

# PeaceNexus Business Engagement

## Problem-solving dialogue

### WHY WE SUPPORT BUSINESS-COMMUNITY DIALOGUE

Economic development can be a key driver of prosperity, stability and peace since it has the potential to provide citizens with jobs, services, infrastructure and opportunities. It can also provide both national and local governments with much needed revenue, allowing them to strengthen their capacities and services. However, in post-war societies there is also a risk that economic activity exacerbates social tensions and that it reinforces factors, such as corruption or the marginalisation of some groups, which strengthen ongoing divisions and risk triggering violence and operational disruption. Divisions can also be reinforced by undesired environmental or social costs of economic development, which can be exacerbated by uncoordinated action by governments and lack of broad participation while establishing regulations.

#### **Inclusive dialogue as a prevention and problem-solving mechanism**

Therefore, citizens, governments and businesses all have a stake in promoting economic development that is well managed and realises its potential to build social and economic resilience. We support inclusive dialogue since it can be a powerful tool to enable these actors to address issues of common concern and build trust. Dialogue enables stakeholders to express their expectations and concerns and develop a better understanding of each other. It also creates an environment in which misunderstandings or problems can be identified at an early stage and can be addressed by developing a shared understanding of the facts and exploring solutions that are acceptable to all. In this way, dialogue can serve as a powerful tool to prevent and overcome conflict. We focus our dialogue support pressing situations that strongly influence local or even national social cohesion.

### WHAT OUR DIALOGUE SUPPORT ENTAILS

We recognise that mutually beneficial outcomes do not always arise in view of power asymmetries between key actors and due to the context challenges mentioned above. When investing in dialogue processes, our support is geared towards ensuring the quality and effectiveness of the dialogue.

We engage with our partners to ensure that the dialogue:

- Is well-prepared, structured and safe – with participants understanding and agreeing to the purpose, process and forms of participation
- Is inclusive – with all affected stakeholders represented and heard
- Is well informed – with all participants having access to reliable information
- Is facilitated and/or mediated – by one or more people that are acceptable to all participants and able to ensure that the process and rules are respected
- Is conducted in good faith – with participants honouring jointly agreed ground rules and agreements
- Leads to actionable measures and sustainable results

#### **Our financial support entails:**

Our accompaniment and financial support are based on the needs identified and the action plan jointly designed after our initial visit. The precise budget allocation is mutually agreed with all stakeholders after the establishment of a partnership outline that charts the path forward for the dialogue.

It typically covers one or more of the following elements:

- Facilitation, mediation and process design
- Dialogue preparation, negotiation and consensus building support for dialogue participants
- Joint fact-finding research as part of a dispute resolution process
- Accompaniment of dialogue participants during implementation of reached agreement
- Facilitation of meeting and travel cost

**Our organisational support entails:**

*Direct process accompaniment from PeaceNexus*

We want to get to know the stakeholders and the environment they work in. We will start with an in-person visit and meetings with all stakeholders (travel restrictions permitting). Moving beyond this exploration phase depends on interest of key stakeholders to actively participate and reach agreements on the identified issue(s). Based on this shared understanding of the context, we will help design the dialogue and formulate a partnership outline among the stakeholders, which determines PeaceNexus' financial investment.

If necessary, PeaceNexus can play an interim convening role, participate in ongoing bilateral meetings between and dialogue events, send event invitations and organising dialogue logistics. However, ensuring local ownership and sustainability of the dialogue outcomes is crucial so identifying another convening organisation/institution is preferred and can be pursued through the dialogue itself. In other instances, we provide complementary support for existing dialogues processes facilitated by international organisations, NGO's or governments. The exact role of PeaceNexus staff depends on the situation and will be jointly agreed with the stakeholders.

*Support in identifying and managing required external experts*

In our experience, in environments characterised by low level of mutual trust, dialogues are more likely to succeed if they are accompanied by facilitators and mediators acceptable to all parties. In addition, we recognise that additional technical expertise may need to be brought in, for example to contribute to joint fact-finding missions and/or to contribute to the identification of technical solutions agreeable to all parties. PeaceNexus staff will assist stakeholders in finding the experts best suited to their needs and identifying what they need to deliver. The consultants accompanying the process will be accountable to all dialogue participants, while PN staff will help them engage effectively with- and provide feedback to experts.

Statement from ongoing dialogue process in the Western Balkans

*ArcelorMittal Zenica (Bosnia-Herzegovina) recognizes the common interest of business, non-governmental and governmental sectors, which is to improve the quality of the environment and ongoing environmental protection activities. The support by Peace Nexus enabled us to objectively and transparently exchange information in order to avoid disinformation, to look at important questions from different points of view and, to try to harmonize our views and opinions about them, which was a particular challenge for all of the participants in the dialogue.*

Azra Sivro, Director Social, Environment and Quality Management Department - ArcelorMittal Zenica

## **We approach all partnerships with the following core principles**

- **Honesty and confidentiality:** Since honest and open sharing of information between us is essential for success, we act under strict confidentiality and only share information with others with stakeholders' s explicit approval. Throughout our partnership, we value their willingness to adapt plans based on results and welcome feedback about our accompaniment.
- **Joint ownership:** Ownership of the dialogue process and outcomes remain with the participants. They jointly agree on the objectives, scope, principles and structure of the dialogue.
- **Commitment over time:** If the process involved has delivered some results but requires more time and effort, we may extend our commitment over several years.
- **Multipartiality:** When supporting dialogue processes, we strive to be supportive of all parties and act in the interest of the jointly agreed process. This means that our process and financial support is put towards a process rather than a single organisation.

## **INTENDED AUDIENCE**

Applicants for support can be a **civil society organisation**, an **informal community group**, a **government institution** or a **company** that intends to be an active participant in the dialogue and has direct interest in the outcomes.

We prioritise dialogues in our **four focus regions** because we have a on the ground presence, a network and strong knowledge of the context. Our focus regions include: **Western Balkans** (Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia), **West Africa** (Senegal, Niger and Burkina-Faso) **Central Asia** (Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan) and **South-East Asia** (Myanmar).

## **SELECTION CRITERIA**

Cases are assessed based on two main selection criteria:

### ***Relevance of the issue***

The issue(s) at stake needs to have a high relevance in terms of social cohesion and local/national stability. Under this criterion, we consider whether solving the challenge would bring tangible long-term benefits in terms of inclusive economic progress.

### ***Likelihood of positive impact***

We need confidence that there is a realistic chance that a dialogue can resolve the identified issue, that stakeholders are ready to engage in a facilitated dialogue and would be willing to change their course of action based on agreements reached through dialogue.

## **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION AND APPLICATION**

For information please see our [website](#). To apply please contact Johannes Schreuder ([johannes.schreuder@paecnexus.org](mailto:johannes.schreuder@paecnexus.org)).