



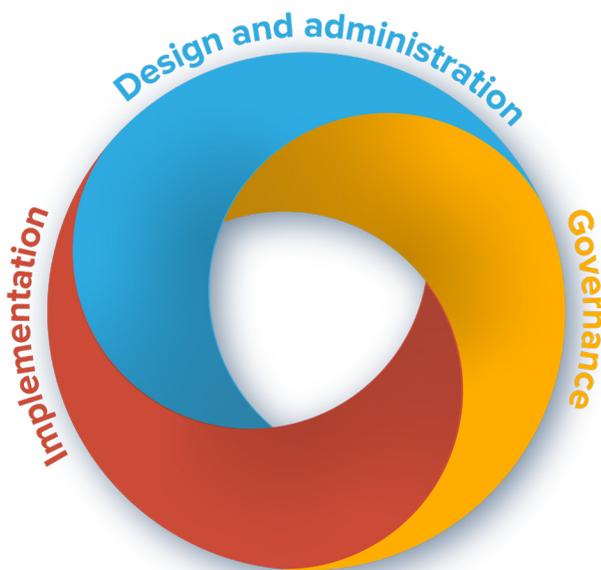
Inter-agency pooled funds: Key concepts and definitions

Several concepts are used when engaging with pooled funds that are useful to know outside of the official definitions. Below are some of the frequently used terms on pooled funds, explaining their similarities and differences.

FIRST, WHAT IT IS AN INTER-AGENCY POOLED FUND?

Inter-agency pooled funds. Co-mingled contributions to multi-entity funding mechanism not earmarked for a specific UN entity. Funds are held in trust by the UN fund administrator and fund allocations decisions are taken by a UN-led governance mechanism. Resources are transferred to participating entities by the Fund Administrator using a pass-through modality. The official definition was agreed upon by the **Finance and Budget Network in June 2015**.

“UN joint funding mechanism that has the three following characteristics:



1. Fund design and administration: The pooled fund is designed to support a clearly defined programmatic purpose and results framework through contributions - usually received from more than one contributor - that are co-mingled, not earmarked to a specific UN entity and held by a UN fund administrator.

2. Joint Governance/Fund operations: Decisions on project / programmatic allocations are made by a UN-led governance mechanism, taking into account the programmatic purpose and results framework of the fund.

3. Fund implementation: Fund implementation is (fully or largely) entrusted to UN entities that assume the programmatic and financial accountability for the resources received”.

(Source definition: [CEB/2015/HLCM/FB/9](#), 16 June 2015)

Multi-Donor/Partner Trust Funds and pass-through Joint Programmes are types of inter-agency pooled funds, and any UN Organization can be the Fund Administrator/Administrative Agent.

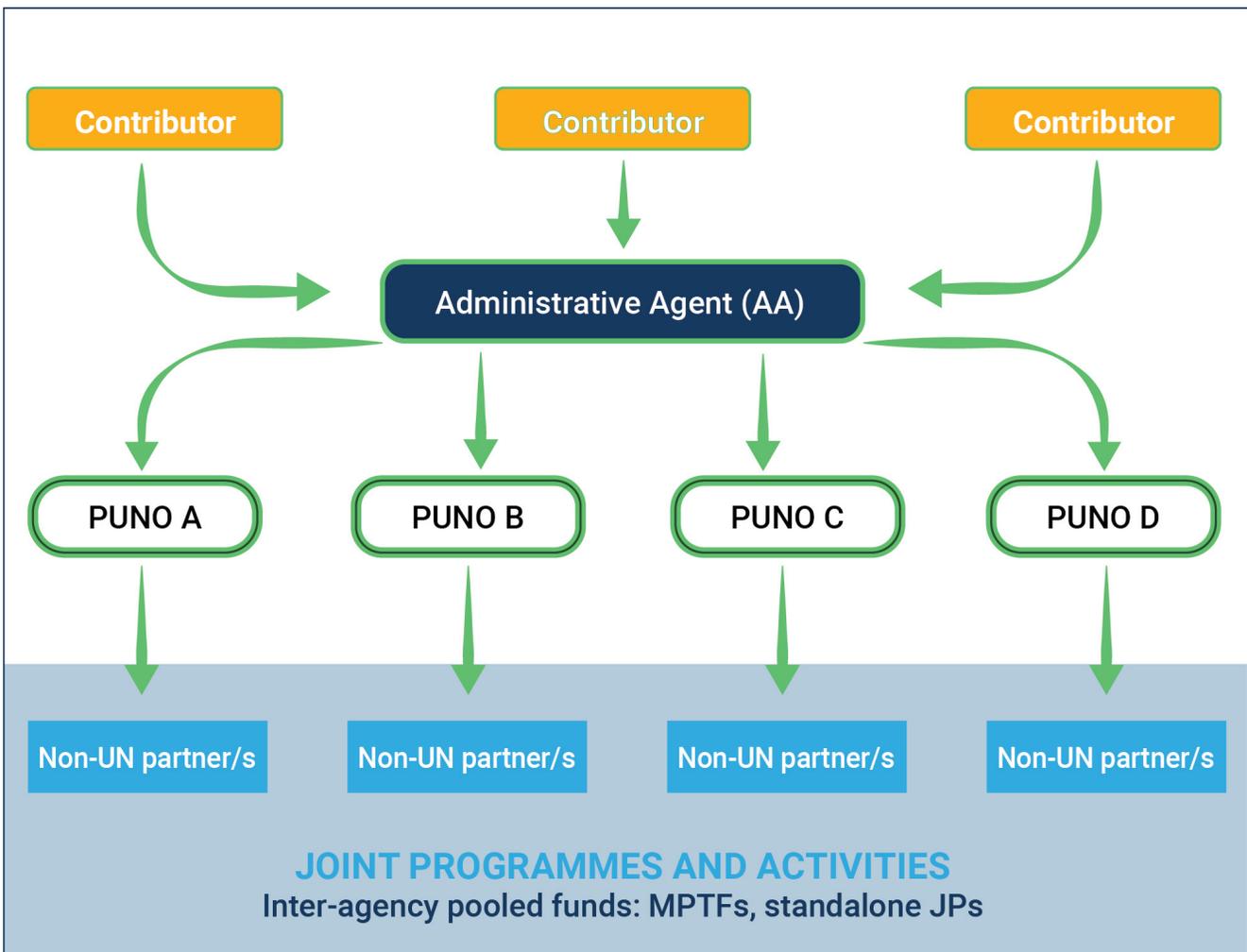
PASS-THROUGH MODALITY

All inter-agency pooledⁱ funds use a **pass-through modality**. It is a fund management modality designed to complement UNDG governance mechanisms, the pass-through involves multiple UN organizations receiving contributions from donors in support of specific national, regional, or global development results. Donor resources are co-mingled and held in trust by the appointed Administrative Agent (AA) for the funding of projects/programmatic allocations implemented primarily by participating UN organizations (PUNOs) that use their own operating policies and procedures for

implementation. Programmatic and financial accountability rests with Participating UN Organizations and (sub) national partners for their respective components.

There are two large typologies of inter-agency pooled funds: **Multi-Partner Trust Funds (MPTFs)**, which are the most frequent, and **standalone Joint Programmes (JPs)**. The key difference between Multi-Donor/Partner Trust Funds and pass-through joint programmes is that a Multi-Donor/Partner Trust fund defines broad results areas that will be implemented through still to-be-designed single agency projects and

ⁱ Examples of inter-agency pooled funds: MDTFs: Peacebuilding Fund, Joint SDG Fund, Malawi SDG Acceleration Fund, Joint Programmes: Joint Programme Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage, Joint Programme Women Empowerment for Inclusive Growth (Bangladesh)



joint programmes, to be approved by the fund's Steering Committee, while a Joint Programme specifically defines (in the Joint Programme document) the programmatic activities, the division of labor between Participating

UN Organizations in implementation of the programmatic activities, and the foreseen budget allocation.

A. MULTI-PARTNER TRUST FUNDS (MPTFs)ⁱⁱ

A type of pooled funding modality under the UNDG governance mechanism involves multiple UN organizations and is designed to receive contributions from donors in support of specific national, regional, or global development results. Donor resources are co-mingled and held in trust by the appointed Administrative Agent (AA) for funding of projects/programmatic allocations implemented primarily by participating UN organizations (PUNOs) that rely on their own operating policies and procedures for implementation. In the past they were also known as a Multi-Donor Trust Funds (MDTFs).

Multi-Partner Trust Funds can have three geographical scopes (global, regional and country) and are classified according to four categories (humanitarian, peace and transition, development, climate and environment). At the country level, the two most frequent types of MPTFs are: country-level pooled funds and country-based pooled funds.

- **Country-level pooled fund (SDG country funds)ⁱⁱⁱ.** It is a financing instrument available to each United Nations country team (UNCT) for consolidating and leveraging funding towards country priority SDGs as established in the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), as such these funds are financing instruments for the UNSDCF, hence primarily focused on

development results. Country-level pooled funds are complementary to other sources of local funding and aligned with global pooled funding instruments. UNCTs apply common management features requested by the Funding Compact: A well-articulated strategy, clear theory of change, solid Results-Based Management system, well-functioning governance system, and the highest standards of operational effectiveness, reporting, visibility and transparency. In the past they were also known as Delivering as One/One Funds.

- **Country-based pooled funds (humanitarian funds)^{iv}.** Country-based Pooled Funds (CBPF) allow donors to pool their contributions into single, unearmarked funds to support local humanitarian efforts. This enables humanitarian partners in crisis-affected countries to deliver timely, coordinated, and principled assistance. CBPFs are established when a new emergency occurs or when an existing crisis deteriorates/escalates. They are managed by OCHA under the leadership of the Humanitarian Coordinator and in close consultation with the humanitarian community. Most CBPFs are administered by OCHA, however, there are some that are administered by the MPTF Office.

Multi-Partner Trust Funds promote UN joint action

ii Examples of MPTFs include UN-REDD Programme Fund, the Joint SDG Fund, Rwanda SDG Fund, Somalia Humanitarian Fund, UN Pacific Strategy Fund.

iii Examples of Country-level Pooled funds: Albania SDG Fund II, Rwanda SDG Fund, Tanzania One UN Fund, PNG UN Country Fund.

iv Examples of Country-based pooled funds (humanitarian): Sudan Humanitarian Fund, Nigeria Humanitarian Fund, Ukraine Humanitarian Fund, DRC Humanitarian Fund.

and collaboration, and often many of the funded activities are “joint programmes^v,” although single

agency programmatic activities can also be funded, depending on the set-up of the MPTF.

B. STANDALONE JOINT PROGRAMMES^{vi}

These programmes are financed directly by UN organizations or donors, and not through an MPTF. In these cases, a fund account is established exclusively for that joint programme. Initiatives typically involve between two and five UN organizations agreeing on specific programmatic scope and deliverables. They can be at country, regional or global levels.

In addition to using a pass-through (inter-agency pooled fund) modality, joint programmes can

also be funded using other two modalities: parallel funding (where each UN Organization is funded separately) and consolidated funding (where UN Organizations provide funds to a UN Organization appointed as a ‘Management Agent’ to be an interface with government partner on behalf of the Joint Programme).

When Joint Programmes use a parallel or consolidated fund management modality, they are not considered inter-agency pooled funds.

DEFINITION OF JOINT PROGRAMME

Joint programmes. A joint programme is a cooperation strategy and way of achieving a development result that depends upon the comparative advantages of two or more UN organizations working together with country partners as a team in a highly coordinated and integrated manner. The joint programme has a strategic intent and strong programmatic rationale with expected results that a) contribute to one or more Country Framework outcomes and related SDGs, and b) focus on one or more policy levers with the potential to catalyze

systemic change. A Joint Programme can be at the country, regional, or global level and involve two or more regions or countries. (Source: Draft Joint Programme Guidance note, released in 2022)

v Examples of Joint Programmes funded through an MPTF: Zimbabwe Spotlight Programme, FC2 2020 Uruguay (funded by the Joint SDG Fund MPTF), Socio-economic Economic Empowerment of Vulnerable Women in Ghor Al Safi (Jordan, funded by COVID- 19 MPTF).

vi Examples of Stand-alone Joint Programmes: Together for Equality: Preventing and Responding to Gender-Based Violence in Timor Leste, JP-Strengthening governance of food security and nutrition through the Committee on World Food Security, DFID Joint Program on Empowering and Protecting Pakistan’s Youth, JP Financing the Green Economy. Social protection JP funded by Sweden and Ireland in Mozambique