



Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

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Bangui National Forum, Central African Republic. UN Photo/Catianne Tijerina

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CONTEXT

Since 2000 and the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325, remarkable normative progress has been made at the global, regional and national levels to further advance and operationalize the women, peace and security (WPS) agenda¹. In his 2014 Report to the Security Council on WPS, the Secretary-General noted that financing for WPS remains inadequate. The Secretary-General called on Member States to ensure that national and regional action plans in this area are well financed and that dedicated budget lines are included in all peace, security and peacebuilding initiatives². Operational paragraph 7(b) of Security Council resolution 2122 (2013) also called on Member States to develop dedicated financing mechanisms to support the agenda³. This was echoed again in the Secretary-General's 2021 Report, where he again reiterated need to increase the share of bilateral aid in support of gender equality and the implementation of the WPS agenda, as well as highlighting the importance of need for donors to set a minimum target of funding towards gender equality⁴. Over the past decade, Official Development Assistance (ODA) has served as a critical lifeline for multilateralism and peacebuilding efforts. From **USD 153 billion in 2015**, global ODA steadily increased—peaking at **USD 223.7 billion in 2023**, before dropping by **7.1% in 2024 to USD 212.1 billion** (OECD, 2025). This marks the sharpest annual decline in ODA in over a decade, amid growing global instability and inflationary pressures.

However, despite the clear benefits of investing in women, their contribution to prevention, humanitarian response and peace consolidation continue to be undervalued, under-utilized and under-resourced. Security Council resolutions 2122 (2013) and 2242 (2015) recognize the significant deficits that exist in implementation of the WPS agenda and across the humanitarian nexus.

The evidence is there. Successive reports of the Secretary-General – including the 2024 and 2025 reports on WPS – confirm that countries' ability to prevent violence, negotiate and sustain peace, and support inclusive recovery hinges on women's full, equal and meaningful participation. Research shows that peace agreements are 35% more likely to last at least 15 years when women are meaningfully involved in peace processes⁵. In addition, inclusion of women's civil society groups in peace negotiations is associated with a significantly lower risk of peace agreements failing².

The Grand Bargain Global commitment signatories note that at least 25% of humanitarian funding reaches national and local actors as directly as possible.³ Ten years since the co-chairs summary of the 2015 World Humanitarian Summit global consultation emphasized “Making humanitarian action work for women and girls” through “Concerted action is necessary to close the gender gap and generate concrete steps that trigger accountability for the inclusion and leadership of women and girls in humanitarian action. Donors are urged to pledge increased funds to women's groups and end funding of programs that cannot demonstrate meeting the needs of women and girls”, the Humanitarian Reset reiterates this call to action. The Humanitarian Reset notes as its vision ‘A humanitarian system that is locally led and globally supported, rooted in communities and driven by greatest

¹ See: S/RES/1325 (2000), S/RES/1820 (2008), S/RES/1888 (2009), S/RES/1889 (2009), S/RES/1960 (2010), S/RES/2106 (2013), and S/RES/2122 (2013).

² United Nations Security Council. (2014). Report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security (S/2014/693). United Nations.

³ United Nations Security Council. (2013). Resolution 2122 (2013) (S/RES/2122), operational paragraph 7(b).

⁴ United Nations Security Council. (2021). Women and peace and security: Report of the Secretary-General (S/2021/827), paragraphs 91–92.

⁵ <https://wps.unwomen.org/participation>

² Nilsson, D. (2012). Anchoring the peace: Civil society actors in peace accords and durable peace. *International Interactions*, 38(2), 243–266.

³ OCHA Financial Tracking System - <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/charter-change-statement-revised-un-global-humanitarian-response-plan-covid19>

need. We will uphold principles, defend humanitarian space, and put protection — especially of women and girls — at the center. By reducing duplication and bureaucracy, ending turf wars, and transitioning to locally led response, we will deliver faster, fairer, and more accountable humanitarian action.”⁴

The Humanitarian Reset as part of the parallel UN 80 analysis outlines a roadmap that will focus on effectively and efficiently addressing the greatest needs through well-resourced, timely and streamlined people-centered responses. The UN 80 analysis has identified pooled funding as a better practice that can be leveraged to deliver results on data and beyond.

To address the financing gaps and create greater synergies between different sources of finance to meet the needs of women across the humanitarian-development divide, a WPS Financing Discussion Group (FDG) was established in June 2014⁵. The FDG included representatives from donors, conflict-affected Member States, United Nations entities and civil society, and provided a unique multi-stakeholder space for elaborating strategies for dedicated and scaled-up financing in support of the WPS agenda. The UN was and remains a key player in peace, security and humanitarian response. Beyond its normative mandate, UN funding is perceived in many contexts to be reliable and although risks exist, with fewer associated risks. Recognizing the urgent need to prioritize action, the FDG proposed the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF)⁶ - a UN pooled funding mechanism which aims to re-energize action and stimulate a significant shift in the financing of the women's participation, leadership and empowerment in humanitarian response, and peace and security settings⁷. Recommendation is recognized in the Secretary-General's 2015 Report as well as reports thereafter, in addition to Security Council resolution 2242 (2015)⁸.

The establishment of the WPHF as UN Multi-Partner Fund represents a partnership between member states, UN agencies and civil society.

WPHF is a multi-partner pooled financing mechanism that brings three unique benefits to enhance women's engagement in peace, security and humanitarian action.

- **Break silos between humanitarian, peace, security and development finance** by investing in enhancing women's engagement, leadership and empowerment across all phases of the crisis, peace, security, and development contiguum.
- **Address structural funding gaps for women's participation** in key phases of the crisis, peace and security, and development contiguum by improving the timeliness, predictability and flexibility of international assistance.

⁴ <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/sites/default/files/2025-11/Humanitarian%20Reset%20Roadmap%2C%2010%20November%202025.pdf>

⁵ The inaugural meeting of the WPS Financing Discussion Group took place on 20 June 2014 in New York. Current members: Minister of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs and Director for Gender, Sierra Leone, Minister of Gender and General Director of Women's Promotion and Gender Equality, Burundi, MFA Finland, Permanent Missions to UN: Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland, United Kingdom, Canada, Germany, Japan, Australia, Cordaid, Global Network of Women Peacebuilders, Resolution to Act - Inclusive Security, Woman Kind Worldwide, Gender Action for Peace and Security (GAPS UK), Saathi, WE Act 1325, Fontain Isoko, PeaceWomen, Afghan Women's Network, Kvinna till Kvinna, Cadre Permanent de Concertation de la Femme Congolaise (CAFCO) Corporación de Investigación y Acción Social y Económica (CIASE), Women, Peace and Security Network – Canada, Japanese civil society coordinating group on the NAP, PBSO, UNDP, and UN Women.

⁶ At the time the Global Acceleration Instrument for Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action

⁷ Cordaid and the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders have conducted research and advocated for dedicated funding for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and the supporting resolutions on WPS since 2010. Together, they have worked with UN Women on the establishment of the WPS Financing Discussion Group and the GAI – now the WPHF. Please see also the 2014 Report of the UN Secretary-General on women and peace and security (S/2014/693).

⁸ Paragraph 137.

- **Improve policy coherence and coordination** by complementing existing financing instruments promoting synergies across all actions: multi-lateral and bilateral entities, national governments and women's machineries, and local civil society organizations.

A key element of the fund is the flexibility and speed provided through its different financing windows supporting quality interventions, which enhance women's participation in preventing and responding to crises and conflict. The totality of WPHF programmable funds is expected to be allocated to or in support of civil society organizations. WPHF funding will be guided by principles of rapidity, transparency, flexibility, needs based, transformative and localization.

Expected Results & THEORY OF CHANGE

The overall goal of WPHF is to contribute to **peaceful, safe and equal societies**. Achievement of this goal will require that women are empowered to participate in, lead in and influence four key outcomes. At the programmatic level, WPHF's outcomes are focused on:

Outcome 1 – Conflict Prevention and Resolution - *Enhanced prevention and resolution of conflicts by women, young women and civil society in crisis and conflict settings*

WPHF will strengthen women's leadership and participation in conflict prevention and peace processes at community, national, and regional levels. Support will focus on enabling women's organizations to lead early-warning efforts, mediation, and local peace dialogues, and to connect these with national and international mechanisms. Programming will also address social norms, legal and institutional barriers, and financing gaps that hinder women's leadership. An enabling environment that values women's voices, protects their rights, and holds institutions accountable for gender-responsive peace and security commitments (including in National Action Plan on WPS processes) will be fostered throughout.

Outcome 2 – Humanitarian and Crisis Response - *Enhanced access of women and girls to local, inclusive, gender-responsive and life-saving humanitarian response and services in conflict and crisis settings*

WPHF will invest in women-led and women's rights organizations to strengthen their engagement in humanitarian coordination, needs assessment, and response planning. Programs will promote equitable access to humanitarian financing and ensure that response frameworks systematically integrate gender analysis and women's priorities. Through institutional and technical support, WPHF will enhance the capacity, visibility, and safety of local women's organizations so that they can shape effective, inclusive, and accountable crisis response systems. Enabling conditions—policy, resources, and institutional recognition—will be reinforced to sustain women's leadership across the humanitarian–development–peace nexus.

Outcome 3 – Protection of Women and Girls - *Enhanced protection of women and girls, and their rights upheld in crisis and conflict settings*

WPHF will resource and strengthen women-led and community-based organizations that prevent and respond to gender-based violence (GBV) and protect women human rights defenders (WHRDs). This includes supporting access to services for survivors, ensuring physical and digital safety, and addressing harmful norms and systemic discrimination. The Fund will promote stronger coordination between civil society, governments, and UN mechanisms to ensure accountability for violations and delivery of survivor-centered, rights-based protection. Across all outcomes, WPHF will advocate for and help sustain the enabling environments—legal, political, and financial—that safeguard women's rights and civic space.

Outcome 4 – Peacebuilding and Recovery - *Enhanced peacebuilding and economic empowerment and inclusion of women and young women in crisis and conflict settings*

WPHF will strengthen women's participation and influence in post-conflict recovery, reconstruction, and governance processes. Support will enable women's organizations to engage in decision-making on peace agreement implementation, reconciliation, and socio-economic recovery, including climate-related resilience and livelihoods. Investments will focus on long-term institutional and financial sustainability of women's organizations, ensuring their capacity to influence policies and accountability mechanisms. A conducive and gender-responsive environment—anchored in national frameworks, inclusive governance, and adequate resourcing—will be essential for sustaining peace and advancing gender equality.

At the systems level (WPHF Secretariat), the outputs contributing to this goal are:

- **Output 1:** Accessible, timely, and flexible funding reaches more women led organizations, peacebuilders, and human rights defenders
- **Output 2:** Women led organizations and movements have strengthened capacity, are more connected, and resilient
- **Output 3:** Advocacy informed by women peacebuilders and women led organizations for coherent, inclusive, and accountable funding, policies, and structures that respond to and prevent conflict and crisis

The cause-and-effect results chain/theory of change is found in Appendix B of the Terms of Reference as well as in the WPHF Operations Manual.

WPHF is currently structured around the following funding windows⁹:

1. **Regular Funding Cycle (RFC).** The RFC is the largest WPHF funding mechanism through which country or regional call for proposals are launched to funds local women's rights and women-led organizations in partnership with UN agencies to effectively localize WPS and HA. Since 2016, the WPHF Regular Funding Cycle has supported over 1,100 CSOs in 48 countries under this window, working across the WPS pillars and taking a holistic approach to humanitarian response (HDP nexus). They are not only providing access to services, including in the most remote areas and reaching the most vulnerable groups, they are transforming communities by increasing women's leadership in the prevention, management and response of conflict and crisis. Close to 50% of organisations that have benefited from RFC funds, report that this is their first time ever receiving UN funds. This often is the beginning of increased access to multiple sources of funding for local women-led organisations. WPHF has collaborated closely with the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF), as well as the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women and others to ensure synergies rather than duplication. As a result, women-led organisations have been able to transition from some of WPHF's shorter term funding mechanisms to longer term financing offered by the UN System as well as other financing partners.
2. **Rapid Response Window on Women and Peace Processes (RRW).** The RRW provides targeted support for women's direct participation in peace processes, from high-level negotiations to community-led dialogues. Since its launch in 2020, at the request of the UN Secretary General, the RRW has supported the participation of approximately 4,099 women and young women, in their active participation in Track I, Track II or the implementation of peace agreements or negotiations. WPHF delivers on the RRW through an innovative collaboration with International and Regional Non-Governmental Organisations as well as UN agencies. By investing in women led civil society's initiatives to influence peace processes and monitor peace agreements, the RRW fills a gap for rapid funding in a context where women continue to face systematic barriers to their participation to peace processes. Yet with support from the window, women have been able to access key stakeholders, promote the engagement and demands of marginalized groups, fostered intergenerational dialogue, build accountability for peace agreements at the community

⁹ In 2022, the WPHF GSC made the decision to close the COVID-19 Emergency Response Window, with COVID-19 Response to be mainstreamed across WPHF Regular Funding Cycle Projects.

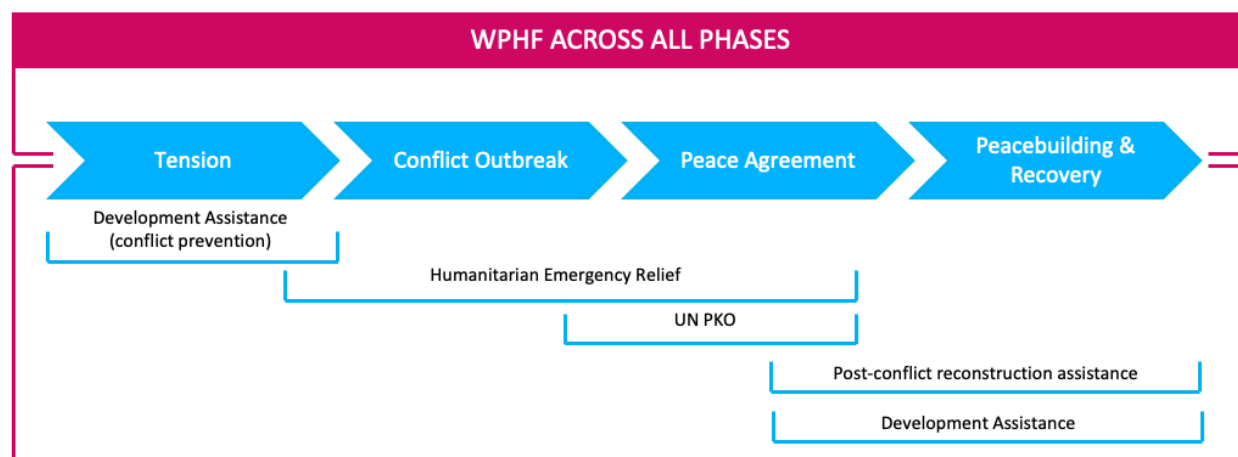
level, and localize peace. Women civil society organizations and peacebuilders have bridged formal and informal peace efforts in changing contexts. The window promotes collaborative partnerships with the UN, INGOs/Regional Organizations and local women-led organizations, using inclusive approaches, and providing access to flexible funding that supports innovation, localization, and sustainability in crisis-affected contexts.

3. **Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRD) Window.** The WHRD Window reflects one of WPHF's innovations as a UN fund by supporting individual Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRDs) with vital protection grants and direct support to access regional and global spaces to continue their advocacy. Since its launch in 2022, WPHF has provided life-saving support to over 1,200 WHRDs and their families and supported access to key regional and international fora for over 180 WHRDs from 30 countries.
4. **Global Learning Hub (L-HUB):** The L-hub is a WPHF's capacity development initiative focused on supporting beneficiaries of WPHF Funds and promotes capacity strengthening and movement building between local CSOs working on peace and humanitarian action to sustain their institutional development and growth. Through partnerships with governments, I/NGOs, the private sector and academia, the L-HUB provides training, networking and knowledge exchange opportunities to WPHF current and past CSO partners, including beyond the completion of their WPHF-funded projects. In 2024, 80.5% of WPHF CSO partners reported applying new knowledge and skills in their organizations, demonstrating the L-HUB's proven promise. This will be expanded to interested CSOs and those keen to create enabling environments for women led organizations to contribute to peace security and humanitarian prevention, protection, participation and response actions.

Through each of the aforementioned funding windows mechanisms, WPHF aims to provide a comprehensive response to the varying needs and priorities of women's rights organizations as well as WHRDs with flexible and quality funding. In addition to providing vital programmatic funding, **WPHF provides core institutional funding** aimed at ensuring the sustainability of women's rights organizations through conflict and crisis settings.

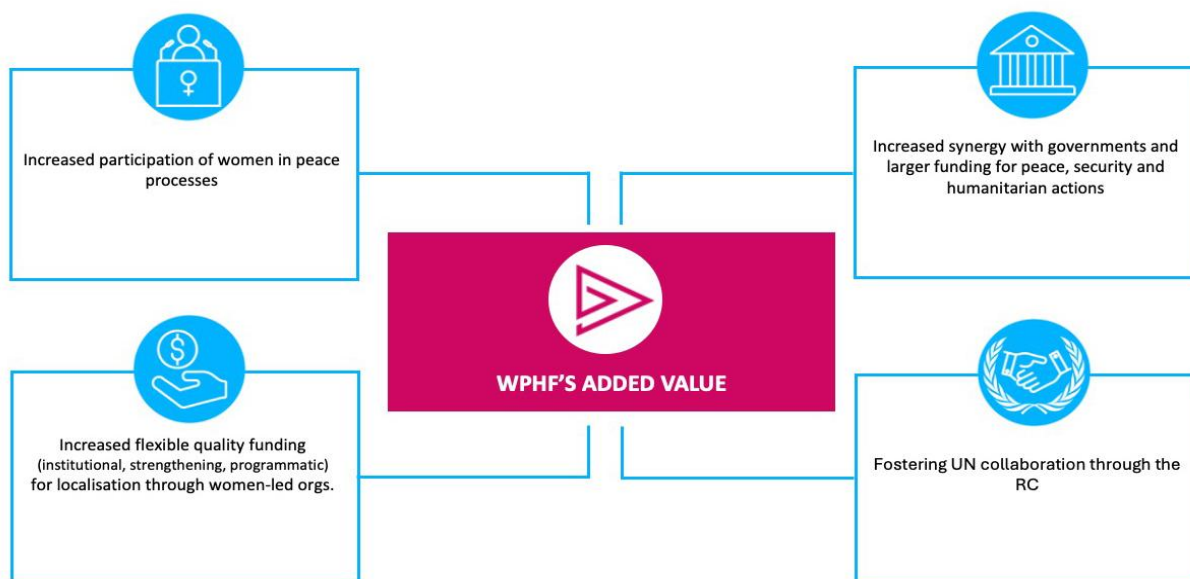
The figure below illustrates the critical role that the WPHF will play by supporting women's engagement in prevention, crisis response, and peacebuilding and recovery.

Figure 1: Role that the WPHF plays in investing in women's engagement across all phases of the contiguum from crisis to peacebuilding and recovery



INVESTING IN WOMEN'S ENGAGEMENT

Figure2: Added value of the WPHF



GOVERNANCE

The management of the WPHF is carried out at the following levels:

- (i) Coordination and Oversight (Steering Committee, Regional/National Steering Committees and Technical Secretariat).
- (ii) Fund Operations (Management of functions implemented directly by the WPHF Technical Secretariat).
- (iii) Fund Design and Administration (MPTF Office).
- (iv) Fund implementation (RFC implementation with Participating UN Organizations (PUNOs), WHRD and RRW implementation with PUNO and non-UN organisations (NUNOs)).

A technical secretariat ensures operational support for the WPHF at the global level as well as regional and country level where relevant.

WPHF Global Steering Committee (Formerly referred to as the Funding Board)¹⁴

The Global Steering Committee (GSC) serves as the governing body of the Fund, providing guidance and oversight and making allocation decisions. This includes making country/regional based allocations for RFC for unearmarked funds, as well as general allocations to the RRW and WHRD for unearmarked funds. The GSC approves all budgets for the funding windows and WPHF Technical Secretariat.

The composition of the Steering Committee consists of representatives from the UN system, member states, and civil society, and it is broken down as follows¹⁵:

¹⁴ In the Fund's legal instruments (MOU and SAA), the decision bodies (GSC and Regional/National level Steering Committees) are all referred to as "Steering Committee" in order to use standard language. UNSDG guidance language that says: "A Steering Committee (SC) or similar entity governs the MDTF and functions as the key decision-making body; it provides strategic guidance and holds ultimate accountability that the fund achieves its programmatic objectives."

¹⁵ Further detail is provided in the WPHF GSC TOR Annex 24 of operational manual

- The four largest member state donors/contributors¹⁶ to the WPHF, on an annual rotational basis
- UN Women, and the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO)
- Two PUNOs¹⁰. Mandatory review will be done for rotational UN Agencies after an agency has been 2 years on the GSC, taking into account the availability of other actors. Decision making process includes:
 - o Interested UN agencies shall submit a formal letter of interest to the Secretariat.
 - o The Secretariat shall circulate the expressions of interest to GSC members.
 - o The GSC shall review requests based on the agency's relevance, comparative advantage, and expected contribution to the Fund.
 - o Selection shall be made preferably by consensus, in line with the GSC's decision-making process.
 - o Membership may be renewed subject to review of the agency's continued relevance, engagement, and contribution.
- Four representatives from civil society organizations focused on the WPS agenda and Gender in Humanitarian Action, on a biennial rotational basis. Civil society representatives shall be self-nominated for a 3-year mandate, non-renewable consecutively.
- The MPTF Office will participate as ex—officio member.
- The WPHF Technical Secretariat, which serves as Secretariat for the Steering Committee with no voting or decision-making rights.

The WPHF GSC serves as a collaborative platform to set WPHF's strategic direction, make resource allocation decisions, and oversee progress towards achieving its results, exercising the overall accountability of the Fund. Provided that quorum (at least 7 members, including at least one representative each from civil society, member states and UN agencies) is met, the GSC shall make decisions by consensus. The GSC may also make decisions via silent procedure¹⁸virtually.

The responsibilities of the GSC include:

1. Provide a platform for global partnership, coordination, advocacy and resource mobilization

- Approve and support implementation of WPHF's Resource Mobilization Strategy.
- Approve and support implementation of WPHF's Advocacy and Communications strategies.
- Encourage and support the facilitation of coordination and consistency with other initiatives on humanitarian action and peace consolidation .

2. Provide Strategic Direction for WPHF

- Approve the WPHF strategic plan, which includes the WPHF results frameworks and theory of change.
- Approve and update as needed the WPHF TOR.
- Identify and agree upon criteria for eligible countries.
- Approve the development and establishment of additional funding windows as relevant.

¹⁶ Contributors are the financial partners which allocate resources to the Fund. They may be governments (i.e. development partners), or institutions, either public or private, including multilateral, intergovernmental, and non-governmental organizations and individuals. The four largest contributors in a given year are represented on the GSC in the following year, and participate in creating strategic guidelines for the Fund, promoting partnerships and monitoring the Fund's overall portfolio.

¹⁰ Any rotational UN agency whose membership, renewal, or review is under consideration shall declare a conflict of interest and shall abstain from the consensus process and decision-making on that agenda item. The agency concerned may provide factual information if requested but shall not participate in the decision. For that item, quorum and consensus shall be determined excluding the agency concerned, and the recusal shall be recorded in the meeting minutes

¹⁸ No objections made.

3. Provide general oversight of the WPHF

- Review, examine and approve the WPHF Operations Manual at least on a bi-annual basis.¹⁹
- Approve the WPHF Technical Secretariat work plan, structure and budget.
- Authorize the Administrative Agent to transfer funds to Participating Organizations (PUNOs and NUNOs)²⁰ for the approved projects.

4. Approve Projects and Make Allocations Decisions

- Approve the WPHF funding windows and Learning Hub project documents, including activities and budget.
- Decide on the allocation of unearmarked WPHF funds to countries and windows.
- Decide on funding allocations to eligible countries and/or windows, including the L-HUB.

5. Exercise overall accountability for the WPHF

- Review and approve global annual and final reports (narrative and financial) ensuring that results, challenges and lessons learned are clearly identified and that follow-up actions are agreed to improve future programming and operations.
- Commission periodic external independent evaluations of the Fund's overall performance and added value and ensure that key findings and lessons learned inform strategic planning, resource allocation and operational guidance.²¹
- Review, approve and monitor Management Responses to evaluations, with clear, time-bound actions and regular reporting on progress to the GSC.
- Approve and periodically review the Fund's Risk Management Strategy, including risk appetite and mitigation measures, ensuring that risk management supports principled, flexible and conflict-sensitive delivery in fragile and conflict-affected settings.
- Promote a culture of learning and adaptive management by systematically using evidence, data and feedback from partners and affected populations to adjust strategies, funding decisions and implementation modalities.

In order to ensure flexibility and country ownership, the governance arrangements combine a global oversight mechanism with country- or regional-level specific steering committees. At country and regional level, the GSC delegates governance of WPHF funds to the National/Regional Steering Committees which is chaired by the relevant Resident Coordinator. The details of how the National/Steering Committees work are outlined in the Operations Manual. For the Global Windows (RRW and WHRD Windows) the GSC delegates to Technical Committees.

For the Rapid Response Window (RRW), the Technical Committee (TC) advises and decides on short-listed proposals. The TC includes RRW INGO partners; a UN Women WPS representative (Country/Regional Office depending on context); UN Women HQ specialists (mediation and WPSHA); DPPA representation for Track 1 peace process requests; UN Women operations focal points for the Direct Support stream where the Secretariat provides support; at least one representative of a UN Entity on the WPHF GSC, and at least one CSO representative on the WPHF GSC. The TC assesses proposals, suggests improvements if needed, recommends the type of support and implementing INGO partner (when relevant), and approves or declines requests; if revisions are requested, the RRW Unit coordinates with the CSO and may resubmit to the TC for information or further review. The TC is also

¹⁹ Or as necessary to allow the Fund to be responsive and adaptable to emerging and rapidly evolving contexts and needs

²⁰ Participating UN Organizations (PUNOs) and/or Non-UN Organizations (NUNOs). Under both the Window for WHRDs and the RRW, implementation is carried out by NGO partners.

²¹ The final evaluation/lessons learned exercise shall be commissioned about 12 months before the Fund's operational end date.

responsible for ensuring advance notice and transparent information sharing to the GSC of the intended utilization of earmarked or unearmarked funds.

For the Women Human Right Defenders Window (WHRD), the WHRD Window Advocacy Committee (technical committee) is an advisory group that reviews shortlisted advocacy support applications and provides expert recommendations on eligibility, strategic value, risks (including reprisals), and potential duplication of support, while identifying opportunities to strengthen impact and coordination with broader human rights, GEWE, and WPS efforts. Comprised of UN Women, OHCHR, and the NGO Working Group on WPS, it helps ensure the Window supports diverse WHRDs appropriately, shares relevant contextual information, and suggests mitigation measures.

WPHF TECHNICAL SECRETARIAT

The WPHF Technical Secretariat (WPHF Secretariat) is responsible for the operational functioning of the Fund, serving as the GSC Secretariat. The WPHF Technical Secretariat **core functions to lead on the achievement of WPHF's Strategic Plan include:**

1. Provide Quality, Flexible, and Effective Funding

- Develop and implement the WPHF Resource mobilization strategy, as approved by the GSC.
- Liaise closely with UN Resident Coordinator Offices and PUNOs to monitor and support Regular Funding Cycle programme implementation as relevant.
- Oversee and manage, where relevant, implementation of RRW and WHRD Windows in coordination with PUNOs and NUNOs.
- Liaise with the Administrative Agent on fund administration issues, including issues related to project/fund extensions and project/fund closure.
- Liaise with PUNO to support timely delivery of funds and oversight of programmes where relevant.

2. Support Global Learning, Capacity Strengthening, and Knowledge Generation

- Collaborate with relevant UN agencies, INGOs and CSOs to support learning, capacity strengthening opportunities.
- Develop and facilitate demand driven, comprehensive evidence-based capacity strengthening and knowledge exchange programming and opportunities.
- Develop, implement and disseminate strategic knowledge products.

3. Strengthen Governance, Strategy Implementation, and Accountability

- Draft and update the WPHF TOR and Operations Manual for GSC Approval.
- Convene GSC meetings, draft agendas and minutes.
- Convene one annual meeting as needed with all donors to present overall programmatic and operational updates.
- Ensure execution of GSC Decisions.
- Provide coordination and operational support to the GSC, as well as National and Regional Steering Committees.
- Ensure the development and implementation of the WPHF Strategic Plan and budgeted annual workplans, as approved by the GSC.
- Develop and implement the WPHF Communications and Advocacy strategy, as approved by the GSC.
- Develop and disseminate Annual Reports.

Using its expertise and capacity, UN Women will act as the WPHF Technical Secretariat, thus ensuring that dedicated funding is accompanied by technical expertise, political support, and the appropriate partnerships. UN

Women will coordinate with the rest of the UN system through the UN Inter-Agency Standing Committee on WPS.

UN Women is uniquely situated to drive a global effort to accelerate implementation of the women, peace and security agenda. In terms of sources of support from the UN system, a civil society survey conducted for the Global Study on Security Council resolution 1325 revealed that almost two thirds (63 per cent) of civil society organizations receive their support from UN Women for their work on women, peace and security. UN Women is also recognized within and outside the UN system as leading global efforts to address the gendered aspects of conflict prevention, post-conflict participation, protection and early recovery, through strategies including knowledge generation, partnerships with key stakeholders, global programming and evidence-based advocacy. UN Women is entrusted the coordination and convening role in the area of gender equality and promoting women's rights, including women, peace and security, by the UN General Assembly (UN GA) in its founding resolution A/RES/64/28923 UN GA resolution A/RES/63/311 on system-wide coherence²⁴, and work under the guidance of its Executive Board. In the area of women, peace and security, UN Women's coordination and accountability role is recognized specifically in Security Council resolution 2242 (2015).

In line with the UNSDG guidance²², the secretariat was placed with UN Women²³ as the UN Organization best positioned to fulfil the functions of the MPTF host for WPHF. UN Women, as the host entity of the WPHF Technical Secretariat, shall provide the institutional platform required for the Secretariat to perform its functions, in accordance with UN Women's applicable rules, regulations, policies and procedures. The Secretariat shall support the GSC in carrying out its functions through advisory, coordination, operational, monitoring, reporting, and liaison support. The costs associated with hosting and running the Secretariat shall be treated as direct costs, subject to approval by the GSC.

Responsibilities of UNW as hosting entity include:

- **Provide the institutional and administrative platform for the WPHF Technical Secretariat**, including office hosting, access to corporate systems, and the operational environment required for the Secretariat to function effectively.
- **Recruit, contract, and administer Secretariat staff** in line with UN Women's HR rules and procedures, including issuance and management of contracts, payroll, entitlements, leave, and separation processes.
- **Provide procurement and operational services for the WPHF Technical Secretariat** including procurement of goods and services, consultant contracting, travel, events, IT equipment, and other operational needs.
- **Provide finance, accounting, and internal control support** for Secretariat expenditures, budget monitoring, vendor payments, travel claims, and financial compliance within UN Women's ERP systems.
- **Provide ICT, information-management, and cybersecurity support** to the Secretariat through UN Women systems, including email, hardware, software access, records storage, and data protection.
- **Support Secretariat engagement with oversight bodies**, including internal and external audit, evaluations, investigations, and other assurance processes.

²² "For regional and global MDTFs, the Secretariat role should ideally be placed with the PUNO who is best placed to fulfill the Secretariat functions", UNSDG Guidance (<https://unsdg.un.org/resources/undg-guidance-establishing-managing-and-closing-multi-donor-trust-funds>).

²³ UN Women is uniquely situated to host the WPHF Secretariat and to accelerate implementation of the women, peace and security agenda. In the area of WPS, UN Women's coordination and accountability role is recognized specifically in Security Council resolution 2242 (2015).

The WPHF Technical Secretariat functions are carried out by the hosting entity in the framework of a project ("The Secretariat project"), approved by the GSC. This project covers staff, logistics, procurement, and is implemented following the host entity's administrative rules and regulations through the entity's systems (e.g., ERP, IT). The WPHF Technical Secretariat staffing, as outlined in the Organigram, is reflective of functional analyses and the objective to remain as lean as possible.

In line with the UNDG Guidance, the Secretariat shall support the GSC through advisory, operational, monitoring, reporting, coordination, fundraising and liaison functions. Secretariat staff shall be recruited and contractually administered by UN Women in accordance with its applicable rules, regulations, policies and procedures, with UN Women retaining the related legal and administrative accountability as host entity. The performance management of the Head of Secretariat, including appointment, renewal, non-renewal, reassignment, or termination, shall be undertaken by UN Women in consultation and coordination with the GSC, which has responsibility for general oversight and exercises overall accountability for the MPTF.

As per the WPHF MOU, ²⁴the WPHF Technical Secretariat costs will be charged to the Fund as direct costs as included in the Secretariat project budget.

At the global level, the WPHF WHRDs and RRW windows Units, hosted by the WPHF Technical Secretariat, manage, coordinate and monitor the windows design and implementation of direct support to civil society organizations and individual women human rights defenders. The Units evaluate applications, share information with relevant stakeholders for due diligence and amplify impact, monitor the overall implementation of the windows and report against the WPHF windows project documents. The window units work closely with WPHF Communications to disseminate information and raise awareness, as well as amplify women's voices from the country to the global level to influence policy and increase funding for women peacebuilders, human rights defenders and civil society organizations.

National/Regional Steering Committees

National/Regional Steering Committees have delegated responsibility from the GSC to manage the WPHF allocation at the country or regional level.

The Resident Coordinator/ Humanitarian Coordinator (RC/HC) leads the WPHF in a country or region, with delegated authority from the WPHF GSC. The RCO or a UN agency (PUNO), as designated by the RC/HC, is playing the role of the secretariat at country or regional level for the Steering Committee. The most appropriate country or regional level steering mechanism will be identified by the UN RC/HC and PUNO (building on existing mechanisms where possible) and shared with the WPHF technical secretariat as part of the WPHF allocation process.

As soon as a new allocation is approved, the Chair of the WPHF Technical Secretariat will send a letter to the RC/HC in the relevant country, announcing the new country allocation. The letter will outline the next steps towards funding allocations including:

- An initial meeting between WPHF and the RC/HC to discuss the funding allocation processes as the chair or co-chair of the Steering Committee, timelines, and the role of PUNO's.
- Identification of the relevant PUNO's.

²⁴ Memorandum of understanding, Section I, para 3: "The Steering Committee may request any of the Participating UN Organizations, to perform additional tasks in support of the Fund not related to the Administrative Agent functions detailed in Section I, paragraph 2 above and subject to the availability of funds. Costs for such tasks will be agreed in advance and with the approval of the Steering Committee be charged to the Fund as direct costs".

- If a PBF National Committee is not present, the establishment of the National/Regional Steering Committee or reactivation of the National Steering Committee.

If there are any delays in standard allocation timelines, the RC/HC together with the WPHF Technical Secretariat would agree on mitigation measures to accelerate delivery and minimize delays.

For WPHF regional responses, a regional steering committee will be established with similar responsibilities as the national steering committee.

In coordination with the WPHF Technical Secretariat, the RC/HC can establish or use an existing separate national steering committee in addition to being member of a Regional Steering Committee if there is a significant increase in funding that is earmarked to the country only rather than a regional response following the standard guidelines on the establishment of national steering committees. WPHF Secretariat will support the Committee as needed and requested by the RC/HC.

Responsibilities of the National/Regional Steering Committees

The steering committees shall assume the following responsibilities (More details can be found in the operations manual):

1. Provide a platform for partnership, coordination, advocacy and resource mobilization at the country or regional level.
2. Manage WPHF resources at the country level.
3. In coordination with the WPHF Technical Secretariat, request the Administrative Agent to transfer funding to PUNOs on approved project documents and available cash balance in the fund account.
4. Monitor progress and provide oversight on project performance.

National and Regional Steering Committees are responsible for ensuring that WPHF resources are managed and allocated in a results-oriented and evidence-based manner at country and regional level.

The National/Regional Steering Committees will review and use results information – including project reports, monitoring data and synthesis provided by the WPHF Technical Secretariat and PUNOs – to inform allocation decisions, adjust priorities and address emerging risks. Meeting agendas should include regular discussion of progress against outcomes as well as bottlenecks and good practices in supporting women's organizations and WHRDs. The Committees will promote a culture of learning by encouraging sharing of lessons among partners, and by ensuring that key insights from implementation are communicated back to the WPHF Technical Secretariat to feed into global analysis, evaluations and strategic planning. Through these functions, National and Regional Steering Committees will serve as the primary fora for results-based decision-making, accountability and adaptive management of the WPHF portfolio at country and regional level.

Composition and Operation of the National/Regional Steering Committees

To the extent possible, existing structures will be used rather than establishing new ones. In most cases, it is envisaged that existing coordination committees for WPS, including National Action Plans coordination mechanisms, PBF Joint Steering Committees, Spotlight Initiative Steering Committees, or other MPTF Steering Committees²⁵ will be used.

²⁵ The WPHF could operate as either a recipient or feeder fund with another fund at the country level in line with the commitment to use existing steering committees and structures.

National Steering Committee

At a minimum, the national level steering committee will be chaired by the UN Resident Coordinator (RC/HC) and be made up of:

- Representatives from the government (as co-chair with the RC/HC) depending on the country.
- Representatives from PUNO's.
- At least two representatives from women's rights civil society organizations.
- At least two representatives from current WPHF donors (As per discussion with RC, preference will be given to donors already represented on the GSC, provided they have an in-country presence).
- WPHF Secretariat focal point (observer status supporting RCO/HC).

Each country will specify to the WPHF Technical Secretariat at the beginning of the process and in its minutes of the meetings, the composition of its national level steering committee and report on the number/names of women's rights civil society organizations who participated in the decision-making process in the minutes and transfer forms (safe civil society participation is mandatory for WPHF). If a donor provides earmarked funding to a Call for Proposals at country level but is not an official member of the National Steering Committee, the Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator may, in coordination with the WPHF Technical Secretariat, consider inviting the donor to participate as a voting member for discussions and decisions related to that specific funding allocation. This participation would be limited to the relevant Call for Proposals and would not confer permanent membership of the National Steering Committee or voting rights on subsequent decision-making items²⁶.

Regional Steering Committee

For regional steering committees, at a minimum, the regional steering committee will be made up of:

- One UN Resident Coordinator as Chair of the steering committee.
- UN Resident Coordinator Office representatives from the countries under the Regional Response.
- Representatives from PUNOs across all countries part of the regional response.
- At least two representatives from women's rights civil society organizations.
- At least two Representatives from current WPHF donors. (As per discussion with RC, preference will be given to donors already represented on the GSC, provided they have an in-country presence).
- WPHF Secretariat focal point (observer status supporting RCO/HC).

On a case-by-case basis, a representative of regional governmental organization or representatives of the governments of at least two countries may co-chair the steering committee.

ADMINISTRATIVE AGENT

The UNDP Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office (MPTF Office) acts as the Administrative Agent (AA) of the WPHF. The MPTF Office is the UN center of expertise in UN pooled funding has administered over 250 UN pooled funding instruments over the years (<http://mptf.undp.org>). 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's standard functions as described in the MOU and SAA.

The standard functions include:

- i. *Fund design*: Support for developing the Fund concept note, TOR and Operations Manual. This includes notably support for the design of the fund architecture (i.e., governance arrangements), operational structure and the establishment of legal instruments.

²⁶ Special consideration may be given to donors that are members of the Global Steering Committee, in recognition of their role in the Fund's global governance structure and continued engagement with WPHF.

- ii. *Fund administration:* The Administrative Agent concludes a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Participating UN Organizations, relevant legal agreements with Non-UN Organizations, and Standard Administrative Arrangements (SAA's) with contributing partners. The AA receives, administers, and disburses funds to the Participating Organizations according to the decisions of the Steering Committee; ensures consolidation of statements and reports, based on submissions provided by each Participating Organization, and ensures annual and final financial reporting to contributing partners and the Steering Committee. The Administrative Agent will also disburse funds to the WPHF Technical Secretariat for direct costs based on the decisions of the Steering Committee.

In addition, the MPTF Office through its GATEWAY (<http://mptf.undp.org/>) offers a web-based service portal, provides real-time, transparent, financial information to the public and a Fund management tool.

CONTRIBUTORS

Contributors wishing to contribute to the Fund must sign a Standard Administrative Agreement with the Administrative Agent (SAA). Contributors shall be able to direct their contributions into the Fund account. Prior to agreeing to accept a contribution from a non-State actor, due diligence will be performed to ensure that these planned contributions are in line with the United Nations policies on the contributions from non-State actors.

While unearmarked contributions are preferred, contributors may earmark their contributions to the WPHF in line with UNSDG guidance. Contributors may earmark their contributions at the outcome level, at the country level, or by funding window, as long as the earmarked country is among the eligible countries approved by the WPHF GSC. Funding Contributions may be accepted in fully convertible currency or in any other currency that can be readily utilized. Such contributions will be deposited into the bank account designated by UNDP MPTF Office. The value of a contribution payment, if made in other than US dollars, will be determined by applying the United Nations operational rate of exchange in effect on the date of payment. Gains or losses on currency exchanges will be recorded in the UN MPTF account established by the Administrative Agent.

The notional approach²⁷: According to the UNDG Guidance Note on Establishing, Managing and Closing MDTFs, pooled funding arrangements operate on a collective compliance principle. Contributions from multiple donors are commingled in a single account, and compliance is assessed at the fund level, not per individual donor contribution. In practice, this means that eligible expenditures incurred under the MDTF must equal or exceed the total donor contributions received. Therefore, a specific donor's contribution is deemed compliant if the total eligible expenses within the MDTF are equal to or greater than the total donor contributions at the time of the alleged ineligibility.

FUND IMPLEMENTATION

WPHF FUNDING WINDOWS²⁸

Regular funding Cycle (RFC)

This window provides quality and flexible funding to local women's organizations working in crisis and conflict-

²⁷ <https://unsdg.un.org/resources/undg-guidance-establishing-managing-and-closing-multi-donor-trust-funds>

²⁸ Secretariat conducting periodic reviews to confirm that the window remains viable in light of the funding available, to facilitate better targeted funding and to ensure that each window has sufficient funds to warrant its administration, to be confirmed by the working level SC.

affected countries. National, regional, local/grassroots, women or young women-led, women's rights, youth rights, feminist, and civil society organizations are eligible to apply. An allocation from WPHF can only be provided to countries that have been declared eligible by the GSC. In regions facing conflict-related or humanitarian challenges, the GSC might also decide on multi-country allocations.

Types of Calls for Proposals under the Regular Funding Cycle

Open Call for Proposals under the Regular Track	Calls for Proposals are advertised on the WPHF website on a periodic basis. Any CSO that meets the eligibility criteria can apply. WPHF conducts the longlisting and shortlisting of proposals, and the National/Regional Steering Committee takes the final decision on which proposals are selected for funding.
Targeted Call for Proposals under the Regular Track	Calls for Proposals are open to a list of pre-identified CSOs. WPHF conducts the longlisting and shortlisting of proposals, and the National/Regional Steering Committee takes the final decision on which proposals are selected for funding. This Call for Proposals is used under special circumstances including in contexts where security considerations do not allow for a publicly advertised Call for Proposals and/or in situations where the total funding allocation for CSOs is under 1 million USD.
Targeted Call for Proposals under the Emergency Track	Calls for Proposals are open to a list of pre-identified CSOs that have passed UN capacity assessments and have a proven track record to respond to a specific emergency need. WPHF conducts the longlisting and shortlisting of proposals and the UN Resident Coordinator's Office takes the final decision on which proposals are selected for funding in a fast-track procedure. This Call for Proposal is used in emergency situations only.
Open Call for Proposals under the Emergency Track	Call for Proposals are advertised on the WPHF website in parallel or following a Targeted Call for Proposals under the Emergency Track. The Open Call for Proposals under the emergency response track follows the same process as the Regular Funding Cycle Open Calls for Proposals, including use of public open calls and decision-making by National or Regional Steering Committee.

Under the RFC, the UN RC with PUNO country office will provide inputs on the regions/scope and impact areas (where relevant) of the CFP. Under the regular funding cycle, three streams of funding are available for CSOs:

- **Stream 1: Institutional Funding for Registered CSOs (USD \$2,500 - \$50,000)** which aims to reinforce the institutional capacity of registered women's rights/led organizations working on gender specific issues in peace and security and humanitarian contexts.
- **Stream 2: Programmatic Funding for Registered CSOs (USD \$30,000 - \$200,000)** which will finance projects by registered CSOs for programmatic activities aligned with the WPHF impact area in the CFP.
- **Stream 3: Small Grants for Non-Registered Organizations (USD \$12,000 maximum)** which will finance grassroots and women-led initiatives by of non-registered organizations led by displaced and stateless women in targeted countries.

Project approval will be based on the WPHF's Operations Manual guidance by the GSC, which sets out its country and thematic allocation priorities encapsulated in a country and regional matrix and expected outcome results.

The Fund may be activated in natural hazard settings where such crises intersect with peace and security dynamics and give rise to generating specific risks, needs and opportunities related to advancing the WPS agenda. In such contexts, WPHF will act within its comparative advantage by supporting women's leadership, participation and protection, while ensuring alignment and complementarity with OCHA pooled funds (CERF and CBPFs) and other existing funding mechanisms, as part of a coherent and system-wide response.

Rapid Response Window (RRW)

This funding mechanism is open to women's rights organizations and women peacebuilders with no deadline for applications submitted aiming to influence ongoing, upcoming or stalled peace processes – including track 1 and track 2 peace processes or peace agreements – in all ODA eligible countries.

Modalities of the WPHF rapid response window on women's participation in peace processes and the implementation of peace agreements:

- **Direct Support:** For logistical and/or technical services (up to 30,000 USD) to ensure women's meaningful influence in a peace process/peace agreement implementation. A full proposal is submitted by a woman peacebuilder, informal group of women peacebuilders or local/national CSO, or a consortium of CSOs. A legal registration is not required for the Direct Support Stream. A Direct Support proposal may be submitted by a UN entity or a RRW INGO partner on behalf of women peacebuilders, informal groups, or CSOs.
- **Short-Term Grants:** For projects (up to 100,000 USD) that address diverse barriers and urgent gaps to women's meaningful influence in peace process or the implementation of a peace agreement. An initial concept note is submitted by a CSO or a consortium of CSOs with one CSO with a legal registration as lead. If the compliance criteria and the project design are aligned with the RRW objectives, CSOs will be invited to submit a full-length proposal. Application on behalf of CSOs is not permitted for Short Term Grants.
- **Both Direct Support and Short-Term Grants:** A full proposal for Direct Support and an initial concept note for Short Term grants are submitted by a CSO or a consortium of CSOs (with one CSO with a legal registration as lead) with separate application form for each. If the compliance criteria and the project design are aligned with the RRW objectives, CSOs will be invited to submit a full-length proposal for the Short-Term Grant application. The two proposals will be evaluated separately.

Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRD) Window

The Funding Window for Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRDs) addresses funding gaps for the protection and safe participation of WHRDs from or working in conflict and crisis-affected contexts.

Modalities of the WPHF funding window for women human rights defenders:

The WHRD Window offers two forms of support to WHRDs:

- **Safety Net:** Individual WHRDs who face – or have faced – risks as a result of their activism around human rights or peace request an emergency protection grant up to 10,000 USD. Financial assistance is provided through NGO partners and is intended to support short-term livelihoods assistance, relocation costs, security equipment, legal assistance, and physical and mental health care.
- **Advocacy Support:** WHRD requests logistical assistance to facilitate their participation, either individually or as a delegation, in a meeting, event, or decision-making process, at the national, regional, or international level, which contributes to advancing human rights and peace. The support is managed directly by the WHRD Unit, covering transportation, visa fees, accommodation, translation, daily subsistence allowance, and accessibility requirements for WHRDs living with disabilities.

At the global level, the WPHF WHRDs and RRW Windows Units, hosted by the WPHF Technical Secretariat, manage, coordinate and monitor the windows design and implementation of direct support to civil society organizations and individual women human rights defenders. These Units will work with NUNOs as well as

Regional and Country Offices to deliver the Funds as per outcome deliverables. The selection of NUNOs, as well as Regional and Country Offices, is outlined in the Operations Manual. The Window Units will evaluate applications, share information with relevant stakeholders for due diligence and amplify impact, monitor the overall implementation of the windows and report against the WPHF windows project documents.

Global Learning Hub (L-HUB)

In line with its knowledge management, capacity strengthening, and rapid response needs, the Global Learning Hub (L-HUB) was established in 2021 to foster connections and knowledge sharing amongst CSO partners and strengthen their capacity. The L-HUB also provides small grants up to 20,000 USD, via targeted Calls for Proposals for WPHF CSO partners to strengthen their institutional capacities, programmatic effectiveness, networking and collaboration through peer learning and joint action initiatives of two or more CSOs working in partnership. These also contribute to advocacy and women's movement building across borders. Considering the cross-country, regional and global scope of these grants, as well as their learning nature and small amount, the final grant allocation is reviewed approved by the GSC. The PUNO will inform the National/Regional Steering Committee by email.

Through multilingual webinars, peer exchanges, knowledge cafés, digital learning tools, and global in-person forums such as the 2023 Global Women's Forum in Berlin (which produced the Berlin Declaration), the L-HUB strengthens institutional capacity, fosters cross-country collaboration, and enables joint advocacy among over 80+ CSOs worldwide.

CSOs may also be offered the opportunity to apply for peer learning grants aimed at fostering capacity development and mutual support between CSOs across WPHF windows. In these cases, application and selection processes will be managed by the L-Hub, in coordination with the respective PUNO's and grants will be transferred using the RFC transfer processes. Alternatively, grants can be transferred directly through the global window. The transfer process will depend on efficiency considerations in each context.

Participating UN Organization acting as Management entity/agent (PUNO-Formerly referred to as management entity)

The Fund will be mainly implemented by CSOs, that will receive funding either through a PUNO or directly from the Fund. As a UN multi-partner trust fund, WPHF works with multiple UN entities. WPHF currently has signed MOUs with UN Women, UNFPA, UNHCR, IOM and UNDP to act as PUNO's. As such, WPHF funds can be allocated to one PUNO or more in a country when this is recommended by the UN RC in coordination with WPHF. The selection of the PUNO will be supported through a Capacity Assessment Matrix in Appendix A.

The WPHF Technical Secretariat will work with the Resident Coordinators Office to support the selection of the appropriate PUNO who will assume programmatic and financial accountability for RFC funds received from the Administrative Agent and ensure timely disbursements of funds to CSO partners. The PUNO will also support the grantees' projects monitoring, evaluation and audits and manage the reporting system of grantees' projects in line with its rules and regulations.

Participating Organizations may charge up to 7% to cover their indirect costs. The Participating UN Organization performing an additional oversight function, will assume programmatic and financial accountability for funds received from the Administrative Agent and may be able to charge up to 3% as direct costs to cover additional costs related to the ME function and 5% direct costs to cover capacity building for CSOs, as approved by the GSC. The PUNO ensures timely disbursements of funds to CSO partners and is

responsible for the grantee's projects monitoring, evaluation and audits and management of the reporting system of grantees' projects in line with its rules and regulations.

At the global level, the GSC may approve funding allocations to Non-Governmental Organizations and International Organizations. NUNOs are selected by the WPHF Steering Committee following a competitive process, a technical evaluation undertaken by the WPHF and a harmonized approach to Cash Transfers (HACT) assessment. The WPHF global window units manage and coordinate the NUNOs to ensure coordination, no duplication and timely delivery.

Specific efforts will be made to identify, work with, and mentor a range of local CSOs at the country level. The selected CSOs will receive funds for approved projects through the PUNO. The PUNO will link the critical work of CSOs on the ground with the broader political and peacebuilding processes. The PUNO will also fully leverage and develop the absorptive capacity of CSOs in this field and ensure knowledge management and learning between CSO partners at the country level. PUNOs and CSO partners will be responsible for management of the project cycle.

The WPHF will transfer resources directly to various Participating Organizations - Participating UN Organizations (PUNOs) and Non-UN Entities (NUNOs) – that will use the funds following their rules and regulations (thereby avoiding any duplication of operating procedures and minimizing transaction costs) and will be programmatically and financially accountable for the funds received. A minimum threshold of 100,000 USD per individual transfer to a Participating Organization is strongly recommended.

The PUNOs will be able to receive funding by signing the Fund MOU. The NUNOs that are assessed as being low risk following a HACT assessment, will be eligible to access and receive financing directly from the Fund after being cleared and approved by the GSC, following the NUNOs' approval procedures, by signing the relevant legal documents with the Administrative Agent. The NUNOs will carry out programmatic activities and assume responsibilities identical to those of the PUNOs, as well as any additional obligations imposed by the Fund's GSC in its approval of a NUNO project proposal.²⁹

ACCOUNTABILITY

The provisions are specified in the legal instruments governing the Fund (MOU, MOA and SAA) and ensure a clear understanding with regard to programmatic and financial accountability of all stakeholders in the course of implementation. In addition to specifying the applicable rules and procedures this section can provide for any special arrangements in case the fund includes windows for non-UN stakeholders.

MONITORING, EVALUATION, and RESULTS

Description of the monitoring and evaluation arrangements of the WPHF are in line with standard UNDG MOU/SAA.

The WPHF Technical Secretariat is responsible for leading and coordinating results-based management (RBM), monitoring and evaluation across the Fund, ensuring that WPHF's strategic vision is translated into measurable results at global, window and country levels. In close consultation with the GSC and relevant partners, the Technical Secretariat will develop, maintain and update the Fund's results framework and overarching Theory of Change. It will provide guidance and tools to ensure coherence between the global results framework and

²⁹ More details on the NUNO management by the WPHF Technical Secretariat can be found in the WPHF Operations Manual.

window-specific and country/regional results matrices.

The Technical Secretariat will consolidate and analyze programmatic results submitted by PUNOs, NUNOs and civil society partners, as per the reporting schedule, ensuring basic quality assurance and maintaining an information system of results. Drawing on this evidence, the Technical Secretariat will share results on annual basis on country level results, and against its strategic plan as per the periodicity outlined in the M&E Strategy for the GSC to support results-informed allocation decisions, strategic adjustments and risk management.

In collaboration with partners, the Technical Secretariat will support capacity strengthening on RBM, results-based reporting, monitoring and evaluation for Participating Organizations and civil society partners, including through practical guidance on RBM, indicator development, data collection and results-based reporting. Through these functions, the Technical Secretariat will serve as the central hub for learning and evidence generation within WPHF, promoting adaptive management, accountability and continuous improvement across all funding windows and levels of governance.

In addition, the GSC will commission independent reviews/evaluations on the overall performance of the Fund. These evaluations will take place at a minimum of twice within the Fund cycle, with additional evaluations taking place if extensions of the Fund occur. A Fund level [evaluation](#) was carried out in 2024 with a second one planned for 2028/2029 to align with the WPHF Strategic Plan period. The aim of these evaluations will be further detailed in the TORs for the evaluations and will assess the performance of the Fund as per OECD-DAC criteria, and to test the theory of change described in the Results Matrix.²⁵

Specifically, the Technical Secretariat will carry out monitoring and evaluation at two levels – System (Fund Level) and Programmatic Level based on its results framework and set of performance indicators which will be reviewed by the GSC, and as outlined in its strategic plan and M&E strategy.

System Level

Based on its strategy and theory of change, the WPHF Technical Secretariat will also recommend a set of Fund level indicators to the GSC based on its results framework for approval in order to monitor and report on performance. The targets which are the results the WPHF plans to achieve will then depend on the investment decision and level of capitalization.

Programme Level

In order to allow the consolidation of results at the global level, partner projects will be expected to select and report on at least one outcome indicator directly linked to the transformative change generated by the project interventions. The outcome indicators will be agreed upon in the WPHF Results Framework and technical guidance provided in Impact and Indicator Tip Sheets. These indicators will measure various changes as outlined in the WPHF outcomes, as well as monitor implementation of WPS and Humanitarian Action policies at the national/country level. Every project funded by the WPHF will be required to collect data associated with indicators of the outcome they are intended to contribute to, which will be tracked through the MPTF Office. Reports will be used by the GSC to review the overall progress against expected results and assess the achievement of performance target.

Output indicators for CSO partners would be specific to each project and reflect changes in skills or abilities, or the availability of new products and services that have been achieved with the resources provided by the WPHF Fund. The evaluation of the performance of each output indicator will take external factors into account as well as the pre-identified assumptions and risks. The Participating Organizations are responsible for the achievement of this first level of results and responsible for collecting and reporting data. Monitoring and evaluation at the

country and global levels will ensure delivery of intended results.

Refer to Appendix B for the Theory of Change in the Terms of Reference and Appendix A of the Operations Manual.

REPORTING

All reporting and monitoring will be undertaken in accordance with the standard Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and Standard Administrative Agreements (SAA).

For each project approved for funding, each participating organization will provide the WPHF Technical Secretariat and the Administrative Agent with annual narrative and financial reports prepared in accordance with their accounting and reporting procedures, as agreed upon in the legal agreements signed with the Administrative Agent.

Narrative reports

The Participating Organizations will present the following reports to the WPHF Technical Secretariat for consolidation and further transmission to the Administrative Agent:

- (a) Annual narrative reports to be provided no more than three months (March 31st) after the end of the calendar year, with a draft provided to WPHF February 28th of each year for review.
- (b) Final narrative reports after the end of activities contained in the program-related approved document, including the final year of such activities, to be submitted no more than four months (April 30th) in the following year after the operational closure of the project.

Financial Reports

The Participating Organizations will present the following financial statements and reports to the Administrative Agent for consolidation:

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

The narrative annual and final reports will be results-oriented, and evidence based. The reports will give a summary of results and achievements compared to the expected result in the project document.

Based on these reports, the Administrative Agent will ensure the consolidation of the narrative and financial reports which will submit to each of the Fund's Contributors and to the GSC as per the schedule established in the Standard Administrative Agreement.

RISKS AND RISK MITIGATION STRATEGIES

Given the thematic priorities of WPHF, the Fund is subject to a wide range of internal and external factors that may affect its ability to achieve its objectives. The Fund's risk management framework aims to foster a shared understanding of these risks, thereby enabling more effective mitigation and adaptation measures. As a core component of the Fund's due diligence and operational processes, risk management ensures that any remaining financial or other risks are collectively borne by all stakeholders. Fund-level risks are outlined below. The WPHF

Technical Secretariat is responsible for maintaining and updating the risk management strategy and will periodically report to the GSC on the progress and implementation of these strategies.

RISK MITIGATION MATRIX	
Risk	Mitigation Strategies
CONTEXTUAL RISKS	
Lack of financing	- Diversify donor base. - Coordinated donor outreach with UN agencies who are PUNOs to the Fund and Resident Coordinator Offices where relevant. - Maintain robust Partnerships and RM capacities at WPHF secretariat. - Effective advocacy and communications outlining WPHFs comparative advantages and funding impacts. - Effective advocacy and communications on the WPS agenda.
UN Reform process	- Prioritize participation in Fund rationalization processes. - Outline synergies with other UN Funding mechanisms. - Collaborate with PUNOs and member states to highlight WPHF as a better practice in localisation especially for women led organisations.
Social norms in donor member states shift.	- Effective advocacy and communications on the WPS agenda. - Effective advocacy and communications on multilateralism and gender equality as foundational pillars of peace and security.
PROGRAMMATIC RISKS	
Women led organisations and WHRDs unaware of WPHF funding opportunities.	- Disseminate WPHF opportunities through CSO, Women Rights Organisations (WRO), and WHRD networks, UN channels, and local partners. - Use accessible formats and local languages where feasible and monitor applicant diversity to address gaps in outreach .
Women and WLOs receiving funding from WPHF at increased security risks	- Ensure privacy of applicants and beneficiaries in insecure contexts. - Consent provided before advocacy and communications tools developed. - Support where possible cross section
UN agency policies delay delivery of Funds.	- Engage early and regularly with the PUNO to identify and reduce avoidable processing delays. - Clarify timelines, roles, and documentation requirements from the outset. - Track recurring bottlenecks raised by CSOs and use annual reporting/learning to support improvements in grant-management practices. - Maintain transparent communication with CSOs on timelines and constraints.

National partners have limited capacity to apply for funds and to implement projects.	- Encouragement of recipient organizations (mentoring / assistance from donor states or CSO) as part of project proposal. - Application of barrier assessment and clear, detailed strategies as part of project proposals. - Management of scope of individual national projects.
Lack of time for initiatives, which have transformative impact.	- Outcome led funding. - Clearly established and time-limited goals for projects. - Management of the portfolio of projects to ensure both short-term achievement and longer-term structural change.
Capacity and knowledge are not translated into transformative action	- Application of barrier assessment to produce evidence-based, reasonable, and achievable projects. - Mentoring and assistance for recipient organizations.
INSTITUTIONAL RISKS	
UN Reform process	- Prioritize participation in Fund rationalization processes. - Outline synergies with other UN Funding mechanisms. - Collaborate with PUNOs and member states to highlight WPHF as a better practice in localisation especially for women led organisations.
Lack of data to adequately analyse project performance	- Projects based around SMART goals. - Strong M&E capacities at Secretariat level.

AUDIT

In line with the audit provisions in the standard MOU and SAA, as well as 2014 Framework for Joint Internal Audit of UN Joint Activities, the Administrative Agent, Participating Organizations (PUNOs and NUNOs) will be audited according to their own rules and financial regulations and in line with this framework for joint audit. In addition, CSOs partners shall be audited in accordance with the Audit Policies and Procedures of the UN Entity. Audit costs are covered by the PUNO.

PUBLIC DISCLOSURE

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

The Technical Secretariat and the Administrative Agent ensure that the WPHF's operations are disseminated, Information posted on the website shall include: contributions received, Steering Committee Decisions, funds transferred, annual certified expenditures, summaries of proposed and approved programmes, the work plan and Fund progress reports on subjects such as fundraising and external assessment reports, including relevant information on Fund operations.

All stakeholders should take appropriate measures to promote the WPHF. Information shared with the press regarding fund beneficiaries, official notices, reports and publications shall acknowledge the WPHF's role. More specifically, the Administrative Agent shall ensure that the role of the contributors and relevant stakeholders is fully acknowledged in all external communications related to the WPHF.

In line with a do-no-harm approach and safeguarding obligations, the WPHF applies an exceptions policy whereby information that could identify beneficiaries—particularly women's rights organizations, women peacebuilders and women human rights defenders operating in sensitive or high-risk contexts—will not be publicly disclosed when such disclosure could pose security, protection, or reputational risks. In these cases, the level of information published through the Gateway and other public channels may be limited, anonymized, or aggregated, while ensuring that internal documentation and reporting requirements for accountability, oversight, and audit purposes are maintained.

AMENDMENTS, DURATION AND CLOSURE

The Steering Committee will be able to modify any of the provisions of these terms of reference, including the Fund's duration and has the authority to close the Fund.

The WPHF was established with an initial end date of December 2020. The Steering Committee extended the end date to December 2040. Any remaining balance in the Fund's account after the closure of the Fund will be used for a purpose established by the Steering Committee and the Donors, or it will be reimbursed to the Donor(s) in proportion to their contribution to the Fund, as decided by the Contributor and the GSC.

APPENDIX A: PUNO Capacity Assessment Matrix

To be provided by UNW for GSC Approval.

APPENDIX B: WPHF Theory of Change

