



The Elsie Initiative Fund for Uniformed Women in Peace Operations

Call for Letters of Interest

This Call for Letters of Interest should be read in conjunction with the Fund’s Terms of Reference. Where the two documents differ, particularly in the case of the programming cycle, this Call for Letters of Interest will take precedence.

Introduction

In March 2019, UN Women, with the Government of Canada launched the Elsie Initiative Fund for Uniformed Women in Peace Operations. The Fund seeks to accelerate progress towards achieving UN targets to increase the proportion of women serving in uniformed military and police roles.

This is the first funding cycle of the Elsie Initiative Fund. The primary recipients of the Fund are troop- and police-contributing countries (T/PCCs). UN organizations that wish to increase the meaningful participation of uniformed women in peace operations may also access the Fund.

We encourage interested T/PCCs and UN organizations to apply through a letter of interest.

The Elsie Fund has the following objectives:

1. It supports (current and prospective) T/PCCs in undertaking a barrier assessment to identify the nature and extent of obstacles impeding their deployment of trained and qualified women peacekeepers.
2. It allows T/PCCs to be reimbursed for some additional financial costs related to the deployment of women that are not covered by existing United Nations’ reimbursement policies.
3. It incentivizes T/PCCs to increase their meaningful deployment of trained and qualified women peacekeepers by offering a “gender-strong unit premium.” The focus on the deployment of gender-strong units, rather than individual women, is to ensure that women are deployed in a working and living environment that allows for their meaningful participation in peace operations.
4. It supports, in a limited manner, targeted pilot projects within United Nations’ missions aimed at enhancing deployment conditions for women peacekeepers.
5. It commits to sustained assessment exercises to establish the impact of the above measures, and to share, as possible, relevant insights.

This Fund recognizes that although the United Nations has an evolving financing system that is critical to the organization’s ability to conduct peace operations, none of the existing measures focus specifically



on increasing the deployment of uniformed women peacekeepers. Therefore, the Fund innovates and complements existing United Nations peacekeeping financing by specifically supporting the meaningful participation of uniformed women as peacekeepers.

Given its time and resource limitations, the Fund cannot fully remedy all barriers to uniformed women's participation in United Nations peace operations. However, it aims to accelerate the pace of change towards increased meaningful participation of uniformed women in United Nations peace operations, and it serves as a pilot initiative whose implications Member States may wish to consider over the longer term as they work towards their stated goal of enhancing the representation of women in United Nations peace operations.

Funding Modalities

The Fund will consider three types of proposals:

1. **Barrier Assessment.** The fund will finance the conduct of a **barrier assessment** in order to identify the main factors impeding the deployment of uniformed women peacekeepers to United Nations' missions, noting the type and effect of barriers can vary amongst T/PCCs. The barrier assessment creates a detailed empirical foundation for the identification of further projects aimed at increasing the meaningful participation of uniformed women in peace operations. It also generates a baseline assessment against which progress can be measured.

A barrier assessment methodology has been developed by the Geneva Center for Security Sector Governance and will be available for use in late September 2019. A description of this methodology is provided at Attachment 2 to this document. Applicants that wish to apply for funding for a barrier assessment in this programming cycle may:

- Apply with the intention of using the DCAF methodology (recommended), or
 - Apply with the intention of identifying and implementing a methodology similar in its scope to the DCAF methodology, and in line with the Barrier Assessment Criteria provided in the Fund's Terms of Reference (and reproduced in Attachment 1). In this case the fund management will need to be satisfied that the proposed methodology meets the requirements outlined above.
2. **Project Funding.** The Fund will finance, in whole or in part, **projects aimed at directly increasing the meaningful participation of uniformed women peacekeepers in United Nations missions, or that take a longer-term view to increasing the number of women in the national pipeline for deployment.** For this first programming cycle, a barrier assessment will not be required to apply for and receive projectized support; however, proposals should identify, and include a strong rationale and analysis of the barriers the project seeks to resolve, in keeping with the barrier assessment guidance provided in Attachments 1 and 2. The Fund does not prescribe the exact nature of the projects, in order to encourage applicant T/PCCs to propose innovative solutions to the specific barriers they have identified.



3. **Gender-Strong Unit Premium.** The Fund can provide a premium to a T/PCC for the deployment of a gender-strong unit. Only T/PCCs are eligible to apply for this financing modality. The premium will consist of a direct payment to the T/PCC at the completion of the unit's deployment, and after verifying that the unit met the guidelines for a gender-strong unit (identified below and in the Fund's Terms of Reference). Priority will be given to T/PCCs that envisage reinvesting the premium in ways that further promote the goals of the Fund. Further elaboration of the Gender-strong Unit Premium modality is provided below.

The Fund can also provide funding for a combination of these modalities, combined into a single proposal (expressed in a single letter of interest). For instance, the Fund could agree to the payment of a gender-strong unit premium for a formed police unit, and as part of the same proposal, agree to funding a project to develop a training programme for the unit prior to its deployment (Project Funding).

Applicants can engage subcontractors, including Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), to support project implementation. Applicants are encouraged to engage with their UN Country Team, the UN Department of Peace Operations, and bilateral partners to develop proposals that leverage the funds, skills, knowledge, and efforts of multiple contributors.

The Fund will not directly compensate individuals, either as part of a project or as part of a gender strong unit premium.

Gender-Strong Unit Premium

A gender-strong unit is defined as a unit that includes substantial representation of women overall and in positions of authority, has provided gender-equity training to all unit members, and has adequate materiel to ensure parity of deployment conditions (including equipment, facilities, accommodation etc.) for women and men peacekeepers.

The Fund will consider proposals by T/PCCs for units qualifying for this premium. In keeping with the Elsie Initiative's intention to promote innovation, and to encourage transformational change to increase women's meaningful participation in peace operations, the criteria for a proposal for incentive payments are not prescriptive; rather it is for applicants to identify the nature, scope and value of their proposal, considering the following guidelines:

- The proposal must demonstrably and substantially increase the percentage of uniformed women in a formed unit that will deploy on a peacekeeping operation (military unit or formed police unit). At a minimum, the percentages must exceed the targets set out in the Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy 2018-2028 by 5 percentage points. For units deploying on peacekeeping operations in 2020, the figures are:
 - **Police.** 15% women for formed police units (based on the Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy target of 10%).



- **Military.** 11.5% for military troop contingents (based on the Uniformed Gender parity Strategy target of 6.5%).
- The proposal must demonstrate that the women deployed are fully integrated into the unit and contribute to its mandate and all the tasks the unit will be asked to perform (including patrolling, security tasks, engagement, and response to incidents). This includes that all women are fully trained for the role(s) they perform in the unit and have participated in all pre-deployment training and preparation.
- All members of the unit must meet, and ideally exceed, existing DPO requirements for pre-deployment training on gender in the military/police, sexual and gender-based violence, conflict related sexual violence, sexual harassment and sexual exploitation and abuse.
- The proposal must demonstrate that there are adequate procedures to deal with instances of sexual harassment and assault, and sexual exploitation and abuse.
- The proposal must demonstrate that appropriate contingent-owned equipment for both men and women peacekeepers will be provided.
- The proposal should be for the duration of the deployment of that unit (usually 12 months) and can be extended two additional deployment periods (usually 12 months each).

Gender-strong units should also strive to meet the following guidelines:

- The proposal demonstrates commitment to employing women across all ranks and across all sub-units. Optimally, women would be proportionally represented at all ranks in the unit.
- The proposal demonstrates how the increased representation of women in peacekeeping will be sustained over time, including after the end of the project.

In the first year of deployment, the premium **should be approximately a sum equivalent to 20 percent of the United Nations' troop/police cost reimbursement rate for 20 per cent of the unit's personnel.** It is payable at the completion of the specified deployment period. The Fund will not normally pay the premium for the deployment of a fraction of a deployed unit (i.e. a company or platoon in an infantry battalion). A proposal could cover up to three years. **The premium in the second year would represent a 25% increase on the original amount. The premium in the third year would represent a 50% increase on the original amount.**

Proposals for the payment of the premium must be accepted by the Fund prior to the unit's deployment. The premium will be paid at the end of the unit's deployment, only after demonstrating that the unit met the guidelines above.

Eligibility Criteria



Proposals must contribute to at least one of the four outcomes in the Fund's Results Framework:

1. Expanded country-specific knowledge of barriers to deployment of uniformed women peacekeepers to UN missions.
2. Increased meaningful deployment of uniformed women peacekeepers to UN missions.
3. Increased pool of uniformed women eligible to deploy as UN peacekeepers.
4. Improved working conditions for uniformed women peacekeepers in UN missions.

Each outcome has associated indicators (as identified in the Results Framework in the Terms of Reference, Page 13). Proposals must contribute to at least one outcome and one of its indicators. Priority will be given to projects that include Outcome 2 among their targeted outcomes. Proposals are expected to set clear targets for the chosen indicator(s) which must be specified in the letter of interest.

Additional Eligibility Criteria for National Governments:

National Governments must also meet the following eligibility criteria:

- a. Is a United Nations T/PCC, or has serious intentions to become one that is demonstrated in the letter of interest;
- b. Demonstrates high-level commitment through the letter of interest being signed by a Minister or Chief of Defense, Minister of Interior or Police Commissioner, or equivalent;
- c. Provide a detailed rationale for each project proposed in the letter of interest. This can, but for this first programming cycle does not need to, include the results of a barrier assessment.
- d. Commits to allow the Fund Secretariat to use data from that assessment to compile an anonymized overview report; and
- e. Meets the requirements of the Human Rights Due Diligence Policy and the Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT) assessment, and remains eligible for United Nations support after the consideration of a risk assessment and the application of any necessary mitigating measures. These mandatory processes will be conducted by the Fund's Secretariat after receipt of a detailed proposal, and during Step 5 of the Programming Cycle. They are not necessary for the submission of a letter of interest. However, T/PCCs should consider the requirements of those processes and be prepared to actively support and enable them.

National governments are required to report in accordance with the UNSDG categories. Guidance on this will be provided for projects that are approved for the development of a detailed proposal.

Participating UN Organizations (PUNO)



The Fund may support projects submitted by PUNO designed to implement and test innovations aimed at enhancing the meaningful participation of uniformed women deployed in United Nations peace operations. It is understood that these projects would not ordinarily be financed from available budgets, and subsequent scaling of these projects would be undertaken within other resources.

As a guideline, the allocation of funds to UN-led projects should not normally exceed 20% of total available funds.

Other Stakeholders

Other stakeholders, such as CSOs, cannot apply to the fund independently. CSOs can participate in funded activities, however, their activities must be undertaken in partnership with, and under a proposal from, a T/PCC or PUNO.

Proposal Size

For Project Funding proposals, the maximum amount for each proposal for this programming cycle is 1,000,000 USD. It is anticipated that this amount will rise in future programming cycles, when barrier assessments will be a requirement for submitting Project Funding proposals.

The minimum amount for each proposal for this programming cycle is 100,000 USD.

Each proposal (as expressed in one letter of interest) can include one or more projects. The total cost of all projects (including the conduct of a barrier assessment) must be between 100,000 USD and 1,000,000 USD. Proposals for the gender-strong unit premium are not included in these amounts: a T/PCC may request up to 1,000,000 USD for Project Funding, **and** the additional payment of the gender-strong unit premium, in one letter of interest.

Submission of Letters of Interest

Applicants should submit a *Letter of Interest* (which would not normally exceed 4 pages) to the Fund Secretariat on or before close of business in New York Tuesday 1st of October 2019. The Fund will accept no more than one military letter of interest and one police letter of interest per country. **Each letter of interest can seek funding for one or more projects.**

Applicants are encouraged to contact the Fund's Secretariat if additional guidance is required.

The minimum requirements for the *Letter of Interest* for this first programming cycle are as follows:

- Description of current activities and efforts with regards to increasing meaningful participation of women in peacekeeping;
- Deployment planning for the next 2 years for military and/or police, if known;
- The outcome(s) and indicator(s) each project will contribute to, with clear targets, all aligned to the strategic objectives of the Fund;



- Outcomes of a barrier assessment, if available, or a rationale for each project proposed;
- Indicative budgets and proposed high-level activities;
- Identification of proposed implementing partners; and
- Signed by a Minister or Chief of Defense, Minister of Interior or Police Commissioner, or equivalent.

If required, additional details may be provided as attachments to the Letter of Interest.

In accordance with the Fund's Terms of Reference, successful letters of interest will be made publicly accessible by the Fund's secretariat.

Review of Letters of Interest

Letters of Interest will be reviewed against criteria which include:

- **The Eligibility Criteria Identified Above.** This includes addressing at least one outcome and one indicator from the Results Framework and meeting the listed National Government or PUNO eligibility criteria.
- **The clear identification of barriers** that the proposal will address (not necessary for the gender-strong unit premium), expressed through the results of a barrier assessment, or a statement outlining the analytical process used and demonstrating the rationale for each project in the letter of interest.
- **Targets** (number and percentage) for the increase of women peacekeepers and the roles they would deploy into (if applicable) within the project timeframe.
- **Current percentage of women** in national armed forces and/or police service and at what levels.
- **The Timeframe** for the deployment of the gender strong unit(s), as applicable.
- **Compliance with Requirements** – Applicants must submit all components required for a complete letter of interest, and if accepted by the Fund for further development, a detailed proposal.
- **Impact and Strategic Relevance** – Preference will be given to projects that contribute to multiple outcomes; include baseline data and realistic targets; and are likely to result in the deployment of a significant number of uniformed women, including in strategic and leadership roles. Preference will be given to projects that are proposed by T/PCCs, in particular those that are ODA eligible.
- **Engagement** – Applicants must demonstrate how women, particularly uniformed women, will play integral roles throughout the project cycle.



- **Sustainability and Extension** – Preference will be given to projects that are likely to contribute to the sustained increased of the deployment of uniformed women by a T/PCC, and this includes projects that: demonstrate clear national ownership; and are likely to yield insights and lessons that can be shared with other T/PCCs. For proposals for gender-strong unit premiums, preference will be given to submissions that specify a T/PCC's intentions to reinvest the gender-strong unit premium in activities that further contribute to the goals of the fund.
- **Innovation** – The Fund seeks to support innovative solutions and new approaches to overcoming barriers.
- **Cost effectiveness** – Applications must include reasonable costs and demonstrate an economical use of resources; financial and in-kind contributions from other parties are encouraged and should be noted in the letter of interest.
- **Management and Monitoring** – The proposed approach to project management, including reporting, as well as the extent to which applicants have included a thoughtful risk analysis and strategies for mitigation will be assessed. Attention should be paid to the Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation section of the Terms of Reference.

2019 Programming Cycle

The proposed Programming Cycle for 2019 is as follows:

Step 1: Launch of call for Letters of Interest - 28 June.

Step 2: Submission of Letters of Interest – 1 October.

Step 3: Review of Letters of Interest by fund management – 1 October – 1 November.
Communication of the outcome of this Review is expected to be on 1 November.

Step 4: Development and Submission of Proposals – submitted to the Fund Secretariat – 13 January.

Step 5: Technical Review of Projects by fund management - 13 January – 28 February.

Step 6: Approval and Disbursement – Commence 28 February.

Note that the call for, development and submission of letters of interest, represents Steps 1 and 2 of this Programming Cycle. Details of each step are outlined in the Fund's Terms of Reference.

It is intended to adhere to the timings above. However, given that this is the Fund's first Programming Cycle, and many of the processes are new – both for the Fund and for applicants, we accept that there is a requirement for flexibility in the timelines and processes. Applicants will be informed by the



Secretariat when timings or expectations change and are asked to be proactive in communicating with the Secretariat if they will have difficulty meeting the timelines identified above.

Selection and Notification

After review, the Fund's Secretariat will notify applicants of the outcome for their letter of interest. Letters of interest may be:

- Accepted (pending development of a detailed proposal and successful due diligence) and funded with available funds. These projects will move immediately to Step 4 of the programming cycle.
- Accepted (pending development of a detailed proposal and successful due diligence) but not able to be funded with existing funds. These projects will be held pending the availability of funding.
- Returned requiring further development, with submission of a revised letter of interest in a subsequent programming cycle.
- Returned as being outside of the scope of the fund or not consistent with its objectives.

Governance

Adequate due diligence of all proposals is fundamental to managing the programmatic risks of the Fund. T/PCC's will assume full financial and programmatic accountability for the funds provided to them. In Step 5 of the Programming Cycle, the Secretariat will be responsible for conducting due diligence of proposals. This will include review of the project proposal (including the included risk management strategy), conduct of the HACT micro assessment, the HRDDP, and the application of the fund level risk management strategy to that proposal.

Project Specific Risk Management. In Step 4 of the Programming Cycle, applicants are required to develop a specific risk management strategy for each proposal. Risks will be considered and provisions for the identification, monitoring, tolerances, and risk responses will be elaborated. While risks will be specific to each project in the proposal, as a criterion for consideration, each proposal is to explicitly address the safety and security of all women military or police personnel who are to be assisted through the proposal. After the application of mitigating measures or strategies, those personnel should not be subject to any more residual risk, to their physical safety, psychosocial well-being, and reputation, than their equivalent counterparts who are men.

Contact Details

All communications regarding the Fund, including the submission of letters of interest should be by email to elsie.mptf@unwomen.org.



Proposals must be submitted in English or French, using Word, Excel, PowerPoint, or .pdf format.

Attachment 1: Barrier Assessment Criteria

The requirement of a barrier assessment acknowledges that the type and relative impact of barriers can vary amongst T/PCCs. It creates an empirically grounded foundation for the elaboration of T/PCC-specific interventions aimed at increasing the meaningful participation of uniformed women in United Nations peace operations. It also generates a baseline assessment of existing barriers to the deployment of women peacekeepers against which progress can be evaluated.

This assessment should seek to identify and validate the reasons for which uniformed women are not participating in United Nations peace operations in greater numbers. Further, this assessment should facilitate the identification of potential interventions that could be supported by the Fund with consideration to the probable effectiveness of those interventions, and an understanding of associated risks and risk mitigation.

An assessment of barriers to women's participation in peace operations should include observational indicators that focus, *inter alia*, on relevant legislation, the distribution of women and men in national military and police institutions, these institutions' policies and practices regarding peacekeeping, as well as perceptual indicators that analyze the attitudes and experiences of both women and men to better understand the barriers. Consultations will involve women and men both with and without direct experience of serving in peace operations.

An appropriate barrier assessment should:

- Include a risk mitigation strategy to ensure the safety and appropriate privacy of all participants in the assessment, as well as the sustainability of interventions supported by this Fund. Information should be collected, stored and analyzed via practices that allow it to be done accurately and anonymously.
- Include basic baseline data collection (targeted questionnaires, surveys and target group interviews) with a statistically significant number of men and women with direct and indirect experience of peacekeeping as well as in leadership and decision-making positions related to personnel management and peacekeeping, training and deployment.
- Address the following areas as they relate to uniformed women's meaningful participation in United Nations peace operations:
 - Institutional initiatives to increase the participation of uniformed women in peace operations (to date), and their effect, if any.
 - The impact of the social context in the T/PCC on institutional policies and decision-making with regard to the deployment of uniformed women.



- The institutional and governmental motivation to increase women’s meaningful participation in United Nations peace operations.
- The institutional capacity and political will for change.

Outputs

The barrier assessment will serve as the principal tool in identifying a project-specific pathway to measurable change that the Fund can support.

A barrier assessment report, including: a country profile, methodological section, identification of universal vs. contextual factors, key findings and statistics, barrier identification and analysis and impact of barriers to uniformed women’s deployment, and recommendations for action.

A set of policy and programmatic recommendations based on a thorough review and analysis of the collected data as concerns the deployment of uniformed women to United Nations peace operations.

Conduct

The assessment may be conducted by the T/PCC using internal resources, but the Fund encourages consideration of using independent analysts (NGO, think tank, academics), or partnering with another Member State.



Attachment 2: The Elsie Initiative: Barriers to Deployment

Provided as a Separate Document (Attachment 2 Description of Barrier Assessment.pdf)