

Terms of Reference

Independent Mid-Term Review of the Joint Peace Fund (JPF)

A. Introduction

The military coup in Myanmar in February 2021 brought an effective end to the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) and saw conflict explode across the country as the military junta attempted to assert its control over Myanmar's people and to quash the anti-coup resistance that erupted across the country. The Joint Peace Fund (JPF), initially established in 2015 to primarily support the NCA based peace process, had to be reformed to address the new realities. A period of reflection and consultation informed a new strategy and a restructured Fund Management Office (FMO). In 2023 the FMO, the Fund Board (FB), and the Fund Board Working Group (FBWG) began to implement that strategy. This enabled the Fund to continue, with a focus on new initiatives in new thematic areas, rebuilding trust in partner and stakeholder relationships, and expanding stakeholder coverage.

The JPF's governance structures are commissioning a mid-term review (MTR) to assess how well this strategy is being implemented, and whether the strategy remains a relevant and impactful peacebuilding and conflict transformation contribution in the evolving context. This MTR will complement a Governance Review that was conducted in 2024, and which validated the existing governance structures and bodies as continuing to be fit for purpose. The MTR will complement that governance review by further assessing whether the structural changes introduced, shifting to a single management structure under UNOPS, following the 2021 coup are able to implement the strategy effectively and efficiently.

B. Background

The Joint Peace Fund was created over the course of 2015-2016 for the purpose of providing a coordinated multi-donor platform for international support to national efforts that contribute to inclusive peace and conflict transformation in Myanmar. In the years since, JPF has provided targeted grant-based financial assistance and specialist technical advisory support to a wide range of implementing partners and key stakeholders.

The Fund continues its activities supporting the peoples of Myanmar in their pursuit of inclusive, sustainable, and principled peace, with JPF's efforts guided by a new strategy from 2023 (approved 4 October 2022).

C. Purpose, Objective, Scope and Focus of the Review

The primary *users* of the Review include JPF FB members¹ and the JPF FMO. The results of the Review will inform whether the Strategy needs to be revised and will inform changes that may be required in the implementation of the strategy and management of the Fund in order that the Fund is able to continue supporting the pursuit of peace and any subsequent peace process in Myanmar over the next several years.

The primary *purpose* of the Review is:

- 1) Strategic Relevance

¹ JPF's current Fund Board consists of representatives from Canada, European Union, Finland, Germany, Italy, New Zealand, Norway, Switzerland, UK.

To assess JPF's 2023 Strategy and Theory of Change at the mid-way point in the envisaged life of the strategy and to assess whether that Strategy remains relevant and impactful in the current context, as outlined in the strategy's two core strategic objectives.

2) Effective and Efficient Implementation

To assess how well this strategy is being implemented. Drawing on the OECD DAC's five evaluation criteria (impact, relevance, sustainability, efficiency, effectiveness), the Review shall focus primarily and not exclusively on delivering the annual workplans and contributing to projected potential impact and relevance.

The evaluators will also take into account the effect of the context and political situation on JPF's operational environment, which has important implications for the scope of the Review. The JPF highlights gender mainstreaming, and Women, Peace, and Security initiatives as both a cross-cutting theme and a strategic priority. The Review will assess the JPF's contribution to, and progress against, this dimension.

The Inception Report will determine how the Review will address the two core strategic objectives and gender-related objectives in assessing the performance of the JPF. This will need to be clearly spelled out at all levels and will be a specific feature of the inception report and presentation to ensure it has been adequately incorporated.

Sustainability of JPF-influenced outcomes is to a large extent dependent on external actors.

3) Fund Management Structure

The review will assess the changes introduced to the FMO following a restructuring in 2022, and whether this supports the efficiency and effectiveness of the JPF.

D. Proposed Approach and Methodology

The reviewers will propose a detailed methodology for the review as the first deliverable. The review should draw on mixed methods combining the collection and analysis of both primary and secondary qualitative data.

The context in which JPF operates is highly insecure and contested. JPF places a high premium on the safety and security of its partners in this context, as such JPF maintains strict confidentiality and security protocols with a limited distribution of the strategy and of written products. JPF will work with the review team to ensure that confidentiality and security are respected, while enabling the review team to develop a methodology that allows a robust assessment of the JPF's strategy and implementation. The review team will consider methodologies (e.g. third party monitoring, key informant interviews, focus group discussions) to help account for local perspectives and adapt to the challenging and sensitive context.

The reviewers will have access to key documents supplied by the FMO to form the basis of a desk review. The FMO will also facilitate a range of interviews that the reviewers can undertake independently with members of the Fund Board and Fund Board Working Group, external stakeholders and implementing partners.

The review will focus on the overall programmatic delivery of the JPF, in order to assess this, the review team will conduct indicative assessments of up to 8 individual grants. These assessments will be conducted at a higher level, and will not constitute in-depth project evaluations of these individual projects.

Field visits within Myanmar will not be possible given the ongoing conflict context and sensitivities that exist around peacebuilding and the JPF.

The Review team is encouraged to suggest other data sources and collection methods if needed.

E. Key Review Questions

Within the above objectives, the Review is to address the following questions:²

1. Relevance:

Assess the extent to which the 2023 strategy, objectives and activities of the JPF respond to the evolving context and deliver a conflict transformation outcome.

2. Impact:

While it may be too soon to reasonably expect significant impact the Review should seek to determine the extent of the JPF's expected/projected contribution to the two core strategic objectives and the cross-cutting theme. This assessment would assess the JPF approach, programme logic, and theories of change to determine whether and to what extent the current strategy, structure, and resources remain relevant in the ever evolving context. This would involve identifying and evaluating the effects of the intervention on activities that the parties have undertaken, the relevant mechanisms, and parties' capacities.

3. Effectiveness and efficiency:

Assess if the JPF can attain its stated objectives, and if its management set-up and systems are efficient for a multi-donor fund with the purpose and objective stated in the 2023 strategy and given the evolving operational context.

4. Coherence and co-ordination

Assess the extent to which the JPF has been able to address the need for more coherent, better coordinated approaches among its members, and with other bilateral donors. Explore how far the JPF is anchored and coordinated with other peace actors.

F. Key Tasks, Deliverables, and Timeframes

The interim Review is to take place from April 2025 to August 2025. Within this timeframe, the suggested key tasks and required deliverables are as follows:

Suggested Key Tasks	Required Deliverables	Estimated Timeframe*
Review key documents (home-based)		8 - 10 days
Design detailed review methodology and core questions and agree this with the FMO and FB	Detailed review methodology signed off by FB and FMO	week 4
Submit inception report, containing the analytical framework and methodology for the Review and report of the desk review	Draft and final Inception Report	week 5
Conduct consultations / interviews with identified stakeholders (likely to be remote)		weeks 6 to 8
Submit draft report	Draft report	week 9
Present findings to FB, FBWG and FMO	PowerPoint file highlighting major findings	week 10
Submit final report	Final report	week 12

² These questions are suggested and are to be confirmed and further refined with Fund Board members during the review's inception stage.

Suggested Key Tasks	Required Deliverables	Estimated Timeframe*
Final Report accepted by FB	Approval of Final Report by FB	Next FB meeting

* Actual due dates to be specified in the final contract

Key Tasks:

- a) Desk review: The key documents to be reviewed. Key documents will be made available to the review team prior designing the detailed review methodology and undertaking any interviews.
- b) Write an Inception Report and agree this with the FB/FBWG/FMO: The Inception report should clarify the Review's purpose, scope, objectives and key questions; present a detailed explanation of the Review approach and methodology including data sources and collection methods for each key question; a data analysis plan, a communication and consultation plan, draft outline of the final report, and a work plan/schedule of activities. Drafts of data collection instruments should be included in an annex.
- c) Conduct consultations/interviews: A list of suggested interviewees will be made available by the FMO in consultation with the FB / FBWG.
- d) Write a draft report.
- e) Conduct debriefing: The debriefing is to be held with the FB / FBWG and FMO highlighting key findings and presenting and discussing recommendations.
- f) Write the final report: The report should consist of an executive summary, an explanation of the Review team and the methodology used, key findings organized by Review objective, lessons learned, and recommendations. A detailed outline of the final report needs to be approved by the FB before the writing of the report.

Payment Terms

Milestone	Payment Percentage
Submission of Inception Report	30 %
The final report is submitted to the JPF	50 %
Acceptance of the Final Report by the JPF FB	20 %

G. Review Team Composition and Qualifications

A Review Team will be selected through a competitive process under UNOPS procurement guidelines.

The Review will be carried out by a gender-balanced team of external consultants, led by a well-qualified Team Leader. The Team will have:

- Ten years international evaluation experience, with demonstrated experience of reviewing and evaluating complex conflict transformation and peacebuilding programmes and processes.
- Familiarity with multi-donor funds in conflict transformation, peacebuilding and transitional contexts (required, especially for the team leader).
- Demonstrable experience and expertise in the Myanmar context, including a knowledge of the evolving context, of the peacebuilding and conflict transformation work and actors, a good understanding of the stakeholder environment and knowledge of the complexities. The Team

Leader should have at least 5 years experience in the Myanmar context, with a focus on peacebuilding, conflict management or other relevant thematic experience.

- Previous experience and demonstrable expertise in and knowledge of women peace and security issues, and in evaluating gender and inclusion in conflict transformation or peacebuilding programming.
- Demonstrable experience in robust evaluation methodologies and processes, including familiarity with logical frameworks, theories of change, and results-based management (required, especially for the team leader).
- Familiarity with UN operating modalities (required), knowledge of UNOPS processes would be preferred.
- Excellent English language communication skills and English report writing skills (required), Burmese language skills are essential. Other relevant language skills would be an asset on the team.

H. Management Arrangements

The Fund Management Office will be responsible for managing the Review process but will work in close cooperation with the Fund Board and Fund Board Working Group at all stages of the process.

The Review Team will be recruited through a competitive selection process under UNOPS guidelines. A Review committee that includes Fund Board representation will review qualified bids and identify the most suitable candidate.