

# UNSDG Human Rights Mainstreaming Multi-Donor Trust Fund

## MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO EVALUATION 2011-2019

*Report received by the Steering Committee on 1 February 2021*

### INTRODUCTION

1. The Steering Committee welcomes the independent evaluation of the UNSDG Human Rights Mainstreaming Multi-Donor Trust Fund (the Fund) covering the period from 2011 to 2019. The Steering Committee commissioned the evaluation as a learning opportunity and to inform future planning for the Fund. The evaluation is timely given the significant changes in recent years under the repositioning of the UN development system and the new opportunities presented for further mainstreaming human rights into development.
2. The Steering Committee recognizes with gratitude the time and contributions of stakeholders who contributed to the evaluation, including UN entities, donors, UN Resident Coordinators and Human Rights Advisers. The Steering Committee also thanks the UN teams and national partners including governments and civil society organisations who participated in the country case studies.
3. The Steering Committee considers the findings and conclusions of the evaluation encouraging and useful. The Steering Committee welcomes in particular findings that:
  - the Fund has demonstrated its relevance by addressing important needs and priorities within the UNDS at the global, regional, and country levels and among national stakeholders by serving as an essential funding tool to mainstream human rights across the UNDS (*relevance*);
  - the inter-agency nature of the Fund's support for Human Rights Advisers and the fact that Human Rights Advisers work directly in the Resident Coordinator's Office and are supported with the full institutional capacity of OHCHR has facilitated human rights support across UN organizations that make up UNCTs (*relevance*);
  - the Fund has made important contributions to institutionalizing and operationalizing human rights mainstreaming across the UNDS (*effectiveness*);
  - the Fund has provided extensive support to Member States through support from HRAs to strengthen their reporting on human rights and engagement with human rights mechanisms (*effectiveness*);
  - the Fund has been effective at supporting the mainstreaming of human rights at the country level particularly through the provision of HRAs, which is the most widely recognized and appreciated aspect of the Fund's work. Human Rights Advisers have played and continue to play a larger role than simply advising on human rights issues that includes bringing national stakeholders together and advancing human rights priorities at the country level (*effectiveness*);

- the Fund has found efficient ways to support human rights mainstreaming (*efficiency*);
  - mainstreaming human rights into five-year country plans (UNDAFs and UNSDCF) has encouraged the sustainability of the integration of human rights into country planning and programming (*sustainability*); and
  - the Fund provides significant value-added to inter-agency coordination and cooperation around human rights by consisting of multiple UN agencies and by facilitating a space for UN agencies to work together to mainstream human rights (*impact*).
4. The Steering Committee generally agrees with the five main recommendations, which resonate with the overall medium-term direction of the Fund, as reflected in the decisions of the Steering Committee taken prior to the completion of the evaluation. In line with United Nations Evaluation Group Norms and Standards (2016), the Management Response covers practical and timebound key actions that build on ongoing work, including designation of responsible entities for their implementation. Noting the multi-stakeholder nature of the pooled financing mechanism, the successful implementation of these recommendations will require the support of all Steering Committee members, including participating UN organizations (PUNOs), the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office (ex-officio member) and the Development Coordination Office (observer). The Secretariat of the Fund will provide additional capacities to support the Steering Committee in implementing key actions under the Management Response. Budget implications for the actions under the Management Response will be elaborated during the planning processes.
5. Regular updates on the status of implementation of the management response will be made available publicly on the MPTFO Gateway site for the Fund (<http://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/fund/HRM00>).

**Recommendation #1: Define the Fund’s strategic vision, including through the creation of a Theory of Change and multi-year results framework, and raise awareness among the UNSDG about the need for a UNDS-wide senior leadership space to guide human rights mainstreaming work, including that of the Fund.**

*Recommended timeline: January – June 2021*

*Directed to: Fund’s Steering Committee*

Management Response: **Accept**

Management position on recommendation:

Part of this recommendation affirms the plans and decisions of the Steering Committee prior to the commencement of the evaluation intended to strengthen the foundation of the Fund in the new context of the repositioned UNDS. In 2019, the Steering Committee decided to have an independent evaluation of the Fund and to develop its multi-year results framework through a consultative process that engages key stakeholders and ensures continued relevant institutional linkages with the UNSDG.

The Steering Committee notes that the current strategic vision and change logic of the Fund are set out in the Terms of Reference of the Fund. The Steering Committee will review and revise as necessary the Fund’s strategic vision, taking into account the current operating context including the UN development system repositioning. Based on this, the Steering Committee will also develop a Theory of Change and multi-year results framework.

As the UNSDG architecture is still undergoing review and re-structure at the time of the development of the Management Response, the Steering Committee will communicate to UNSDG leadership the strategic value of a senior inter-agency policy body to ensure policy coherence on human rights mainstreaming across the system and provide strategic guidance for this work, including that of the Fund. Based on information available at the time of implementing the actions under this Recommendation, the Steering Committee will review its governance structure and processes to ensure that the Fund strengthens policy coherence at global level and delivers strategic support to RCs and UNCTs to mainstream human rights in line with the strategic vision of the Fund as further elaborated.

Key Actions	Responsibility	Time Frame for completion	Status (Initiated, Ongoing, Completed)
1. Recommendation to UNSDG regarding the need for a senior, UNDS-wide policy and strategic decision-making group on human rights mainstreaming in the UN development system	Steering Committee [Chair to lead]	April 2021	

2. Conduct a strategic visioning exercise with senior level UN staff to define the future mandate and scope of the Fund.	Steering Committee [OHCHR to lead; Secretariat to support]	April 2021	
3. Theory of Change (ToC) developed through a consultative process engaging selected stakeholders at global, regional and country levels including RCs.	Steering Committee [Secretariat to lead]	May 2021	
4. Multi-year results framework (MYRF) developed (including funding targets and scenarios, and indicators based on vision/mandate)	Steering Committee [Secretariat to lead with consultant to support]	May 2021 (preliminary); July 2021 (final)	
5. Review governance structure and processes with a view to ensuring the Steering Committee can provide the necessary strategic guidance to the Fund (Steering Committee membership at Director level or above; Steering Committee and Secretariat roles clearly defined; appropriate linkage with UNSDG).	Steering Committee [Secretariat to lead]	November 2021	
6. The Steering Committee will hold annual strategic dialogues with partners.	Steering Committee	First dialogue by October 2021	
7. Update Fund Terms of Reference as necessary and create an Operations Manual to reflect other agreements including detailed responsibilities of the Steering Committee, Participating UN Organizations (PUNOs) and Secretariat.	Steering Committee [Secretariat and MPTFO to lead]	December 2021	

**Recommendation #2: Mobilize additional resources by developing a resource mobilization strategy and an aligned communications plan that promote the Fund's visibility among UN stakeholders and donors and that articulates the Fund's comparative advantage, value added, and its future vision for mainstreaming human rights across the UNDS.**

*Recommended timeline: January – September 2021*

*Directed to: Fund's Steering Committee*

Management Response: **Accept**

Management position on recommendation:

The Steering Committee accepts this recommendation. This recommendation will further strengthen prior efforts of the Steering Committee to expand the donor base for the Fund and increase the amount and predictability of funding, which is critical to strategic planning and management of resources. With the 2019 decision to extend the Fund to the end of 2024, the Steering Committee has a solid foundation for implementing this recommendation. Actions planned under Recommendation 1 will be important building blocks for the implementation of this recommendation. In developing a resource mobilization strategy and communications plan, the Steering Committee will consider practices and experiences from other similar pooled funds.

The Steering Committee notes that success in mobilizing additional resources for scaled up work in this area will be influenced by the availability of funding amongst current and potential donors, and this is likely to be impacted negatively in the coming years by broader socioeconomic trends, including the impact of COVID-19.

Key Actions	Responsibility	Time Frame for completion	Status (Initiated, Ongoing, Completed)
1. Develop a resource mobilization strategy with substantive inputs from Steering Committee members' resource mobilization sections/experts.	Steering Committee and PUNOs, DCO [Secretariat to lead]	September 2021	
2. Develop a funding proposal based on the multi-year results framework with a resource mobilization plan	Steering Committee [Secretariat to lead]	June 2021	
3. Develop a Communications plan with substantive inputs from Steering Committee members' external relations'/communications sections/experts.	Steering Committee and PUNOs, DCO [Secretariat to lead]	November 2021	

**Recommendation #3: *Continue scaling-up support for Human Rights Advisors while simultaneously expanding the proportion of the Fund's portfolio that falls outside of the HRA Programme.***

*Recommended timeline: January 2021 – no end date*  
*Directed to: Fund's Steering Committee and Participating UN organisations*

Management Response: **partially accept**

Management position on recommendation:

The Steering Committee welcomes the evaluation’s findings on the continued relevance of the Fund and potential for increased impact through expanded areas of work. The planned actions under Recommendation 1 (i.e. visioning exercise, development of the theory of change and multi-year results framework) will define the broader areas of future investment and proportions. Expansion of the Fund’s portfolio and allocations will be determined by donor engagement and interest in the Fund and the broader funding environment.

HRA scaling up is ongoing and all new HRA deployments include annual budget envelope of \$15,000 for activities and funding for operational costs per deployment since 2020. The funding estimates for operational costs are currently being reviewed and will be updated as required. In addition to availability of funds required, expansion of other programmes will be determined by the capacity of the Participating UN Organisations to implement projects.

Key Actions	Responsibility	Time Frame for completion	Status (Initiated, Ongoing, Completed)
<p>1. The following plans will be developed as specific inputs for the development of the multi-year results framework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) costed plan for HRA scale up (including HRA budget envelope, operational costs and other HRA programme elements)</li> <li>b) Strategy with options for providing HR advisory support at the regional level in light of UNSDG regional structures (synchronizing with the process for formation of the Regional Collaborative Platforms);</li> <li>c) a strategy and costed plan for human rights mainstreaming knowledge management across the UN development system that leverages existing KM platforms and capacities,</li> <li>d) a strategy and costed plan for scaled-up investment in RC human rights leadership initiatives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) OHCHR to lead</li> <li>(b) OHCHR and DCO to lead consultative process</li> <li>(c) DCO to co-lead with the Secretariat, with additional support through secondment/consultant</li> <li>(d) OHCHR and DCO to lead</li> </ul>	<p>May 2021</p>	
<p>2. Continued investment in human rights mainstreaming throughout UN development system frameworks and policies (including through inter-agency tools and guidance for RCs/UNCTs) to be elaborated as appropriate in the theory of change and multi-year results framework and implemented subject to available resources.</p>	<p>Steering Committee on MYRF; PUNOs on implementation</p>	<p>Continuing</p>	

3. Investment in support to strengthen human rights mainstreaming throughout UNCT programming to be elaborated as appropriate under the theory of change and multi-year results framework and implemented subject to available resources.	Steering Committee on MYRF; PUNOs on implementation	Continuing	
4. Identify entry points for strategic partnerships and collaborative arrangements with other UN pooled funds, including through the theory of change process.	Steering Committee	November 2021	
5. Multi-year results framework to include at least one strategic level inter-agency workshop on human rights mainstreaming in development (continuing previous practice) to promote system-wide coherence.	Steering Committee; PUNOs on implementation	August 2021 (final MYRF); implementation continuing	

**Recommendation #4: Institutionalize and systematize the Fund’s management processes to align them with good management practices and to better reflect results-based management principles.**

*Recommended timeline: January – December 2021*

*Directed to: Fund’s Steering Committee*

**Management Response: Accept**

Management position on recommendation:

Management practices and expectations for pooled funding mechanisms have evolved in the last decade. With recently expanded capacity in the Secretariat, and the actions planned under Recommendations 1 and 2, the Steering Committee will be well-placed to implement this recommendation.

In reviewing and revising the current governance structure and management processes to ensure that they align with good UN management practices and RBM principles, the Steering Committee will also review the capacities of the Secretariat, taking into account the level of ambition of the Fund, recommendations accepted through the Management Response and resources available.

<b>Key Actions</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Time Frame for completion</b>	<b>Status (Initiated, Ongoing, Completed)</b>
1. Secretariat roles to be reflected in updated Fund Terms of Reference; Secretariat capacities to be agreed and reflected in updated Secretariat Project Document for 2022-2024	Steering Committee; DCO and MPTFO (as hosts of Secretariat)	December 2021	

2. Fund Operations Manual to be developed, including: semi-annual results reporting; fund templates and processes (updated as needed to align with best practices); donor engagement; roles and responsibilities of PUNOs and other Steering Committee members with respect to reporting, knowledge management, resource mobilization and strategic planning; detailed Secretariat responsibilities.	Steering Committee [Secretariat and MPTFO to lead]	May 2022	
3. M&E framework developed based on multi-year results framework	Steering Committee [Secretariat to lead]	October 2021	

**Recommendation #5: Update the 2012 HRA deployment criteria and clearly articulate the detailed criteria (including prioritization) in a formalized document. At the same time, formalize DCO's contributions towards supporting the HRA Programme in line with its new role of supporting the RC system.**

*Recommended timeline: January – 31 July 2021*

*Directed to: Fund's Steering Committee, DCO and OHCHR*

**Management Response: Accept**

Management position on recommendation:

The Steering Committee accepts this recommendation. This response to this recommendation will build on the developments over the last 8 years of successful implementation of the UNSDG Strategy for the Deployment of Human Rights Advisers in UNRCOs and to UN Country Teams under OHCHR's substantive and operational leadership. In addition to up-dating elements for the prioritization of deployments, operational responsibilities of the Steering Committee should be identified so as to ensure that responsibility for the sustainability of the HRA programme is a shared responsibility, and particularly in cases of financial challenges that this is not left only to the implementing UN entity, given the important human resources implications.

Key Actions	Responsibility	Time Frame for completion	Status (Initiated, Ongoing, Completed)
1. HRA Deployment criteria to be further up-dated including development of possible elements for prioritization taking into account recent UN Development System repositioning. OHCHR will provide a first draft based on the existing criteria to facilitate its updating. The UNSDG Strategy on the Deployment of HRAs	OHCHR in consultation with Steering Committee	May 2021	



to RCs and UNCTs will also be updated to take into account the UN development system repositioning.			
2. Adoption of the up-dated criteria and decision on what to be included in a formalized up-date version to be public.	Steering Committee	July 2021	
3. Development a management cooperation chart with DCO to optimize areas for coordination of requests and sharing of information that would be critical to maximize impact of deployments including strategic prioritization taking into account existing capacities in RCOs and the UNCT.	OHCHR/DCO	March 2021	

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