undertaken by the RRC staff, evidencing good staff’s skills and approach, availability and commitment to beneficiary’s satisfaction.

**The evaluation registered a 4,62 rating out of 5 for the overall quality of the services provided** on a scale of 1 minimum to 5 maximum (from 21 respondents).

This is very similar to the mid-term evaluation where the rating average was 4,70 out of 5. This indicates that despite the compressed time frame to complete the NPP and implement the exit strategy and hand-over, the NPP has been able to preserve the quality of services provided to the beneficiaries.

Timeliness of the assistance was another strong point of the programme implementation, with a large majority of the beneficiaries reporting the very swift handling of their application and the very short time between the application and the receipt of the assistance (often within one month). There was cases where the assistance was received later: This was due to the funding difficulties of the NPP as the procurement process was put on hold awaiting confirmation of additional pledges that were needed to continue the assistance process (in early 2012). Therefore the difficulty in obtaining smooth and regular funding for the NPP did cause some delay in the procurement and delivery of the assistance. The lesson learned is that NPP lead nations should ensure the timely provision of the funds to avoid having a negative impact on programme implementation.

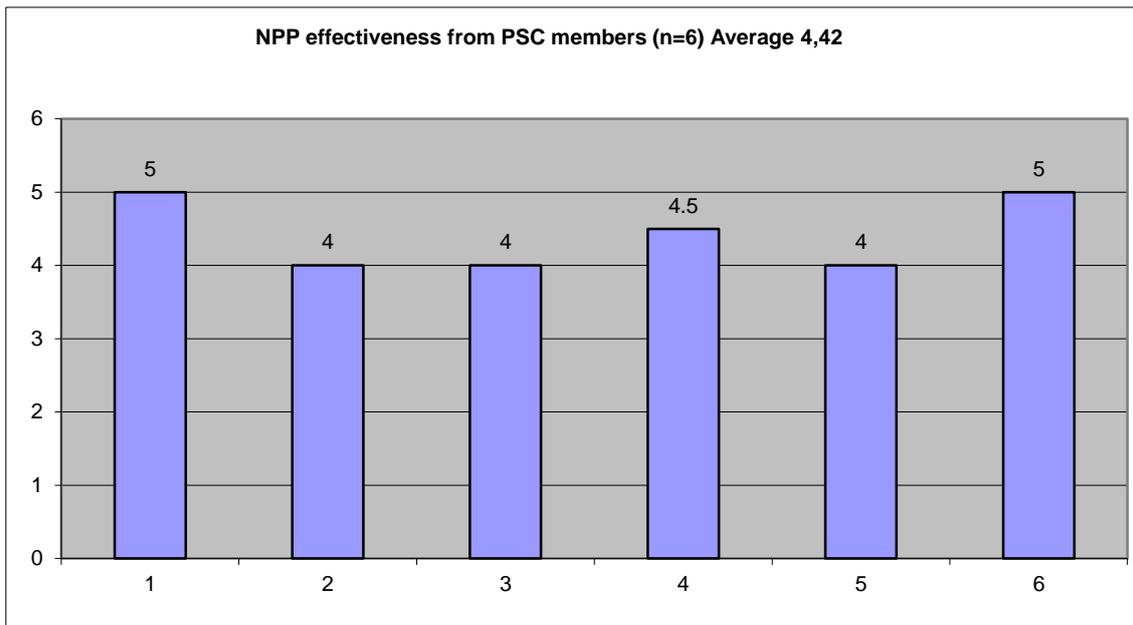
Psychosocial support proved to be a critical element. **However all beneficiaries interviewed mentioned that it was necessary to have such support available before and during the discharging process**, which is the most critical period. Fifteen of 21 beneficiaries indicated that the psychologist visits proved helpful to them, while five thought they were pleasant but they did not feel they needed further support as they already had the right attitude and mindset.

### C. Effectiveness from the donors’ perspective

The evaluation was able to hold interviews with six members of the PSC. Their appraisal regarding the effectiveness of the NPP is as follows:

#### Box 3 – results obtained – donors’ perspective

Six of the PSC donors provided high ratings regarding the levels of NPP effectiveness. The average of the six responses is **a high 4,42** out of 5 (on a scale of 1 minimum to 5 maximum), with many qualitative explanations that support the high rating received. Individual responses are shown in the graphic hereunder:



#### D. Effectiveness in ensuring stability and security in the country

Another indicator of achievement of the NPP has been the wider effect on the stability and security situation in the country. With 2,575 persons who have registered for the NPP, not one single serious security incident was reported. While according to the field staff early on in the programme there were often threats made by those who were discharged in the barracks against NPP staff, these never materialized. Public demonstrations in front of the Parliament and individual and collective actions from disgruntled soldiers were also part of the operational context. Considering that almost each person has a five member family household, the total of 2,738 people discharged from 2010 to 2013 means that some 14,000 people (spouse, parents and children of the discharged personnel) were affected by the lack of a steady income as a result of the discharge. While there are different views on the potential for violence from discharged military personnel and the likelihood of a serious incident leading to a snowball effect and jeopardizing public security in BiH, it is certain that the NPP has also played a role in order to ease tensions and facilitate a peaceful transition without any serious incidents reported in any of the four RTCs.

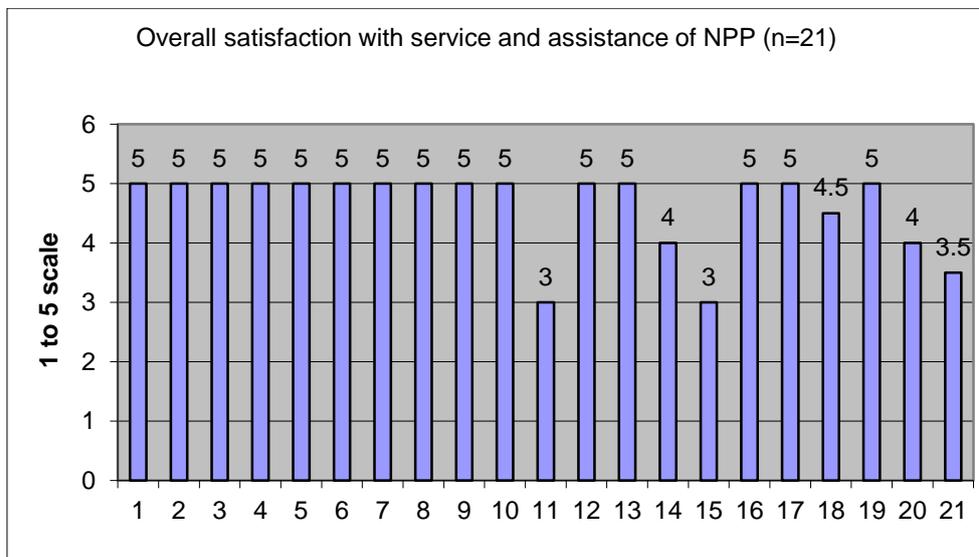
#### V. Impact (positive and negative, intended or unintended, direct or indirect effects of the project intervention) – Qualitative appraisal of the Project’s impact on the social and financial integration of the assisted beneficiaries.

##### Impact of the programme on beneficiaries

This section presents the results from the beneficiary interviews undertaken during the evaluation. The contents and data are solely those resulting from the 21 in-depth interviews undertaken, and the evaluator takes full responsibility for the transcription and interpretation of the contents. The wording has been revised where necessary for ease of reading, but without any content change.

Beneficiaries were also asked to appraise the quality of the services received through the NPP, inclusive of the range of counselling, advice, services and assistance received from the RTC staff and the psychologist who provided psychosocial assistance. They provided **an average rating of 4,62 out of 5 on a scale of 1 minimum to 5**

**maximum**, which is a very high satisfaction rating (1 is equal to very poor, 2 is insufficient, 3 is average, 4 is good and 5 is excellent). Details of individual ratings are as follows:



Some of the lower ratings were explained by the amount of the grant, that was not enough to really start a business, the timeliness in which psychosocial support was provided (**after** discharge instead of providing it **before and during** the discharge process) and the limited flexibility for the types of grant assistance available. However there is not single rating under the average of 3, even those cases that were not able to obtain any concrete results.<sup>2</sup>

IOM’s monitoring reports also provide some useful information regarding the effects of the NPP on beneficiaries. There is clear evidence to show that the NPP has provided beneficiaries with a way forward after being discharged, and in many cases the NPP served as an aspiration and motivation for beneficiaries. Beyond the amount of the grant and the type of assistance that was requested, and beyond the capacity of generating income in a globally negative economic environment, characterized by sustained high unemployment rates, the NPP offered beneficiaries a productive and innovative manner to focus on constructive activities that allowed both to look into the future, offer a chance of income generation, and gave the human attention and support that the beneficiaries craved. The negative feelings that were felt by almost all of the beneficiaries upon discharge needed to be addressed, and the individual counselling offered by the NPP came as a very badly needed balm to show that, as mentioned by many of the beneficiaries, “someone cares about us”.

The coping strategy in BiH in the current context shows a mix of methods in order to make ends meet in the difficult economic environment. With formal employment scarce and very limited income sources, the wide majority of the beneficiaries interviewed

<sup>2</sup> One such case was a beneficiary that obtained assistance for a fishpond, and had over 700 kilos of live fish. During the winter a heavy snow fell with over 1 meter of snow in the yard. People had to keep indoors for three days and by the time the beneficiary could reach the fishpond the structure had collapsed and all the fish had died. In this case, it was neither the NPP nor the beneficiary’s fault, yet the assistance did not bring any income to the beneficiary and the case was not successful. Despite of this, the beneficiary considered that the counseling, support and attention from the NPP had been good and provided the corresponding rating.

have to diversify the livelihood strategies to minimize the costs and expenditures and increase their income in various ways. From the beneficiary interviews the most common forms of coping strategies include: 1) living with the parents (who normally have a pension) in the same house (normally on different story); 2) undertaking daily labour in either agriculture or other informal employment such as construction, but this is seasonal and also brings in limited income; 3) Making agricultural production in the garden for consumption (almost everyone in BiH has a plot of land that can be used for greenhouses, agriculture or animal farming depending on the size and conditions). Therefore the assistance from the NPP is often useful not only in producing income for the family, but in many cases for decreasing the expenditures related to production of goods and services. For example, obtaining a motor cultivator to plough and plant corn has two effects: on the one side, it lowers the expenditures to feed the animals, something that represents a substantial cost. On the other hand, it can be used for providing labour to the neighbours and hiring the workforce to generate income. 4) Using the rest of the family to provide labour and work in the assistance received (either the spouse or children can contribute to working in the greenhouse, using the materials and machines received through the NPP, therefore increasing the possibility of income generation). It is therefore important to understand that the NPP assistance is enhancing the possibility of beneficiaries to survive, but there are as of yet few examples of prosperous businesses. While beneficiaries report their satisfaction with the results obtained with the assistance, it remains substantially less than when they were working in the army. Therefore globally their economic condition has worsened and they have a very limited social life – normally confined to the family.

What appears as striking is the fact that almost all of the assistance is centred on individual projects that involve only the family. It is not known if this is a result of the war, but people are very distrustful of each other and there is a very low number of associations and cooperatives that are functioning well, according to the various service providers interviewed. This indicates that there remains a deep mistrust in the people of BiH, something that does not contribute to widening collaboration or starting a reconciliation process in the country to overcome the old wounds.

All beneficiaries interviewed indicated the importance of receiving psychosocial support but **before and during** discharge, something that the MoD should incorporate in the planning of its Human Resource management cycle. This is even mentioned by the five cases (of 21 beneficiaries interviewed) that indicated that they appreciated but did not need the psychosocial support (by extrapolation this indicates that almost 75% of beneficiaries do need such kind of support), while recognizing the importance and value of the same.

VI. Sustainability – appraise the degree to which benefits will last even after the programme is completed.

There are two aspect of sustainability in the NPP: one is the capacity of the beneficiaries to live with sufficient income and the other is the capacity of the MoD to ensure that it possesses the skills and know-how to ensure the continuation of the support to military personnel in transition. A key achievement in the NPP is to make the MoD aware that transition is not an ad hoc activity, but part of the Human Resource Management Cycle, from Recruitment to Transition. Understanding the importance of adequate and early planning in HR management is a key aspect to delivery timely and targeted assistance to the transitioning staff, particularly with a view to avoiding social unrest and problems related to inadequate planning and lack of clarity on the conditions of transition.

## **Economic sustainability of the beneficiaries**

Qualitative evidence from the beneficiary interviews show that the economic sustainability is not widely ensured at this point in time. In the cases of second grants, it seems that the prospects for improved sustainability exist, as the effect of second grants provided a multiplier effect from the first grant. Rather than being an addition of the first plus the second grant, the second grants visited were critical in providing additional income that could not have been obtained through the first grant only.

The IOM Monitoring Report of March 2013 further gives some information regarding a subjective appraisal of the beneficiaries' sustainability. However in order to obtain hard evidence of sustainability, an ex post evaluation should be commissioned one year after the end of the NPP in order to obtain data on the beneficiaries' economic and social situation. Such an evaluation would also provide information on the capacity of the MoD to continue providing transition services to the discharged personnel. While such evaluation have seldom been undertaken in the NTF in the Balkans, it was done in Serbia in 2011 and provided some very useful lessons and accountability to the donors and the Ministry of Defence regarding the overall programme achievements. At this stage it is too early to quantify and appraise the level of socio-economic sustainability, particularly since a number of beneficiaries are in their first agricultural campaign, and the 2013 discharge caseload are just in the process of receiving the NPP assistance but have not yet significantly developed their business and are still in the start-up phase.

## **Capacity development of the MoD/PERSPEKTIVA**

The MoD/PERSPEKTIVA staff have developed their skills and capacities for providing reintegration assistance to the discharged defence personnel.

At the field level in the four RTCs, the MoD staff have been throughout the past three years working alongside the IOM advisors with coaching and learning by doing methodologies that are now embedded in the work of the MoD staff. There is one exception with the RTC in Tuzla, as it was finally opened in April 2012 only and therefore there has been a much more limited time to learn the process and the work of the NPP from the IOM. Also the staffing there is not complete so there are some concerns about the readiness of the MoD staff to take over and continue the process once the IOM involvement comes to an end, particularly considering that the most experience staff, the transition officer, is away attending a six months training course.

At the headquarters level, it is more difficult to appraise the actual level of capacity development of PTSU and PERSPEKTIVA in Sarajevo. From the four-man staff of PTSU, there is one person responsible for managing the database. However the person was not available for the whole duration of the evaluation and there are serious concerns about the capacity of the PTSU to ensure and operational and updated database. As an urgent issue requiring attention a new database manager should be trained ahead of the hand-over of the NPP in September 2013. Since the beginning of the NPP a number of formal training and activities were undertaken, but given the lack of funds not all the activities that were planned in the exit strategy have been implemented. Should additional funding be made available to the IOM, such activities should be completed, including the training of a new database manager in PTSU.

While MoD indicates it has the technical readiness to take over from the IOM at the end of the NPP, evidence of capacity could be appraised through an ex post evaluation

that would also look at how MoD was able to ensure the continuation of the PERSPEKTIVA after the IOM has completed its work. The MoD is a heavy structure with numerous procedures that do not facilitate timely action: many aspects remain to be solved, sometimes seemingly insignificant issues like a budget line for paying the VPN internet services that are critical for timely information reporting and maintaining the operational database. Other issues also relate to the level of staff turnover, and the level of commitment from MoD to the transition process itself. While technical capacities have generally been given to the MoD, the operational capacity and commitment can be appraised only after the IOM has completed its operational support, to see if the MoD can continue the PERSPEKTIVA using its own procedures.

## **6. Understanding the dynamics**

Support to transition of former military has never been an easy task. However with greater amounts of funding available and in a positive global economic context, difficulties of the transition could be more easily overcome. The current NPP has been developing in a very negative economic environment marked by high unemployment and a low amount of funding (compared to past transition programmes). It is also much more ambitious given the development of a national capacity to support transition in the MoD, something that is unique to this programme in BiH and requires a different approach through which IOM is actually coaching and building the MoD capacity in close collaboration on daily basis – with shared offices in the field and joint monitoring visits to beneficiaries. It is much easier for an international organization to actually implement such a programme on its own, given its more flexible procedures and the simpler management structures. Taking on the responsibility to develop capacity of the MoD is not a simple or easy feat, and requires time and sustained efforts. IOM should be commended for taking on this challenge, as it is recognized good practice in line with the Paris Declaration on aid effectiveness. The technical capacities have largely been developed, while some improvements remain necessary.

Another key aspect is the importance given to the psychosocial component. All of the caseload of discharged personnel are former war veterans who participated, at least in part, in the war that started in 1992. Veterans echoed the feeling that they felt betrayed by their country, as often they spent some 18 years or more in the army, just to be discharged without as much as a pension. The feeling deep into people's hearts is one of anger, as they feel their sacrifice while fighting for the country has gone largely unrecognised and unrewarded. Therefore, the simple fact that an organisation is providing counselling services and information, having a friendly and respectful attitude that allows the veterans to express themselves, is a huge first step in addressing the difficult transition process. If during the mid-term evaluation beneficiaries indicated that the assistance received through the NPP was more important than the counselling, the final evaluation would, given the additional information obtained, question the validity of such a statement.

Having someone care and try to help you in the complex issue of integration into civilian life is crucial when there is no longer a secure source of regular income. It is a cause of frustration, anxiety and depression for some of the beneficiaries. A major achievement has been the incorporation of the psychosocial support as part of the transition process. The importance of this component should not be underestimated. If in the NPP the inclusion of formal psychosocial support with the assistance of psychologist came perhaps too late for those who were discharged in 2010, nonetheless the "front lines" of the NPP, the IOM client advisors, often played a role of psychological counsel just to convince beneficiaries to register and adopt an attitude

that would be more constructive and conducive to transitioning to civilian life. Without a proper mindset, the assistance is by itself not sufficient to ensure successful transition to civilian life. An important enabling factor for successful integration into civilian life is adopting a positive and pro-active attitude towards the future, despite the difficulties, rather than dwelling on past losses and feeling lost and helpless. Something that the IOM client advisors should largely be credited with having achieved in a very large majority of cases is to tackle these issues that allowed beneficiaries to better understand and address the difficulties of transition into civilian life. This finding is also supported by the registration and assistance data available as well as the qualitative perception of beneficiaries.

The NPP showed very good sensitivity and timeliness in adjusting its activities, incorporating an additional and unforeseen caseload of 794 to be discharged in 2013, to its objectives, while ensuring that the transition process was done smoothly across the country. Monitoring data indicates that with the experience gained in the early stages of the programme the 2013 caseload could be covered more rapidly and efficiently without the initial difficulties encountered at the start of the programme, as all beneficiaries agreed to register for the NPP quickly and the issue of the pension was no longer constituting an impediment for joining the NPP.

## **7. Conclusions**

IOM has made a rather unique contribution to national and regional stability through the successful implementation of the NPP. The results at the quantitative level exceed the initial expectations of 2,300 originally planned beneficiaries, and up to 2,575 people may be assisted by the NPP's closure in September 2013.

The approach to MoD capacity development was certainly the right approach, although it also entailed a slower implementation rate given this is a learning exercise for all, unlike previous projects which were done under direct IOM implementation. However there is only so much IOM can do for capacity development, and the MoD should prove its operational capacity after IOM operational support is completed. Commitment at the highest level of the MoD is necessary to mainstream transition in the regular cycle of human resource management of the MoD, and this begs for an annual budget line to be allocated to transition.

However MoD now recognizes the importance of transition as part of the human resource management cycle, and should be committed to maintaining such an operational structure in the future.

Programme management from IOM proved responsive, responsible, with a high quality of implementation as reflected by the high levels of beneficiary satisfaction, of MoD satisfaction, and in terms of donors' satisfaction, with the NPP. IOM proved reliable throughout a difficult period that did not create enabling conditions for transition. There is a wealth of information that should be further extracted from this programme and applied to any programme that deals with transition from the military to the civilian life in the future.

The NPP is a valuable programme that address two levels of concerns: domestic security and defence threats, as well as the social and economic integration of families of discharged and unhappy soldiers, most of whom are also war veterans.

The management and implementation of the NPP showed very good value for money based on the costs versus the actual quantitative and qualitative results.

## 8. Lessons identified

### 8.1 Lessons at the NPP level

- The NPP has adopted the right approach by putting the MoD in charge and having IOM play a coaching and a support function – but now the MoD has to prove this commitment with a proper financial and human resourcing for transition at the HQ and field levels, including ensuring an annual budget line for transition;
- The NPP has also rightly decentralised decision making to the local level (RTC and JRP), leading to swifter and more effective programme implementation – but this requires a strong monitoring component that needs to be developed;
- Developing an exit strategy is good practice and in line with results based management;

### 8.2 Lessons for NATO and donor countries

- NPP is not only about social and economic reintegration of discharged soldiers: it is also an investment in human security and social peace if it is done well
- Good, regular and sustained transparent communication between the IOM and the MoD contributed to sharing a common approach, problem solving, pro-active decision making at the PSC and generally good NPP implementation procedures;
- This sort of programme – reintegration of discharged defence personnel – cannot and **should not be undertaken on an emergency short-term basis if it wants to achieve sustainable results**, and particularly when undertaken under a national capacity development umbrella for the MoD. As such, it would be preferable to work as much as possible on a funding modality of a three year cycle as a minimum to ensure results can be achieved and consolidated, although a five year cycle is more realistic considering the time for MoD to make internal changes to some of their procedures and solve internal constraints and leverage support from other units; funding constraints have negatively affected the pace and quality of implementation (delayed procurement and assistance);
- Qualitative analysis based on primary stakeholders as well as beneficiary interviews that bring out the human stories and faces behind the numbers are crucial to understanding the quality of programme implementation, and providing the opportunity to donors to discuss the NPP directly with beneficiaries is an important element to provide the donors with a proper understanding of the importance of such a programme.
- Beneficiaries are very satisfied with the quality of the counselling, assistance and psychosocial support provided. The programme contributes to a smoother integration of discharged soldiers into civilian life.

### 8.3 Lessons for the MoD

- Developing a sound and trustworthy collaboration with the NATO and the International Community can be conducive to strong internal capacity development and can help overcome internal challenges if the issue of transition is understood as a fundamental part of the human resource management cycle and is supported at the ministerial level in MoD;
- The NPP has contributed to improving the perception of MoD among its discharged staff, in the midst of a difficult and politicised environment;
- Civil-military partnership with experienced international organisations such as the IOM can be conducive to improved practices within the MoD in relation to transition of defence personnel.
- Posting the proper number of skilled and trained staff and retaining them throughout the life of the programme is key to achieving the objectives, high staff turn-over (illness, transfer, promotion) must be coupled by a back-up pool of skilled and trained resource persons who can take over when gaps appear in the NPP structure.
- Commitment must be matched by operational readiness and the financial resources to guarantee that transition is embedded in the regular cycle of human resource management.
- Psychosocial support is a critical element in the process of transition. It should be provided BEFORE and DURING the transition process to be most useful and increase the chances of a successful transition into civilian life.
- Transition in MoD now forms part of the human resource management cycle. Joining the Recruitment and Transition processes in one Centre is a positive achievement.

## 9. Recommendations

For the IOM

1. IOM should continue to support the psychosocial component as a key element and in view of the lack of internal MoD capacity while ensuring the monitoring of NPP beneficiaries;
2. IOM psychologists should train MoD staff on approach towards discharged soldiers and empathy;
3. IOM should include in the second part of the exit strategy the development of a Results Framework for the MoD post NPP in order to define the objectives to be attained by the MoD after the end of the NPP;
4. Some capacity building activities could not be realized given the lack of available funding – IOM should review with the PSC what could still be undertaken if additional funds are received

For the MoD

5. MoD should show commitment to transition at the Ministerial level and ensure that an annual budget line is allocated for transition;
6. The staff structure in Tuzla RTC is incomplete and less prepared given only one of operations has passed since it was opened – careful staffing and preparation of the MoD staff are warranted
7. Incorporating psychologists in the RTCs would give added value to the human resource management cycle, and could benefit all personnel (new recruits, transitioning personnel, and peacekeeping mission personnel suffering from PTSD and similar pathologies). However this requires additional resources.
8. MoD would benefit from RBM and M&E targeted training in order to facilitate cooperation amongst units, review procedures and adapt its structure to RBM objectives – and maximize the capacity of PERSPEKTIVA to carry on after the end of the NPP
9. MoD should develop a results framework and monitoring plan for the period after the end of the NPP (from September 2013) for a one year period
10. Training a of backup database manager is urgent and should be undertaken as soon as possible in PTSU.

For NATO and donors

11. Better understanding of this type of programme is necessary – the value of such programmes as conflict prevention and contributing internal stability and social peace should not be underestimated;
12. An ex post evaluation one year after the end of the NPP would allow to a) obtain evidence of regarding the social and economic sustainability of beneficiaries, b) provide evidence of the capacity of the MoD to manage the programme on their own, and c) assess the effects of the psychosocial assistance
13. Review the funds available and the time frame needed to complete the exit strategy and related activities.