



STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE: PROGRAMME

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Note: Following UNITLIFE’s 5th Executive Board Meeting in April 2021, the Executive Board approved a second operating model for funding projects through the UNITLIFE’s process.

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UNITLIFE's first operating modality - Call for proposals' development

The UNITLIFE Secretariat identifies target countries based on the indicators defined in the Investment Strategy and presents them to the Executive Board. Once a country has been selected, the Secretariat consults with the Government and nutrition actors on the ground to better understand needs, priorities, and contextual considerations. Other stakeholders such as nutrition donors investing in the same country may be consulted as well. These consultations are conducted by UNITLIFE's Portfolio Specialist. Based on these discussions, the Secretariat develops a call for proposals paper. This paper contextualizes UNITLIFE's Investment Strategy to the country needs, may focus on a specific angle and include country-specific considerations.

A. Project Selection Process

Partner Eligibility

As of August 2020, the following organizations are eligible to receive direct funding from the UNITLIFE trust fund:

- United Nations System Organizations (thereafter referred to as Recipient United Nations Organizations or RUNOs)
- International NGOs (thereafter referred to as Non-United Nations Organizations or NUNOs) that meet the following criteria:
 - Annual budget of US\$1 million or more overall
 - Annual budget of at least US\$200,000 in country of proposed implementation in the last two years and at least twice the annual budget requested from UNITLIFE
 - At least three years of experience in the country of proposed implementation

National and/or smaller NUNOs may access the funds as a sub-contractor through an organization that fits the above criteria. As per UNITLIFE terms of reference, a small grants window had been foreseen. Such window may be operationalized in the future and reflected in future iterations of these SOPs.

Additional call-specific eligibility requirements may be included and will be specified in the call for proposals issued.

During calls for proposals, interested organizations are invited to complete a short online eligibility questionnaire to confirm eligibility before accessing the submission page.

Call for Proposals

Timeline:

Step	Duration
1. Call for concept notes	1 month
2. Pre-Selection by Secretariat	1 week*
3. Full proposal submission	1 month
4. Review by Technical Review Committee	2 weeks*
5. Endorsement by Executive Board	1 week
6. Due Diligence by specialized firm	6 weeks*
7. Financial Agreement and disbursement	2 weeks
TOTAL	4 months

**Review steps may be shortened or lengthened depending on the number of proposals*

Calls for proposals will be timed based on fund capitalization and seasonal calendars.

Step by Step Description:

1. Call for concept notes

The UNITLIFE Secretariat develops a call for concept notes document for dissemination to potential implementing partners. Call for concept notes are aligned with UNITLIFE's Investment Strategy and may include additional call-specific requirements.

Calls are disseminated through:

- In-country nutrition coordination groups.
- UNITLIFE website and social media, amplified through UNCDF social media.
- Large or multi-country call for proposals may also be disseminated through international nutrition networks.

Interested organizations are invited to submit concept notes, using a template provided by the UNITLIFE Secretariat, via an online platform to ensure transparency, simplify processes, and provide institutional memory.

The UNITLIFE Secretariat remains available to answer questions from interested organizations throughout the process.

2. Pre-selection by the UNITLIFE Secretariat:

After the submission deadline, the UNITLIFE Secretariat conducts an initial selection of projects, based on a pre-defined scorecard approved by the Executive Board. The scorecard aims to assess the potential of the projects described in the concept notes to contribute to UNITLIFE's mission, in line with UNITLIFE's investment strategy, as well as to any additional call-specific strategic objectives described in the call for proposals.

Upon request of UNITLIFE Board, the Secretariat may develop investment principles for the fund.

The cumulative budget of the set of concept notes which will pass this initial stage should not exceed twice the amount available through the call for proposals (for example, if a call for

proposals is open for US\$ 5 million, no more than US\$ 10 million worth of proposals shall pass the pre-selection). This ensures organizations who spend time and human resources developing full proposals have a good chance of receiving funding, while contributing to best usage of the review time of Technical Review Committee members.

3. Full proposal submission:

Partners who passed the pre-selection stage, submit full proposals, including detailed budgets, logical frameworks and workplans in a standardized template provided by the UNITLIFE Secretariat.

4. Review by Technical Review Committee (TRC):

The TRC is composed of an expert chairperson and a team of four experts with a range of specializations including (but not limited to) chronic malnutrition, gender empowerment in rural areas, and climate-smart agriculture. The TRC members also have previous experience reviewing, analysing, or implementing nutrition projects, and they may have a practitioner or academic background. The composition of the TRC is carefully designed to enable an integrated, balanced, technically competent and professional assessment of proposals.

The TRC receives the project proposals from the Secretariat two weeks prior to the TRC meeting and are expected to allocate the equivalent of 3 working days during that period for their independent individual assessment of the proposal, in line with the scorecard (the duration may be shortened or lengthened depending on the number of proposals to review). During this period, the TRC members may solicit the Secretariat as needed for any clarifications or technical information, as well as information on policies or any aspects of the UNITLIFE Investment Strategy. The TRC members may not contact requesting organizations during that time.

The Secretariat will then convene a three-day meeting of the TRC two weeks after sharing the proposals. During the meeting, the TRC reviews proposals as a group, shares and discusses observations and agrees on project scores.

The TRC may also, with the support of the Secretariat, request clarifications from requesting organizations and discuss possible changes to project proposals with them. By the end of the meeting, the TRC assigns a score to each project. When possible, an in-country focal point also serves as a resource person on country context for the TRC and is available remotely.

The Committee then scores each proposal and justifies according to standardized criteria. The highest scored proposals (number to be dependent of funding available) is be recommended to the Executive Board for approval, through the Secretariat. Additional high-scoring projects, if recommended, can remain in UNITLIFE's database and may be included in UNITLIFE's portfolio once the highest scoring project receives funding. The recommendations are done by consensus. If consensus cannot be reached, the Chair of the TRC shall call for a decision by majority vote of those present.

For additional information on the TRC, please consult annex 1 "UNITLIFE TECHNICAL REVIEW COMMITTEE (TRC) – TERMS OF REFERENCE".

5. Endorsement by the Executive Board

The Executive Board, with the support of the UNITLIFE Secretariat and based on the recommendations of the TRC, approves projects for funding. Approval may be given by Round Robin, and should take place once request submitted, within 7 working days of submission of the TRC report. In case there is no consensus over the projects to be approved, the Chair of the Executive Board, with the support of the Secretariat, may convene an extraordinary Board meeting, as per the Executive Board's rules of procedures. The Chair may decide to invite the TRC for additional clarifications.

6. Fiduciary Assessment:

As the administrative agent for UNITLIFE, the UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office (MPTFO) jointly with the Fund Secretariat will lead the fiduciary assessment.

NUNOs selected for funding will take part in the MPTFO standard fiduciary assessment process, conducted by an outside specialized organization. Cost of the due assessment will be charged to UNITLIFE. NUNOs will be asked to provide standard documents. *An indicative list of documents is provided in annex 2 "Fiduciary Assessment documents".*

Additionally, NUNOs have to demonstrate [compliance with the 2018 Protocol on Allegations of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse involving implementing partners](#).

RUNOs do not need to undergo a fiduciary assessment.

7. Financial Agreement and disbursement

RUNOs are required to sign the Standard 2019 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for MPTFs.

For NUNOs, once the due diligence process is completed, the NUNO will sign the financial agreement for non-UN organizations.

The project proposal (referred to as ProDoc in its final version) will be signed by the recipient organization and by the President of the UNITLIFE Executive Board.

Upon signature of the two documents above, the MPTFO will disburse the first tranche of funding after receiving the partner vendor profile form and an official bank letter as a supporting document.

B. Project Cycle Management

Disbursements

Funding to RUNOs will be disbursed in one tranche.

Funding to non-UN organizations will be disbursed in tranches depending on the duration of the project:

Project duration	Tranches
Up to 24 months	70% / 30%
25 months or longer	40% / 30% / 30%

The first disbursement tranche is automatically released upon signature of the financial agreement. The Administrative Agent will transfer the funds to the NUNO within 15 working days after receipt of the fund transfer request approved by the Executive Board and the signed ProDoc. Subsequent disbursements must be requested by the partner once 70 percent of the previous disbursement tranche has been expended and are contingent on the submission of an interim financial report. If the disbursement is requested at the time of the mandatory annual financial report submission, no additional financial report is required to avoid duplication.

Reporting

For each project approved for funding, each Implementing Organization provides the Secretariat and the Fund Administrator with narrative progress reports and financial annual statements prepared in accordance with their accounting and reporting procedures, as agreed upon in the legal agreements signed with the MPTF.

The annual and final reports are results-oriented and evidence based. The reports give a summary of results and achievements compared to the expected result in the programme document. Both programmatic and financial performance indicators are monitored at the outcome and output levels.

Partners are required to submit:

Narrative reporting

- One narrative report per 6-month period, including a final report after project end date (due dates set in financial agreement)

Financial reporting

- Annual financial reports (due date set in financial agreement)
- A progress financial report when requesting a disbursement tranche
- One final financial report after project end date (due date set in financial agreement).

General Ledgers should be attached to all financial reports. The UNITLIFE Secretariat reserves the right to request additional documents supporting the narrative and financial reports.

Communication reporting

- Short updates (one paragraph) with pictures on project implementation for the UNITLIFE transparency page every 1-2 months.

Monitoring

At least one field visit will be conducted on each project funded by UNITLIFE. The field visit may be conducted by UNITLIFE Secretariat staff, or the coordinator of a UN in-country nutrition coordination group.

Project Revisions

Any revisions to the project must be requested in writing (by email) no later than 45 days prior to project end date.

Revisions not requiring prior UNITLIFE Secretariat approval

- Cost redeployments not exceeding 15% of the approved budget per category (except staff category which total budget cannot be increased)

Revisions requiring prior UNITLIFE Secretariat approval

- Budget redeployments between budget categories that result in an increase of 15% or more of one of the budget categories approved total must receive prior approval by the Secretariat (by email)
- Cost redeployments between budget categories that cumulatively equal or exceed 25% of the project total approved budget must receive prior approval by the Secretariat and UNITLIFE Executive Board. In this case, the ProDoc budget will be revised
- Any increases to the approved budget of the staff category (budget category 1)
- New budget lines
- Changes to project approved activities or location
- No-cost extensions

Revisions not authorized

- Cost-extensions are not allowed per se. However, UNITLIFE may open a "top-up" window to extend existing projects. Such extensions would require approval by the UNITLIFE Executive Board and signature of a new grant agreement.

Project Closure

Projects will be closed upon clearance of the final narrative and certified financial reports and refund of any remaining balance including interest.

Performance assessment

Individual project results will be aggregated and summarized by the UNITLIFE Secretariat and reported to the Executive Board. To this end, implementing organizations are requested at proposal stage to include relevant UNITLIFE core indicators, which can be found in UNITLIFE's investment strategy.

If and when a top-up window is created, partner performance against agreed upon indicators will be taken into account in decisions to extend and top-up projects.

Accountability

The UNITLIFE Secretariat and the MPTFO, as the administrative agent for the trust fund, share the responsibility to put in place a strong accountability framework to ensure accountable utilization of the funds entrusted by UNITLIFE donors.

Auditing

Recipient NUNOs shall cooperate and comply with any requests made by the UNITLIFE Secretariat that an external audit be conducted of the use of funding and control systems. Once UNITLIFE is fully operational, audits will be systematically conducted on NUNO projects.

Fraud and Corruption management

Minimum eligibility requirements, fiduciary assessment by independent specialized firm to guarantee implementing partners have the systems in place to responsibly manage UNITLIFE funds, disbursements in tranches, as well as reporting and monitoring requirements all contribute to reduce the risk of misuse of UNITLIFE funds.

However, a zero risk does not exist. Suspected fraud or corruption may be identified through several channels including findings from monitoring and reporting, whistleblowing, or self-reporting by the partner.

Partners are required to report any misuse of UNITLIFE funds to the Executive Board through the Secretariat, as well as steps taken to address it. Each case will be discussed with the MPTFO who holds the fiduciary responsibility for UNITLIFE funds to determine most appropriate course of action based on each unique situation. The MPTFO, jointly with the UNITLIFE Secretariat, may request the partner to conduct an internal investigation or order an independent forensic audit, or terminate the Agreement, in whole or in part. The Executive Board will be informed of any ongoing investigations.

Complaint and feedback mechanism

Implementing partners are required to have a complaint and feedback mechanism in place that is context-appropriate and ensure project beneficiaries are well-informed on how to use it.

UNITLIFE’s second operating modality – Existing Projects featured

The UNITLIFE Secretariat will operate a digital platform which will include at all times 10 existing projects dedicated to fighting chronic malnutrition, including 3 projects from the Rome-based Agencies (the World Food Programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization and the International Fund for Agricultural Development), and 1 project from UN Women.. It is important to note that funding for these projects will not be secured ex-ante, but the Secretariat will use its best efforts to secure funding for these projects. Once a project’s funding is secured, the Secretariat selects a new project through the same process, within the list of the Board’s approved project.

As is the case for the first operating modality, the Secretariat consults with the Government and nutrition actors on the ground to better understand needs, priorities, and contextual considerations. Other stakeholders such as nutrition donors investing in the same country may be consulted as well. These consultations are conducted by UNITLIFE’s Portfolio Specialist. Based on these discussions, the Secretariat identifies a maximum of 3 existing projects from International NGOs per country for project assessment.

A. Project Selection Process

Partner Eligibility

- United Nations System Organizations (thereafter referred to as Recipient United Nations Organizations or RUNOs) are eligible. In addition, the three Rome-based Agencies together with UN Women have the opportunities to feature one project on the hub without going through the Technical Review Committee process.
- International NGOs (thereafter referred to as Non-United Nations Organizations or NUNOs) that meet the following criteria:
 - Annual budget of US\$1 million or more overall
 - Annual budget of at least US\$200,000 in country of proposed implementation in the last two years and at least twice the annual budget requested from UNITLIFE
 - At least three years of experience in the country of proposed implementation

Call for Projects

Timeline:

Steps	Duration
1. Call for projects	4 weeks
2. Pre-Selection by Secretariat	1 week*
3. Review by Technical Review Committee	2 weeks*
4. Endorsement by Executive Board	1 week
5. INGO is informed and Projects are featured on the hub	2 weeks
6. Due Diligence by specialized firm (when funding is secured)	6 weeks*

7. Financial Agreement and disbursement	2 weeks
TOTAL	4 months

**Review steps may be shortened or lengthened depending on the number of proposals*

Step by Step Description:

1. Call for projects

Not enough funding is going towards fighting chronic malnutrition. This is why UNITLIFE is specifically looking to give visibility and financially support existing projects which are aligned with UNITLIFE strategy.

The UNITLIFE Secretariat develops a call for projects document for dissemination to potential implementing partners. Call for projects are aligned with UNITLIFE's Investment Strategy and may include additional call-specific requirements.

Calls are disseminated through:

- In-country nutrition coordination groups
- UNITLIFE website and social media, amplified through UNCDF social media.
- Large or multi-country call for projects may also be disseminated through international nutrition networks.

Interested organizations with ongoing¹ chronic malnutrition prevention projects in line with UNITLIFE strategy are invited to submit their projects in the format of their choice (e.g. previously developed proposal / project existing concept note or report), so as to save time and resources for the applicant. UNITLIFE will not provide a template, but will list essential elements that must be included (e.g. location, number of beneficiaries, results framework etc.) via an online platform to ensure transparency, simplified processes, and provide institutional memory.

The UNITLIFE Secretariat remains available to answer questions from interested organizations throughout the process.

2. Pre-selection by the UNITLIFE Secretariat:

After the submission deadline, the UNITLIFE Secretariat conducts an initial selection of projects, based on a pre-defined scorecard approved by the Executive Board. The scorecard aims to assess the potential of the projects submitted to contribute to UNITLIFE's mission, in line with UNITLIFE's Investment Strategy, as well as to any additional call-specific strategic objectives described in the call for projects. At this stage, the Secretariat may request additional information from the applicants in preparation for the Technical Review.

3. Review by Technical Review Committee (TRC):

¹ Recent projects which had to stop due to insufficient funding may also be eligible.

The process is lighter for existing projects. TRC members will receive the projects descriptions from the Secretariat two weeks prior to the TRC meeting. When reviewing the projects descriptions, the TRC members may solicit the Secretariat as needed for any clarifications or technical information, as well as information on policies or any aspects of the UNITLIFE Investment Strategy.

The Secretariat will convene a TRC meeting² two weeks after sharing the proposals. During the meeting, the TRC will review the projects as a group, share and discuss observations and agree on project scores.

The TRC may also, with the support of the Secretariat, request clarifications from requesting organizations. By the end of the meeting, the TRC will assign a score to each project. When possible, an in-country focal point³ will also serve as a resource person on country context for the TRC and be available remotely.

The Committee will score each project according to standardised criteria. The two highest scored projects per country will be recommended to the Executive Board for approval, through a report drafted by the Secretariat and approved by the TRC Chairperson.

The recommendations will be done by consensus. If consensus cannot be reached, the Chair shall call for a decision by majority vote of those present.

For additional information on the TRC, please consult annex 1 "[UNITLIFE TECHNICAL REVIEW COMMITTEE \(TRC\) – TERMS OF REFERENCE](#)".

4. Endorsement by the Executive Board

The Executive Board, with the support of the UNITLIFE Secretariat and based on the recommendations of the TRC, approves projects for inclusion into the UNITLIFE's portfolio. Approval may be given by Round Robin, and should take place once request submitted, within 7 working days of submission of the TRC report. In case there is no consensus over the projects to be approved, the Chair of the Executive Board, with the support of the Secretariat, may convene an extraordinary Board meeting, as per the Executive Board's rules of procedures. The Chair may decide to invite the TRC for additional clarifications.

5. Projects are presented to prospective financial partners by UNITLIFE

UNITLIFE will act as an ambassador for the projects selected: they will be given visibility on UNITLIFE's website, social media and awareness campaigns. The UNITLIFE Secretariat will seek funders for these projects among financial partners and set up innovative finance partnerships to support them.

In order to further raise the profile of chronic malnutrition, featured organizations will be invited (on a voluntary basis) to share any articles, blog posts or other communication materials about chronic malnutrition which UNITLIFE will centralize on its website to act as a

² The meeting may take place remotely.

³ The in-country focal point may be a Nutrition Cluster/Sector representative or a representative from a relevant Ministry

hub on chronic malnutrition and relay through its communication channels to amplify the organizations' voice.

While UNITLIFE will exercise best efforts to obtain funding for all featured projects, funding is not guaranteed. This is why requirements from the interested organizations are minimal at the call for project stage: they are invited to submit already existing project documents as opposed to designing new ones. This creates a win-win situation: projects are showcased by UNITLIFE to financial partners at no-cost to the implementing organizations and with minimal time used for the submission. In the event that they do not obtain funding, they still gain significant visibility and contribute to raising awareness on chronic malnutrition.

6. Financial partner expresses financial commitment to a project:

Once a financial partner expresses a financial commitment to a project, the implementing organization is contacted and requested to transpose the project into the standard Unitlife Project Document template (ProDoc). If a specific fundraising campaign is set up with the financial partner, the implementing organization will be included in preparation efforts and may be asked for inputs for communication materials (updates on the project, photos etc.).

7. Fiduciary Assessment:

As the administrative agent for UNITLIFE, the UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office (MPTFO) will lead the fiduciary assessment jointly with the Fund Secretariat.

NUNOs selected for funding will take part in the MPTFO standard fiduciary assessment process, conducted by an outside specialized organization. Cost of the due assessment will be charged to UNITLIFE. NUNOs will be asked to provide standard documents. *An indicative list of documents is provided in annex 2 "[Fiduciary Assessment documents](#)".*

Additionally, NUNOs have to demonstrate [compliance with the 2018 Protocol on Allegations of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse involving implementing partners](#).

RUNOs do not need to undergo a fiduciary assessment.

8. Financial Agreement and disbursement

RUNOs are required to sign the Standard 2019 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for MPTF.

For NUNOs, once the due diligence process is completed, the NUNO will sign the financial agreement for non-UN organizations.

The project proposal (referred to as ProDoc in its final version) will be signed by the recipient organization and by the President of the UNITLIFE Executive Board.

Upon signature of the two documents above, the MPTFO will disburse the first tranche of funding after receiving the partner vendor profile form and an official bank letter as a supporting document.

9. Project replacement

Once a project is funded, it will be replaced by another project from the TRC waiting list of high-scoring projects.

B. Project Cycle Management

Disbursements

Funding to RUNOs will be disbursed in one tranche.

Funding to non-UN organizations will be disbursed in tranches depending on the duration of the project:

Project duration	Tranches
Up to 24 months	70% / 30%
25 months or longer	40% / 30% / 30%

The first disbursement tranche is automatically released upon signature of the financial agreement. The Administrative Agent will transfer the funds to the NUNO within 15 working days after receipt of the fund transfer request approved by the Executive Board and the signed ProDoc. Subsequent disbursements must be requested by the partner once 70 percent of the previous disbursement tranche has been expended and are contingent on the submission of an interim financial report. If the disbursement is requested at the time of the mandatory annual financial report submission, no additional financial report is required to avoid duplication.

Reporting

For each project approved for funding, each Implementing Organization provides the Secretariat and the Fund Administrator with narrative progress reports and financial annual statements prepared in accordance with their accounting and reporting procedures, as agreed upon in the legal agreements signed with the MPTF.

The annual and final reports are results-oriented and evidence based. The reports give a summary of results and achievements compared to the expected result in the programme document. Both programmatic and financial performance indicators are monitored at the outcome and output levels.

Partners are required to submit:

Narrative reporting

- One narrative report per 6-month period, including a final report after project end date (due dates set in financial agreement)

Financial reporting

- Annual financial reports (due date set in financial agreement)
- A progress financial report when requesting a disbursement tranche
- One final financial report after project end date (due date set in financial agreement).

General Ledgers should be attached to all financial reports. The UNITLIFE Secretariat reserves the right to request additional documents supporting the narrative and financial reports.

Communication reporting

- Short updates (one paragraph) with pictures on project implementation for the UNITLIFE transparency page every 1-2 months.

Monitoring

At least one field visit will be conducted on each project funded by UNITLIFE. The field visit may be conducted by UNITLIFE Secretariat staff, or the coordinator of a UN in-country nutrition coordination group.

Project Revisions

Any revisions to the project must be requested in writing (by email) no later than 45 days prior to project end date.

Revisions not requiring prior UNITLIFE Secretariat approval

- Cost redeployments not exceeding 15 % of the approved budget per category (except staff category which total budget cannot be increased)

Revisions requiring prior UNITLIFE Secretariat approval

- Budget redeployments between budget categories that result in an increase of 15% or more of one of the budget categories approved total must receive prior approval by the Secretariat (by email)
- Cost redeployments between budget categories that cumulatively equal or exceed 25% of the project total approved budget must receive prior approval by the Secretariat and UNITLIFE Executive Board. In this case, the ProDoc budget will be revised
- Any increases to the approved budget of the staff category (budget category 1)
- New budget lines
- Changes to project approved activities or location
- No-cost extensions

Revisions not authorized

- Cost-extensions are not allowed per se. However, UNITLIFE may open a “top-up” window to extend existing projects. Such extensions would require approval by the UNITLIFE Executive Board and signature of a new grant agreement.

Project Closure

Projects will be closed upon clearance of the final narrative and certified financial reports and refund of any remaining balance including interest.

Performance assessment

Individual project results will be aggregated and summarized by the UNITLIFE Secretariat and reported to the Executive Board. To this end, implementing organizations are requested at proposal stage to include relevant UNITLIFE core indicators, which can be found in UNITLIFE's Investment Strategy.

If and when a top-up window is created, partner performance against agreed upon indicators will be taken into account in decisions to extend and top-up projects.

Accountability

The UNITLIFE Secretariat and the MPTFO, as the administrative agent for the trust fund, share the responsibility to put in place a strong accountability framework to ensure accountable utilization of the funds entrusted by UNITLIFE donors.

Auditing

Recipient NUNOs shall cooperate and comply with any requests made by the UNITLIFE Secretariat that an external audit be conducted of the use of funding and control systems. Once UNITLIFE is fully operational, audits will be systematically conducted on NUNO projects.

Fraud and Corruption management

Minimum eligibility requirements, fiduciary assessment by independent specialized firm to guarantee implementing partners have the systems in place to responsibly manage UNITLIFE funds, disbursements in tranches, as well as reporting and monitoring requirements all contribute to reduce the risk of misuse of UNITLIFE funds.

However, a zero risk does not exist. Suspected fraud or corruption may be identified through several channels including findings from monitoring and reporting, whistleblowing, or self-reporting by the partner.

Partners are required to report any misuse of UNITLIFE funds to the Executive Board through the Secretariat, as well as steps taken to address it. Each case will be discussed with the

MPTFO who holds the fiduciary responsibility for UNITLIFE funds to determine most appropriate course of action based on each unique situation. The MPTFO, jointly with the UNITLIFE Secretariat, may request the partner to conduct an internal investigation or order an independent forensic audit, or terminate the Agreement, in whole or in part. The Executive Board will be informed of any ongoing investigations.

Complaint and feedback mechanism

Implementing partners are required to have a complaint and feedback mechanism in place that is context-appropriate and ensure project beneficiaries are well-informed on how to use it.

Annex 1: UNITLIFE Technical Review Committee (TRC) – Terms of Reference

I. Background and purpose:

UNITLIFE is a fund hosted by the United Nations dedicated to the prevention of chronic childhood malnutrition, a disease affecting 1 in 5 children in the world and leading to life-long consequences including stunted physical growth, impaired cognitive development and a weakened immune system. Chronic malnutrition is irreversible, but it can be prevented with the right interventions in the first 1,000 days of a child's life, from conception to age two. UNITLIFE leverages technology and innovative financing to bring new resources for development partners – NGOs and UN agencies – who work in developing countries to deliver practical solutions to prevent chronic malnutrition.

UNITLIFE has two operating modalities:

- 1- 1st operating modality: Funding is secured, after which UNITLIFE allocates funding through an annual call for proposals organized by the UNITLIFE Secretariat. Interested organizations (International NGOs and United Nations Organizations) submit a proposal for a project to be funded. The funding is acquired ahead of the call for proposals.
- 2- 2nd operating modality: UNITLIFE Secretariat identifies existing projects and then mobilizes resources from the private sector stakeholders to fund these projects. The Secretariat identifies up to 3 projects in each country of interest through a specific call for existing projects. The funding for the project is mobilized after the projects have been identified.

The Executive Board (ExBoard), which is UNITLIFE's primary governance body, has the ultimate responsibility for project approval. In order to assess these projects, UNITLIFE is seeking advisors to form a Technical Review Committee (TRC), which will be responsible for recommending projects for funding to the ExBoard and the Secretariat, based on the group's independent review of the strategic value, technical soundness and potential for impact of proposals received.

Composed of leading external experts and technical advisors of UNITLIFE's Executive Board member organizations, the TRC will play a key role in ensuring a fair and transparent proposal review process resulting in the selection of the most deserving projects.

II. Mandate:

The TRC is responsible for:

- Assessing project proposals based on their strategic value to UNITLIFE's Investment Strategy, technical soundness and potential for impact, using a pre-defined scorecard to ensure fairness;

- Providing recommendations to the ExBoard and the Secretariat on which projects to prioritize, based on the above-mentioned assessment. This task may include assisting in prioritizing between two equally scored projects.

The TRC:

- May seek clarifications from the organizations requesting funding or from the identified existing projects, with the assistance of the Secretariat;
- Only for the first operating modality process, the TRC may recommend adjustments to project proposals, including the removal or addition of specific elements. Proposed changes should systematically be discussed with the requesting organization to determine feasibility before a decision is made.

III. Membership:

The UNITLIFE Secretariat will issue a call for interest to join the TRC, which will be composed of an expert chairperson and a team of experts with a range of specializations including (but not limited to) chronic malnutrition, gender empowerment in rural areas, and climate-smart agriculture. A minimum of 7 years of relevant experience is requested.

Additional experts may be placed in a pool of experts, which can be called upon to join the TRC should specific expertise be required that is not met by the active TRC members, or in the event that an active TRC member is unable to participate in the annual proposal review.

Experts must have previous experience reviewing, analysing, or implementing nutrition projects. They may have a practitioner or academic background. In addition to technical expertise, a commitment to fighting chronic malnutrition and a track record of ethical behaviour is required.

The composition of the TRC will be carefully designed to enable an integrated, balanced, technically competent and professional assessment of proposals. Efforts will be made to ensure geographical and gender balance.

The TRC may include advisors from the organizations which are members of UNITLIFE's Executive Board.

TRC members are appointed for a specific period of time and may be reappointed.

IV. Working arrangements:

In both operating modalities, interested International Non Governmental Organizations and United Nations agencies (excluding UN Women, FAO, IFAD and WFP which have a separate process) will be asked to submit their project through a UNCDF platform. After the closure of the platform, the Secretariat will conduct an initial review of proposals to verify that they meet minimum requirements, prior to sharing the proposals as well as the review scorecard and other supporting documents with the TRC members.

Process for the first operating modality:

The TRC members will receive the project proposals from the Secretariat two weeks prior to the TRC meeting and are expected to allocate the equivalent of 3 working days⁴ during that period for their independent individual assessment of the proposal, in line with the scorecard. During this period, the TRC members may solicit the Secretariat as needed for any clarifications or technical information, as well as information on policies or any aspects of the UNITLIFE Investment Strategy. The TRC members may not contact requesting organizations during that time.

The Secretariat will convene a three-day TRC meeting⁵ of the TRC two weeks after sharing the proposals. During the meeting, the TRC will review proposals as a group, share and discuss observations and agree on project scores.

The TRC may also, with the support of the Secretariat, request clarifications from requesting organizations and discuss possible changes to project proposals with them. By the end of the meeting, the TRC will assign a score to each project. When possible, an in-country focal point⁶ will also serve as a resource person on country context.

The Committee will score each proposal according to standardised criteria. The highest scored proposals (number to be dependent of funding available) will be recommended to the Executive Board for approval, through a report drafted by the Secretariat and approved by the TRC Chairperson.

If the Executive Board cannot reach consensus, the Chair shall call for a decision by majority vote of those present.

Process for the second operating modality:

The process is lighter for existing projects. TRC members will receive the projects descriptions from the Secretariat two weeks prior to the TRC meeting. When reviewing the projects descriptions, the TRC members may solicit the Secretariat as needed for any clarifications or technical information, as well as information on policies or any aspects of the UNITLIFE Investment Strategy.

During the TRC meeting, the members will review the projects as a group, share and discuss observations and agree on project scores. By the end of the meeting, the TRC will assign a score to each project. When possible, an in-country focal point⁷ will also serve as a resource person on country context for the TRC and be available remotely.

The Committee will score each project according to standardised criteria. The two highest scored projects per country will be recommended to the Executive Board for approval, through a report drafted by the Secretariat and approved by the TRC Chairperson.

⁴The expected days of work may be adjusted depending on the number of proposals received.

⁵ The meeting may take place remotely.

⁶ The in-country focal point may be a Nutrition Cluster/Sector representative or a representative from a relevant Ministry

⁷ The in-country focal point may be a Nutrition Cluster/Sector representative or a representative from a relevant Ministry

If the Executive Board cannot reach, the Chair shall call for a decision by majority vote of those present.

V. Administrative arrangements:

The UNITLIFE Secretariat provides substantive and administrative support to the Executive Board. To this end, UNITLIFE Secretariat will provide the Technical Review Committee with the approved Investment Strategy and Standard Operating Procedures for Proposal review, and will brief the Committee on the UNITLIFE programme and guiding principles. The Secretariat will also appoint a TRC Chairperson amongst the experts, to guide the process and ensure that the TRC deliberations are independent.

The Technical Review Committee will be supported by the Secretariat to facilitate its activities including arrangements for convening the meetings, as well as provision of the relevant documentation for review. The UNITLIFE Portfolio Specialist will serve as the Secretary to the TRC.

For the 1st Operating modality, the Chairperson and TRC Members will receive 3 days of professional fees. For the 2nd Operating modality, the TRC Chairperson will receive 1 day of professional fee. In addition, in case of physical meetings all expenses related to expert participation in this process including travel, accommodation and meals will be covered by the UNITLIFE Secretariat in accordance with UNCDF rules and regulations⁸.

VI. Confidentiality and conflict of interest:

Members of the TRC undertake to keep in strict confidence all information that they may come across in the course of their role and responsibility in the TRC. If a Member believes he or she may have a conflict of interest in any matter being considered by the TRC, this conflict of interest must be reported immediately to the Chairperson, who, in consultation with the Secretariat, shall rule on the appropriate action to take, including but not limited to, the member abstaining from contributing to a decision on the matter at hand.

Annex – UNITLIFE Proposal Review Process (1st and 2nd modality):

The Executive Board is responsible for approving project proposals received by the UNITLIFE Secretariat, based on the recommendations of the Technical Review Committee and the UNITLIFE Project Manager. This will ensure a technically competent, credible and transparent review.

Steps for the Review and Approval of Project Proposals (1st modality)

⁸ The Secretariat will prioritize remote meetings.

1. The UNITLIFE Secretariat will launch a call for proposals in line with UNITLIFE Investment Strategy. Interested organizations will have no less than 60 days to submit a proposal. During the proposal submission period, interested organizations may send a preliminary concept note for feedback before the fully fledged proposal to the Secretariat, no less than 30 days after the call for proposal. In any case interested organization may reach out to the Secretariat for clarifications.
2. After the submission deadline, the UNITLIFE Secretariat will pre-screen proposals to verify their compliance with minimum eligibility criteria such as eligibility of the organization, basic alignment with the Investment Strategy, as well as any additional minimum criteria specified in the call for proposals.
3. The Secretariat will then send the proposals along with supporting documents to a pre-identified TRC two weeks prior to the TRC meeting. TRC members are expected to allocate 3 working days for their independent individual review of proposals, following a pre-defined scorecard to ensure fairness. This time may be adjusted depending on the number of proposals to review.
4. The Secretariat will work with the TRC Chairperson to convene a three-day proposal review workshop. During the meeting, the TRC will review proposals as a group, share and discuss observations and agree on project scores. The TRC may also, with the support of the Secretariat, request clarifications from requesting organizations and discuss possible changes to project proposals with them. By the end of the meeting, the TRC will assign a score to each project. When possible, an in-country focal point will also serve as a resource person on country context.
5. Following the TRC meeting, the Secretariat may ask some requesting organizations to resubmit a revised proposal, based on recommendations from the TRC.
6. The Secretariat will send all reviewed Proposals (including any revisions received from the implementing partners) accompanied by a report of the meeting to the UNITLIFE Executive Board. The Chair of the Executive Board may invite the Chairperson of the TRC to present its recommendations to the Executive Board.
7. The Executive Board, with the support of the UNITLIFE Secretariat and based on the recommendations of the TRC, may approve projects for funding. Approval may be given by Round Robin, and should take place once request submitted, within 7 worked days of submission of the TRC report.
8. The UNITLIFE Secretariat will send the results of the reviews to the implementing agencies and request short term clarification or additional information as necessary.
9. The UNITLIFE Secretariat, together with the UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund, will work with successful organizations to prepare the Standard Administrative Arrangement and proceed with the first disbursement.

Steps for the Review and Approval of Projects (2nd modality)

1. The UNITLIFE Secretariat will launch a call for existing projects in line with UNITLIFE Investment Strategy. Interested organizations with ongoing projects corresponding to the criteria will have 30 days to submit their projects, in the format of their choice (proposal previously prepared for another donor, existing project concept note, etc.) as long as it covers essential elements listed in the call for projects (e.g. location, # of beneficiaries, results framework etc.). During the proposal submission period, interested organization may reach out to the Secretariat for clarifications.

2. After the submission deadline, the UNITLIFE Secretariat will pre-screen projects to verify their compliance with minimum eligibility criteria such as eligibility of the organization, basic alignment with the Investment Strategy, as well as any additional minimum criteria specified in the call for projects. At this stage, the UNITLIFE Secretariat may request additional information/clarification before sharing their projects with the TRC.
3. The Secretariat will then send the projects along with supporting documents to a pre-identified TRC two weeks prior to the TRC meeting. TRC members are expected to review the projects, following a pre-defined scorecard to ensure fairness.
4. The Secretariat will work with the TRC Chairperson to convene a project review meeting. During the meeting, the TRC will review projects as a group, share and discuss observations and agree on project scores. The TRC may also, with the support of the Secretariat, request clarifications from requesting organizations. By the end of the meeting, the TRC will assign a score to each project. When possible, an in-country focal point⁹ will also serve as a resource person on country context.
5. The Secretariat will send all reviewed Projects accompanied by a summary of the results from the technical review to the Executive Board. The Chair of the Executive Board may invite the Chairperson of the TRC to present its recommendations to the Executive Board.
6. The Executive Board, with the support of the UNITLIFE Secretariat and based on the recommendations of the TRC, may approve projects for inclusion in UNITLIFE's portfolio. Approval may be given by Round Robin, and should take place once request submitted, within 7 worked days of submission of the TRC report.
7. The UNITLIFE Secretariat will send the results of the reviews to the implementing agencies and request short term clarification or additional information as necessary.
8. Selected projects will be included in the UNITLIFE Portfolio of projects, which means that UNITLIFE will act as an Ambassador for these projects, providing them with visibility and identifying financial partners on their behalf.
9. Once a financial partner is identified for a project, the UNITLIFE Secretariat, together with the UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund, will work with successful organizations to prepare the Standard Administrative Arrangement and proceed with the first disbursement. At this stage, the Implementing Partner will be required to transpose the project into the standard UNITLIFE Project Document format and may be asked for inputs towards project communications (e.g. project update, photos).

⁹ The in-country focal point may be a Nutrition Cluster/Sector representative or a representative from a relevant Ministry

Annex 2: Fiduciary Assessment documents

Kindly note this list is indicative and provided to facilitate the process. The company conducting the assessment will contact you directly.

- Proof of previously received funding from Donors, or UN. (Any donor is ok)
- Proof of current valid formal registration as non-profit and tax-exempt organization with a social mission in both the country where the headquarters is located and in the country of project implementation for the duration of the proposed grant. (NOTE: If registration is done on an annual basis in the country, the organization must have the current registration and obtain renewals for the duration of the project in order to receive subsequent funding tranches).
- Latest annual report that includes the activities of the country of proposed project implementation.
- Audited financial statements of the last two years, including:
 - The legal organization that will sign the agreement (and oversee the country of project implementation, if applicable).
 - The signed auditor opinion letter (the letter from the auditor should also state whether the auditor firm is designated as a nationally qualified audit firm)
 - The activities and budget of the country of project implementation. (NOTE: If the audited financial statements do not clearly include the in-country activities and budget, please provide the latest two audit reports for a programme or project-based audits in the country of project implementation).
- Provide an explanation of how the CSO is legally structured (e.g. global/national/regional, centralized/decentralized etc.), including the specific legal entity which will enter into the legal agreement with the Trustee for UnitLife (in case there is several organization under a Global structure). A quick explanation of your structure and a figure illustrating the structure will be great.