

# **EQUATORIAL GUINEA MULTI-PARTNER TRUST FUND**

## **Terms of Reference**

**August 2021**

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## 1. Introduction

In Equatorial Guinea, key actors of the Government, civil society, private sector, United Nations etc. have come together in strategic reflections on national development priorities requiring coordinated responses from the United Nations to support the country's progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. On the basis of established national priorities and comparative advantages of the United Nations system, the United Nations and national partners have identified the following four areas of cooperation that are considered relevant to the achievement of the SDGs: (i) human capital, (ii) economic development, (iii) good governance and (iv) environmental sustainability. The aim is to lay the foundations for the realization of the United Nations Vision 2030 for Equatorial Guinea, of a united country in peace and prosperous in which people enjoy their economic, social, political and cultural rights in an equitable manner. The UNDAF planning process 2019-2023 was based on the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs and is inspired by the fundamental principles of gender equality, the realization of rights, environmental resilience and the elimination of all forms of discrimination.

On 13 March 2020, the country confirmed its first COVID-19 imported case and since then cases have gradually been on the rise until July 2020, when the peak was reached according to WHO, during the first wave. Equatorial Guinea is currently emerging out from its second wave of COVID19 pandemic, as per WHO and national authority's information, with the latest data from 21 July 2021 reporting 8863 total cumulative cases, and a 0,6 % positivity rate in the last 7 days<sup>1</sup>.

Following the UN Secretary General call in March 2020, the UN Equatorial Guinea supported the Government in the preparation of a joint **Socioeconomic Response Plan (SERP)** to the impact of COVID-19<sup>2</sup>. In this framework, two major studies were conducted aimed at informing the national plan: the 'Rapid Macroeconomic Assessment of COVID-19 Impact' completed in July 2020<sup>3</sup>, and the 'Socioeconomic Assessment of COVID-19 Impact' completed in December 2020<sup>4</sup>.

The SERP has an estimated total budget of USD 173 million for two years. The response plan is organized in five key thematic areas: Health; Social protection; Economic recovery; Macroeconomic response and multilateral cooperation and the last Social cohesion and Community resilience.

The National Socio-Economic Response and Recovery Plan against COVID-19 in Equatorial Guinea is based in the two impact assessments and inspired by the Framework for Socio-Economic Response proposed by the United Nations and mirrors the lines of intervention identified in the SERP to address the main challenges generated by the pandemic with a systemic and multidimensional perspective, with a special focus on the most vulnerable groups to leave no one behind and addressing the structural weaknesses aggravated by the crisis to rebuild better after COVID-19. The SERP has been mainstreamed to the annual workplan of the United Nations in Equatorial Guinea.

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<sup>1</sup> Equatorial Guinea Ministry of Health and Social Welfare official web site: [MINSABS | Estadísticas \(guineasalud.org\)](https://minsa.gq/)

<sup>2</sup> Plan Nacional de Respuesta y Recuperación Socioeconómica frente a la COVID-19 en Guinea Ecuatorial

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.gq.undp.org/content/equatorial\\_guinea/es/home/library/evaluacion-macroeconomica-rapida-de-los-efectos-del-covid-19-en-.html](https://www.gq.undp.org/content/equatorial_guinea/es/home/library/evaluacion-macroeconomica-rapida-de-los-efectos-del-covid-19-en-.html).

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.gq.undp.org/content/equatorial\\_guinea/es/home/library/rapid-macroeconomic-assessment-of-the-effects-of-covid-in-equato.html](https://www.gq.undp.org/content/equatorial_guinea/es/home/library/rapid-macroeconomic-assessment-of-the-effects-of-covid-in-equato.html).

The Equatorial Guinea United Nations Country Team (UNCT), in agreement with the Government, has agreed to establish a Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) to support coherent actions towards the accomplishment of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The scope of the Fund is to contribute to development effectiveness and UN coordination through the efficient, accountable and transparent design and administration of innovative pooled financing mechanisms.

The Fund will draw up and mobilize funding/financing for strategic interventions through which the UN development system and its partners—acting together and drawing on each other’s comparative advantages—can contribute to the achievement of the Equatorial Guinea’s national development priorities as reflected in the UNDAF 2019-2023 and in the Socioeconomic Response Plan to COVID-19 Impact (SERP), ultimately contributing to Agenda 2030.

The MPTF will support integrated and coherent resource mobilization, allocation and disbursement - from the governments of Member States of the United Nations, inter-governmental or non-governmental organizations, or from private sources - to promote the implementation of integrated activities to accelerate the achievement of SDGs in the priority areas outlined in the National Strategy for Sustainable Development- *“Agenda Guinea Ecuatorial 2035”*<sup>5</sup> and in the National Socio-Economic Response and Recovery Plan against COVID-19. The MPTF will focus on four thematic windows: 1. The COVID-19 vaccination support; 2. Systems strengthening and knowledge management; 3. Good governance and security and 4. Building back better.

## 2. Rationale and Fund's Functions

The 2030 Agenda calls for integrated approaches across multiple sectors and goals, as well as collective action at all levels in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). On 31 May 2018, the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 72/729 which aims to better position the United Nations development system (UNDS) to address the full range of human rights, peacebuilding, humanitarian and development challenges and opportunities, and to align its functions and capacities with the 2030 Agenda to be more strategic, accountable, transparent, collaborative, efficient, effective and results-oriented.

A repositioned UNDS that delivers on the 2030 Agenda is being implemented by the Secretary-General from January 2019, and calls for a new generation of more responsive United Nations Country Teams (UNCTs) and creates an independent, empowered and impartial Resident Coordinator and strengthened UN Resident Coordinator Office (UNRCO) able to lead the UN’s integrated and impactful contributions at country level. To deliver on such an ambitious reform agenda, and to enable a new generation of Resident Coordinators to shape country-based programming, aligned with country Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDf or UNDAF), the resolution 72/729 promotes the use of pooled funding mechanisms.

Experience to date shows that pooled funds can improve coordination, coherence, and alignment; better manage risks; and promote transformative change. They help bridge the silos between humanitarian,

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<sup>5</sup> [Página Oficial del Gobierno de la República de Guinea Ecuatorial \(guineaecuatorialpress.com\)](http://guineaecuatorialpress.com)

peacebuilding and development agendas in a flexible design that can accommodate several windows and governance mechanisms while improving overall accountability for results and financial reporting.

The Equatorial Guinea MPTF envisions to support an ambitious agenda for working together to unlock progress towards the SDGs.

The Fund will have the following functions:

- Coordination and alignment: Enable a platform to strengthen coordination, monitoring, evaluation, planning and communication among several entities;
- Coherence: Develop synergies among different players;
- Strategic allocation of resources through an inclusive and transparent decision-making structure;
- Reduce political and fiduciary risks faced by stakeholders through the concentration of resources and a result-based management system which is transparent and responsible;
- Broaden the financial base of emerging or non-resident donors;
- Reduce transaction costs by using pre-approved single Standard legal agreements;
- Provide flexibility: the Fund is a flexible mechanism that easily adapts to changes (new thematic areas of intervention, additional implementing entities, new processes, etc.).

### 3. Scope of the Fund

The **overall goal of the fund is to contribute to the achievement of the SDGs in the country** by supporting key catalytic interventions within the Equatorial Guinea UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNDAF 2019-2023) and the SERP.

The objective of the Fund is to contribute to a more resilient, equitable and inclusive society in the context of the COVID-19 response and recovery, with specific focus on the most vulnerable groups of the population, i.e women and children, adolescents and youth, the elderly, rural population and informal sector workers. The specific objective of the Fund is to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on the health, social protection, education systems and on the environment. The Fund's core approach is *to leave no one behind* and addressing structural weaknesses aggravated by the crisis to *rebuild better* after COVID-19.

Several **vulnerable groups** in the country are at risk of suffering the consequences of COVID-19 to a greater extent if no appropriate action is taken. Women in the country, who represented about 51% in 2015 (INEGE 2019), are more likely to be poor, unemployed, have lower wages, child-marriage, drop out of school, and face higher levels of gender-based violence (DHSEG-I 2011). In addition, in 2011 it was found that the rate of mothers' education and socioeconomic status had an inverse relationship with the neonatal and postnatal mortality rate of their children, meaning that interruptions in access to education and reductions in women's income could have an impact on future child mortality rates in the country.

Children had low rates of immunization (only 26% had all the immune preventable vaccines in their childhood, United Nations 2019), 26% were below the expected growth. Together with youth and adolescents, this population group faced high dropout rates (of students who start primary education only 9% reach the end of secondary education) and showed a marked gender difference in terms of

unemployment (women: 36.9%, men: 30.3%, 15-24 years old) (United Nations 2019). According to the statistical yearbook of Equatorial Guinea (INEGE 2017), 3,055 people had a disability, and require differential policies to address the consequences of the pandemic. Older persons, despite representing about 3% of the population in 2015, are more likely to die from COVID-19. Furthermore, the last records available show that they live in low-income households, where at least 65% of them lived in poverty (Ministry of Social Affairs and Promotion of Women 2012). In addition, only 4.1% had a retirement plan.

The Fund will be structured in four thematic windows with several results as follows:

**1. The COVID-19 vaccination support:**

Within this window, the Fund will support the public health response to contain the spread and impact of COVID-19 pandemic by decreasing morbidity and mortality through access to COVID-19 vaccines.

The new dynamic to 'put health first' will focus on several implementation chapters<sup>6</sup>, with the Fund directly contributing to operational and logistic support and vaccination.

Specifically, the Fund will support the vaccination Plan of the Government as well as access to the COVAX Facility, a global risk-sharing mechanism for pooled procurement and equitable distribution of COVID-19 vaccines as well as logistic support for the cold chain and refrigerators. The Fund will also support capacity building of the health service providers as well as communication on preventive measures and community engagement.

**2. Systems strengthening and knowledge management**

Within this window, the Fund will aim at improving equitable access and quality of basic health, education and social protection services, particularly for the most vulnerable groups of population. It will also aimed at enhancing and strengthening Equatorial Guinea partners with data collection, analysis and dissemination

Interventions under this window will look at strengthening the health, education and social protection systems to accelerate the implementation of the SGDs, the UNDAF, the mainstreamed SERP and to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 crisis and improve their ability to absorb future shocks. Interventions will focus strengthening national health system at national and local level. Meeting the health care needs of the population especially the most vulnerable and socially excluded , the maintenance of essential health services, notably those most affected since the beginning of the pandemic, ie provision of prevention and protection against HIV/AIDS, TB and Hepatitis B, starting a path to universal health coverage universal; placing special emphasis on the imperative need for the transformation of the Health System to make it more effective, efficient, inclusive and equitable with a view of preparing for future possible emergencies. This component will look at improving the hygiene and sanitation conditions and the availability of drinking water of the population, on a national scale, with specific focus to vulnerable and socially excluded groups.

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<sup>6</sup> These include: Leadership, coordination, planning and monitoring, Risk communication and community involvement, Surveillance, case investigation and contact tracing , Surveillance at points of entry, Diagnosis and testing, Infection Prevention and Control, Case management and treatment, Operational and logistical support, Maintenance of essential services, Vaccination, Research, innovation and evidence.

As far as education is concerned, the Fund will promote catalytic interventions to education system strengthening through improving the equity and quality of learning for children and adolescents in primary, secondary education and technical and vocational education. Strengthening the capacity of teachers, education planners and learners including through distance learning, addressing the digital divide and teacher training and revision of the curricula. Interventions will also aim at strengthening the social protection system through the development of a framework of social protection policies and mechanisms focused on the most vulnerable and socially excluded population, promoting good practices based on provision transparent and equitable social services.

Despite the creation of the National Institute of Statistics of Equatorial Guinea (INEGE), there are still challenges in the production of key data's and analysis to inform national policies, strategies and programs and measuring and reporting including on the Agenda. In particular, the exact levels of human rights, climate, economic and social vulnerability of the population are unknown<sup>7</sup>. With this window, interventions will aim at building the capacity of State Institutions for an efficient and reliable data with Public and Economic, Social and Human rights Policies based on evidence.

### **3. Good governance and security**

Within this window, the Fund will support interventions aiming at harmonizing national legislation with international law in order to contribute to the strengthening of the **rule of law**, through the modernization of the judicial system and human rights education. It will also support the process of strengthening and effective functioning of State Institutions and Public Management based on norms, procedures, programs. The Horizon 2020 national vision, as well as the new 2035 National Development Strategy places good governance at the service of citizens at the heart of its programme with the main objective of modernising the administration, so that it can lend to citizens quality public services and improve the efficiency of state agents and the transparency of public management and fight against corruption. The realization of political rights, Civil, economic, social and cultural of all citizens without discrimination is at the heart of the un commitment and is essential to move towards achieving the SDGs by 2030.

This will entail strengthening national institutional capacities to promote the rule of law and combat corruption and provide quality public services in a transparent and equitable manner to particularly vulnerable populations at the national and local levels. National human, technical and institutional capacity will be strengthened to take into account the real needs of vulnerable populations, their economic, social and cultural rights and gender equality in development programmes at the national and local levels and to promote women's participation in decision-making processes. National human rights institutions (NHRIs) will be able to prevent and remedy human rights abuses, including human trafficking and prevention systems will be strengthened through awareness-raising and advocacy actions. In addition, the Fund will look at, but not limit to, empower community-based organizations and vulnerable groups to respond to and mitigate the impact of the pandemic, combat domestic violence, stigma and other forms of discrimination related to COVID-19. The fund will also support Equatorial Guinea to comply with monitoring and reporting on its international treaty bodies and conventions

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<sup>7</sup> SOCIOECONOMIC IMPACT Assessment of COVID-19 in Equatorial Guinea, United Nations, 2020

Under this window, the fund will contribute to strengthen national institutions and legislative framework in the area of maritime and military security, and fight against corruption.

#### **4. Building back better**

Within this window, the Fund will promote all interventions for sustainable, inclusive and decent employment-generating economic development with special focus on women and young people, innovation and the sustainable management of natural resources.

Interventions will include, but not limited to, strengthening institutional capacity of national and local economic actors to increase the contribution of the non-oil sectors to economic growth and the creation of decent work opportunities, especially for women and young people. Focus will be on ensuring the sectors linked to natural resources, i.e. biodiversity, agriculture, fisheries and forestry contribute to a greater extent to the creation of national wealth, through the elaboration and implementation of sectoral development policies and their respective legal frameworks.

Youth, women and persons with disabilities will have better equitable access to decent work opportunities -particularly in the green and blue economy-through dedicated policies and increased skills, with particular focus on innovation and link to the private sector.

For a sustainable post-COVID recovery, a key focus will be on the environment and more inclusive, integrated and sustainable use of the natural resources (marine, forest and water) at the local and national levels and protection and conservation of biodiversity in order to contribute to the adaptation and mitigation of the effects of climate change and COVID-19 related impact on the environment.

More sustainable sectoral strategies for agricultural, plant, fish and forestry production will take into account the food and nutritional needs of the population, both their quantity and their quality, in particular of vulnerable groups.

To maximize efficiency and effectiveness, wherever possible, existing mechanisms will be utilized, such as the COVID19 Surveillance and Response Technical Committee and key actors already working in the field in support of populations.

The figure below provides more details on the four windows of interventions.

**DESIRED CHANGE IN THE LONG TERM**

*Post COVID-19 recovery for a more equitable and resilient society leaving no-one behind*

**WINDOW to start ASAP**

**1. COVID-19 vaccination support**

- Support the Government national COVID 19 vaccination plan;
- Access to COVAX facility
- Capacity building of the health service providers
- Ensure communication on preventive measures and community engagement

**Windows to operationalize when the Fund Operational Manual will be developed and funds are available**

**2. System strengthening & knowledge management**

- Improved equitable access and quality of basic health, education and social protection services for all;
- Evidence-based policy

**3. Governance & security**

- strengthening the rule of law, through the modernization of the judicial system and human rights education;
- More efficient Public Management based on norms, procedures, programs;
- Increased participation of CSOs in effective functioning of State Institutions
- Improved gender equality and women and youth participation and empowerment
- strengthen capacity and legislative framework on maritime and military security

**4. Build back better**

- Improved economic resilience through inclusive and decent employment-generating economic development.
- Scale up actions towards a safe environment and climate change mitigation through sustainable use of resources

## 4. Theory of Change

### **Overall problems to be addressed**

To ensure urgent and robust response to accelerate its socioeconomic recovery, during the first semester of 2021, the Government of Equatorial Guinea has focused on rolling out a comprehensive **COVID-19 immunization and covid 19 prevention and protection plan**, which needs to be accelerated over the next months to achieve group immunity as soon as possible and strengthen and sustain prevention measures. The immunization plan is accompanied with a national wide awareness raising campaign on vaccination and prevention, a comprehensive surveillance, testing and treatment components. The establishment of the MPTF will directly contribute to accelerate the rolling out of the plan with direct support to the vaccination, prevention, strengthening system and capacity operation and logistics and awareness-raising components.

The **national health system** has some persistent challenges: 60 per cent of the population live within five kilometers of a health center but there are significant disparities in access and quality of care. The Government guarantees financing for procurement of essential supplies and free services include immunization, growth monitoring and treatment of malaria, tuberculosis, HIV and AIDS. However, delays in the release of funds often lead to stock depletion and service disruptions throughout the health system<sup>8</sup>. The density of health personnel is 1.81 per 1000 inhabitants (2018), below the recommended 4.45 in the SDG targets (WHO 2016)<sup>11</sup> - and is accentuated in rural areas, leaving the rural population more vulnerable to the pandemic and other existing diseases. According to the Multiple Overlapping Deprivation Analysis (MODA) 2014, up to 20 per cent of children under-five years of age show multiple deprivations in health and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), and 56 per cent do not have access to adequate food. Access to safe drinking water and sanitation facilities has shown some improvements; however, 22 per cent of urban households depend on unimproved water services. Access to at least basic drinking water services for rural households has decreased from 41 to 31 per cent. The country is characterized by a low open defecation rate estimated at 4 per cent. Nevertheless, only 57 per cent of households have access to hand-washing facilities.

Despite the increase in healthcare workers to deal with the pandemic, it is important to consider the indirect effects of COVID-19 on the population, including the potential increase in tuberculosis and HIV associated mortality over a 5-year period.

The **education sector** faced many challenges even before the COVID-19 crisis. These include: a) lack of infrastructure, with 24% of pre-school schools lacking water, 49 per cent latrines and 68 per cent electricity and 63% of primary schools without electricity, b) quality of education, with teachers' minimum qualification as 6% in preschool, 54% in primary, and 69% in secondary, c) low students' performance in selection tests, with only 9.1% success rate in n 2016 as well d) limited funding (49% of financial execution) to support national education strategic objectives<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> UNICEF, CPD, 2018

<sup>9</sup> Common Country Assessment, UN, 2017

Due to the COVID-19 restrictions, it is estimated that more than 220,000 students were seriously affected in their learning cycle, and lost approximately 26% of the education provided in a normal school year. This, without taking into account potential school dropouts, which can be accentuated by a reduction in household income and an increase in the cost of teachers linked to the increase in school shifts - morning, afternoon and evening-, to cope with the risk of contagion.

To mitigate the effect of school closures on the learning cycle, the Government (with the support of international donors) implemented measures such as the adoption of online learning platforms. However, telecommunications infrastructure is limited in the country, thus leaving most vulnerable children more exposed to dropping out of school<sup>10</sup>.

**Social protection** is limited in the country. A report from UNICEF on social protection in Equatorial Guinea mentions that existing policies are focused to a very limited extent on old age, disability, illness, and occupational risk coverage, and only for formal employees, civil servants and military personnel. These programs are mainly financed by employers and the Government, with a small contribution from the employee (see OGAWA 2015). Regarding social cohesion, the pandemic further highlighted the lack of information on the population's vulnerability and the inequalities in access to basic services, which may increase in the absence of the social protection systems that will hardly be implemented with the expected loss of State revenue. The digital gaps in the country, due to the lack of last-mile connections, limit the access that the population can have to measures against COVID-19 infections, such as telework and tele-education, receiving digital cash transfers<sup>11</sup>.

**At the socioeconomic level**, the country has different challenges. One of the main ones is the scarcity of up-to-date data on vulnerable populations. The main sources of information regarding vulnerability come from the 2006 poverty profile, the 2011 demographic and health survey (DHSEG-1), and some public data from the 2015 census. These data are complemented with administrative records from the different ministries, such as health, education, social affairs and gender equality. The **development of evidence-based national policies** and plans is hampered by the ineffectiveness of information management systems. The Government is working to improve the availability of reliable and timely routine information on social indicators. However, epidemiological and social data are not systematically collected and updated. It is also important to emphasize the lack of data on country poverty. Despite the inconsistencies in the poverty data, what is almost certain is that lack of employment is the main reason for poverty, as already suggested by the responses to the 2006 survey (ANGE 2007) (65% of the interviewees indicated this factor as the primary cause of poverty). This linkage between lack of employment and poverty could only be reinforced with Covid-19, although the available data is not available.<sup>12</sup>

The Government has been working on a significant number of laws, policies, strategies and plans (family code, social protection legislation, a bill on customary marriage, a gender-based violence law, national health regulations, a national health development plan, national policies on child health and nutrition, and child health and malaria strategic plans), which have not yet been approved/ratified.

Ensuring **good governance** is essential for the development of Equatorial Guinea as stable and peaceful country and for strengthening the rule of law, including the realization of economic, social and cultural

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<sup>10</sup> Socioeconomic impact Assessment of COVID-19 in Equatorial Guinea

<sup>11</sup> Ibidem

<sup>12</sup> Ibidem

rights of Equatoguinean and maritime security's. Despite improvements in democratic governance following the constitutional reforms of 2011 and the presidential elections of 2016 and the legislative, senatorial and local elections of 2017, the problems of good governance persist. These include weak technical and institutional capacity in the public sector, low participation of women and young people in decision-making processes, insufficient implementation of principles of accountability and transparency, as well as anti-corruption mechanisms<sup>13</sup>. Although these efforts of the State have made it possible to improve the quality of the administrative infrastructure and have brought the administration closer to citizens across the country, they have not significantly improved the effectiveness of the public sector in the provision of quality services that are accessible to all, especially the most disadvantaged. In 2021 Equatorial Guinea has adopted a legislation to fight against corruption. The country will required technical assistance and capacity building to enhance its national system to fight corruption and put in place tools and mechanisms. Due to its geographic position, Equatorial Guinea is exposed to incident of maritime crime. In absence of legislative framework and judiciary capacity, the country is not able to prevent and deter maritime crime. Therefore, the government has solicited UN support in the area of establishing system and mechanism on maritime security. Following the 2021 Bata explosion, the government is seeking United Nations support in the area of military security for building and managing military and none military depots and putting in place effective control and oversight systems.

Equatorial Guinea's major challenge is to use its oil wealth to achieve sustainable and more inclusive growth so as to improve the country's social status. Despite sustained growth and its huge natural resources, the country is lagging behind on the improvement of social indicators. The high incidence of hydrocarbons in the economy of Equatorial Guinea, 90% of GDP on average, has increased their vulnerability to external shocks, in particular price fluctuations in the oil on the international market and showed the need to reduce the national economy's dependence on oil and to generate inclusive growth that benefits society as a whole, particularly vulnerable people, including youth and women. Since of the active population, which represents 60.2% of the total population, almost half (49.4%) is unemployed, reducing unemployment, especially among young people, is a key economic and social development priority of Equatorial Guinea.

Similarly, **environmental sustainability** is at the heart of economic, social and cultural development strategies. The country has significant resources natural resources consisting of a diversified fauna and flora, and considerable fishery resources. The conservation of the ecosystem and the sustainable use of natural resources of the country are key for the country's transformation into an emerging economy. The United Nations system supports Equatorial Guinea in all areas related to the protection of the environment and the sustainable management of natural resources through environmental governance based on the participation of communities in the sustainable management of their natural resources.

The MPTF will facilitate interventions aimed at addressing the key bottlenecks above to facilitate and strengthen a more equity-focused approach to economic recovery, social services, health, education and water and sanitation, employment which includes the most disadvantaged. The strategies and activities leading to outputs such as increasing capacities, empowerment, changes in attitudes and behaviors are expected to directly address a large portion of the identified bottlenecks.

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<sup>13</sup> MANUD, 2019-2023 (UNDAF in the English version)

## **The vision of change**

**This theory of change** states that, based on the favorable assumptions like the enduring of peace and stability in the region, availability of vaccines, the continuity of funding to the MPTF from the Governments, bilateral partners and private sectors, the political will of the Government of Equatorial Guinea on achieving the SGDs and fulfilling its international obligations as regards the respect of human rights, fight against corruption, sustainable economic growth and environment, **if** interventions are coordinated at national and local levels, **if** technical support is provided to national intuitions so that they increase their capacity, accountability and transparency towards their citizens, if the principle of ‘leaving no one’ behind is applied in all economic recovery and development interventions, **if** children, young people and women are empowered to make their voices heard and co-create solutions for issues in their communities and are actively involved in the COVID-19 response and **if** national partners play their full part in the defence and protection of the environment, promoting the integration of environmental sustainability into development programmes and projects; **then** the Government will have the capacity to roll out the COVID 19 vaccination plan; the health, education and social protection systems will be able to cater for the needs of the most vulnerable groups and will have increased capacity to absorb future shocks, policy decisions and mechanisms will be based on updated evidence and data; national institutions will have increased capacity to promote the rule of law and combat corruption and maritime crime and will be more accountable and transparent towards their citizens and ensure increased participation of women and youth in the decision making process; policies and strategic plans for diversified employment-generating opportunities and for the sustainable use of natural resources will be developed and approved by national authorities **(OUTPUTS)**

These will contribute in the medium term to the following: **(OUTCOMES)**

1. All targeted citizens in Equatorial Guinea-including the most vulnerable- have access to COVID-19 vaccines;
2. Inclusive and quality health, education and social protection services and sectorial and economic policies are strengthened based on improved and up to date evidence;
3. Human rights and gender equality are promoted through increased governance mechanisms including fight against corruption and rule of law;
4. Increased inclusive and diversified economic growth and environmental sustainability

Also in the medium term, these changes will lead to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on health, social protection, education systems and environment and support the Government in the implementation of the National Development Plan **(SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE)**.

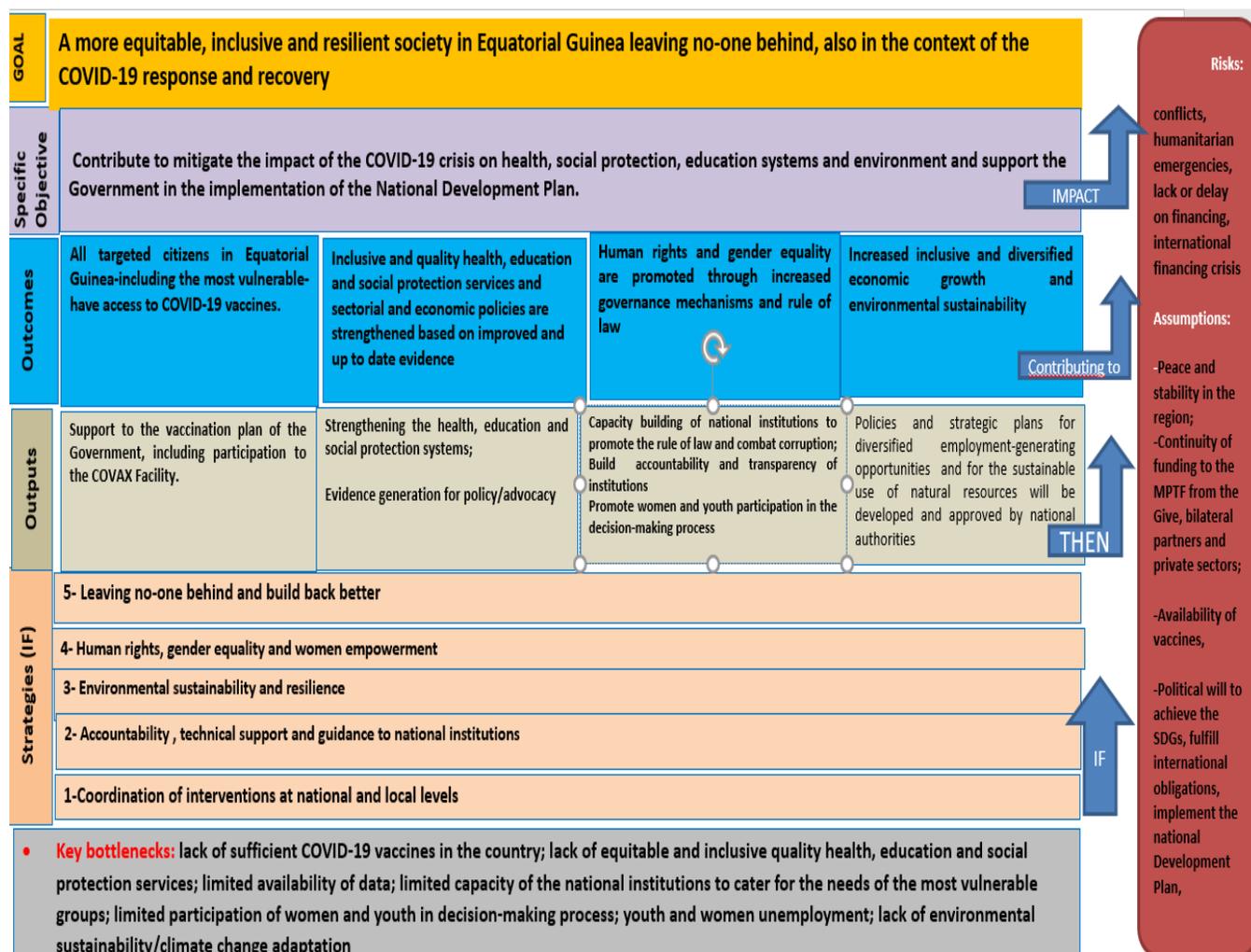
The United Nation’s vision is to contribute in the long term to a more equitable, inclusive and resilient society in Equatorial Guinea leaving no-one behind, also in the context of the COVID-19 response and recovery **(OVERALL OBJECTIVE/IMPACT)**.

The MPTF will support resilient development by supporting the capacities of local systems and structures to address these shocks and threats systematically by integrating risk factors into public services planning and delivery and ensuring access to services, during and after the COVID-19 outbreak.

Effective implementation **assumes** that authorities prioritize the needs of most vulnerable and social excluded families with children and that social services are prioritized by the municipalities and adequate focus and resources are allocated.

**Conflicts, humanitarian emergencies, lack or delay on financing, international financing crisis** are all risks that that might hinder the realization of the MPTF. The pathways of change from the identified problem to the expected outcomes are illustrated in the following diagram:

**FIGURE 1. The expected changes in the conditions of people: the theory of change**



## 5. Fund Governance and Coordination

The Fund operating details will be described in depth in the Fund Operational Manual that will be developed by the Fund's Secretariat with support from the MPTF Office after the establishment of the Fund.

The Fund's governance involves three levels: Operation (Steering Committees, Thematic Working Groups and the Fund Secretariat), Design and Administration (MPTF Office) and Implementation (implementing entities).

### Fund Operations

#### ***MPTF Steering Committee***

The Steering Committee is the body in charge of the strategic guidance and general supervision of the Fund. It is co-chaired by the Government and the UN Resident Coordinator. The Steering Committee comprises representatives of United Nations agencies signatories of the MOU, donors and MPTFO as ex-officio member.

The Steering Committee meets when deemed necessary and it is responsible for the following tasks:

- Provide general oversight and exercising overall accountability of the Fund;
- Approve the strategic direction of the Fund and its overall results framework;
- Approve the Fund TOR and Fund Operational Manual;
- Approve the Fund risk management strategy and review risk monitoring regularly;
- Review and approve proposals submitted for funding (if applicable: after being cleared by the relevant thematic working groups), ensuring their conformity with the requirements of the Fund Terms of Reference (TOR);
- Decide the allocation of funds;
- Review Fund status and oversee the overall progress against the results framework through monitoring, reporting and evaluation;
- Review the periodic progress reports consolidated by the Administrative Agent and the Secretariat based on the progress reports submitted by the Implementing Entities;
- Commission mid-term and final independent evaluations on the overall performance of the Fund;
- Approve direct costs related to fund operations, including the Secretariat costs;
- Approve Fund extensions and updates to the Fund TOR, as required.

The Steering Committee makes decisions by consensus.

#### **Covid-19 vaccination support window Steering Committee**

The Covid-19 vaccination support window has a specific Steering Committee with delegated authority to perform the SC functions within the window, in line with the strategic guidance of the Steering Committee. The Covid-19 vaccination support window steering committee is chaired by the UN Resident Coordinator (or designated UN official) and is comprised by the relevant Participating UN Organizations, the United States Department of Justice, and a non-voting, advisory representative of the Government of

Equatorial Guinea. The Fund Secretariat and Administrative Agent will also participate as ex-officio members.

### **Thematic window Steering Committee**

For each Thematic Window, the Steering Committee may decide to create a specific window Steering Committee with delegated authority to perform the SC functions within the thematic window, in line with the strategic guidance of the Steering Committee. The thematic window Steering Committee composition will be decided by the Fund Steering Committee based on each window's specific needs.

### ***Secretariat***

It is the entity responsible for the operational functioning of the Fund. The Secretariat provides technical and administrative support to the Steering Committee.

The Secretariat function will be provided by the Resident Coordinator Office.

The Secretariat structure can be reviewed and adjusted by the Steering Committee in line with needs and budget availability.

The Secretariat main functions are:

- Advise the Steering Committee on strategic priorities, programmatic and financial allocations (based on the inputs of inter-agency working groups, if applicable)
- Provide logistical and operational support to the Steering Committee;
- Organize calls for proposals and appraisal processes;
- Ensure the monitoring of the operational risks and Fund performance;
- Consolidate annual and final narrative reports provided by the Participating UN Organizations and share with the Steering Committee for review as well as with Administrative Agent for preparation of consolidated narrative and financial reports;
- Facilitate collaboration and communication between Participating UN Organizations to ensure programmes are implemented effectively;
- Liaise with the Administrative Agent on Fund administration issues, including submitting the funds transfer requests and issues related to project/ Fund extensions and project/Fund closure.

The costs of the Secretariat will be charged to the Fund as direct costs. The Secretariat's budget will be agreed and approved by the Steering Committee.

### ***Thematic Working Groups (TWG)***

The Thematic Working Groups are bodies in charge of reviewing projects or joint programmes submitted to the Fund, which will be submitted for approval to the Steering Committee through the Secretariat. Whenever deemed appropriate, and depending on the project theme, this function can be delegated to the relevant UN Results Groups, as appropriate.

During the project review, the implementing entities and/or executing partners can be invited to the TWG meetings in order to receive technical recommendations regarding project and programme execution.

Project review by Thematic Working Groups has the following objectives:

- Ensure project technical quality through technical specialized review per sector or field;
- Guarantee intervention relevancy: it ensures that the projects submitted to the approval of the Steering Committee are: (i) aligned to these Terms of Reference; (ii) coordinated with existing activities, foreseen within the sector; and (iii) developed in consultation with relevant national institutions.

The TWGs consists of representatives of the UN and a Fund's Secretariat representative. Depending on the project's subject matter, representatives from other entities (e.g. Government, donors, etc.) with relevant knowledge could be invited.

Thematic Working Groups meet as required.

## Fund Administration

### ***The Administrative Agent***

The Fund is administered by the MPTFO under the pass-through management modality. The Fund's administration services, whose costs are 1 percent of received contributions, include:

- (i) The Fund's setting up: support to the Fund's design (Terms of Reference and Operation Manual), and development of legal instruments;
- (ii) The Fund's administration: receipt, administration and release of funds to implementing entities in accordance with decisions from the Steering Committee, and financial report consolidation.

The MPTFO is responsible for the following functions:

- Provide support to the design of the Fund;
- Sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Participating UN Organizations;
- Sign Standard Administrative Agreements with donors that wish to contribute financially to the Fund;
- Receive and administer funds included those of the Fund's closure;
- Provide updated information to the Steering Committee regarding the regular resource availability;
- Subject to the availability of resources, transfer funds to implementing entities in accordance with the Steering Committee decisions;
- Consolidate the financial annual and final reports submitted by implementing entities and present the consolidated report to the Steering Committee and to each of the Fund's contributors;
- Provide a Fund's final financial report which included a notice of the Fund's closure;
- Release funds as direct costs for the running of the Secretariat, based on the Steering Committee decisions;
- Release funds for additional expenses that the Steering Committee decide to allocate;
- Provide tools for fund management to ensure transparency and accountability.

## Fund Implementation

The Fund will be implemented by UN Agencies signatories of the MPTF. Each implementing entity is programmatically and financially responsible for funds received in accordance with its own regulations, rules, policies and procedures, including those related to public procurement, as well as recruitment and evaluation of executing partners. Agencies will charge as indirect costs, seven percent (7%) of amounts received for project implementation.

## 6. Contributions

Contributions to the Fund may be accepted from governments of Member States of the United Nations or from intergovernmental or non-governmental organizations, or from private sources. Acceptance of funds from the private sector will be guided by criteria stipulated in the UN system-wide guidelines on cooperation between the UN and Business Community (the UN Secretary General's guidelines: <http://www.un.org/partners/business/otherpages/guide.htm>) and a Due Diligence process will be performed by the Administrative Agent.

The Fund's resources will be used to finance or co-finance projects, programmes and operations approved by the Fund's Steering Committee. As a general rule, the contributions will not be earmarked and will depend on the decisions of the Steering Committee, however contributors can earmark at window level.

The Fund receives contributions in fully convertible currency or any other currency that can be readily used. Such contributions will be deposited to the bank account designated by the MPTFO. The value of the contributions, if made in a currency other than US dollars will be determined by applying the UN operational exchange type in effect of the date of payment. Profit or loss due to currency exchange rate is registered in the Fund's account set by the Administrative Agent and will be taken on by the Fund.

## 7. Project Approval Process

Two types of project approval are proposed:

1. *Rapid cycle: the approval phases are shorter (total duration of maximum five days), to prioritize the approval of critical initiatives of short-term implementation.*
2. Regular cycle: includes phases of project identification, presentation, and review.

### 7.1. Rapid cycle

Under the rapid cycle, projects are developed based on a request from the SC and will have between eight (8) weeks and eight (8) months' timeframes.

The Implementing Entity submits the project document to the Secretariat. The Secretariat consults the relevant UN Results Group or TWG, as decided by the SC, to review virtually the proposal within no more than 72 hours at the end of which the project shall be deemed approved on a no-objection basis. Once the project document is endorsed by the UN Group or TWG, and the technical sheet is prepared by the Secretariat (within no more than two [2] working days), the Secretariat will circulate these documents to the SC for approval, which can be done electronically and on a *non-objection basis within 72 hours of submission*. When the project is approved, the funds transfer follows the same process as the regular cycle.

This rapid cycle will be used when the SC considers necessary for emergency interventions.

## 7.2. Regular cycle

### 7.2.1 Project identification, design and submission

Project identification will be ensured through needs analysis that can be done at level of the SC or UN Thematic Groups. Such projects should be aligned to the UNDAF and SERP outcomes. The SC and the UN groups will be supported by the Secretariat in the identification of priorities and needs.

Two project submission processes are foreseen: Direct submission and Call for proposals.

1. Direct submission of projects: Based on SC directives, prioritizations and consultations, the Implementing Agencies may be directly invited to present project proposals to the Secretariat.
2. Calls for proposals: The Secretariat, based on SC's decisions, will request implementing entities to submit project proposals. The call will specify the requirements for submitting a proposal.

Prior to the Project Development, the implementing agencies will present a concept note to the SC through the Secretariat for validation. This is to ensure that prior to developing the full-fledged project proposal it is aligned to the relevant strategy and priorities and is within the funding range set by the SC or TWG for the respective Thematic Area.

The design of the projects will be the responsibility of the Implementing Agencies. The design of projects or programmes shall be consistent with the programmatic parameters established in the Windows Strategic Framework. The minimum requirement for project proposals should be: the key expected results and indicators, activities, indicative budget, a risk analysis, proposed implementing partners and geographical scope.

### 7.2.2. Review of Projects

The Secretariat, with the support of relevant thematic area specialists, will conduct an assessment of the project proposals.

The assessment is divided in two (2) reviews:

#### 1. Secretariat Review

This review will ensure the administrative completeness of the submission and will be done within one day of the receipt of the proposal. The administrative review includes: (i) format; (ii) supporting documents; (iii) budget; and (iv) general value for money assessment.

#### 2. Technical Review

Proposals are then transmitted by the Secretariat to the relevant TWG or UN Results Group, as decided by the SC, for a technical assessment. The relevant Group conducts the programme-related quality control of the proposal and ensures alignment, coordination and prioritization of the intervention in the relevant Thematic Area, including gender equality and environmental management. The review completed within 05 working days ensures that programmes that are subject to the approval of the SC are aligned to

priorities and needs of the relevant strategies, coordinated with existent and foreseen activities, and developed in consultation with relevant actors.

The Secretariat shall send the consolidated package of all submitted proposals to the SC within three working days of submission and 48 hours prior to the date of the scheduled meeting.

### 7.2.3. Project approval and funds transfer

#### *Project approval*

Once the reviews are finalised, project documents will be submitted to the SC for approval. The SC will approve the funds' allocations based on the review package received from the Secretariat. The reviewing process will not go beyond one week from the reception of the project proposal. The SC will take into account all the proposals and will select these based on their alignment with the Fund's Strategic Framework, available funding, complementarity of the intervention with other ongoing or foreseen actions and level of involvement of concerned actors. The Cross-cutting criteria will also be taken into account.

Programmes or projects approved with recommendations do not require submitting a proposal again. The Secretariat shall ensure that the implementing entity incorporates the recommendations of the SC, before requesting the MPTFO to transfer funds to the Participating UN Organization.

The SC decisions are recorded in its minutes of meeting, which are consolidated by the Secretariat and shared electronically.

#### *Funds' transfer*

The Secretariat shall request the transfer of funds to the AA by submitting a Funds Transfer Request (FTR) form for the budget allocations approved by the SC. The MPTFO will carry out transfers approved by the SC to implementing entities no later than five working days after the receipt of the FTR. Upon completion of the transfer, the representative of the receiving organization and the Secretariat will be notified through electronic mail.

### 7.3. Covid-19 vaccination support window cycle

The Covid-19 vaccination support window uses a specific approval cycle. The projects are developed based on a request from the Covid-19 vaccination support window SC.

The Implementing Entity submits the project document to the Secretariat. The Secretariat consults with the relevant UN agencies, as decided by the window SC, to review the proposal within no more than 5 working days. Once the project document is reviewed, and the technical sheet is prepared by the Secretariat (within no more than two [2] working days), the Secretariat will circulate these documents to the window SC for approval, which can be done electronically and on a *non-objection basis within 72 hours of submission*. When the project is approved, the funds transfer follows the same process as the Fund regular cycle.

## 8. Risk management

The final objective of a risk management strategy at the Fund level is facilitating the achievement of programme-related objectives of its interventions in the context of the risk in which it operates.

The Technical Secretariat will develop a risk management strategy whose main objectives are: accelerate Fund implementation and increase its impact, ensure that the Fund's interventions meet the "Do no harm" principles, verify that resources are used for foreseen purposes and improve risk management capacity of national institutions.

The Fund's risk management strategy will encompass the following tasks:

- Develop shared understanding of risks faced by the Fund;
- Define risk appetite or tolerance of the Fund (Fund's risk profile);
- Establish the Fund's policies regarding identified risks (Fund's risk policies);
- Identify or clarify potential compensation from risk taking and seek consensus among stakeholders regarding its management;
- Determine risk treatment through measures of mitigation or adaptation;
- Identify risk holders, control its spreading and define follow-up measures;
- Establish information strategies and common messages about the risks.

Every programme or project approved by the Fund shall comply with the risk management strategy. The fulfillment of such strategy will be one of the selection criteria during the process of project evaluation.

## 9. Monitoring, evaluation and reporting

### 8.1 Monitoring

The Secretariat is responsible for the continuous monitoring and evaluation of programmes, providing guidance to implementing partners on performance indicators and methods of data collection and analysis. The Secretariat consolidates programme-level information in a central, results-based management system. Performance data is gathered at outcome and output levels, linking programme-related and financial result indicators so evaluators can measure the Fund efficiency and effectiveness.

#### Output level

Output indicators are specific to each programme and reflect changes in skills and abilities, or the new products and services that can be sourced with resources provided by the Fund. Evaluating performance against each output indicator involves taking external factors into account alongside pre-identified assumptions and risks. Implementing organizations are responsible for meeting the first level of results, collecting data, and reporting process/findings.

#### Outcome level

Signature outcome indicators are defined in the Result Framework. Implementing partners are obligated to report against selected outcome indicators. The evaluation of performance indicators take external factors into account, as well as previously identified assumptions and risks in each theory of change.

Gathering data is a mandatory element to be reflected in every annual report drafted by implementing partners.

## 8.2 Evaluation

External evaluations are required to assess programme performance and at the mid-term and, if necessary, around the time of programme closure. Evaluations are used to analyze programme performance and demonstrate the validity of theories of change. The Fund's mid-term and final (independent) evaluations will be commissioned by the Steering Committee to assess overall Fund performance, design and management. In the evaluation specific recommendations may be provided to the Steering Committee to guide revisions to the theory of change, governance arrangements, and/or project approval cycle.

## 8.3 Reporting:

The responsibilities related to reporting are gathered and detailed in the Memorandum of Understanding (Section IV) and Standard Administrative Agreements (SAA) (Section V).

All the implementing entities will carry out annual and final reports on activities and expenditures according to a common format designed for the Fund.

### Narrative reports

For each project, the Participating UN Organizations will present the following reports to the Secretariat for consolidation and further transmission the Administrative Agent:

- (a) Annual narrative reports to be provided no more than three months (31 March) after the end of the calendar year;
- (b) Final narrative reports after the end of activities contained in the programme-related approved document, including the final year of such activities, to be submitted no more than four months (30 April) in the following year after the financial closure of the project.

Annual and final reports will exhibit results based on evidence. Annual and final narrative reports will compare actual results against estimated results in terms of outputs and outcomes and they will explain the reasons of higher or lower performance. The final narrative report will also include the analysis of how the outputs and outcomes have contributed to the Fund's global impact.

### Financial Reports

For each project, the Participating UN Organizations will present the following financial statements and reports to the Administrative Agent:

- (a) Annual financial statements and reports to 31 December, regarding released resources by the Fund to them; these shall be provided no more than four months (30 April) after the ending of the calendar year;
- (b) Final certified financial statements and financial reports after the completion of activities contained in the programme-related approved document, including the final year of such activities, to be submitted no more than six months (30 June) in the following year after the financial closure of the project.

Based on these reports, the Administrative Agent will prepare consolidated financial reports which will submit, along with the narrative consolidated report, to each of the Fund's Contributors and to the Steering Committee as per the schedule established in the Standard Administrative Agreement.

## 10. Accountability and transparency

These clauses are detailed in the legal instruments that will govern the Fund (MOU and SAA).

### 10.1 Accountability

The UN entities will provide implementation services in accordance with its own financial regulations, rules and policies.

For each project or programme approved for funding, each implementing entity will provide the Secretariat and the MPTFO annual and final reports and financial statements prepared in accordance with their accounting system and reporting procedures, as stated in the legal agreements signed with the Administrative Agent.

Financial audit: the Administrative Agent and the UN implementing bodies will be audited according to their own financial rules and regulations, in line with the audit framework for multi-donor funds, as agreed by the Audit Internal Services of the UN implementing bodies and endorsed by UNDG in 2014.

### 10.2. Transparency

The MPTFO web site, Gateway (<http://mptf.undp.org>), is a web-based service portal that provides real-time financial data issued directly from the UNDP accounting system. The Fund has a separate page in the Gateway portal which allows partners and the public at large to follow-up the Fund contributions, transfers and expenses, and access key documents and reports.

The Secretariat and the MPTFO will ensure that the Fund's operations are posted on the Gateway portal. From its side, each implementing entity will take appropriate measures to promote the Fund. Information shared with the media regarding beneficiaries of funding, official press releases, reports and publications will acknowledge the role of the Fund.

## 11. Amendments, duration and termination

The present Terms of Reference may be modified at any time by the Steering Committee (including the duration).

The Equatorial Guinea MPTF Fund was established upon signing of the Memorandum of Understanding and will terminate upon completion of all programmes funded through the Fund and after satisfaction of all commitments and liabilities. This fund will be established for an initial period of three (3) years, aligned with the current UNDAF cycle that runs until the end of 2023.

The last date to transfer funds to Participating Organizations will be 31 December of the penultimate year of the programmatic cycle (i.e. 31 December 2022). Completion of all operational activities will be 31 December of the end year of the programme (i.e. 31 December 2023). The dissemination of the final narrative report will be 30 June of the year following the operational closure of the Fund.