

UN Peacekeeping and CPAS: An Experiment in Performance Assessment and Mission Planning



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since 2018, the UN Department of Peace Operations' (DPO) Division for Policy, Evaluation and Training (DPET) has been rolling out the Comprehensive Planning and Performance Assessment System (CPAS) across all UN peacekeeping operations. CPAS sets out a framework for mission officials to interrogate how their operations impact stakeholders and processes in the country and whether these impacts are helping missions achieve their mandated priorities. While DPET has developed a standard methodology for CPAS, missions have tailored it to their own contexts and needs.

CPAS is a multifaceted system that engages many parts of missions' operations, and it has had a particularly notable impact in three areas:

- **Data collection and analysis:** CPAS has helped missions collect both quantitative and qualitative data on their performance and impact more regularly, centralize this data, easily visualize it, and analyze longer-term trends. At the same time, missions have continued to face challenges related to the collection, quality, and interpretation of data.
- **Impact assessment:** CPAS's contributions to mission-wide impact assessments are among its most impactful, clearly understood, and widely accepted contributions. CPAS offers a clear methodology and diverse tools to help missions undertake impact assessments to complement their traditional narrative-based reporting and analysis. However, CPAS impact assessments can be time-intensive, and they do not always clearly feed into external reporting.
- **Mission planning:** Compared with its well-understood value as an impact-assessment tool, CPAS's role in the mission planning process faces much greater scrutiny within missions and throughout headquarters. Although CPAS has the potential to help missions resolve widely acknowledged shortcomings in strategic planning, thus far it has had less impact in shaping how missions adjust their priorities or plan future operations.

Several cross-cutting issues have had an impact on how missions understand, implement, and value CPAS:

- **Mission-wide integration:** Particularly through context-mapping and impact-assessment exercises, CPAS has made a positive impact on mission-wide integration, improving how different parts of a peacekeeping operation align their goals

and collaborate on analysis and operations.

- **Mission leadership and mission-wide ownership:** While working-level officials tend to value CPAS, mission leadership and section chiefs are often more skeptical. Without ownership at the top, CPAS could come to be perceived as just a data-collection tool.
- **Capacities and skill sets:** CPAS is a methodologically detailed and time-intensive process, and while there is a steep learning curve to set the system up, it has helped missions provide basic monitoring and evaluation and data-literacy skills to more personnel.
- **Alignment with other peacekeeping planning tools:** CPAS is one of many competing political and policy priorities within DPO and is not always aligned with other tools, including the Action for Peacekeeping Plus monitoring framework and

results-based budgeting.

- **Thematic priorities:** CPAS has helped DPO embrace a more structured and data-driven approach to tracking progress on thematic priorities like the women, peace, and security agenda and gender mainstreaming; peacekeeping transitions; and the response of UN peacekeeping missions to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Dynamics between UN headquarters and field missions:** While CPAS's mission-driven and mission-owned approach has fostered collaboration between missions and DPET, other departments have not been involved, and it has been challenging to demonstrate progress to member states.

CPAS is an ambitious and imperfect experiment in UN peacekeeping that has challenged the organization to rethink how it assesses performance and undertakes strategic planning. It is a system underpinned by context-sensitivity, flexibility, and evidence-driven decision making and depends on mission-wide ownership and integrated approaches to analysis. The system emerged at a moment of heightened political pressure on UN peacekeeping missions, which are being asked to provide more rigorous evidence to substantiate their impact. That CPAS not only survived the past five years but also grew from a pilot project into an institutionalized part of UN peacekeeping is a testament to how its objectives and methods have resonated across different missions. With CPAS now operational in all peacekeeping operations, UN officials can grapple with a new cycle of ideas and challenges to sustain it into the future.

To read the full policy paper visit: <https://bit.ly/3DE3SAN>

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**For UN peacekeeping operations:****1. Include CPAS-specific information in handover notes.**

All civilian and uniformed personnel who hold CPAS reporting responsibilities should include information about this work in their handover notes when leaving their position.

2. Share the topline of CPAS frameworks and impact assessments with UN headquarters.

Missions should give permission to select UN DPO entities to regularly view (but not edit) their CPAS results frameworks and visual dashboards.

3. Improve the design, tracking, and communication of CPAS recommendations.

All UN peacekeeping missions should systematically track the recommendations that emerge from the CPAS process.

4. Provide detailed overviews of CPAS impact assessments in the secretary-general's (SG) reports to the Security Council.

Peacekeeping missions should use their regular reports to the Security Council to share more detailed information about their CPAS frameworks and impact assessments.

5. Broaden CPAS participation to the UN country team and other UN entities in the country or region.

Missions should continue expanding CPAS processes to include relevant UN entities in the country and the immediate region.

6. Incorporate local views of mission performance and impact into CPAS.

Missions should engage host-country stakeholders on CPAS and incorporate the views of community leaders, representatives of civil society and NGOs, and local and national government officials into their analyses.

For UN Headquarters:**7. Publish CPAS fact sheets on mission websites.**

DPO should publish all finalized mission fact sheets on the UN peacekeeping website.

8. Incorporate CPAS exercises and assessments into senior leadership training exercises.

DPET should begin integrating CPAS-related material into training sessions, briefings, and inductions for senior mission leadership (both civilian and uniformed).

9. Expand training materials on data analysis and visualization.

DPET should expand its portfolio of training material to build the capacity of mission personnel to analyze data and create visuals.

10. Align CPAS with other UN planning and reporting processes.

DPET should accelerate its collaboration with other parts of DPO and the wider UN system to align CPAS with existing policies, processes, and tools for mission-wide data collection, planning, and impact assessment.

For member states:**11. Provide consistent political support and attention to CPAS.**

UN member states should continue to politically support and scrutinize the implementation of CPAS.

12. Increase funding for civilian planning and data-management posts.

UN member states on the General Assembly's Fifth Committee should approve additional posts in peacekeeping operations for civilian experts in planning and data management.

13. Include CPAS in UN peacekeeping curricula at national peacekeeping and police training centers.

Member states that host national or international peacekeeping training centers should request support from DPET to integrate introductory trainings on CPAS into specialized training materials for peacekeepers.

14. Pledge additional funding for CPAS and for mission strategic-planning capacity at the 2023 UN Peacekeeping Ministerial Conference.

Member states could consider including political, financial, and capacity support for CPAS in their pledges at the 2023 UN Peacekeeping Ministerial Conference in Ghana.