



**UNITED NATIONS
MULTI-PARTNER
TRUST FUND**

Reconciliation *Stabilisation* Resilience

**THE UNITED NATIONS MULTI-PARTNER
TRUST FUND FOR RECONCILIATION,
STABILISATION, RESILIENCE IN SOUTH
SUDAN**

(SOUTH SUDAN RSRTF)

REVISED TERMS OF REFERENCE (05 June 2025)¹



¹ This is a revised version of the founding Terms of Reference (TOR) of November 2018. In accordance with the requirement for routine review of the Fund TOR the SC endorsed this updated version to reflect the RSRTF's strategic direction and allocation procedures as well as incorporating lessons from its first six years of operations and the findings of a 2024 comprehensive fund evaluation.

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Executive Summary

The South Sudan Reconciliation, Stabilisation, and Resilience Trust Fund (RSRTF) is a joint initiative of the UN Country Team (UNCT) and the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) established in 2018. It provides strategic financing to Area-Based Programmes (ABPs) to reduce violence, strengthen social cohesion, restore governance and justice structures, and build long-term community resilience. The RSRTF embraces a Triple Nexus approach that integrates humanitarian, development, and peace efforts, aligned with national strategies and United Nations reforms. As of 2025, following a comprehensive evaluation, the Fund remains a catalytic mechanism focused on short- to mid-term stabilisation and peacebuilding. This document outlines the Fund's objectives, operational structures, programmatic framework, allocation processes, and accountability mechanisms. At the Steering Committee meeting held on 05 June 2025, the SC unanimously endorsed the South Sudan RSRTF TOR 2025 and extended it until 31 December 2028.

Approved by:

Date: 10 June 2025

Signature:

[Redacted Signature]

Name: Anita Gbeho Kiki

Position: The DSRSG/RC/HC, the Steering Committee Chair

Organization: United Nations Mission in South Sudan



Glossary of Acronyms

RSRTF: Reconciliation, Stabilisation, and Resilience Trust Fund

ABP: Area-Based Programmes

SC: Steering committee

FS: Fund Secretariat

AA: Administrative Agent

MA: Managing Agent

UNCT: United Nations Country Team

UNMISS: United Nations Mission to South Sudan

HDP: Humanitarian, Development and Peace

RSR: Reconciliation, Stabilisation, and Resilience

MPTFO: Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office

HACT: Harmonised Approach to Cash Transfers

ARG: Area Reference Group

PBF: Peace Building Fund

SSHF: South Sudan Humanitarian Fund

TGW: Thematic Working Group



1. Objective

The United Nations Country Team (UNCT) and the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) jointly launched the South Sudan Reconciliation, Stabilisation, and Resilience Trust Fund (RSRTF) in December 2018. The Fund provides strategic financing to integrated programmes that together lessen the destructive drivers of conflict and create more stable conditions to realize development and resilience objectives. Drawing on the comparative advantages across UNMISS, UN agencies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), local/national partners, and local stakeholders at the grassroots level, the RSRTF promotes integrated programming across the ‘Triple Nexus’ of the humanitarian, development, and peace fields.

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

Instead of isolated projects that address only the symptoms of violence, the Fund fosters coordinated, multi-actor initiatives that simultaneously tackle the root causes and structural drivers of conflict. The Fund promotes cooperative efforts across multiple actors working in the same space at the same time to effectively address the root causes and structural drivers of conflict, whether political, security, social, or economic, in an integrated manner. By fostering stable political and security environments, the RSRTF contributes to reducing risks and vulnerabilities that fuel South Sudan’s escalating humanitarian needs, instead stimulating conditions for development and recovery. Through adaptive, flexible, complementary reconciliation, stabilisation, and resilience efforts, the intent is to attain lasting change, supporting communities to realise sustained peace, stability, and economic & livelihood gains.

Recognising the centrality of sustained political dialogue, engagement, and leadership for resolving violent conflicts and the influence of political dynamics as a determinant of whether interventions can succeed, the Fund’s nexus approach sponsors strategic alliances that consider the political and security dimensions of the operating context and maximise the potential to realise tangible change. Central to the concept of the Fund, the programmatic framework of the RSRTF emphasizes the political primacy of national actors in sustainable conflict resolution. The Fund uniquely bridges sub-national, grassroots, state, and national-level peacebuilding processes, linking bottom-up approaches to efforts at the national level that support the development of accountable and inclusive governance.

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

- **Reconciliation:** Rebuild trust and confidence, strengthen social cohesion, and promote peaceful coexistence through gender and age-sensitive communal conflict prevention, management, and resolution.

Stabilisation: Broaden participation and enhance space for peaceful political processes, strengthen the social contract between citizens and institutions, and support the restoration of security, the rule of law, and access to justice.

- **Resilience:** Invest in capacities, assets, and opportunities that foster interdependency between communities, deter the mobilisation of at-risk youth, and promote social integration, equality, agency, and self-reliance to realise peace dividends that shift incentives and raise the cost of resorting to violence.

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

Resilience programmes that encourage self-reliance are more viable in a secure environment. A secure environment, however, that does not reconcile underlying differences is less sustainable. Supporting communities economically that have reconciled is more likely to equate to resilient and self-sustaining gains in the longer term and enable them to successfully resist pressure to resort to violence as they resolve or manage tension. In South Sudan's fluid and fragmented context, the notion of a linear continuum or transition from conflict and acute humanitarian need to reconciliation, recovery, and development is unrealistic. The complementary elements supported by the Fund enable more flexible and adaptive programming responsive to the inevitable shifting dynamics of the context, resulting in changeable sequencing and gradations of the three RSR elements over time as changing circumstances dictate.

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

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

2. Context

The brutal civil war that erupted in December 2013 and the protracted peace process since then have dominated the political and security context of South Sudan. While implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS) has resulted in a marked reduction of large-scale political violence between the main parties, the implementation of its political commitments and the unification of military forces remains incomplete to date and continuing delay has sparked an increase in sub-national and inter-communal violence. Fragmentation, shifting alliances, and related power

and identity-based conflicts promote division and competition, contributing to more pronounced ethnic polarization and reduced public confidence in overall peace and security.

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

The conflict in neighbouring Sudan worsened the humanitarian conditions in South Sudan. Over a million people have crossed the border into South Sudan since the war started in April 2023, further complicating the humanitarian situation in the country.

The number of people in need of humanitarian aid continues to climb each year and now equates to more than 80% of the total population of South Sudan. For instance, the 2024 humanitarian budget requirement to address these needs is USD 1.79 billion compared to USD 1.17 billion in 2018³, while the number of people in need is 9.3 million in 2025 among the 13.2 million population. As the gap between needs and resources widens, which is now a global phenomenon, the reality of escalating needs and an inevitable decrease in resources will exacerbate the humanitarian crisis in South Sudan and likely result in increased loss of life.

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

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

For many communities in South Sudan, the Revitalized- Agreement to the Resolution of Conflicts in South Sudan, while bringing a decrease in overall levels of violence, the extension of the transitional period, and delays in completing the implementation of the R-ARCSS, increased uncertainty, enhanced localised intercommunal tensions that are driven by power struggles, resource competition, and prone to political manipulation. With few avenues for representation in either the political or security spheres, many minority

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

³ <https://www.unocha.org/south-sudan>.



ethnic groups are likely to face continued marginalisation. In contrast, even the majority ethnic communities will continue to suffer from the disconnect between citizens and the state. Marginalisation in South Sudan tends to be structural, with biases in terms of participation, often accompanied by the physical marginalisation of peripheries from power centres and urban areas. As such, perceptions of isolation and neglect find easy reference in poor infrastructure, the lack of basic services, and limited financial support from the centre to the states. In such a context, communal self-reliance is prioritized with high levels of internal cohesion, creating mutually exclusive hierarchies that increase the difficulty of peacebuilding approaches based on inter-group action.

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

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

3. The Core Mission of the Fund

The United Nations Multi-Partner Trust Fund for Reconciliation, Stabilisation, and Resilience in South Sudan (RSRTF) is established to mitigate and prevent violence in its designated areas of intervention. The Fund’s core mission is to implement immediate and targeted security and stabilisation interventions that address conflict drivers, reinforce social cohesion, and strengthen the rule of law.

The RSRTF seeks to facilitate the transition from crisis response to sustainable peacebuilding and development by fostering a secure and predictable operating environment. The Fund’s comprehensive evaluation, conducted in 2024, emphasised the need to define whether it will remain a short-term catalytic fund or assume responsibility for longer-term recovery programming. The outcome of these strategic reflections and consultations with diverse stakeholders concluded that the Fund should remain a short-term stabilisation and security measure, playing a catalytic role in stabilising conflict hotspots in the country. This approach aligns with peacebuilding processes and best practices in conflict resolution, ensuring that stabilisation efforts are inclusive, accountable, and responsive to the evolving security dynamics in South Sudan.

4. Approach

Despite South Sudan’s many challenges, there are opportunities where context-specific strategic planning and alignment of resources can bring about meaningful change in the short and medium term. Addressing the trajectory of escalating humanitarian requirements – saving lives sustainably – while building the



The interlinked, mutually reinforcing notion of peace and development has been promoted since the 2005 UN World Summit. The ‘New Way of Working’ that emerged from the 2016 Humanitarian Summit further advocated for breaking barriers between humanitarian and development actors. As the UN Secretary-General, António Guterres, called for “sustaining peace” to be considered “the third leg of the triangle” and specifically called for earlier investment in the foundations for resilience, stability, and a more integrated response across development, humanitarian, and peacebuilding fields.⁴ The Secretary-General’s vision for repositioning the UN development system highlighted the requirement for a broad, whole-of-United Nations approach, emphasising that in conflict settings, to build resilience and sustain peace fully, UN Country Teams must work in an integrated manner with UN peacekeeping missions.

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

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

The Fund aims to enhance sustainability by supporting and training local actors, including local administration, local justice actors, and civil society, during the programming phase. This will enable them to continue and sustain the newly acquired or re-established peace in their areas. Additionally, it will aim to equip them with sufficient capacity to collaborate with development and other actors, thus further consolidating their achievements and improving their situation. The Fund envisages this will allow them to focus on sustainable development and resilience. By learning lessons from the 2024 Fund Evaluation, to ensure the local actors deliver effectively on the fund's objectives, and to ensure localisation, the Fund determined to maximise the role of local actors by increasing their participation and allocating a 30% budget at the targeted ABPs to national organisations.

Enabling Area-Based Programming

RSRTF programs are predominantly 'area-based', targeting distinct conflict hotspots in South Sudan, concentrating resources to comprehensively address underlying drivers of conflict and overcome the fundamental obstacles to sustained peace. The area-based approach promotes collective efforts that provide

⁴ <https://news.ain.org/en/story/2023/11/14/79426-xx-The%20IN%20Secretary%20CGenral%20on%20press%20conflict%20-%2080%2D26-630X-29>



a holistic response to complex challenges, underpinned by a political strategy and building on locally owned peace agreements. The approach enables actions that tackle the root causes of conflicts in parallel to responding to the urgent needs they generate to stabilise an area and create the conditions for sustained resilience and development endeavours.

4.1. Providing Flexible Financing

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

Maximising the synergies between the work of the UN Country Team, UNMISS, and NGOs has been identified as a priority objective by all partners to achieve better results in the fragile context of South Sudan. Unfortunately, rather than bridging these silos, financing instruments frequently contribute to further dividing the streams of external assistance. The high level of earmarking towards specific agencies and projects and the separation between stabilisation/peacekeeping funding of UNMISS on one side and the development funding on the other deters collaboration across the sectors and actors. In addition, pure development instruments remain ill-equipped to deal with political unpredictability and are often not responsive enough to changing circumstances. To ensure the adaptiveness of the Fund to the evolving implementation contexts, it applies flexible resource allocation modalities, including the Crisis modifier budgeting that aims to address unforeseen circumstances that require the attention of the RSRTF intervention without further delays and agency-specific bureaucratic impediments.

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

4.2. Adaptive Programming and ABP Timeframes

In recognition of the complexities of RSR programming, executing the learnings of the past six years of the RSRTF ABP implementation, and upon the recommendation of the 2024 RSRTF Comprehensive Fund Evaluation,⁵ the Fund is moving toward a three-year ABP cycle. This includes a mandatory inception phase focused on community consultation and co-design, midterm adaptive programming reviews, and clearly articulated exit strategies aligned with development actors. Budgetary flexibility of up to 20% between budget categories is allowed, and crisis modifiers will remain standard features.

In the circumstances that there is an absence of development actors who intervene and sustain the gains achieved by RSRTF, the Steering Committee (SC) can analyse the recommendations from the evaluations and lessons learned and decide to extend the program with an additional phase.

⁵ The RSRTF has undergone a comprehensive Fund Evaluation in 2024 by an external independent evaluation firm commissioned by the SC which came up a number of recommendations to be implemented to improve on its delivery.



4.3. Increasing Coherence

The 2024 RSRTF Comprehensive Fund Evaluation identified key areas to increase coherence with other funding mechanisms, and the RSRTF should continue to prioritise bottom-up coordination through its Area-Based Programmes (ABPs), where practical collaboration can be tailored to local needs. Strengthening the role of Area Reference Groups (ARGs) is key, as they provide a platform for aligning efforts among RSRTF, UNMISS, NGOs, government actors, and actors implementing programs in the same location at the same time, ensuring accountability and contextual relevance. Clarifying the strategic roles of partners, particularly UNMISS, is also essential, especially as mandates evolve and the RSRTF considers longer-term planning. New frameworks such as the Fund Complementarity Strategy and the UN's Area-Based Leadership (ABL) initiative offer additional opportunities to enhance coordination and avoid duplication. At the same time, systemic constraints—such as the SSHF's focus on humanitarian priorities or the PBF's centralised decision-making—must be acknowledged and managed in a realistic manner. Ultimately, maintaining the RSRTF's flexible and crisis-responsive identity while progressively integrating longer-term humanitarian development (HDP) nexus objectives will be crucial to improving coherence in South Sudan's complex funding environment.

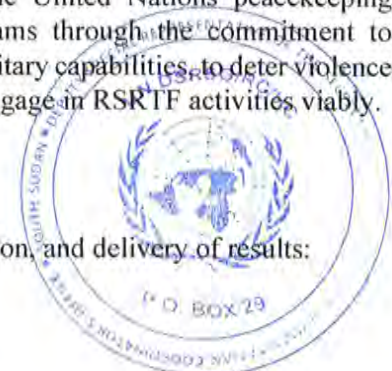
The governance mechanism of the RSRTF allows a wide range of partners (UN, development partners, donors, and civil society) to agree on priorities and strategies collectively. As well as seeking to sustain multi-stakeholder area-based partnerships through direct financing, the Fund additionally encourages initiatives that build synergies with other complementary stabilisation and resilience funds and programs.

Through its ARG approach, RSRTF ABPs are closely coordinated with UNCT, non-governmental, governmental partners, local community-based organisations and initiative funded by other donors. The Fund also explores opportunities for increasing coherence and leveraging impact with initiatives the South Sudan's Ministry of Peacebuilding and other Government agencies, United Nations Peacebuilding Fund, South Sudan Humanitarian Funding, the World Bank, the United Kingdom Peacebuilding Opportunities Fund, and the United States Office of Democracy and Governance, amongst others at both capital and subnational levels. As a result, the Fund capitalises on synergies and complementarities not only amongst RSRTF projects but also more widely with programs funded from other sources and implemented by other partners.

In providing strategic leadership to the Fund, directly reporting to the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General/Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Co-ordinator (DSRSG/HC/RC) at the RCO office to ensure 360 coordination within the UN System, other initiatives under UNCT, OCHA and strategic partners at country level and externally. The Fund also receives support from senior UN officials in the country to ensure close strategic and operational partnerships among relevant political, security, and development actors and between the United Nations, the Government, and other key stakeholders, including international and regional organizations. Furthermore, as head of the United Nations peacekeeping operation, the SRSRSG ensures strategic support to the RSRTF programs through the commitment to multidimensional Mission resources, inclusive of civilian, police, and military capabilities, to deter violence and foster safe and supportive environments conducive for partners to engage in RSRTF activities viably.

4.4. Ensuring Transparency

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



- By including a broad representation of stakeholders in the governance structure of the Fund as the Steering Committee, partners are able to participate in the decision-making processes and access all the evidence and data shaping the decisions, as well as reports on activities undertaken, including on challenges faced and results achieved.
- By pooling resources contributed towards reconciliation, stabilisation, and resilience activities in the jointly agreed priority areas, the Fund provides a consolidated overview of funds allocated, making available joint reporting on the implementation progress and results achieved.
- The results-based management system also enhances accountability for results and enables greater visibility and measurement of collective actions, outcome effectiveness, and overall impact.
- By posting all relevant information, including finances, on the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office (MPTFO) Gateway of UNDP, an open-source platform that allows easy access to real-time information on the funding status (commitments and deposits by donors, transfers made to implementing partners, progress reports, etc.).
- The Fund also publishes an Annual Report, the soft copy of which is uploaded to the MPTFO platform.

5. Programmatic Framework

Positioned at the intersection of peacekeeping, humanitarian, and development, the Fund's programmatic framework reflects the mutual priorities of the UNCT and the Mission. It draws upon the overarching United Nations Sustainable Development Co-operation Framework (UNSDCF) 2023-2025⁶ and the UNMISS Strategic Vision 2021/2024⁷. The Fund's results-based management system ensures that all actors contribute to a minimum set of predefined outcomes and results indicators aligned with the SDG goals for 2030. This both facilitates a view of the comprehensive aggregated changes the Fund has influenced and enables clear identification of RSRTF contributions to the UNCF Results Framework and the Comprehensive Planning and Performance Assessment System (CPAS). See the RSRTF Results Framework in the Annex.

The RSRTF envisages to bridge institutional silos and facilitate a 'whole of system' approach. Stemming from the three thematic priorities – Reconciliation, Stabilisation, and Resilience. The RSRTF has six strategic outcomes that reflect the intersection of programming between the development, stabilisation, and peacebuilding fields (see graphic below).

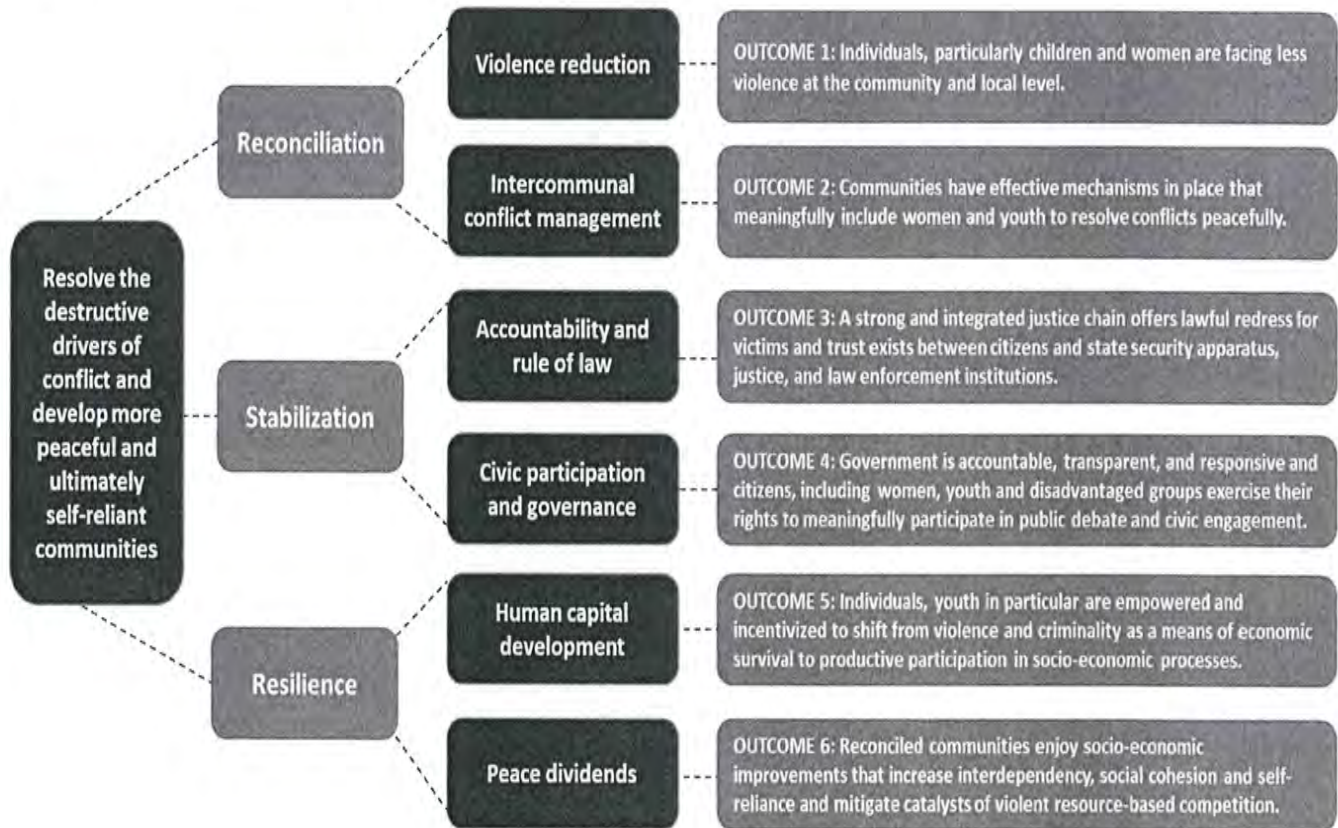
Funded programmes and projects may align with one or a number of outcomes informed by identified priorities in the proposed location. Actions across the pillars are complementary and mutually reinforcing to increase the impact of change. Area-based programmes are expected to address at least one outcome

⁶ The UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2023-2025 is the embodiment of this commitment. Created in collaboration with representatives of the Government, civil society (including NGOs, CSOs, academia and media), the private sector as well as development partners, it is designed to address the national priorities of today as well as prepare for and advance on the bright future planned for tomorrow. It therefore contains support for implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS) and the Revised National Development Strategy (R-NDSS) 2021-2024, with strengthened linkages to our humanitarian work under the Humanitarian Response Plan corresponding to the period of the Cooperation Framework.

The UNSDCF 2023-2025 defines the collective vision and response of the UN Country Team in South Sudan to the country's national priorities as well as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. As Resident Coordinator of the UN in South Sudan

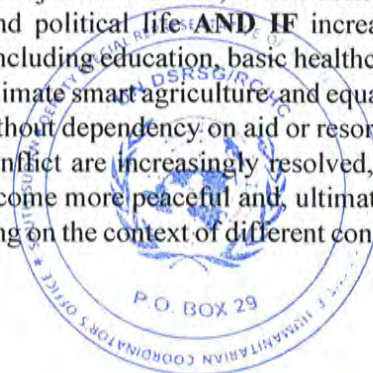
⁷ Through resolution 2567, the Security Council envisaged a three-year strategic vision for UNMISS to: prevent a return to civil war in South Sudan, build durable peace at the local and national levels; support inclusive and accountable governance; and facilitate the conduct of free, fair, and peaceful elections in accordance with the Revitalized Agreement.

across all three pillars. Where multiple outcomes are being addressed, the integrated nature must be explicit through the project-specific Theory of Change and by articulating the program's intervention strategy.



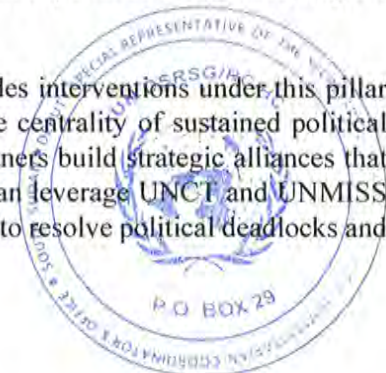
Abbreviated RSRTF Theory of Change

IF communal conflict prevention, management, and reconciliation increasingly restore trust, promote peaceful coexistence, and strengthen sociopolitical cohesion **AND IF** conducive governance and security conditions, accountability, and the rule of law are reinforced and access to justice widened, in turn deterring violence and creating conditions for productive social, economic and political life **AND IF** increased community interdependency, capacities, resources, access to services including education, basic healthcare, able to build climate resilience in terms of access to natural resources, climate smart agriculture and equality enhance communities' agency and self-reliance to meet basic needs without dependency on aid or resorting to violence or criminal activities **THEN** the destructive drivers of conflict are increasingly resolved, the cost of returning to violence becomes prohibitive and communities become more peaceful and, ultimately, self-reliant ensuring transitional to medium to long term peace depending on the context of different conflict hotspot locations.



5.1. Reconciliation

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



5.2. Stabilisation

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

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

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

By agreeing to implement the R-ARCSS, the Government has indicated its willingness to implement the institutional reforms necessary to build a more accountable, transparent, and responsive government for the people of South Sudan. At the local level, this requires governance and service delivery to be people-centred and for public expenditure policies to be pro-poor and gender sensitive. RSRTF will continue to work with the same objectives as provisioned by R-ARCSS, irrespective of its continuity, but in agreement with the similar framework as agreed by the government after it ends in the future.

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

The Fund provides support for establishing or enhancing a climate-smart local economy and strengthening it through market linkage, job creation, entrepreneurship, skill training, climate-smart agriculture, including assisting communities to move from sustenance agriculture to commercial agriculture, and livestock management. RSRTF partners also provide support to the communities for the protection, recovery, and prevention of degradation of the local environment, for example, through sustainable management of environmental resources, renewable energy, recycling, water harvesting, etc. In areas where drought or flooding reduces the availability of water points, grazing, and agricultural land, the Fund works with communities to develop disaster risk management plans and water and rangeland management strategies. The overarching aim is that economically resilient communities will more successfully resist pressure to resort to violence as they resolve or manage tensions. Addressing disaster risk reduction and climate change

effects also overlaps with the Resilience pillar, as they are mutually beneficial and interconnected at the operational level.

5.3. Resilience

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

The RSRTF supports the creation of joint community assets that foster interdependency between communities, such as markets, which, in addition to creating commercial opportunities, can also improve social cohesion through inter-community interaction. The Fund creates equitable access to resources and creates inter-community-led management of resources to dissolve inter-community conflicts for access to resources and sustainable use of resources. RSRTF resilience activities also deter the mobilisation of at-risk youth into armed groups or the remobilisation of ex-combatants by providing them with access to education, technical and skill training, vocational training, business management, and entrepreneurship training to create opportunities and refocus on positive aspects of their lives rather than falling into the hopeless cycle of violence. By engaging at-risk youth, women, victims of violence, and ex-combatants in cash for work, access to education, and labour-intensive infrastructure rehabilitation, they can productively engage in alternative livelihood activities while at the same time contributing to their communities, promoting social integration, and combating stigma and bias. By increasing the availability of secondary education and functional adult literacy programs, community members are afforded opportunities to gain the necessary skills to engage in the formal economy and, therefore, have options other than resorting to violence or criminal activities.

5.4. Sustainability and Exit Strategies.

The RSRTF intends to create conditions of peace and stability where they are currently absent. By supporting community reconciliation processes and reducing incentives for violence in hotspot areas, the RSRTF serves as a short-term security and stability measure with mid to longer-term implications for peace and development (through its activities, the RSRTF contributes to at least the following seven Sustainable Development Goals). The selection of candidate areas, however, requires a degree of stability and demonstrated “readiness” of local authorities, leaders, and communities to actively engage in and contribute to a partnership.



Figure 1: RSRTF ACTIVITIES CONTRIBUTE TO ACHIEVING SEVEN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs)

As a strategic entry point, the RSRTF actions aim to create the conditions for subsequent development programming and facilitate the piloting of activities to strengthen the evidence base and foster the development of best practices. In this regard, activities supported by the Fund aim to be catalytic in terms of laying the groundwork for sustained development programming that, over time, will deliver the priorities and outcomes envisaged in the country's National Development Strategy.

Given the focus of the RSRTF on creating conditions of peace and stability that are conducive to viable resilience efforts, the Fund serves as a natural precursor to a long-term Humanitarian Development Peace (HDP) Program that emphasises resilience and development. In order to smoothly transition to an HDP programme, it may be necessary to adopt an area-based programming approach and strive to improve collaboration among donors, UN agencies, and international and national/local NGOs in order to achieve resilience and stabilisation objectives. Additionally, the Fund collaborates with national and local governments as accountable partners, actively working with all stakeholders to ensure that the necessary policy, administrative, and other support is provided to achieve the envisioned goals.

By building on the 2024 Fund evaluation, from the onset, RSRTF will work in close coordination with the HDP actors, in the event that they are available in the ABP target locations, to support a smooth transition when the RSRTF has been able to establish a level of stability that would enable the development actors' interventions.

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

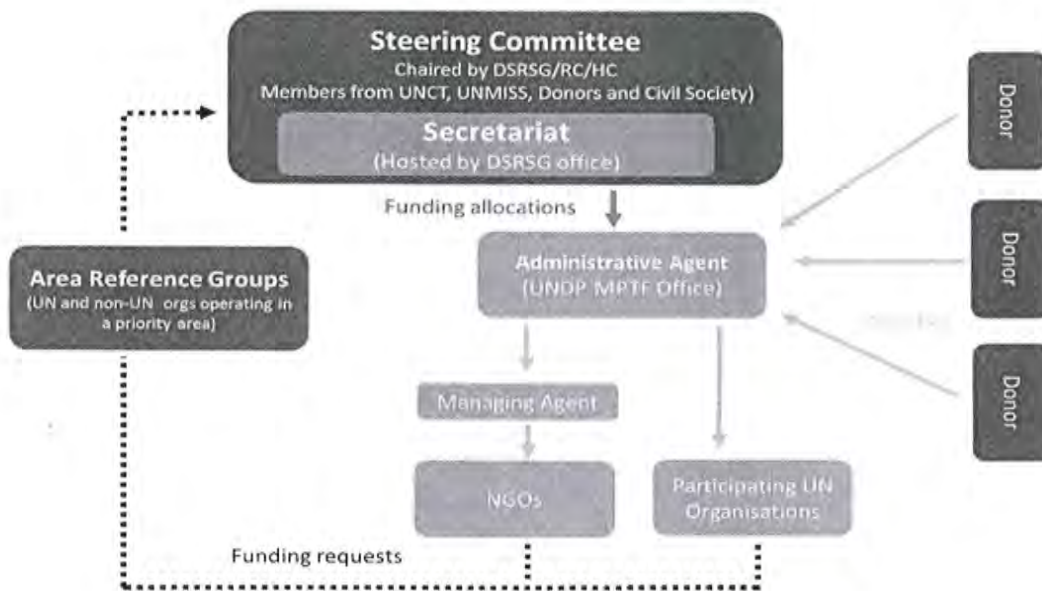
In the event that HDP programming with a focus on long-term stabilisation and resilience is unavailable in RSRTF exit areas after the initial phase, which may not be within a three-year timeframe, the Steering Committee could consider implementing a more extensive phase program following the initial phase. This will be done on a case-by-case basis and informed by an independent evaluation of relevant programmes. The Fund Steering Committee reviews the merit of follow-on programme phases, taking into consideration the presence of alternative programmes that are likely to sustain the gains achieved through the RSRTF program. The objective is to safeguard initial Fund investments, prevent the undoing of gains, and assess the performance and efficiency of the initial ABP.

To ensure that a second phase of programming is not initiated as a default, the Steering Committee will seek advice and recommendations from an independent evaluator. In such cases, the programme timeline will be relatively longer (an additional three years) based on needs and will be considered if it has the potential to further stabilise the location and promote economic growth in the region. This may require simultaneous support for strengthening violence reduction activity, which are deterrents to initiatives that can contribute to growth, prosperity, and advancement, helping the communities to leave behind the violent past. The Fund will utilise the programme end evaluation findings to guide its distinct nexus programming, emphasising the advancement of stabilisation and resilience to capitalise on achievements and expedite development in the region. This will be accomplished through collaboration with local and national NGOs, in line with national government strategy, UNSDCF, and development frameworks of organisations such as the World Bank, African Development Bank, to facilitate further sustainability.

In addition, building on the 2024 Fund evaluation recommendation, RSRTF will prioritise direct engagement with developmental actors, including IFIs, bilateral partners, and the leadership of UN agencies with a developmental mandate, to secure follow-up programming that builds on the gains of the RSRTF actions.

6. The Governance Structure

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



6.1. Steering Committee

The Steering Committee, chaired by the DSRSG/RC/HC or their delegate, shall provide strategic direction, oversight, and overall accountability for the Fund.

6.1.1. Membership Composition:

Membership of the Steering Committee will embody the spirit of the integrated nature of the Fund, strive for a gender balanced representation, and comprise the following Constituencies:

- Two representatives of the United Nations Country Team (UNCT)
- Two representatives of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan
- Two donor representatives in South Sudan.
- Two representatives of international NGOs in South Sudan
- Two representatives of the National NGO of South Sudan.
- UNDP Country Office



- 6.1.2. The following bodies shall participate in their capacity as ex-officio members:
- a) The Fund Secretariat
 - b) Representative of the Administrative Agent – UNDP Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office
 - c) At least one of the ex officio members must attend all SC meetings.

- 6.1.3. The following bodies shall attend as observers:

- a) The South Sudan Humanitarian Fund Secretariat (SSHF)
- b) The UN Peace Building Fund (PBF)
- c) African Union Bank
- d) World Bank

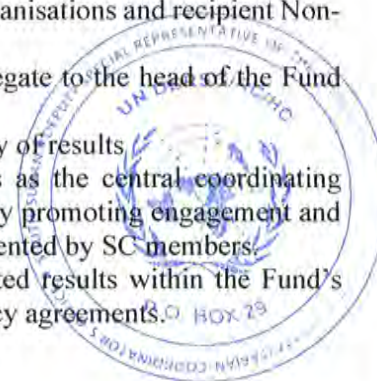
- 6.1.4. Responsibilities of the Steering Committee and decision-making

Strategic oversight and accountability

- a) Establish the strategic direction and focus of the Fund.
- b) Identify priority locations for new RSRTF ABP start-ups and, where relevant, target FS capacity to support new program designs in areas of strategic priority.
- c) Review and endorse the RSRTF strategic investment plan and pipeline projects and ensure alignment with the UNSDCF.
- d) Ensure strategic planning and cooperation between the RSRTF and parallel initiatives, funding/coordination platforms, and work to strengthen and formalise linkages to ongoing Nexus work within the relevant constituencies represented by SC members.
- e) Oversee resource mobilisation and development of strategic investment plans to secure future financing and strengthen the complementary use of resources between humanitarian, peace, and development partners.
- f) Review the Fund's risk management strategy and approve residual programme-level risks (as determined by the Secretariat).
- g) Update and approve the South Sudan RSRTF Terms of Reference, as required, after due consultation with stakeholders.
- h) Approve extensions of the Fund's duration as required.

Results-based management

- i) Review proposals together with Secretariat assessment and recommendations, making decisions regarding required revisions, approvals, and financing.
- j) Instruct the AA to disburse resources to the Participating UN Organisations and recipient Non-Governmental Organisations through the MA accordingly.
- k) Approve requests for programmatic changes to projects (or delegate to the head of the Fund Secretariat).
- l) Ensure accountability of project boards for the collective delivery of results.
- m) Support the successful functioning of Area Reference Groups as the central coordinating forums to facilitate joint planning and implementation by actively promoting engagement and support to these forums within the relevant constituencies represented by SC members.
- n) Review the Fund status and its overall progress against expected results within the Fund's Results Framework and performance targets defined in the agency agreements.



- o) Review periodic progress reports consolidated by the Secretariat and the MPTFO based on progress reports submitted by implementing organisations.
- p) Commission evaluations, reviews, and “lessons learned” reports on the performance of the individual programmes and mid-term and final evaluations on the overall performance of the Fund, discussing follow-up actions; and
- q) Approve the Fund's direct costs, specifically those related to the Secretariat support operations, evaluations, and audits.
- r) Approve all cost extensions.
- s) Hold the lead agencies and Area Reference Groups accountable for performance.

Decision-making

- t) The SC shall complete its review and decision-making process within two weeks from the reception of the submitted project proposals.
- u) For decision-making, the SC shall have a quorum of 5 members, including the Chair and at least one representative of each constituency (UNCT, UNMISS, NGOs, Donors).
- v) The Steering Committee endeavours to reach an agreement by consensus. When consensus cannot be reached, the chair makes the final decision and instructs the Secretariat and Administrative Agent accordingly.

6.2 The Fund Secretariat

The Fund Secretariat (FS) is the entity responsible for the operational functioning of the Fund and provides technical and management support to the SC. The Secretariat, placed within the Office of the DSRSG/RC/HC, performs the following functions:

- a) Execute and coordinate all management functions of the RSRTF, including implementing decisions made by the Steering Committee.
- b) Plan and prepare meetings of the Steering Committee and hold records of decisions through minutes of the meetings.
- c) Provide quality assurance throughout the programme/project approval process and review and vet the technical and operational soundness of projects, providing detailed reporting on evaluation processes before they are submitted to the Steering Committee for approval.
- d) Approve or reject project revision requests or refer to the Steering Committee when deemed necessary. In the management of no-cost extensions (NCEs) and all budget realignments, a two-layer approval process is in place to ensure both efficiency and oversight. The SC chair will approve implementing partners’ requests for NCEs or budget realignments that are three months or less than three months in duration, which are presented by the Fund Secretariat. For all requests that involve an extension or budget realignment exceeding three months, the responsibility for decision-making lies with the entire Steering Committee. All cost extensions will be approved by the SC. This graduated approval system ensures timely decision-making for minor adjustments while maintaining appropriate oversight and strategic consideration for more substantial changes.
- e) Prepare research papers and reports, strategic considerations, and draft recommendations to facilitate decision-making by the SC, ensuring that the Fund’s approach and priorities remain relevant to the evolving contexts.
- f) Undertake outreach and participate in coordination forums to ensure the RSRTF is well situated within the broader ‘Triple Nexus’ and funding landscape, ensuring opportunities for cooperation and complementarity are maximized.



- g) Facilitate systematic cooperation with UNMISS, the UN Country Team, the South Sudan Humanitarian Fund, the UN Peacebuilding Fund, donors, bilateral partners, multilateral funding, and coordination mechanisms and programs to ensure RSRTF funding allocations leverage comparative advantages across the 'Triple Nexus.'
- h) Implement the Fund's knowledge management strategy and ensure a systematic approach to retaining institutional memory and capturing lessons learned and best practices across the Fund and its partners.
- i) Facilitate collaboration and communication between Participating Organizations and guide the establishment of functional and accountable Area Reference Groups (ARGs) at each ABP.
- j) Undertake monitoring and evaluation of projects/programmes implemented at various levels and locations by the participating agencies, UNMISS sections, and NGOs.
- k) Implement the Fund's Risk Management Strategy to establish a common understanding of risks among all stakeholders, ensuring efficient and strategic risk mitigation and adaptation measures, and ensuring monitoring and control of operational risks, including by routinely updating the risk monitoring matrix.
- l) Consolidate the narrative annual and final reports submitted by recipient organizations and present reports to the Steering Committee and the Administrative Agent for review.
- m) Submit the final project reports to the administrative agents for operational closures.
- n) Under the leadership of the SC Chair, help mobilize an appropriate and sustainable funding base and maintain existing partnerships, including through outreach and timely preparation of donor proposals, presentations, and briefing papers.
- o) Manage communication, public information, and visibility.
- p) Periodically review the ToR of the Fund and recommend changes or revisions to the SC based on the preceding comprehensive fund evaluation.
- q) With the support of the AA, elaborate an Operations Manual in accordance with signed legal agreements and ensure compliance with it.
- r) Liaise with the AA on Fund administration issues, including Fund Transfer Requests, program/fund extensions, and program/fund closures.
- s) Secretariat staffing requirements and associated costs submitted are prepared by the Fund Manager and submitted to the SC for consideration and approval. Cost plans will be submitted to the Steering Committee in the form of a project document on an annual basis. This will include a work plan (with a schedule), a budget, and a detailed organisation chart. These operating costs may cover both the recruitment of the Secretariat staff and other expenses directly related to the functions of the Secretariat, including fees for contracting independent consultants for discreet projects in support of the Fund's objectives and commissioning of RSRTF evaluations and specific research.

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

6.3 The Administrative Agent

The South Sudan RSRTF is administered by the UNDP Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office, and it acts as the Administrative Agent (AA). The description below of the AA's responsibilities is based on the UNDG "Protocol on the Administrative Agent for Multi-Donor Trust Funds, Joint Programmes, and One UN Funds". The AA is entitled to allocate an administrative fee of one percent (1%) of the amount contributed by each donor to meet the costs of performing the AA function.



The AA is responsible for the following functions:

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

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

6.4 The Managing Agent

UNDP's responsibilities as the Managing Agent (MA) are executed by the UNDP Country Office, which operates separately from UNDP's role as the AA in accordance with UNDP's policy of maintaining a clear separation of the dual functions as AA and Participating UN Organization under Multi-Partner Trust Funds and Joint Programmes.

UNDP, based on the instructions received from the SC and funding received from the AA, ensures access to the South Sudan RSRTF for NGOs. In this regard, UNDP performs additional oversight functions as the MA. UNDP ensures project implementation per regulations, rules, directives, and procedures applicable to it and is responsible for discharging all commitments and obligations with NGOs. UNDP will use its simplified standard NGO execution modality for this purpose and charge the corresponding indirect and direct costs for these projects. Partners funded through the South Sudan RSRTF must implement projects abiding by UNDP rules and regulations.

Based on the SC decisions, UNDP's responsibilities as MA are the following:

a) MA coordination and communication

- 1) Ensure capacity assessment of NGOs identified by the Area Reference Groups/ ABP consortium upon request by the FS. The assessment is based on standard procedures and guidelines in accordance with UNDP rules and regulations.
- 2) Define risk rating for all NGO partners in line with the HACT (Harmonised Approach to Cash Transfers) provisions.
- 3) Provide financial expenditure to the FS and AA in accordance with the timetable indicated in the MOU.



- 4) Provide periodic funding status reports to the FS.
- 5) Provide adequate inputs for the Annual Report of the South Sudan RSRTF, based on the information received from the NGOs.

b) Financial and HR Management:

- 1) Sign implementation agreements with NGO partners.
- 2) Set up project budgets and ensure timely disbursements of funds in accordance with the decisions of the SC.
- 3) Undertake financial accountability for funds received from the AA.
- 4) Administratively manages the performance of the Fund Secretariat staff recruited under the UNDP contract.
- 5) Manage crisis modifier budget for all agencies and ensure fast-tracked release of funds when requested.

c) Contract monitoring and oversight (audit):

- 1) Ensure financial follow-up, including financial monitoring visits of NGO projects.
- 2) Conduct audits of NGO projects – audit of financial records and financial management systems of internal controls.
- 3) Fraud prevention and mitigation- risk management training, setting standard requirements for NGOs, and establishing sanctions for fraud.
- 4) Receive the narrative and financial reports from NGOs for funded projects.

d) Capacity building:

- 1) Ensure NGO partners' support, orientation, and training regarding the administrative, programmatic, and financial procedures applicable to the South Sudan RSRTF.
- 2) Implement capacity-building measures for NGO partners based on recommendations of HACT assessments to ensure the NGO possesses sufficient capacity to implement the project.
- 3) Implement capacity-building measures for NGO partners based on recommendations and assurance activities (spot-checks and audits).
- 4) Identify capacity needs of national and international NGOs.

6.5 The Recipient Organisations

Resources will be allocated to participating UN organisations, i.e., the UN Specialised Agencies, Funds and Programmes, and the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, which have signed the Memorandum of Understanding with the AA. Each Participating UN organisation will assume full programmatic and financial accountability for the funds disbursed to it by the AA. Such funds will be administered by each Participating UN Organisation in accordance with its own regulations, rules, directives, and procedures. Indirect costs of the Participating UN organisations recovered through program support costs will be harmonised at 7% (with exceptions based on UNSDG approval). Implementing NGO Partners can receive funding from the Fund through the Managing Agent. Non-governmental organizations are deemed eligible for funding through UNDP South Sudan acting as the RSRTF Managing Agent (MA) if they have successfully undergone an assessment of their institutional, managerial, and financial capacity under the Harmonised Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT) framework.

6.6 The Area Reference Groups

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

Wherever possible, the ARG utilises existing coordination structures to avoid duplication, ensuring credible coordination and reducing costs. In cases where these structures already exist, such as ABL (Area Based Leadership under the UN), the ARG should work in an integrated manner to coordinate not only with implementing partners but also with external partners and local stakeholders. These structures form the basis for coordination.

As the expansion of ARG's capacities became a requirement due to its success, the ARG ensures taking on additional responsibilities and ensuring representative participation in coordination with ABL and local government members where it is present and when it is deemed beneficial for the success of the programming and ensuring coordination, complementarity with external partners. While the Fund does not mandate the specific composition of a newly established ARG, these coordination structures must represent relevant stakeholder interests and aim to promote collaboration while utilising local resources and expertise. The ARG can be at the county or state levels, where feasible, depending on the conduciveness to the target area.

The ARGs form the heart of the RSRTF operational structure, and their membership, efficiency, and sustained engagement are fundamental to the performance and achievements of the Fund. In receiving financing from the Fund, all contracted partners must cooperatively participate in the ARG, attending coordination meetings, providing activity updates and inputs for collective results monitoring, participating in joint review processes, and sharing in a timely manner any significant information, fact, problem or delay likely to affect the implementation of their respective activities and in turn, the overall achievement of collective area outcomes.

Based on the 2024 RSRTF comprehensive Fund Evaluation recommendation, the RSRTF encourages ARGs to serve as inclusive, collaborative forums beyond implementing partners. ARG leadership may be delegated to local authorities in coordination with Area-Based Leadership (ABL). Steering Committee members and Secretariat staff will periodically participate in ARG sessions to enhance transparency and strategic insight.

6.7 Project Boards

In addition to the ARG, RSRTF consortia should be governed by a senior management level Project Board (PB), responsible for the achievement of results as well as providing strategic oversight and guidance, as well as ensuring joint commitment and accountability between participating agencies. The PB should



further support ABP implementation through the creation of vertical and horizontal linkages with government institutions.

The Project Board will be chaired by the head of the consortium lead agency, together with the ABP coordinator, who additionally serves as a secretariat, to document minutes and ensure information is shared with relevant actors. Membership will consist of Country Directors or Deputy Country Directors, or their appointed senior programme managers designated by fund recipient partners, plus implementing partners. RSRTF FM and two members of SC will participate in the PB meeting as observers.

7. The Contributions

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

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

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

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

8. The Fund Allocation Process

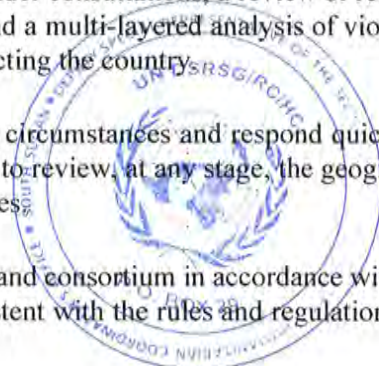
8.1. Annual Strategy

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

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

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

The RSRTF monitors the performance of the implementing partner and consortium in accordance with UN standards and guidelines. These standards and guidelines are consistent with the rules and regulations and



ensure that funds are disbursed while taking into account the investment risks. For NGOs, funding is channelled through the MA, which adheres to UNDP's rules, regulations, and procedures.

The RSRTF employs the following funding windows:

8.2. Area-Based Programmes (ABP) Window

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

- **Levels of violence.** As captured by the UNMISS Human Rights Division, monitoring and considering available intelligence, analysis, and assessments of the potential for future violence.
- **Potential fault lines between communities.** The nature of existing and potential future cleavages and tensions between local communities, including the risk of these tensions being manipulated by national elites or where localized grievances have the potential to trigger local, or even national, insecurity that could threaten the broader peace process and the ceasefire.
- **Access and availability of implementers in the area.** Reflects whether the current level of access is sufficient for RSRTF programming and whether there are implementers in the area, including any opportunities to complement existing or future programs.
- **Level of marginalisation.** The level of political and economic marginalisation by the central state apparatus (indicators of marginalisation include access to markets and cost of basic food baskets), as well as the extent to which existing reconciliation, stabilisation, and resilience initiatives are present in the area.
- **Feasibility and conflict sensitivity.** The feasibility of realising an impact under existing conditions in the area without doing harm and taking into account the above criteria.

The Annual Strategy will typically illustrate three or four potential areas for RSRTF programming. By presenting an analysis framed around the above criteria, the strategy will identify the most relevant and feasible selection for SC endorsement. The number of new areas selected within one year will depend on the availability of the Fund.

Applications for programming within the selected area or for the ABPs and the Thematic Grants Window are solicited through a Call for Proposals (CFP) as outlined below.

8.3. RSRTF Thematic Grants Window (TGW)

The Fund's ABP modality is reinforced by applying a thematic grants funding window. This allows for the application of funding within a defined implementation timeframe to deliver impact, enhance further stabilisation and resilience through political and/or national engagement, and strengthen existing ABPs by allocating funds to address thematic gaps and priorities.

The overarching intention of the RSRTF is to reduce violence and build stability, nurturing conducive conditions that stimulate recovery and development and allow for the consolidation of peace. While the Fund takes a local focus through its ABPs, the activities of the Fund at the national level also contribute to



creating an enabling environment more broadly through engagement in political and policy processes, often working with the national government, that support the implementation of the national peace process, as the ultimate precondition for peace and stability.

The Thematic Grant Window shall be capped at a maximum allocation of USD One Million per grant, with an implementation timeframe not exceeding Twenty-Four (24) months. The principal purpose of this funding modality is to facilitate the timely and targeted delivery of measurable outcomes in identified thematic priority areas. Such interventions shall be designed and executed in a manner complementary to and enhancing the effectiveness of the RSRTF's strategic objectives and operational footprint at the Area-Based Programme (ABP) level.⁸

8.4. Call for Proposals (CFP)

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

The Fund Secretariat screens and shortlists submissions according to the established CFP criteria. A detailed evaluation of shortlisted proposals is subsequently undertaken, where relevant, drawing on technical and geographic experts to review individual components of submissions. Applicable proposal revisions are undertaken in consultation with the applicants. The full proposals, along with reports of the technical reviews, are subsequently submitted to the Steering Committee together with a recommendation for funding on the basis of the submission that best meets the evaluation criteria, and which constitutes the best value to the Fund.

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

8.5. The Transfer of Funds

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



⁸The TGW, launched in 2020, specifically sought to capitalise on momentum resulting from the formation of the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity (R-TGoNU). The allocation financed initiatives that would strengthen and promote inclusive civic participation in the implementation of the peace agreement and support the development of a robust political system and a more accountable, transparent, and responsive government by building governance capacity and fostering cohesion among political actors

9. Monitoring, Evaluation, Knowledge Management, and Reporting

9.1. Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

The Fund's M&E systems ensure the availability of quantitative and qualitative data like MSS (measuring Safety and Security or other context-specific tools) to inform the SC in its evidence-based policy, fund allocation, planning, and programming decision-making. Using and applying actual and updated data provides an ongoing feedback loop to assess the probability and resource effectiveness and efficiency for achieving intended results. This gives the Fund the needed adaptability to plan and manage the Fund's investments and activities responsibly. In addition to the Fund-wide M&E systems, each ABP and thematic grant project has its own M&E system, including a results framework and data collection plan.

To ensure the implementation of the 2024 comprehensive Fund Evaluation recommendation, the M&E components of each ABP will be sufficiently budgeted and aligned with the Fund's Results Framework. Third-party monitoring, such as the MSS (Measuring Safety and Security) framework, will be scaled up and coordinated by the RSRTF Secretariat. Greater emphasis will be placed on measuring strategic outcomes and learning from implementation challenges.

The Fund conducts annual measurements of its outcome level indicators, preferably by the end of each year, to assess the yearly performance of the ABPs and TGW programmes. To achieve this, the Fund Secretariat recommends an independent evaluation team to collect a combination of qualitative and quantitative data. This data will also contribute evidence-based information to the fund's annual report.

Once completed, ABPs are evaluated independently. Thematic grant projects are assessed on a case-by-case basis, depending on the project's scope and appropriateness to the mandate of the Fund.

The Fund conducts its own evaluation every four years unless advised otherwise by the Steering Committee. The aim of this evaluation will be specified in more detail in the TORs. The objective of the evaluation will be to examine the Fund's impact and different performance measurements, assess the validity of the 'New Way of Working' approach implemented by the South Sudan RSRTF, and provide specific recommendations to the SC for potential adjustments in the Fund's functioning.

9.2. Knowledge Management

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

9.3. Reporting

For each project approved for funding, the MA and each Participating UN Organization will provide the FS, the AA, and the SC with reports and financial annual statements prepared in accordance with their accounting and reporting procedures, as agreed upon in the legal agreements signed with the AA. The annual and final reports will be results-oriented and evidence-based. The reports will summarize results and

achievements compared to the expected results in the project document. Reports will be used by the SC to review the overall progress against expected results and assess the achievement of performance targets. The RSRTF will streamline its reporting processes to enhance accountability and donor engagement, balancing detailed activity reports with strategic outcome narratives.

10. Communications

Effective communication is essential to the RSRTF's success. A proactive communications approach enhances the Fund's visibility and public profile, ensures transparency and accountability, engages stakeholders (including communities, partners, and donors), and supports resource mobilization by showcasing results to current and potential contributors. The RSRTF is committed to integrating strategic communications across all aspects of its work to highlight achievements and maintain trust with stakeholders.

The Fund's communications efforts aim to raise its profile, ensure consistent and clear messaging, support donor visibility, and promote a unified RSRTF identity across all platforms. All messaging will be deliberate and targeted to appropriate audiences, reinforcing the Fund's unique value and impact in South Sudan.

11. Risk management

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

While the Fund cannot control external risks, it proactively implements mitigation and contingency measures to reduce their impact on operations.

This includes routine monitoring of the operational environment and leveraging political engagement of the Fund's stakeholders with national, sub-national, and regional actors when expedient. Risk mitigation is a standard requirement in the design of all RSRTF programs. Furthermore, the comprehensive and complementary nature of the RSRTF approach enables more flexible and adaptive programming responsive to the inevitable shifting dynamics of the context. Programme design, therefore, supports thoughtful risk mitigation, allowing for changeable sequencing and gradations of the reconciliation, stabilisation, and resilience elements over time as changing circumstances dictate. The Fund can maintain greater control over programmatic and institutional risks by integrating and embedding risk management into organisational processes such as allocation procedures, knowledge management, mainstreaming in projects, and robust monitoring and reporting procedures, among others.

12. Operations Manual

The Fund Operations Manual describes the governance structure, operating principles, guidelines, and procedures for day-to-day operations of the RSRTF but does not constitute a legal document. The guidelines



cover all steps and phases to be followed during the allocation processes by all RSRTF participants and stakeholders.

13. Audit

In line with the audit provisions in the standard MOU and SAA, as well as the 2014 Framework for Joint Internal Audit of UN Joint Activities, the AA, the MA, and Participating UN Organisations will be audited according to their own rules and financial regulations and in line with the framework for joint audit. The Managing agent employs its own audit rules, regulations, and system for the NGOs receiving funds from the Fund.

14. Public Disclosure

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

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

15. Modification and Expiration of the Fund

The South Sudan Reconciliation, Stabilisation, and Resilience Trust Fund (RSRTF) was established in 2018 with an initial mandate of four years, set to conclude in 2022. In 2021, the Fund's duration was extended until June 2026 to support ongoing programming. To align with the implementation timeline of Area-Based Programmes (ABPs) scheduled to run through 2027, the Steering Committee, during its meeting in July 2024, approved a further extension of the Fund's lifespan to 31 December 2027. A comprehensive evaluation of the RSRTF has since been conducted, generating key recommendations that have informed the revision of this Terms of Reference. To ensure the Fund remains responsive and relevant to South Sudan's evolving context, a subsequent evaluation could be carried out in the future, depending on the extension of this TOR.

This revised Terms of Reference, South Sudan RSRTF TOR-2025, has been endorsed by the Steering Committee at the meeting held on 05 June 2025 and extended until 31 December 2028.

The Managing Agent (MA) and all Participating UN Organizations (PUNOs) will provide certified final financial reports and financially closed projects no later than five (5) months after the end of the calendar year in which the financial closure of the activities in the approved programmatic document occurs, or according to the period specified in the financial regulations and rules of the MA and the Participating UN Organisation, whichever is earlier. The dissemination of the certified final financial statement ("Source and Use of Funds") is to be provided at the end of the Fund Tenure.

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

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

