

South Sudan Multi-Partner Trust Fund for Reconciliation, Stabilization, Resilience (South Sudan RSRTF)

REVISED TERMS OF REFERENCE (1 Dec. 2021)¹

1. Objective

The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) together launched the South Sudan Reconciliation, Stabilization, and Resilience Trust Fund (RSRTF) in December 2018. The Fund provides strategic financing to integrated programmes that together lessen the destructive drivers of conflict and create more stable conditions in which development and resilience objectives may be realized. Drawing on the comparative advantages across UNMISS, UN agencies, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the RSRTF promotes integrated programming across the ‘Triple Nexus’ of the humanitarian, development, and peace fields.

The RSRTF intends to reduce violence and conflict in hotspot and marginalised areas of the country. Through its Area Based Programmes (ABP) RSRTF partners deliver comprehensive interventions that reduce social acceptance of violence and simultaneously nurture a conducive environment where peace can be sustained. Often building on existing efforts to bridge political divides and reconcile community divisions, the approach ensures hard won political agreements and community reconciliation initiatives are reinforced through tangible actions that shift incentives and raise the cost of resorting to violence.

Rather than distinct projects responding to the symptoms of violence and conflict, the Fund promotes cooperative efforts across multiple actors working in the same space at the same time to effectively address the root causes and structural drivers of conflict, whether political, security, social, or economic. By fostering stable political and security environments, the RSRTF contributes to reduce the risks and vulnerabilities that fuel South Sudan’s escalating humanitarian needs, instead stimulating conditions for development and recovery. Through adaptive, complementary reconciliation, stabilization, and resilience efforts the intent is to attain lasting change, supporting communities to realize the long-term, economic and livelihood gains of sustained peace.

Recognizing the centrality of sustained political dialogue, engagement, and leadership for resolving violent conflicts, and the influence of political dynamics as a determinant of whether interventions can succeed, the Fund’s nexus approach sponsors strategic alliances that take account of the political and security dimensions of the operating context and maximise the potential to realise tangible change. Central to the concept of the Fund, the programmatic framework of the RSRTF emphasizes the political primacy of national actors in sustainable conflict resolution. The Fund plays a unique role in bridging sub-national

¹ This is a revised version of the founding Terms of Reference (TOR) of November 2018. In accordance with the requirement for routine review of the Fund TOR the SC endorsed this updated version to reflect the RSRTF’s strategic direction and allocation procedures as well as incorporating lessons from its first three years of operations and the findings of an independent early-stage evaluation.

grassroots, state, and national-level peacebuilding processes, linking bottom-up approaches to efforts at the national level that support the development of accountable and inclusive governance.

The approach embodies the vision of the United Nations' reform process to realise more cohesive approaches of UN entities across humanitarian, development and peace building realms working together to capitalize on their respective comparative advantages to achieve collective outcomes. Drawing on those comparative advantages across UN agencies, NGOs, Civil Society and the UN Mission, the South Sudan RSRTF promotes integrated programming built around three essential elements:

- **Reconciliation:** Rebuild trust and confidence, strengthen social cohesion, and promote peaceful coexistence through gender and age sensitive communal conflict prevention, management and resolution.
- **Stabilization:** Broaden participation and enhance space for peaceful political processes, strengthen the social contract between citizens and institutions and support restoration of security, the rule of law and access to justice.
- **Resilience:** Invest in capacities, assets and opportunities that foster interdependency between communities, deter the mobilisation of at-risk youth and promote social integration, equality, agency and self-reliance to realize peace dividends that shift incentives and raise the cost of resorting to violence.

Efforts to promote reconciliation, create stability and strengthen resilience are equally critical. They are also mutually-reinforcing. As standalone initiatives each adds value to potentially elicit short-term results and changes to people's lives. However, when harnessed together the chance of successfully building peace and self-reliance over a medium to longer term period is significantly enhanced.

Resilience programmes that encourage self-reliance are more viable in a secure environment. A secure environment, however, that does not reconcile underlying differences is less sustainable. Supporting communities economically that have reconciled is more likely to equate to resilient and self-sustaining gains in the longer term and enable them to successfully resist pressure to resort to violence as they resolve or manage tension.

In South Sudan's fluid and fragmented context, the notion of a linear continuum or transition from conflict and acute humanitarian need to reconciliation, recovery and development is unrealistic. The complementary elements supported by the Fund enable more flexible and adaptive programming responsive to the inevitable shifting dynamics of the context, resulting in changeable sequencing and gradations of the three RSR elements over time as changing circumstances dictate.

In achieving its stated aims, the implementation approach of the Fund is further guided by three fundamental principles:

- *Increasing local focus:* Reinforce locally led analysis, planning and decision making, promoting stronger local focus in the way resources are programmed while drawing on existing capacities, experience and lessons learned to formulate evidence-based and sustainable action.
- *Bridging silos:* Ensure comprehensive problem analysis that decisively identifies all causal factors irrespective of their nature to deliver an appropriate programming response, bridging silos and capitalising on all relevant capacity and expertise to maximise results through a 'whole of system' approach.
- *Promoting partnership:* Strengthen coherence, complementarity, cooperation and coordination across development, humanitarian and peacebuilding entities improving the way capability is brought together through collective action to deliver common outcomes.

2. Context

The brutal civil war that erupted in December 2013 and the drawn-out peace process since then have dominated the political and security context of South Sudan. While implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS) has resulted in a marked reduction of large-scale political violence between the main parties, the implementation of its political commitments and the unification of military forces remains incomplete and continuing delay has sparked an increase in sub-national and intercommunal violence. Fragmentation and shifting alliances and related power and identity-based conflicts are promoting division and competition contributing to more pronounced ethnic polarization and reduced public confidence in overall peace and security.

The faltering progress on the political level has done little to reverse the escalating humanitarian crisis in South Sudan. Borne from years of violence, resulting mass displacement, and sustained economic decline, the protracted crisis is further exacerbated by natural disasters and hazards, including flooding, locust infestation and the COVID-19 pandemic. Droughts and floods of increasing frequency in recent years have shown that South Sudan is highly vulnerable to climate change, further posing indirect implications for peace and security as cumulative loss and destruction fuels competition over minimal resources². Limited infrastructure, basic services and livelihoods have come under increasing stress from intra- and inter-community violence driven by competition over dominance and resources. Meanwhile decades of violence have eroded and weakened traditional conflict prevention, mediation and resolution structures.

The number of people in need of humanitarian aid continues to climb each year and now equates to more than two-thirds of the population. The 2021 humanitarian budget requirement to address these needs was \$1.7 billion dollars, an increase of \$200 million on the previous year. As the gap between needs and resources widens globally, the reality of escalating needs and an inevitable decrease in resources will exacerbate the humanitarian crisis in South Sudan and likely result in increased loss of life.

The continued provision of essential, lifesaving humanitarian assistance, therefore, must go hand in hand with programming that enables people to both emerge from cycles of crisis and build their resilience to cope with and recover from future shocks. Consequently, humanitarian and development actors are increasingly looking to bridge the divide between meeting emergency needs and achieving development goals, developing more 'resilience' focused initiatives and strategies to guide engagement and programming in South Sudan.

However, building community resilience and reducing long term dependency on aid cannot be achieved unless the political, peace and security environment is also transformed. The accumulated deficits in the transitional security arrangements alongside weak governance, impunity, and inconsistent applications of the rule of law create difficult conditions for the enhancement of political stability and addressing high levels of need.

For many communities in South Sudan, this transitional period, while bringing a decrease in overall levels of violence, remain characterised by dearth and uncertainty with localised tensions still driven by power struggles, resource competition and prone to political manipulation. With few avenues for representation in either the political or security spheres, many minority ethnic groups are likely to face continued marginalization, while even majority ethnic communities will continue to suffer from the disconnect between citizens and the state. Marginalization in South Sudan tends to be structural with biases in terms of participation often accompanied by the physical marginalization of peripheries from power centres and urban areas. As such, perceptions of isolation and neglect find easy reference in poor infrastructure, the lack of basic services, and limited financial support from the centre to the states. In such a context,

² Climate change will undoubtedly prove to be a "threat multiplier" in South Sudan, exacerbating existing conflict drivers. Where relevant RSRTF allocation processes will incorporate the priorities set by the UN informal Task Force on climate and security and once developed, will ensure consideration of the joint UNMISS-UNCT Climate and Security Strategy in determining annual RSRTF allocation strategies.

communal self-reliance is prioritised with high levels of internal cohesion creating mutually exclusive hierarchies that increase the difficulty of peacebuilding approaches based on inter-group action.

These broad dynamics underscore the importance of adopting comprehensive approaches to intervention that can operate across the political, security, justice, and livelihood sectors while also able to link across the national and subnational spaces. There is a clear role for international actors to play during this transitional period, supporting avenues for non-violent political competition, enabling the administration of justice, expanding the rule of law, and aiding the realisation of social and economic rights alongside the quest for advancing civil rights. The international community will be challenged to advance innovative programming approaches that seek to use limited resources to achieve maximum violence reduction. Essential in this endeavour is learning from the numerous previous efforts to build peace and address local conflict to overcome a reliance on piecemeal approaches and interventions that struggle with scale and sustainability.

The RSRTF addresses many of these gaps. It leverages flexible funding strategically to foster collaboration and cross-sectoral approaches across the ‘Triple Nexus’. It is designed to address the inter-play between – and complexity of – conflict drivers in South Sudan based on a deep understanding of local contexts. At the same time, it provides a tool to link national level political and security processes to local conflict resolution efforts.

3. Approach

Despite South Sudan’s many challenges, there are opportunities where context specific strategic planning and alignment of resources can bring about meaningful change in the short and medium term. Addressing the trajectory of escalating humanitarian requirements – saving lives sustainably – while building the foundations to reduce fragility and vulnerability in the long term is achievable in South Sudan if pursued through the right intersection of programming between the conflict and peacebuilding fields, on the one hand, and the fields of development, disaster recovery and humanitarian action, on the other.

The interlinked, mutually reinforcing notion of peace and development has been promoted since the 2005 UN World Summit. The ‘New Way of Working’ that emerged from the 2016 Humanitarian Summit further advocated for a breakdown of barriers between humanitarian and development actors. As incoming UN Secretary-General, António Guterres called for “sustaining peace” to be considered “the third leg of the triangle” and specifically called for earlier investment in the foundations for resilience, stability and a more integrated response across development, humanitarian and peacebuilding fields. The Secretary-General’s vision for the repositioning of the UN development system highlighted the requirement for a broad, whole-of United Nations approach, emphasizing that in conflict settings, to fully contribute to building resilience and sustaining peace, UN Country Teams must work in an integrated manner with UN peacekeeping missions.

The Fund’s approach of promoting integrated programming around complementary reconciliation, stabilization and resilience efforts seeks to realize these powerful synergies, drawing on comparative advantages across the humanitarian, development, and peace nexus. The Fund’s design and methodological approach have been informed by a substantial evidence base including local lessons drawn out from past peacebuilding attempts in the country, international best practice literature as well as UN strategies and reforms. The Fund’s cornerstone is its innovative area-based programming approach.

Enabling Area-Based Programming

RSRTF programmes are predominantly ‘area based’ targeting distinct conflict hotspots in South Sudan, concentrating resources to comprehensively address underlying drivers of conflict and overcome the fundamental obstacles to sustained peace. The area-based approach promotes collective efforts that provide a holistic response to complex challenges, underpinned by a political strategy and building on locally owned

peace agreements. The approach enables actions that tackle the root causes of conflicts in parallel to responding to the urgent needs they generate with a view to stabilize an area and create the conditions for sustained resilience and development endeavours.

The Fund plays an effective role in promoting stronger local focus and ensuring an inclusive, people-centred approach in the way resources are programmed. Through the area-based programming approach emphasis is placed on locally led analysis and the design of local strategies that take into account the unique nature of the area and the local drivers of conflict. The Fund is an instrument that aims to place local communities at the heart of delivering locally relevant programming. Both the contextual analysis and identification of priority actions will be responsive to and build on the knowledge and experience of local actors ensuring support for existing capacities and initiatives rather than applying a set of predetermined standardized activities designed at the national level.

Providing Flexible Financing

The establishment of the South Sudan RSRTF is a strong example of Member States coming together to find new and innovative ways to finance development and peacebuilding, turning funding from a divider into an enabler. The RSRTF concept builds on the momentum of global commitments and frameworks to deliver better and more flexible financing across the nexus and enable implementation of more collaborative, coherent and complementary programmes.

Maximizing the synergies between the work of the UN Country Team, UNMISS and NGOs has been identified as a priority objective by all partners to achieve better results in the fragile context of South Sudan. Unfortunately, rather than bridging these silos, financing instruments frequently contribute to further dividing the streams of external assistance. The high level of earmarking towards specific agencies and projects and the separation between stabilization/peacekeeping funding of UNMISS on one side and the development funding on the other deters collaboration across the sectors and actors. In addition, pure development instruments remain ill-equipped to deal with political unpredictability and are often not responsive enough to changing circumstances on the ground.

The RSRTF approach is not a substitute for development, rather it has a catalytic and preparatory purpose to reduce and mitigate immediate contextual risks, creating the space and opportunities for broader engagement on actions that consolidate peace and contribute to development goals. The pooled financing mechanism should be seen as complementary to individual agency-based resource mobilisation mechanisms and other pooled funds, leveraging greater additional resources and attracting new and more diverse donors. as a multi-partner vehicle, as well as providing a vehicle to access political/peacebuilding/stabilization specific financing.

Increasing Coherence

The 2021 early-stage independent evaluation of the Fund stated that the “RSRTF’s approach towards ‘One UN’ across the HDP Nexus is potentially ground-breaking and of relevance in both South Sudan and other countries with ongoing UN peacekeeping missions”. The evaluation also highlighted that the RSRTF “sits well with other multilateral and bilateral funding and coordination mechanisms (such as the Peacebuilding Fund and the Partnership for Recovery and Resilience) and fills an important gap in terms of transitional funding. The Area Reference Groups (ARGs) are well-placed to act as the main locus for programme accountability and inter-agency collaboration.”

The governance mechanism of the RSRTF allows a wide range of partners (UN, development partners, donors and civil society) to collectively agree on priorities and strategies. As well as seeking to sustain multi-stakeholder area-based partnerships through direct financing, the Fund additionally encourages initiatives that build synergies with other complimentary stabilization and resilience funds and programmes. Through its ARG approach, RSRTF ABPs are closely coordinated with UNCT, non-governmental, and governmental partners. The Fund also explores opportunities for increasing coherence and leveraging

impact with initiatives of the South Sudanese Ministry of Peacebuilding, United Nations Peacebuilding Fund, the World Bank, the United Kingdom Peacebuilding Opportunities Fund, and the United States Office of Democracy and Governance, amongst others. As a result, the Fund capitalizes on synergies and complementarities not only amongst RSRTF projects, but also more widely with programmes funded from other sources and implemented by other partners.

In providing strategic leadership to the Fund, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) and senior UN officials in the country ensure close strategic and operational partnerships among relevant political, security and development actors, and between the United Nations, the Government, and other key stakeholders, including international and regional organizations. Furthermore, as head of the United Nations peacekeeping operation, the SRSG ensures strategic support to the RSRTF programmes through commitment of multidimensional Mission resources, inclusive of civilian, police and military capabilities, to deter violence and foster safe and supportive environments conducive for partners to viably engage in RSRTF activities.

Increasing transparency

The Fund provides increased transparency on planning, implementation, and delivery of results:

- By including broad representation of stakeholders in the governance structure of the Fund, partners are able to participate in the decision-making processes and access all the evidence and data shaping the decisions as well as reports on activities undertaken, including on challenges faced and results achieved.
- By pooling resources contributed towards reconciliation, stabilization, and resilience activities in the jointly agreed priority areas, the Fund provides a consolidated overview of funds allocated, making available joint reporting on the implementation progress and results achieved.
- The joint results-based management system also enhances accountability for results and enables greater visibility and measurement of collective actions, outcome effectiveness and overall impact.
- By posting all information on the MPTF Office Gateway, all partners have easy access to real time information on the funding status (commitments and deposits by donors, transfers made to implementing partners, progress reports, etc.).

4. Programmatic Framework

Positioned at the intersection of peacekeeping and development, the Fund's programmatic framework reflects the mutual priorities of UNMISS and the UNCT. It draws upon the overarching strategic documents of both bodies, the 2019-2021 UN Cooperation Framework (UNCF)³ and the UNMISS Strategic Vision 2021/2024⁴. The Fund's results-based management system ensures all actors contribute to a minimum set of predefined outcome and results indicators. This both facilitates a view of the comprehensive aggregated changes the Fund has been able to influence but also enables clear identification of RSRTF contributions to the UNCF Results Framework and the Comprehensive Planning and Performance Assessment System (CPAS).

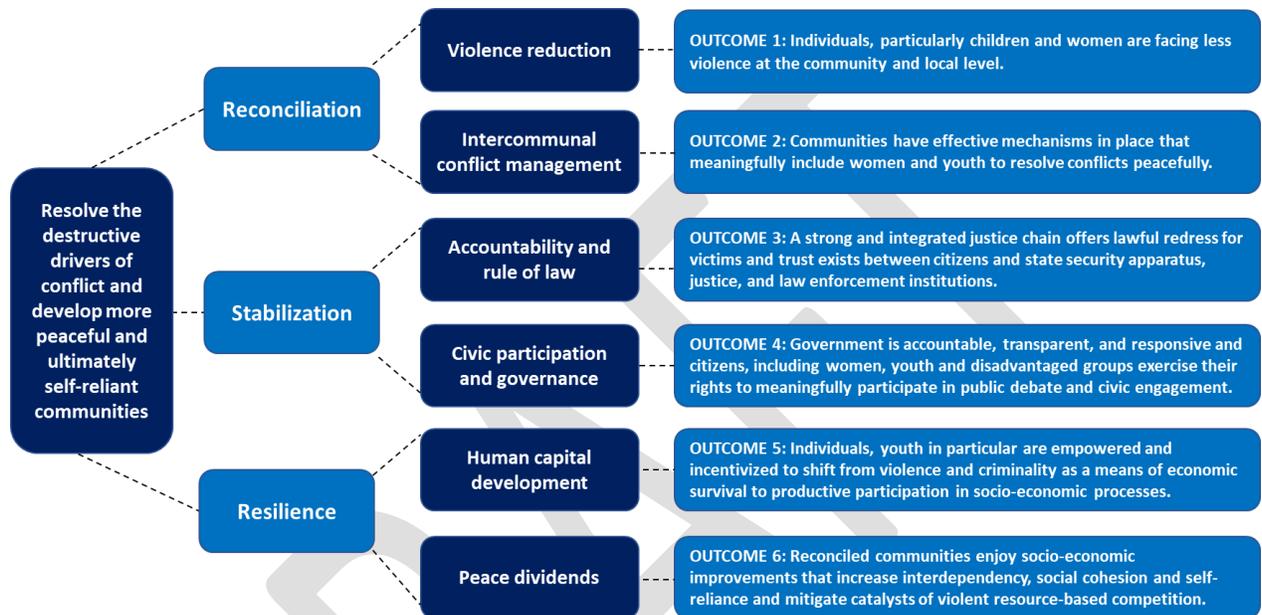
The RSRTF intends to bridge institutional silos and facilitate a 'whole of system' approach. Stemming from the three thematic priorities – Reconciliation, Stabilization and Resilience – the RSRTF has six

³ The UNCT is preparing a new UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) to run from 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2025. The UNSDCF Outcomes and Outputs are to be agreed by UNCT and government by December 2021. The Fund Secretariat will participate in the planned Strategic Prioritisation Workshop and ensure continued alignment between the RSRTF and the UNSDCF Strategic Priorities and Outcomes.

⁴ Through resolution 2567, the Security Council envisaged a three-year strategic vision for UNMISS to: prevent a return to civil war in South Sudan; build durable peace at the local and national levels; support inclusive and accountable governance; and facilitate the conduct of free, fair, and peaceful elections in accordance with the Revitalized Agreement.

programmatically reflective of the intersection of programming between the development, stabilization and peacebuilding fields (see graphic below).

Funded projects may align to one or a number of outcomes informed by identified priorities in the proposed location. Actions across the pillars are complimentary and mutually reinforcing to increase impact for change. ABPs are expected to address at least one outcome across all three pillars. Where multiple outcomes are being addressed, the integrated nature must be explicit through both the project specific Theory of Change and articulation of the programme’s intervention strategy.



Abbreviated RSRTF Theory of Change

IF communal conflict prevention, management, and reconciliation increasingly restore trust, promote peaceful coexistence, and strengthen social cohesion **AND IF** conducive governance and security conditions, accountability, and the rule of law are reinforced and access to justice widened, in turn deterring violence and creating conditions for productive social, economic and political life **AND IF** increased community interdependency, capacities, resources, and equality enhance communities’ agency and self-reliance to meet basic needs without dependency on aid or resorting to violence or criminal activities **THEN** the destructive drivers of conflict are increasingly resolved, the cost of returning to violence becomes prohibitive and communities become more peaceful and, ultimately, self-reliant.

The above is representative of the RSRTF concept. The theory of change across all programmes is not homogenous. Different contexts require different approaches. Each ABP however is expected to leverage the integrated ‘Triple Nexus’ programming approach, and design programmes responsive to the context implementing relevant and complementary activities from across all three pillars – examples of which are outlined below.

Reconciliation

Under the reconciliation pillar, activities seek to restore trust, promote peaceful coexistence, and strengthen social cohesion through community conflict prevention, management, and reconciliation. At the grassroots

level, the RSRTF ABPs work to strengthen local mechanisms and capacity to enhance intra- and inter-community dialogue, reintegrate ex-combatants into society, and strengthen existing community social structures to mitigate harmful cultural norms that may fuel violence. Partners engage at-risk children and youth through peace education in schools as well as inter-communal sports and social activities to encourage a new generation of peaceful coexistence. In order to break the existing cycles of revenge violence and prevent further conflict, for instance, communities are supported to peacefully recover stolen cattle. Abductees and survivors of sexual violence are being traced, recovered, and reunified with their families and supported with trauma, legal, and medical support with the understanding that generations of compounded trauma and resentment often fuels violence. Gender, youth, minority protection considerations are mainstreamed through all these interventions with specific focus on strengthening women's participation in local and national peace processes.

Emphasising the centrality of sustained political dialogue and engagement for resolving violent conflicts, the Fund's partners build strategic alliances that capitalise on existing expertise and programming experience. Partners can leverage UNMISS leadership's 'good offices', political influence, and diplomatic mediation to resolve political deadlocks and achieve results. Political analysis and an understanding of how power is distributed guides interventions under this pillar and supports tailoring of activities for greatest impact.

Stabilization

Actions under the stabilization pillar work to create conditions for productive social, economic and political life and create an environment in which reconciliation and peacebuilding objectives can be sustained by strengthening security, reinforcing rule of law, promoting meaningful accountability, and developing effective mechanisms for participation in governance and decision-making.

The worst of the violence the RSRTF seeks to address is commonly experienced in remote areas that suffer from weak rule of law and the absence of formal justice actors. Combined with the eroding authority of traditional governance structures to peacefully resolve disputes, this has resulted in widespread impunity which triggers more retaliatory attacks and continued cycles of violence among communities.

The RSRTF stabilization activities contribute to address the pervasive lawlessness and insecurity that prevails in the absence of accountability and lack of lawful redress for victims. As well as pursuing meaningful accountability, Fund activities work to build trust between citizens and the state security apparatus, and the justice and law enforcement institutions responsible for their protection. Through access to legal aid, skills enhancement activities and rapid and mobile deployment of the justice chain (police, prosecutors, prison and judicial personnel) to remote hotspot locations, partners work to prevent and deescalate revenge attacks and ensure accountability for serious, often cattle migration-related, violence.

By agreeing to implement the R-ARCSS, the Government has indicated its willingness to implement the institutional reforms necessary to build a more accountable, transparent, and responsive government for the people of South Sudan. At the local level this requires governance and service delivery to be people-centred and for public expenditure policies to be pro-poor and gender sensitive.

Increasing political inclusion and empowering the citizens of South Sudan through an active and organized civil society will be fundamental to achieving a credible electoral outcome and establishing accountable institutions which govern on the basis of consent rather than coercion. The RSRTF supports partners working to achieve competent and inclusive local governance able to plan, budget and deliver services and with effective mechanisms for participation and transparent and accountable decision-making. The RSRTF's ABPs enhances and broadens civic participation in peace and political processes through activities that build trust, create space for social mobilisation and free expression, and support citizens and government to develop mutually reinforcing relations fundamental to sustaining peace.

Resilience

Under the resilience pillar, and in support of its reconciliation and stabilization efforts, the Fund aims to invest in community capacities and resources to promote equality, agency and self-reliance to ultimately reduce vulnerability to future shocks and stresses. The resilience activities are not standalone initiatives. They are linked to identified conflict drivers and empower communities in conflict hotspots to reap tangible socioeconomic peace dividends.

The RSRTF supports the creation of joint community assets that foster interdependency between communities such as markets, which in addition to creating commercial opportunities can also improve social cohesion through intercommunity interaction. RSRTF resilience activities also deter the mobilisation of at-risk youth into armed groups or the remobilization of ex-combatants by providing them with livelihoods training and livelihoods opportunities. By engaging at-risk youth and ex-combatants in cash for work and labour-intensive infrastructure rehabilitation they are able to productively engage in alternative livelihoods activities while at the same time contributing to their communities, promoting social integration and combating stigma and bias.

By increasing the availability of secondary education and adult functional literacy programs, community members are afforded opportunities to gain the necessary skills to engage in the formal economy, and therefore have options other than resorting to violence or criminal activities. The Fund also approaches resilience activities as a way of decreasing conflict over natural resources. In areas where drought or flooding reduce the availability of water points, grazing, and agricultural land, the Fund works with communities to develop disaster risk management plans and water and rangeland management strategies. The overarching aim is that economically resilient communities will more successfully resist pressure to resort to violence as they resolve or manage tensions.



Sustainability and exit strategies

The RSRTF intends to create conditions of peace and stability where they are currently absent. By supporting community reconciliation processes and reducing incentives for violence in hotspot areas, the RSRTF serves as a short-term security and stability measure with mid to longer term implications for peace and development (through its activities the RSRTF contributes to at least seven Sustainable Development Goals).

As a strategic entry-point the RSRTF actions aim to create the conditions for subsequent development programming as well as facilitating the piloting of activities to strengthen the evidence base and foster the development of best practices. In this regard activities supported by the Fund aim to be catalytic in terms

of laying the groundwork for sustained, development programming that over time will deliver the priorities and outcomes envisaged in the country’s National Development Strategy.

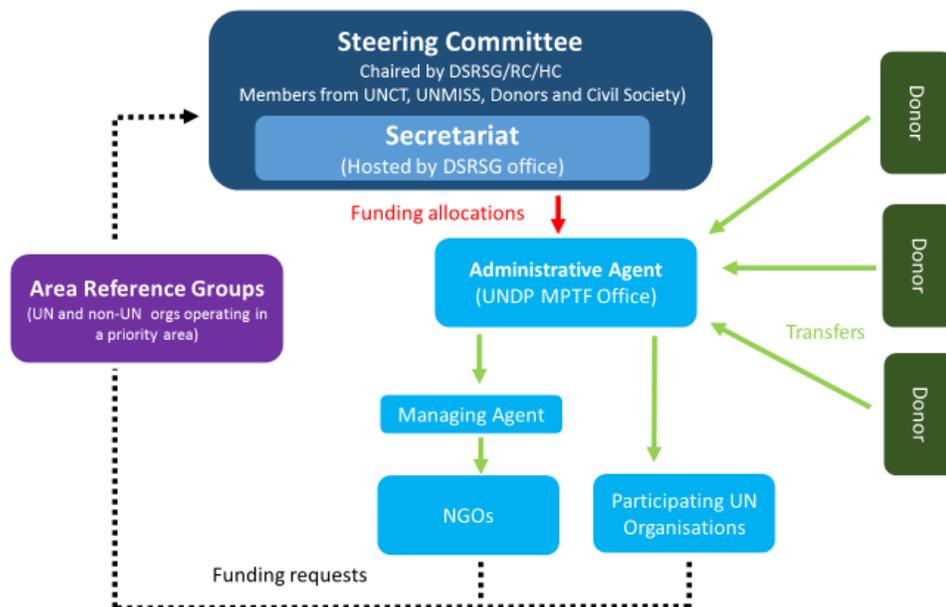
Given the focus of the RSRTF to create the conditions of peace and stability conducive for viable resilience endeavours the Fund acts as a natural pre-cursor to the Partnership for Recovery and Resilience (PfRR). The PfRR also takes an area-based programming approach and aims to improve coordinated efforts amongst donors, UN agencies and NGOs to achieve resilience goals. Selection of candidate areas however requires a degree of existing stability and demonstrated “readiness” of local authorities, leaders, communities to actively engage in and contribute to a partnership. Where feasible the RSRTF will work in close coordination with the PfRR and other development actors to support smooth transitions where the RSRTF has been able to establish a level of stability that would enable programming supported by partners with more restrictive risk tolerance.

The Fund also acknowledges however that the changes required to bring peace to places struggling with protracted conflict are realistically achieved over generations. In some locations, short-term interventions may not allow the Fund to realize its desired impact given the time required for conflict transformation to take hold. On a case-by-case basis, and informed by an independent evaluation of relevant programmes, the Fund Steering Committee reviews the merit of follow-on programme phases in consideration of the presence of alternative programmes likely to sustain the gains achieved through the RSRTF projects; the need to safeguard initial Fund investments, and fragility of gains that could be undone; as well as the performance and efficiency of the initial ABP.

At the same time the Fund promotes programming modalities that strengthen local ownership, reinforce local community-based initiatives, build the capacity of local structures and institutions, stipulate active involvement of both local/state government and national organizations in programme implementation and take appropriate measures to ensure that structures are self-sustaining after the project implementation is over. Actions under the Fund’s stabilization pillar are particularly important to nurture longer-term sustainability by strengthening institutions for transparent, accountable, and inclusive governance.

5. The Governance Structure

The governance structure of the South Sudan RSRTF is depicted below.



The Steering Committee

The Steering Committee (SC) is chaired by the DSRS/RC/HC. Membership of the Steering Committee will embody the spirit of the integrated nature of the Fund, strive for a gender balanced representation, and comprise the following members:

- a) Two representatives of the United Nations Country Team
- b) Two representatives of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan
- c) Two donor representatives in South Sudan
- d) Two representatives of NGOs in South Sudan

The following bodies shall participate in their capacity as-ex-officio members:

- a) The Fund Secretariat
- b) The Administrative Agent (AA) – UNDP Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office
- c) The Managing Agent (MA) – UNDP South Sudan Office

To enhance strategic coordination and cooperation the following bodies may attend as observers:

- a) The World Bank
- b) The Partnership for Recovery and Resilience (PfRR)
- c) The South Sudan Humanitarian Fund Secretariat

The Steering Committee's responsibilities include to:

- Provide oversight and exercise overall accountability of the RSRTF.
- Represent and communicate the views of their constituency and routinely share all relevant RSRTF related information and updates with their constituency.
- Participate in annual identification and selection of strategic priority areas for RSRTF investment
- Review and approve proposals submitted for funding following completion of evaluation by the Fund Secretariat, ensuring conformity with the requirements of the RSRTF.
- Instruct the AA to disburse resources to the Participating UN Organizations and recipient Non-Governmental Organizations through the MA accordingly and consequently. (UN-chair)
- Support the successful functioning of Area Reference Groups as the central coordinating forums to facilitate joint planning and implementation by actively promoting engagement and support to these forums within the relevant constituencies represented by SC members.
- Hold lead agencies and Area Reference Groups to account for performance.
- Review the Fund status and its overall progress against expected results and performance targets.
- Review the periodic progress reports (programmatic and financial) consolidated by the Fund Secretariat and the AA, based on the progress reports submitted by the Participating UN Organizations and the recipient Non-Governmental Organizations through the MA.
- Commission reviews and “lessons learned” reports on the performance of the RSRTF and discussing follow-ups actions.
- Review on an annual basis, the Fund Risk Matrix prepared by the Fund Secretariat or more regularly if needs arise.
- Approve direct costs related to fund operations supported by the Fund Secretariat
- Support initiatives to mobilise resources the Fund.
- Update and approve the RSRTF Terms of Reference.

The Fund Secretariat

The Fund Secretariat (FS) is the entity responsible for the operational functioning of the Fund and provides technical and management support to the SC.

The Secretariat, hosted within the Office of the DSRSG/RC/HC, performs the following functions:

- Execute and coordinate all management functions of the RSRTF, including the implementation of decisions made by the Steering Committee.
- Plan and prepare meetings of the Steering Committee and hold records of decisions through minutes of the meetings.
- Provide quality assurance throughout the programme/project approval process and review and vet the technical and operational soundness of projects, providing detailed reporting on evaluation processes before they are submitted to the Steering Committee for approval.
- Approve or reject project revision requests or refer to the Steering Committee when deemed necessary.
- Prepare research papers and reports, strategic considerations and draft recommendations to facilitate decision-making by the SC, ensuring the Fund's approach and priorities remain relevant to wider developments.
- Undertake outreach and participate in coordination forums to ensure the RSRTF is well situated within the broader 'Triple Nexus' and funding landscape, ensuring opportunities for cooperation and complementarity are maximized.
- Facilitate systematic cooperation with UNMISS, the UN Country Team, the South Sudan Humanitarian Fund, donors, bilateral partners, multilateral funding and coordination mechanisms and programmes, to ensure RSRTF funding allocations leverage comparative advantages across the 'Triple Nexus'.
- Implement the Fund's knowledge management strategy and ensure a systematic approach to retaining institutional memory and capturing lessons learned and best practice across the Fund and its partners.
- Facilitate collaboration and communication between Participating Organizations and guide establishment of functional and accountable Area Reference Groups (ARGs).
- Undertake monitoring and evaluation of projects/programmes being implemented at various levels and in various locations by the different participating agencies, UNMISS sections, and NGOs.
- Implement the Fund's Risk Management Strategy to establish a common understanding of risks among all stakeholders, ensuring efficient and strategic risk mitigation and adaptation measures and ensure monitoring and control of operational risks, including by routinely updating the risk monitoring matrix.
- Consolidate the narrative annual and final reports submitted by recipient organizations and present reports to the Steering Committee for review and to the Administrative Agent for consolidation of narrative and financial reports.
- Mobilize an appropriate and sustainable funding base and maintain existing partnerships including through outreach, and timely preparation of donor proposals, presentations, and briefing papers.
- Manage communication, public information and visibility.
- Periodically review the ToR of the Fund and recommend changes or revisions to the SC.
- With the support of the AA, elaborate an Operations Manual, in accordance with signed legal agreements, and ensure compliance with it.
- Liaise with the AA on Fund administration issues, including issues related to Fund Transfer Requests, programme/Fund extension and programme/Fund closure.

The costs of the Secretariat are charged to the Fund as direct costs. The budget for the Secretariat is submitted to the SC on an annual basis and the Secretariat staffing structure is adjusted and endorsed by the SC as per needs and budget availability.

The Administrative Agent

The South Sudan RSRTF is administered by the UNDP Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office, acting as the Administrative Agent (AA).

The below description of the responsibilities of the AA is based on the UNDG “Protocol on the Administrative Agent for Multi-Donor Trust Funds, Joint Programmes, and One UN Funds”. The AA is entitled to allocate an administrative fee of one percent (1%) of the amount contributed by each donor, to meet the costs of performing the AA function.

The AA is responsible for the following functions:

- Support the design of the Fund, including the development of the Fund TOR.
- Conclude the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Participating UN Organizations and the Standard Administrative Arrangements (SAAs) with contributing partners.
- Receive contributions from donors that wish to provide financial support to the Fund.
- Administer such funds received including winding up the Fund and related matters.
- Subject to availability of funds, transfer such funds to Participating UN Organizations and the MA, upon instructions from the SC.
- Provide to donors an annual consolidated report and a final consolidated report based on narrative reports consolidated by the FS and financial reports provided by implementing organizations.
- Disburse funds for any additional costs of the tasks that the SC may decide to allocate.
- Ensure that the SC and Secretariat are duly informed of the applicable UN(SDG) policies and procedures relevant to fund operations, and, upon request, benefit from knowledge management support and advisory services on aspects of fund operations.

In addition, the MPTF Office through its GATEWAY (<http://mptf.undp.org/>) offers a web-based service portal, which provides real-time financial data generated directly from its accounting system. It provides all partners and the general public with the ability to track information on contributions, transfers and expenditures.

The Managing Agent

UNDP’s responsibilities as the Managing Agent (MA) is executed by the UNDP Country Office which operates separately from UNDP’s role as the AA in accordance with UNDP’s policy of maintaining clear separation of the dual functions as AA and Participating UN Organization under MDTFs and Joint Programmes.

UNDP, on the basis of the instructions received from the SC and funding received from the AA, ensures access to the South Sudan RSRTF for NGOs. In this regard UNDP performs additional oversight functions as MA. UNDP ensures project implementation in accordance with regulations, rules, directives and procedures applicable to it and it is responsible for discharging all commitments and obligations with NGOs. UNDP will use its simplified standard NGO execution modality for this purpose and will charge the corresponding indirect and direct costs for these projects. The SC retains the responsibility for the allocation of funds to NGOs projects, selected through the allocation process as defined in this ToR. Partners funded through the South Sudan RSRTF have to implement projects abiding to UNDP rules and regulations.

On the basis of the SC decisions UNDP responsibilities as MA are the following:

- Ensure capacity assessment of NGOs upon request by the FS. The assessment is based on standard procedures and guidelines in accordance with UNDP rules and regulation and in consultation with the Resident Coordinator
- Define risk rating for all NGO partners in line with the HACT (Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers) provisions
- Ensure and facilitate the entire process of technical review for NGO projects
- Ensure timely disbursements of funds in accordance to the decisions of the SC
- Undertake programmatic and financial accountability for funds received from the AA
- Ensure programmatic and financial follow up, including projects monitoring and evaluation and audits of NGO projects
- Receive the narrative and financial reports from NGOs for funded projects
- Provide financial expenditure to the AA in accordance with the timetable indicated in the MOU
- Provide adequate inputs for the Annual Report of the South Sudan RSRTF, based on the information received from the NGOs
- Ensure partners' support, orientation and training with regard to the administrative, programmatic and financial procedures applicable to the South Sudan RSRTF

The Recipient Organizations

Resources will be allocated to Participating UN Organizations, i.e. the UN Specialized Agencies, Funds and Programmes that have signed the Memorandum of Understanding with the AA. Each Participating UN Organization will assume full programmatic and financial accountability for the funds disbursed to it by the AA. Such funds will be administered by each Participating UN Organization in accordance with its own regulations, rules, directives and procedures. Indirect costs of the Participating UN Organizations recovered through programme support costs will be harmonized at 7% (with exceptions based on UNSDG approval). Implementing Partners can receive funding from the Fund through Participating UN Organizations.

Non-Governmental Organizations are deemed eligible for funding through UNDP South Sudan acting as the RSRTF Managing Agent (MA) if they have successfully undergone an assessment of their institutional, managerial, and financial capacity under the Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT) framework.

The Area Reference Groups

For each ABP funded by the RSRTF the lead agency is expected to convene an Area Reference Group (ARG) as the central coordinating forum to facilitate joint planning and oversight of activity implementation and collective monitoring of progress towards realising common outcomes. A thorough mapping of relevant actors and stakeholders is required at the proposal stage to identify all the pertinent actors in the target area. The ARG forms a multidisciplinary network that integrates and coordinates various competencies. It is led by the lead partner organization and composed of representatives of local authorities and local communities (whenever feasible) and representatives of organizations (UN and partners) that are present locally and have significant experience of implementing programmes in the area. Membership may also include other selected peacebuilding, conflict and recovery experts as required to provide technical advice on relevant issues and support identification of capacity gaps.

Wherever possible the ARG utilises existing coordination structures to avoid duplication, ensuring credible coordination and reducing costs. Where existing structures are in place, these form the basis of the ARG with expansion of their capacities as needed to take on additional responsibilities and ensure representative participation. While the Fund does not prescribe mandatory composition of a newly established ARG, these coordination structures must be representative of relevant stakeholder interests and seek to promote collaboration and capitalize on existing local resources and expertise.

The ARGs form the heart of the RSRTF operational structure, and their membership, efficiency and sustained engagement are fundamental to the performance and achievements of the Fund. In receiving

financing from the Fund, all contracted partners must participate in the ARG in a cooperative manner, attending coordination meetings, providing activity updates and inputs for collective results monitoring, participating in joint review processes and sharing in a timely manner any significant information, fact, problem or delay likely to affect the implementation of their respective activities and in turn, the overall achievement of collective area outcomes.

6. The Contributions

Contributions to the South Sudan RSRTF may be accepted from Member States, regional bodies, inter-governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, businesses, foundations and individuals.

To facilitate the SC to plan and allocate resources strategically and to bridge silos and enable cross pillar multi-dimensional programming, the Fund strongly encourages un-earmarked contributions so as not to discourage integrated approaches.

However, the Fund recognizes that many funding mechanisms remain incompatible with the ‘Triple Nexus’ approach and where necessary therefore contributors may earmark funds towards reconciliation, stabilization or resilience pillars of the Fund. The earmarking will be reflected in the contribution agreement. Earmarking at the project level is not possible.

Contributions may be accepted in fully convertible currency. Such contributions will be deposited into the bank account designated by UNDP MPTF Office.

7. The Fund Allocation Process

Annual Strategy

To ensure relevance and flexibility of the RSRTF, the Fund Secretariat, on behalf of the Steering Committee, prepares an annual strategy paper identifying priority geographic and thematic areas which form the basis for the SC’s funding decision-making for the coming year. The selection of strategic priorities is designed to ensure the Fund achieves maximum impact within the evolving context and allows for streamlined allocation and review processes to ensure timely, effective and accountable use of funds.

Development of the RSRTF annual strategy is informed by stakeholder consultations and review of relevant programme and country strategies, datasets, and project documents as well as a multi-layered analysis of violence, food insecurity, returns, and political and economic dynamics impacting the country.

To ensure the Fund remains flexible and able to adapt to changing circumstances and respond quickly to emerging priorities for quick impact, the SC reserves the flexibility to review at any stage, the geographic priorities and thematic focus areas established in the annual strategies.

Area Based Programmes (ABP) Window

In determining potential candidate areas for Area Based Programmes the Fund is guided by five geographic targeting criteria:

- *Levels of violence.* As captured by UNMISS Human Rights Division monitoring and considering available intelligence, analysis, and assessments of potential for future violence.
- *Potential fault lines between communities.* The nature of existing and potential future cleavages and tensions between local communities, including the risk of these tensions being manipulated by national elites or where localized grievances have the potential to trigger local, or even national, insecurity that could threaten the broader peace process and the ceasefire.

- *Access and availability of implementers in the area.* Reflects whether the current level of access is sufficient for RSRTF programming, and whether there are implementers in the area, including any opportunities to complement existing or future programmes.
- *Level of marginalization.* The level of political and economic marginalization by the central state apparatus (indicators of marginalization include access to markets and cost of basic food baskets) as well as the extent to which existing reconciliation, stabilization, and resilience initiatives are present in the area.
- *Feasibility and conflict sensitivity.* The feasibility of realizing an impact under existing conditions in the area without doing harm and taking into account the above criteria.

The Annual Strategy will typically illustrate three or four potential areas for RSRTF programming. Presenting analysis framed around the above criteria, the strategy will identify the most relevant and feasible selection for SC endorsement. The number of new areas selected within any one year will be dependent upon Fund liquidity.

Applications for programming within the selected area are solicited through a Call for Proposals (CFP) as outlined below.

RSRTF Thematic Grants Window (TGW)

The Fund's ABP modality is reinforced through application of a smaller thematic grants funding window. This allows for nimbler application of funding within a shorter implementation timeframe to react to windows of opportunity and deliver quick impact, as well as to strengthen existing ABPs through allocation of funds addressing thematic gaps and priorities.

The overarching intention of the RSRTF is to reduce violence and build stability, nurturing conducive conditions that stimulate recovery and development and allow for the consolidation of peace. While the Fund takes a local focus through its ABPs, the activities of the Fund also contribute to create an enabling environment more broadly through engagement on political and policy processes that support implementation of the national peace process, as the ultimate precondition for peace and stability.

The TGW, launched in 2020, specifically sought to capitalize on momentum resulting from the formation of the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity (R-TGoNU). The allocation financed initiatives that would strengthen and promote inclusive civic participation in the implementation of the peace agreement and support the development of a robust political system and a more accountable, transparent, and responsive government by building governance capacity and fostering cohesion among political actors.

Unless otherwise determined by the SC, the TGW allows for a maximum grant of \$500k for the implementation of one-time small-scale independent activities or a coherent series of actions, utilising the available funds within an agreed set of parameters over a maximum period of 12 months.

Call for Proposals (CFP)

Applications under both windows are solicited through a Call for Proposals (CFP) which provides detail on the scope of the funding opportunity and establishes any relevant funding preconditions, programme expectations, eligibility requirements, budget limitations if relevant and a submission timeline in addition to application procedures.

The Fund Secretariat screens and shortlists submissions according to the established CFP criteria. A detailed evaluation of shortlisted proposals is subsequently undertaken, where relevant, drawing on technical and geographic experts to review individual components of submissions. Applicable proposal revisions are undertaken in consultation with the applicants. The full proposals along with reports of the technical

reviews are subsequently submitted to the Steering Committee together with a recommendation for funding on the basis of the submission that best meets the evaluation criteria, and which constitutes the best value to the Fund.

All final decisions on funding allocations are made by the SC. The RSRTF reserves the right to fund any or none of the proposals received. Applicants will be notified by RSRTF in writing of the decision concerning their application. For each eliminated submission the Secretariat documents the rationale for elimination and prepares detailed feedback to applicants.

The Transfer of Funds

The FS will prepare a fund transfer request for each project and fund allocation approved by the SC, which will be signed by the Chair of the SC. The AA will process the approved fund allocations and transfer the corresponding amounts to the Participating UN Organizations within five business days following the receipt of the transfer request. As soon as the fund transfer has been processed, the AA will notify by email both the Representative of the Participating UN Organization receiving the funds and the FS.

8. Monitoring, Evaluation, Knowledge Management and Reporting

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

The Fund's M&E systems ensure the availability of quantitative and qualitative data to inform the SC in its decision-making on policy, fund allocation, planning, and programming. The use and application of actual and updated data provides an ongoing feedback loop to assess the probability and resource effectiveness and efficiency for achieving intended results. This gives the Fund the needed adaptability to responsibly plan and manage the Fund's investments and activities. In addition to the Fund-wide M&E systems, each ABP and thematic grant project has its own M&E system, including a results framework and data collection plan.

The Fund has also pioneered the 'Measuring Safety & Security' (MSS) method in South Sudan. Developed with researchers from South Sudan and the United Kingdom, the Fund uses MSS as a tool to measure people's perceptions of safety and security. MSS prioritises the understandings and perceptions of people and communities that interventions aim to benefit. It requires implementing partners to leverage their local contextual knowledge and to combine qualitative and quantitative approaches, including by conducting interviews and surveys. All RSRTF ABPs conduct MSS base- and endline studies to assess what impact their interventions might have had on the security situation and how perceptions of safety may have changed within the communities throughout the ABPs' lifespan.

Monitoring and Evaluation of the agency-specific projects and joint programmes funded under the South Sudan RSRTF will be undertaken in accordance with the provision contained in the agency-specific projects and joint programmes submitted by concerned Participating UN Organizations, which are consistent with the respective rules, regulations and procedures of the Participating UN Organizations. In the case of NGOs accessing funding through the MA, the rules, regulations, and procedures of UNDP will apply.

ABPs are independently evaluated once they reach completion. Thematic grant projects are evaluated on a case-by-case basis, depending on the scope of the project. The RSRTF has undergone an early-stage evaluation in 2021 and the SC will commission an independent review/evaluation on the overall performance of the Fund in the first quarter of 2024. The aim of the evaluation, to be spelled out in further detail in the TORs for the evaluation, will be to study the Fund's impact and various performance measurements, test the validity of the 'New Way of Working' approach adopted by the South Sudan RSRTF, and provide specific recommendations to the SC for possible adjustments in the functioning of the Fund.

Knowledge Management

The RSRTF adopts a systematic approach to capturing lessons learned and ‘good practices’, as detailed in its Knowledge Management Strategy. The Fund conducts various learning activities throughout the year across the knowledge management cycle from (i) knowledge creation and documentation, to (ii) knowledge exchange and dissemination, to (iii) knowledge application in practice. Given the Fund’s role as a ‘Triple Nexus’ pioneer it is critical to document ‘what works’, ensuring the Fund and its partners have an evidence base from which they can adapt their operations to overcome challenges and remain relevant in the evolving operating environment.

Reporting

For each project approved for funding, the MA and each Participating UN Organization will provide the FS and the AA with reports and financial annual statements prepared in accordance with their accounting and reporting procedures, as agreed upon in the legal agreements signed with the AA. The annual and final reports will be results-oriented, and evidence based. The reports will give a summary of results and achievements compared to the expected result in the project document.

Reports will be used by the SC to review the overall progress against expected results and assess the achievement of performance targets.

9. Operations Manual

The Fund Operations Manual describes the governance structure, operating principles, guidelines, and procedures for day-to-day operations of the RSRTF. The guidelines cover all steps and phases to be followed during the allocation processes by all RSRTF participants and stakeholders.

Within three months of the endorsement of the updated 2021 RSRTF Fund TOR, the Operations Manual will be similarly revised and submitted to be endorsed by the RSRTF Steering Committee.

10. Risk management

The RSRTF is a risk-sharing and high risk-tolerant mechanism designed to operate in the most fragile environments in South Sudan. The RSRTF Risk Management Strategy serves to establish a common understanding of risks among all stakeholders, ensuring efficient and strategic risk mitigation and adaptation measures. It is intended to support the Steering Committee to limit exposure to an acceptable level of risk in relation to the expected gain by taking action to reduce the probability of the risk occurring and its likely impact. The Risk Management Strategy will accompany the RSRTF annual strategies / priority options papers and will be updated accordingly on an annual basis or more frequently, when needs arise.

Although the Fund has little to no control over the external risks, it nevertheless undertakes all possible direct and indirect mitigation and contingency measures to reduce impact on the Fund’s existence and performance. This includes routine monitoring of the operational environment and leveraging political engagement of the Fund’s stakeholders with national, sub-national and regional actors when expedient. Risk mitigation is a standard requirement in the design of all RSRTF programmes. Furthermore, the comprehensive and complementary nature of the RSRTF approach enables more flexible and adaptive programming responsive to the inevitable shifting dynamics of the context. Programme design therefore supports judicious risk mitigation, allowing for changeable sequencing and gradations of the reconciliation stabilization and resilience elements over time as changing circumstances dictate. The Fund is able to maintain a greater element of control over programmatic and the institutional risks by integrating and embedding risk management into organizational processes such as in the allocation procedures, knowledge management, risk management mainstreaming in the projects as well as in robust monitoring and reporting procedures, among others.

11. Audit

In line with the audit provisions in the standard MOU and SAA, as well as 2014 Framework for Joint Internal Audit of UN Joint Activities, the AA, the MA and Participating UN Organizations will be audited according to their own rules and financial regulations and in line with the framework for joint audit.

12. Public Disclosure

The FS and the AA ensure that the South Sudan RSRTF's operations are well disseminated. Information posted on the website shall include contributions received, SC decisions, funds transferred, annual certified expenditures, summaries of proposed and approved programmes and Fund progress reports.

In line with the standard MOU and SAA, all stakeholders should take appropriate measures to promote the South Sudan RSRTF. Information shared with the press regarding fund beneficiaries, official notices, reports and publications shall acknowledge the Fund's role. More specifically, the AA shall ensure that the role of the contributors and relevant stakeholders is fully acknowledged in all external communications related to the South Sudan RSRTF.

13. Modification and Expiration of the Fund

The South Sudan RSRTF was established in 2018 for a duration of 4 years until 2022. In 2021 it was extended to June 2026. It may be further extended based on approval by the SC and the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office, after consultation with relevant actors.

The MA and all Participating UN Organizations will provide certified final financial reports and financially closed projects no later than five (5) months (31 May) after the end of the calendar year in which the financial closure of the activities in the approved programmatic document occurs, or according to the period specified in the financial regulations and rules of the MA and the Participating UN Organization, whichever is earlier. The dissemination of the certified final financial statement ("Source and Use of Funds") is to be provided no later than 31 May 2027; that is, five months after the end of the calendar year in which the financial closing of the South Sudan RSRTF occurs.

Notwithstanding the completion of the initiatives financed from the Fund, any unutilized balances will continue to be held in the South Sudan RSRTF Account until all commitments and liabilities incurred in implementation of the programmes have been satisfied and programme activities have been brought to an orderly conclusion.

As per the standard MOU and SAA, any balance remaining in the Fund Account upon completion of the Fund will be used for a purpose mutually agreed upon or returned to the Donor in proportion to its contribution to the Fund as decided upon by the Donor and the SC.