OCHA Evaluation of Country-Based Pooled Funds

South Sudan - Country Report

November 2019
Management, Funding and Implementation of the Evaluation

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Acknowledgements

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Cover Photo: Leer, South Sudan. Child carrying water in the sunset. Credit: OCHA
South Sudan Country Report: Executive Summary

Evaluation purpose

1. The evaluation of Country-Based Pooled Funds (CBPFs) has two main purposes: to improve accountability and learning, and to examine the results of the humanitarian action supported by CBPFs between 2015 and 2018, with the purpose of drawing lessons on what has worked well. It will also identify challenges to their effective functioning in order to provide recommendations on how to continue to strengthen the CBPFs as a funding mechanism in support of timely, coordinated and principled humanitarian response for affected people.

2. The evaluation of the South Sudan Humanitarian Fund (SSHF) was the second of five country case studies. Two team members undertook a two-week trip to South Sudan, conducting interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) with key stakeholders in Juba and Western Bahr-el-Ghazal, including with communities that had received SSHF-funded assistance.

Summary of findings

3. The findings from this case study point to the SSHF being a well-managed fund that is able to deliver timely and coordinated humanitarian assistance that contributes to saving lives. However, the unpredictable and inconsistent timing of donor contributions poses a challenge to the fund’s ability to make timely allocations.

4. The SSHF is closely aligned to the HRP and partners are required to have projects in the HRP to receive funding. This provides an incentive for participation in the HRP process. The SSHF also contributes to strengthening cluster coordination by providing funding that clusters can prioritize to implement their objectives and priorities. This is particularly useful early in the year, before the arrival of other funding. The ICWG plays a critical role in the SSHF allocation process, including by deciding on cluster envelopes. This has the potential to foster inter-cluster collaboration and develop agreed priorities but it is an ongoing challenge to prevent the process from becoming a competition for funds.

5. In a context of huge needs and limited funding, there is evidence that the fund has made a difference to people's lives in a variety of ways. SSHF allocation strategy papers consistently emphasize quality programming through the mainstreaming of cross-cutting issues and accountability to affected populations (AAP), which are important for maintaining human dignity. While there is some evidence that SSHF-funded projects assisted vulnerable groups, including those with disabilities, mainstreaming gender, age, disability and protection into project design and implementation remains an ongoing challenge for the humanitarian sector as a whole. Similarly, the evaluation found limited evidence of effective AAP mechanisms. A number of factors, including short implementation timeframes and small grant sizes, make it more difficult to deliver quality programming. Since affected populations do not experience needs in siloes, the 2018 and 2019 HRPs incorporated multi-sectoral assistance into the strategic objective to save lives. The SSHF committed to promoting multi-sectoral assistance in its allocation strategies but this had proved difficult to deliver, particularly through a sectoral cluster system and due to a lack of understanding about how best to fund multi-sectoral projects. However, the SSHF funded multi-sector projects through the second standard allocation in 2019.

6. In a context where parties to the conflict continuously seek to manipulate aid, attack and threaten aid workers, loot humanitarian assistance and interfere in humanitarian programs, it is difficult to assess fully the SSHF’s contribution to promoting principled humanitarian assistance. However, there is evidence that the SSHF has supported adherence to the humanitarian principles. It has been helpful that the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) has advocated with local authorities on the humanitarian principles as this also benefits SSHF partners.

7. It is encouraging that the SSHF has increased funding to national and local NGOs (NNGOs) significantly as the partners who are best placed to gain access to difficult areas and to work closely with communities. It is also helpful that NNGOs are members of the SSHF Advisory Board (AB) and Strategic Review Committees (SRCs) at cluster level that review and select projects for funding. However, there were some concerns about whether NNGOs were being heard adequately, due to AB composition and the way that meetings were run.

8. The HC was of the view that the SSHF has strengthened his leadership role. He and the AB had played their appropriate roles in SSHF allocation processes. The AB, in particular, had asked questions about funding decisions and risk
9. management when relevant. It had also provided guidance on issues such as Common Performance Framework indicators. However, interviews and discussions during the feedback presentation on findings from this evaluation highlighted a desire for greater clarity on the fund's purpose and comparative advantage in a changing context.

10. Due to the fund structure in South Sudan, risk management responsibilities for NGO funding were divided between OCHA and UNDP. This made it difficult for either entity to have a comprehensive overview and was also inefficient because it required the use of two separate financial systems. AB members raised concerns about the robustness of UNDP's risk management systems since this identified far lower levels of loss and fraud than expected in the context and compared to other UN agencies. The transfer of NGO grant management responsibilities to OCHA in January 2020 offers an opportunity for OCHA to address these concerns by strengthening risk management.

11. In conclusion, the findings of the case study suggest that, to a large extent, the SSHF has been able to deliver ‘operational impact’ through timely and coordinated assistance to save lives, alleviate suffering and make a difference to people’s lives. The table below lists targeted recommendations to help strengthen the SSHF’s operation.

### Recommendations for the SSHF

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Responsible/Priority</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>Recommendation:</strong> The HC and AB should review the SSHF’s objectives and niche in the context of the humanitarian response in South Sudan. They should then develop a vision for the fund's future role to ensure that it remains relevant to the context and continues to add value to the overall response. This should include a focus on: 1. What efforts are required to support localization 2. How best to support the cross-cutting issues outlined in recommendation 4. This could include exploring options for more technical support in the SSHF or within clusters 3. How to strengthen the sustainability of SSHF-funded projects, given the protracted nature of the crisis 4. Examining ways to strengthen complementarity between the SSHF and the CERF.</td>
<td>HC, AB</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Explanation:</strong> During interviews and at the feedback presentation at the end of the evaluation team's visit, there appeared to be a lack of clarity around the fund's purpose and a desire for a strategic vision to guide the fund.</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td><strong>Recommendation:</strong> OCHA and the Humanitarian Financing Unit (HFU) should ensure that the actions agreed upon at global level on financial rules, risk management and assurance actions at the Managing Agent Transition Workshop in August 2019 are implemented in a timely way. This will include working with UNDP on the migration of data.</td>
<td>HFU, OCHA</td>
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<tr>
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<td><strong>Explanation:</strong> In view of the risk management concerns that the evaluation has highlighted, it will be important for OCHA and the HFU to ensure that they have adequate resources in place to manage the transfer of NGO grant management responsibilities from UNDP to OCHA in January 2020.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td><strong>Recommendation:</strong> The SSHF should strengthen support for principled humanitarian action as follows: 1. HFU and OCHA should work with SSHF partners to ensure systematic reporting on access incidents. 2. SSHF donors should ensure adequate resources for training to partners on operationalizing the humanitarian principles. This could be delivered through the NGO Forum.</td>
<td>OCHA, HFU, donors, NGO Forum</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Explanation:</strong> While there is some evidence of ways in which the SSHF has contributed to a principled humanitarian response in South Sudan, it could be more proactive on this issue.</td>
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</table>

[1] These recommendations are specific to the SSHF. Issues that have more general relevance across CBPFs and which will be addressed in the Global Synthesis Report are outlined in Section 5.2.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th><strong>Recommendation</strong>: The SSHF should work with cluster coordinators, partners and the NGO Forum to identify practical ways to enable partners to deliver quality programs by mainstreaming gender and protection, addressing the needs of vulnerable groups such as Persons with Disabilities (PwD) and the elderly, and putting in place effective AAP mechanisms.</th>
<th><strong>HFU, ICWG, SSHF partners</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Explanation</strong>: Despite the SSHF’s attempts to promote quality programming, there is a range of practical barriers such as a lack of knowledge about how to mainstream cross-cutting issues, and short program timeframes and small grants that make it difficult to deliver quality programs.</td>
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<td>AA</td>
<td>Administrative Agent</td>
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<tr>
<td>AAP</td>
<td>Accountability to Affected Populations</td>
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<td>AB</td>
<td>Advisory Board</td>
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<td>CBPF</td>
<td>Country-Based Pooled Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCCM</td>
<td>Camp Coordination and Camp Management</td>
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<td>CERF</td>
<td>Central Emergency Response Fund</td>
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<td>CHF</td>
<td>Common Humanitarian Fund</td>
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<td>CPF</td>
<td>Common Performance Framework</td>
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<td>DAC</td>
<td>Development Assistance Committee</td>
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<td>DRC</td>
<td>Democratic Republic of the Congo</td>
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<td>DSRSG</td>
<td>Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General</td>
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<td>ERC</td>
<td>Emergency Relief Coordinator</td>
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<td>ERF</td>
<td>Emergency Response Fund</td>
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<td>FGD</td>
<td>Focus Group Discussions</td>
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<td>FSL</td>
<td>Food Security and Livelihoods</td>
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<td>FTS</td>
<td>Financial Tracking Service</td>
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<td>GAM</td>
<td>Gender with Age Marker</td>
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<td>GB</td>
<td>Grand Bargain</td>
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<td>GBV</td>
<td>Gender-Based Violence</td>
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<td>GMS</td>
<td>Grant Management System</td>
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<td>HACT</td>
<td>Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers</td>
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<td>HC</td>
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<td>HNO</td>
<td>Humanitarian Needs Overview</td>
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<td>HoO</td>
<td>Head of Office</td>
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<td>HPC</td>
<td>Humanitarian Program Cycle</td>
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<td>Humanitarian Response Plan</td>
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<td>IAHE</td>
<td>Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation</td>
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<td>IASC</td>
<td>Inter-Agency Standing Committee</td>
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<td>ICWG</td>
<td>Inter-Cluster Working Group</td>
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<td>IDP</td>
<td>Internally Displaced Person</td>
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<td>IM</td>
<td>Information Management</td>
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<td>INGO</td>
<td>International Non-Governmental Organization</td>
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<td>IPC</td>
<td>Integrated Phase Classification</td>
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<td>KII</td>
<td>Key Informant Interviews</td>
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<td>MA</td>
<td>Managing Agent</td>
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<td>M&amp;E</td>
<td>Monitoring and Evaluation</td>
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<td>Monitoring and Reporting</td>
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<td>MPTFO</td>
<td>Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office</td>
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<td>NAWG</td>
<td>Needs Analysis Working Group</td>
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<td>NDP</td>
<td>National Development Plan</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organization</td>
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<td>NNGO</td>
<td>National Non-Governmental Organization</td>
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<td>OCHA</td>
<td>Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs</td>
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<td>ODSG</td>
<td>OCHA Donor Support Group</td>
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<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development</td>
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<td>OIOS</td>
<td>Office for Internal Oversight Services</td>
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<td>OPR</td>
<td>Operational Peer Review</td>
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<td>PFWG</td>
<td>Pooled Fund Working Group</td>
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<td>PoC</td>
<td>Protection of Civilians</td>
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<td>PSC</td>
<td>Program Support Cost</td>
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<td>PSEA</td>
<td>Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse</td>
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<td>PwD</td>
<td>Persons with Disabilities</td>
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<td>RA</td>
<td>Reserve Allocation</td>
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<td>Resident Coordinator</td>
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<td>Rapid Response (CERF)</td>
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<td>Rapid Response Fund (OFDA)</td>
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<td>RSRTF</td>
<td>Reconciliation, Stabilization, and Resilience Trust Fund</td>
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<td>RWG</td>
<td>Risk Working Group</td>
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<td>SA</td>
<td>Standard Allocation</td>
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<td>SAM</td>
<td>Severe Acute Malnutrition</td>
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<td>SG</td>
<td>Secretary-General</td>
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<td>SHF</td>
<td>Somalia Humanitarian Fund</td>
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<td>SSHF</td>
<td>South Sudan Humanitarian Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>SO</td>
<td>Strategic Objective</td>
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<td>SPEGS</td>
<td>Strategy, Planning, Evaluation and Guidance Section</td>
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<td>SRC</td>
<td>Strategic Review Committee</td>
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<td>ToR</td>
<td>Terms of Reference</td>
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<td>TS</td>
<td>Technical Secretariat</td>
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<td>UFE</td>
<td>Underfunded Emergencies (CERF)</td>
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<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
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<td>UNHAS</td>
<td>UN Humanitarian Air Service</td>
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### Glossary of terms

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<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>References</th>
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<tr>
<td>Accountability</td>
<td>The Operational Handbook highlights that there are two types of accountabilities in relation to CBPFs. The first relates to the ability of CBPFs to achieve their objectives (as illustrated by the operational impact model) as humanitarian financing mechanisms. The second is of recipient organizations to deliver project results.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accountability to affected populations</td>
<td>Accountability to affected populations (AAP) is an active commitment to use power responsibly by taking account of, giving account to, and being held to account by the people humanitarian organizations seek to assist[^1][^2]. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee has endorsed four commitments on AAP and Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA). These are described under the four headings of leadership, participation and partnership, information, feedback and action, and results[^2].</td>
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<td>Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF)</td>
<td>Established in 2005 as the UN's global emergency response fund, CERF pools contributions from donors around the world into a single fund allowing humanitarian responders to deliver lifesaving assistance whenever and wherever crises hit. CERF has a US$1 billion annual funding target and is fully un-earmarked to ensure funds go to meet the most urgent, lifesaving needs[^3].</td>
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<td>Country-Based Pooled Funds</td>
<td>CBPFs are established by the UN Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) when a new emergency occurs or when an existing humanitarian situation deteriorates. Contributions from donors are collected into single, un-earmarked funds to support local humanitarian efforts. Funds are directly available to a wide range of relief partners at the front lines of the response through an inclusive and transparent process in support of priorities set out in crisis-specific Humanitarian Response Plans[^4].</td>
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<tr>
<td>Humanitarian action</td>
<td>Humanitarian action comprises assistance, protection and advocacy in response to humanitarian needs resulting from natural hazards, armed conflict or other causes, or emergency response preparedness[^5].</td>
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<tr>
<td>Humanitarian principles</td>
<td>Underlining all humanitarian action are the principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence. These principles, derived from international humanitarian law, have been taken up by the United Nations in General Assembly Resolutions 46/182 and 58/114. Their global recognition and relevance are furthermore underscored by the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations in Disaster Relief and the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability. The General Assembly has repeatedly reaffirmed the importance of promoting and respecting these principles within the framework of humanitarian assistance[^6].</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grand Bargain</td>
<td>The Grand Bargain is an agreement between more than 30 of the biggest donors and aid providers, which aims to get more means into the hands of people in need. It includes a series of changes in the working practices of donors and aid organizations that would deliver an extra billion dollars over five years for people in need of humanitarian aid. These changes include gearing up cash programming, greater funding for national and local responders and cutting bureaucracy through harmonized reporting requirements[^7].</td>
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[^1]: IASC (no date) Accountability to Affected Populations: A brief overview.
[^7]: See https://www.agendaforhumanity.org/initiatives/3861.
| **Localization** | Localizing humanitarian response is a process of recognizing, respecting and strengthening the leadership by local authorities and the capacity of local civil society in humanitarian action, in order to better address the needs of affected populations and to prepare national actors for future humanitarian responses.  
| **Operational impact** | The 2015 CBPF Policy Instruction defines operational impact as the provision of timely, coordinated, principled assistance to save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain human dignity.  
| **Risk Management** | According to the Operational Handbook, risk management aims to provide a specific set of decision-making tools to support the achievement of strategic outcomes in a transparent manner. Risk management includes risk identification, risk analysis and the development of mitigation strategies to manage residual risks. Partner risk management focuses on tailoring grant management procedures according to the capacity and performance of partners. Funding decisions should take into account risk analyses at both levels suggesting the appropriate assurance mechanisms. CBPF risk management procedures do not apply to UN agencies, only to other types of partners. |
1. Introduction, approach and context

This section introduces the evaluation, provides a summary of the approach used for the case study and gives a brief background to the humanitarian situation and the South Sudan Humanitarian Fund (SSHF). A description of the methodology and the context are provided in annexes 1 and 5 respectively.

1.1. Introduction

12. The evaluation of Country-Based Pooled Funds (CBPFs) has two main purposes: to improve accountability and learning, and to examine the results of the humanitarian action supported by CBPFs between 2015 and 2018, with the purpose of drawing lessons on what has worked well. It also identifies challenges to the effective functioning and provides recommendations on how to continue to strengthen the CBPF as a funding mechanism in support of timely, coordinated and principled humanitarian response for affected people. The evaluation will contribute to greater transparency and accountability for key stakeholders.

13. The South Sudan Humanitarian Fund (SSHF) case study is the second of five. Two members of the evaluation team undertook a two-week trip, conducting interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with key stakeholders, including with communities that had received SSHF-funded assistance. The evaluation team visited two INGO and two NGNO projects in Western Bahr-el-Ghazal and Juba.

1.2. Approach

14. The team used a mixed-methods approach for data collection and analysis, which included document review (see annex 4 for a bibliography), project-related data analysis, semi-structured key informant interviews (see annex 3 for a list of participants) and gender-disaggregated focus group discussions with communities. Table 1 below summarizes evidence sources for the case study. Annex 1 provides a more detailed outline of the methodology. The findings of the case study are structured according to the evaluation matrix (Annex 2).

Table 1: Summary of data collection methods and sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tools and methods</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Document and literature review</td>
<td>33 documents cited in this case study report, drawing from a repository of around 200 documents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key informant interviews</td>
<td>120 key informants in Juba and Western Bahr-el-Ghazal, 39% female and 61% male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community engagement</td>
<td>151 community members from 4 SSHF-funded projects in Western Bahr-el-Ghazal and Juba (53% male and 47% female)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.3. The humanitarian context in South Sudan

15. South Sudan has been affected by conflict since December 2013, resulting in large-scale displacement. At the end of 2018, there were nearly 2 million IDPs and nearly 2.2 million South Sudanese refugees. The Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan, signed in Addis Ababa in September 2018, has reduced the intensity of the conflict. However, the conflict and associated economic decline have further reduced the government’s ability to provide basic services, particularly healthcare and education. Over 80 per cent of the population lives below the absolute poverty line. The conflict has also worsened food insecurity significantly and South Sudan was one of four countries at risk of famine in 2017. It experienced a localized famine in 2017 and Integrated Phase Classification (IPC) analysis

[1] During the evaluation period, CBPFs were operational in the following countries: Afghanistan, Central African Republic, Colombia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Nigeria, Myanmar, Pakistan, occupied Palestinian territory, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Turkey and Yemen. The Colombia fund closed at the end of 2018. The Haiti fund closed in 2015 and is not part of this evaluation.

predicted that 5.2 million people would be severely food insecure from January-March 2019. During the evaluation period, conflict and attacks on aid workers and assets restricted access. Humanitarian access has improved considerably in 2019, with humanitarian actors able to access most of the country without major incidents, but bureaucratic impediments and operational interference continue to hamper the delivery of humanitarian assistance. See Annex 5 for further details.

1.4. Background to the SSHF

16. The Sudan Common Humanitarian Fund (CHF) was one of two original CHFs established in 2006 (the other was in the Democratic Republic of the Congo). When South Sudan became independent, the separate South Sudan CHF began operating in 2012. In 2016, as part of standardizing OCHA-managed pooled funds, the South Sudan CHF was renamed the South Sudan Humanitarian Fund (SSHF). The fund’s aim is “to support the timely allocation and disbursement of donor resources to address the most urgent humanitarian needs and assist the most vulnerable people in South Sudan”. Since it was established originally as a CHF, the SSHF is one of four CBPFs where the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) is the Managing Agent (MA) administering grants to international and national NGOs. It is also one of six CBPFs where UNDP’s Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office (MPTFO) is the Administrative Agent (AA) responsible for receiving, administering, disbursing donor funds to UN agencies (including OCHA and UNDP as MA). As a result, South Sudan has a joint OCHA-UNDP Technical Secretariat (TS) to manage the fund on a day-to-day basis. Within this, OCHA has a Humanitarian Financing Unit (HFU) and Figure 5 maps the HFU’s organizational structure in 2018. In practice, OCHA and UNDP have operated separately, including having separate reporting lines within each entity, although they have weekly meetings on fund-related issues. Table 2 summarizes key facts about the SSHF while Annex 5 provides further details of the SSHF.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SSHF at a glance, 2015-2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total annual contributions ($ millions)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No. of donors</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No. of projects</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No. of people reached (millions)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No. of implementing partners</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SSHF as a % of total contributions to the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.5. Timelines of SSHF allocations

17. Table 3 below provides an overview of the humanitarian timeline for the period under evaluation, highlighting key humanitarian events and the launch of HRP{s}, alongside SSHF and Central Emergency Response Funds (CERF) allocations. This provides useful evidence on the timing and timeliness of SSHF allocations (discussed in sections 3.2.1 and 5.1) and also on opportunities for ensuring complementarity between CERF and SSHF allocations (discussed in section 4.2.2).

[6] The number of people reached in 2018 might be significantly higher than previous years because of the change in CBPF reporting. Since projects started in 2017 might not have been completed in that year and projects started in 2018 might not have results to report until 2019, the CBPFs shifted from reporting results only for 2018 allocations to total results reported in 2018, including projects funded but not completed in 2017.
[7] The timeline is a snapshot of key events and does not seek to provide a comprehensive overview.
Table 3: Timeline of SSHF allocations, 2015-2018[^8]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Humanitarian event (appeal/crisis)</th>
<th>CERF allocations (RR[^9]/UFE[^10])</th>
<th>SSHF SA</th>
<th>SSHF RA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dec 2014</td>
<td>2015 HRP launched, 6.4 million in need, 4.1m targeted, $1.8b required</td>
<td></td>
<td>Jan 2015 $59.5m</td>
<td>Jan 2015 RA1 $0.5m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 2015</td>
<td>Violent conflict – fighting intensifies around Renk and Kaka. RA1 in response to return of children from armed groups in Jonglei</td>
<td></td>
<td>Jan 2015 $59.5m</td>
<td>Jan 2015 RA1 $0.5m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 2015</td>
<td>Fighting in Greater Upper Nile region intensifies. RA2 for rehabilitation of Rubkona airport</td>
<td></td>
<td>April 2015 $1.3m</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May-July 2015</td>
<td>Aid workers forced to relocate from multiple locations due to fighting. Heavy fighting in Malakal town, hindering aid deliveries</td>
<td>June 2015 $5.6m RR</td>
<td>July 2015 $23.8m</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug 2015</td>
<td>Parties to the conflict sign Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan. CERF allocation to manage cholera outbreak in Juba and Bor</td>
<td>Aug 2015 $2.2m RR</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept 2015</td>
<td>RA3 to respond to Protection of Civilians (PoC) site influxes and increase logistical support.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sept 2015 $3.9m</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 2015</td>
<td>Fighting resumes in central and southern Unity State. RA4 to re-establish and scale-up Unity State operations</td>
<td></td>
<td>Oct 2015 $2.4m</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 2015</td>
<td>RA5 to set up light base camps in remote locations</td>
<td></td>
<td>Nov 2015 $0.8m</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec 2015</td>
<td>2016 HRP launched, 6.1m in need, 5.1m targeted, $1.3b required</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 2016</td>
<td>SA1 to kick-start HRP activities, including dry season priorities</td>
<td>Jan 2016 $38.7m</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 2016</td>
<td>Fighting breaks out in Malakal PoC, Pibor, Wau, Yambio and Mundri West.</td>
<td>Mar 2016 $14.8m and $5.9m RR</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 2016</td>
<td>Formation of the Transition Government of National Unity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2016</td>
<td>Renewed fighting in Western Bahr-el-Ghazal displaces tens of thousands. RA1 in response</td>
<td></td>
<td>July 2016 $2.4m</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug-Nov 2016</td>
<td>Increase in refugees and IDPs. SA2 responds to re-prioritized activities following major escalation in conflict across the country</td>
<td></td>
<td>Aug 2016 $29.2m</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[^8]: Dates and descriptions of humanitarian events and CERF/CHF/SSHF allocations are from South Sudan Humanitarian Response Plans, SSHF Annual reports and CERF Rapid Response funding reports (see bibliography in annex 4).

[^9]: CERF Rapid Response (RR) grants provide support when a new crisis hits, when an existing emergency deteriorates significantly or in response to time-critical needs, OCHA (2019) About CERF, January 2019.

[^10]: CERF Underfunded Emergencies (UFE) grants provide support for critical needs in underfunded and often protracted crises. These are allocated during two rounds per year, OCHA (2019) About CERF, January 2019.
| Oct 2016 | RA2 – emergency supplies for priority actions in dry season in Greater Equatoria | Oct 2016 $11m |
| Dec 2016 | 2017 HRP launched, 7.5m in need, 5.8m targeted, $1.6b required |  |
| Feb 2017 | Localized famine declared in Leer and Mayendit counties. Insecurity in Mayendit forces relocation of aid workers |  |
| Mar 2017 | 6 aid workers killed while travelling from Juba to Pibor | Apr 2016 $15.5m RR  Mar 2017 $22.5m |
| April-May 2017 | Intensified fighting in northern Jonglei and Upper Nile displaces thousands | June 2017 $28.3m |
| July 2017 | Fighting in Upper Nile displaces thousands |  |
| Oct-Dec 2017 | IPC analysis projects over 5 million people will be severely food insecure. RA1 for dry season procurement and pre-positioning supplies | Dec 2017 $11m |
| Dec 2017 | 2018 HRP launched, 7m in need, 6m targeted, $1.72bn required |  |
| Dec 2017 | Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities, Protection of Civilians and Humanitarian Access signed |  |
| Jan 2018 | Renewed fighting in Unity and Equatoria |  |
| Feb 2018 | IPC analysis projects over 6.3 million people will be severely food insecure until April | Mar 2018 $21m |
| May 2018 | Over 40,000 people displaced to swamp areas in Lear County due to fighting in central Unity |  |
| June-July 2018 | Humanitarian assistance convoy and trucks ambushed near Yei town and in central Equatoria | June 2018 $30.4m |
| Sept 2018 | Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan signed in Addis Ababa |  |
| Oct 2018 | Fighting resumes and displace thousands to Yei town |  |
| Dec 2018 | 2019 HRP launched, 7.1m in need, 5.7m targeted, $1.5bn required. RA1 for dry season procurement and pre-positioning supplies. SA1 launched for implementation from 20 Feb 2019 (UN agencies) and 1 Mar 2019 (NGOs) | Dec 2018 2019 SA1 launched $34.5m  Dec 2018 $2m |
2. Inputs: Is the management of the fund fit for purpose and does it operate efficiently?

This section of the report focuses on the inputs to the Fund, which include financial contributions, risk management and the capacity of the humanitarian system to manage the fund and deliver projects.

2.1. Resource mobilization

2.1.1. Donor contributions

18. Although the volume of contributions to the SSHF dropped sharply (by around 40 per cent) between 2015 and 2016, the number of donors increased from 11 in 2015 to a peak of 15 in 2017, before decreasing slightly to 14 in 2018 (see Figure 1 below). Funding levels increased in 2017, potentially because South Sudan was one of four countries at risk of famine (see the context analysis in Annex 5). Funding to the SSHF increased again in 2018, mainly due to larger contributions from Germany and the Netherlands. While DFID remains the largest donor to the CBPFs globally, its funding to the SSHF decreased dramatically between 2015 and 2016 from $53 million to $20 million.\[11\] It declined again to $17 million in 2018 but DFID was still the second largest donor to the fund, providing 19 per cent of total contributions. DFID was also the first donor to commit to a multi-year funding agreement with the SSHF, contributing 60 per cent of GBP 21.8 million in 2018, with the remaining 40 per cent to be paid in 2019.\[12\] ECHO has not traditionally been a contributor to pooled funds but, following a staff mission to South Sudan in early 2019, it decided to contribute to the SSHF in June.

Figure 1: Donor contributions to the SSHF, 2015-2018\[13\]

19. Donor interviewees, including ECHO, highlighted three main reasons for contributing to the SSHF. One was because of its role in strengthening the humanitarian system, including cluster coordination and the Humanitarian Coordinator’s (HC) leadership role. The second was the SSHF’s ability to finance local and national NGOs (NNGOs).\[14\] Despite their Grand Bargain (GB) commitment, the majority of donors lack the capacity to fund NNGOs directly and this has been one of the factors in ECHO’s recent decision to contribute to the SSHF. NNGOs also appreciate the SSHF as one of the

[11] DFID’s funding level could have fallen for a variety of reasons; spending reviews, a portfolio shift, a determination that another partner was better placed to deliver its humanitarian objectives and/or factors specific to the fund.
[13] Data obtained from OCHA GMS and downloaded on 27 May 2019
[14] For purposes of consistency, this report refers to local and national NGOs as NNGOs.
only sources of direct funding and one NNGO had advocated with ECHO to contribute to the fund. Finally, the SSHF is a convenient mechanism for donors with a limited field presence and administrative resources to follow up on their funding. For these donors, the fund’s risk management framework provides important assurance that their contributions are well managed.

20. After decreasing between 2015 and 2016, the South Sudan HRP requirements returned to the 2015 level in 2017 and increased slightly in 2018. Funding for the HRP has remained relatively stable from 2016-2018. Table 4 below shows SSHF funding as a percentage of total contributions to the HRP over the evaluation period. The fund has remained well below the Secretary-General’s aspiration for CBPFs to comprise 15 per cent of HRP funding in order to have an impact on the humanitarian system.\[15]\ However, as SSHF funding has increased from 2016 onwards, it has channelled a growing portion of HRP funding, reaching 7.5 per cent in 2018.

Table 4: SHF funding as a share of HRP contributions, 2015-2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>HRP requirements</th>
<th>HRP contributions</th>
<th>SSHF as a % of total contributions to the HRP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>$1.635bn</td>
<td>$1.076bn</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>$1.291bn</td>
<td>$1.188bn</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>$1.639bn</td>
<td>$1.166bn</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>$1.718bn</td>
<td>$1.182bn</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.1.2. Resource mobilization strategy

21. The SSHF does not have a formal resource mobilization strategy. However, the SSHF fund manager engages with donors regularly and donor interviewees appreciated his communication and leadership style. The SSHF team also supports the HC’s resource mobilization efforts in donor capitals (see section 5.2.1 for details of the HC’s fundraising efforts). OCHA also has weekly meetings with donors. The HFU focused its efforts on its traditional donors, rather than seeking to attract new donors, since they were by far the largest contributors of HRP funding. This strategy seems sensible since other CBPFs, such as the Somalia Humanitarian Fund, have found that non-Development Assistance Committee (DAC) donors tend to want greater visibility for their funding than they can achieve through a pooled fund.

Figure 2: Share of total contributions from 10 leading donors to the SSHF from 2015-2018

22. The SSHF’s ability to increase the number of donors, even when the level of contributions decreased sharply between 2015 and 2016, is positive because this makes it less vulnerable to funding shifts by large donors, such as DFID, which has reduced its contribution significantly compared with 2015 (see Figure 2). It also highlights the importance of the SSHF continuing to broaden its core donor base and increase the size of contributions from a range of donors in order to reduce dependence on the large donors, which now include Germany and Sweden.

23. OCHA is planning to strengthen public information and communications to highlight SSHF success stories, beneficiary voices, etc. It also plans to use its Twitter account more strategically to showcase the SSHF’s work and the SSHF could acknowledge donor contributions more systematically through social media. This would be a useful way to promote the SSHF with donors and to demonstrate how it is making a difference to people’s lives, since this is an area in which donors have a keen interest.

2.1.3. Multi-year contributions

24. One challenge for the SSHF has been the timing of donor contributions. Figure 3 below shows the contributions to the SSHF in each quarter. This highlights that, in 2015, the SSHF received most of its donor contributions in the first half of the year although there was also a significant level of contributions in the last quarter. By contrast, most of the contributions in 2018 came in the last quarter. Figure 3 also makes it clear that there is no pattern to the timing of contributions from year to year and this is what makes it extremely difficult for the HC and HFU to plan allocations. Advance notification of when the team can expect a contribution and its size would alleviate this problem. It is beneficial that Norway makes a contribution at the end of a calendar year so that the SSHF can carry this over for a timely first Standard Allocation (SA) of the next year. However, it is difficult to address needs in a timely manner if over half the fund’s annual contributions come at the very end of the year, as they did in 2018.

Figure 3: Timing of donor contributions to the SSHF, 2015-2018

Good practice: In light of the volatility in the timing of donor contributions, multi-year commitments like that from DFID can help the HC and the HFU to plan allocations better as long as they know when to expect the contributions.

2.2. Risk management

25. In South Sudan, responsibility for risk management was shared between UNDP and OCHA during the evaluation period. UNDP has been responsible for financial risk management (including conducting capacity assessments, financial spot checks and commissioning project audits) while OCHA has been responsible for programmatic monitoring and updating information on partner performance in the CBPF Grant Management System (GMS). Following on from a global agreement between OCHA and UNDP, OCHA will take on responsibility for NGO grant management in the four countries where UNDP has this role from January 2020. Based on an OCHA-UNDP agreement at headquarters level on details of the handover process, the CBPF-Section in New York conducted a workshop with the OCHA teams in the four affected countries in August 2019.

26. The SSHF introduced a formal Risk Management Framework in 2015. It updated this at the end of 2016 and again in July 2017. The 2017 update reviewed the original risks identified in the 2015 framework and revised risk levels accordingly. In mid-2017, resource acquisition, misappropriation of funds and losses (through looting and confiscation), and access were the highest-level risks. Risks related to monitoring and reporting had reduced as the HFU had strengthened its monitoring procedures. This section examines different aspects of the SSHF’s risk management in turn.

2.2.1. Capacity assessment and due diligence

27. In order to be eligible for SSHF funding, partners have to demonstrate adequate institutional, managerial, financial and programmatic capacity and expertise. As signatories to the SSHF Memorandum of Understanding, UN agencies are deemed to have the requisite capacity and are not subject to capacity assessments. All NGOs applying for SSHF funding for the first time have to undergo a capacity assessment. After an NGO has been assessed and received SSHF funding, it undergoes a new capacity assessment in each UN program cycle, which is usually once every four or five years (this is in line with the Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT) framework).[17]

28. To be eligible for SSHF funding (and therefore a capacity assessment), NGOs must have a project in the HRP. Since a very large number of NGOs have projects in the HRP, it is impractical for the TS to assess the capacity of all of them. Therefore, during an allocation process, the TS initiates the capacity assessment for NGOs that have not received SSHF funding in the past as soon as the cluster coordinator indicates that the organization is being considered for funding.

29. The capacity assessment is a two-fold process. UNDP uses a third-party company to assess an NGO’s institutional, managerial and financial capacities within the HACT framework. This due diligence process is referred to as a micro assessment. The other aspect is an assessment of the NGO’s programmatic capacity, which the HFU conducts as a desk-based exercise. In some cases, the micro assessment and the programmatic assessment, produce different risk ratings. This is not surprising, since an NGO might be good at delivering results on the ground even if it does not have robust institutional or financial procedures in place. In such cases, the HFU has taken the decision to adopt the risk rating from the micro assessment.

30. UNDP tends to commission the micro assessments in batches though it can request one or two when an NGO has been selected for SSHF funding and it does not want to delay the process of signing a partnership agreement. The micro assessments usually take one and a half to two days at the NGO’s office. Some NNGOs found the process helpful for strengthening their procedures. One that had undergone capacity assessments for donors such as DFID and OFDA found it an easy process since it had already strengthened its internal systems. However, another NGO pointed out that undergoing a similar assessment process for multiple donors is a time-consuming and frustrating process. This is not the case for UN agencies that are part of the HACT framework since these agencies participate in a working group in which they have a shared database of micro assessments. If an NGO has been assessed by one of the HACT members, UNDP can use this report and does not need to commission a separate micro assessment.

31. The micro assessment report assigns a risk level assigned to each aspect of the NGO that is assessed, such as human resources and financial management. This helps to identify areas of weakness and UNDP engages with the NGO to help strengthen them and improve its procedures. The overall risk level also determines the level of financial spot checks and monitoring, in accordance with the HACT assurance policy. The TS enters the assessment report into the

GMS since the HFU uses the risk level to monitor partner performance.

32. The HFU’s programmatic assessment includes liaising with relevant cluster coordinators to review the NGO’s participation in cluster coordination (which accounts for 20 out of the maximum 50 points for the programmatic expertise assessment). The HFU recognizes that, whilst the programmatic assessment is based on CBPF global guidance, it is not an in-depth assessment of an NGO’s program delivery. This has worked well to date and OCHA monitoring has not highlighted major program delivery challenges. However, when OCHA takes on responsibility for NGO grant management, it could review how to develop a more detailed programmatic assessment that is relevant for the South Sudan context, potentially learning lessons from other CBPFs.

2.2.2. Monitoring

33. At the time of the 2015 evaluation, the SSHF had embedded eight Monitoring and Reporting (M&R) specialists, one in each cluster to support project monitoring and report to cluster coordinators. In 2016, an audit found that the combination of cluster functions and SSHF project monitoring responsibilities did not provide for independence in the monitoring function. The TS then relocated the specialists to the HFU, which enabled it to reduce the number of specialists to four since each specialist could support multiple clusters. Figure 5 outlines the HFU organizational structure in 2018, including the M&R officers. This has proved to be a cost-effective model for the HFU since the M&R specialists are UN Volunteers with relevant monitoring, evaluation and reporting qualifications and experience. The TS has tended to monitor projects directly but, in 2016, it used remote monitoring when the outbreak of conflict in Juba forced the TS to relocate. The M&R specialists, along with the rest of the HFU, are involved in the initial screening of projects during the allocation process. The benefit of this is that the M&R specialists are familiar with the projects that they will monitor from the proposal stage.

### Table 5: The use by SSHF of monitoring modalities, 2016-2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monitoring type</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total # Partners/SSHF projects</td>
<td>67 partners/211 projects</td>
<td>67 partners / 186 projects</td>
<td>87 partners/ 225 projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015 Portfolio</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2016 Portfolio</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016 Portfolio</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>2017 Portfolio</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of portfolio monitored</td>
<td>2015: 33%</td>
<td>2016: 36%</td>
<td>2017: 38%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

34. The HFU monitoring team uses the GMS to generate a list of projects that require monitoring after every allocation, taking into account the partner’s risk level, the grant size and project duration. This reflects the risk-based approach outlined in the SSHF Operational Manual and Operational Modalities. In addition, it prioritizes new partners and projects identified by cluster coordinators as requiring monitoring. In some cases, UNDP requests the team to visit a project, for example, when a financial spot check has identified an irregularity. The team aims to monitor at least 30 per cent of SSHF-funded projects, which is more than is required by the fund’s operational modalities. Based on a recommendation by the Board of Auditors, this includes the monitoring of UN agency projects. Table 5 summarizes the HFU’s monitoring coverage from 2016-2018. Although the 2018 annual report states that the team monitored 37 out of the 40 projects that GMS deemed mandatory, the team selected a further 44 projects for monitoring based on the criteria outlined above. It was able to monitor 35 of these so it monitored a total of 72 projects in 2018.

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[20] According to their ToRs, the UNVs are required to have a Master’s degree or equivalent in a relevant field of study, a minimum of 3-5 years’ experience of working on humanitarian issues or international development, hands-on experience of project/program monitoring, reporting and evaluation, and hands-on experience in data collection for monitoring, gathering and reporting on human interest stories.
[22] Data obtained from the relevant SSHF Annual Reports.
[23] The percentage of the portfolio monitored is reported a year later because projects funded in 2015, for example, continue to be implemented and monitored in 2016 so it is only in 2016 that the HFU can report on the percentage of the full 2015 portfolio that it monitored.
35. During project visits, the M&R specialists focus on verifying that partners are implementing activities as planned. If they identify challenges, they share the information with cluster coordinators who can then follow up with the organization and provide technical support, if necessary. A number of NNGOs had found the HFU monitoring visits constructive and felt that they were conducted in a spirit of partnership, with OCHA seeking to support partners to improve rather than marking them down or telling them what to do.

36. Although the clusters have limited human resources, they tend to undertake their own monitoring visits (the health cluster was one exception). They also review partner reports on SSHF funding and provide comments. One cluster highlighted that it has used its knowledge from field visits to return reports to partners for revisions. Cluster coordinators highlighted their good working relationship with the HFU but also expressed interest in joint monitoring visits with the M&R specialists as a way of strengthening feedback to partners. In particular, they felt that they could complement the work of the M&R specialists by contributing technical knowledge. This could help to ensure that partners were meeting relevant standards, particularly in areas such as protection where results are less tangible and less easily measured. To enable this to happen, cluster coordinators requested earlier information about planned monitoring visits, including at sub-national level for clusters, such as WASH, that are trying to strengthen sub-national cluster operation.

Lessons: Joint monitoring missions between the HFU and cluster coordinators or cluster lead agency staff could strengthen feedback to partners and the technical aspects of SSHF monitoring.

37. Most donors also have limited capacity in country to monitor their funding but the HFU organizes donor visits to SSHF project sites. A donor interviewee noted that they had found this useful.

38. NNGOs made limited mention of their internal monitoring and evaluation (M&E) capacity. This is possibly because of challenges with securing adequate funding for an M&E function. However, one NNGO had established its internal M&E capacity in 2014 and had one M&E officer in Juba and two in field locations. These staff members undertake both programmatic and financial monitoring and support the field team to improve projects.

39. As the SSHF increases funding to NNGOs that might require more support and also receive a larger number of small grants, a few interviewees suggested that the SSHF might need to increase its monitoring capacity in order to maintain its current level of coverage and focus on higher-risk partners.

2.2.3. Spot-checks

40. UNDP commissions a third-party company to conduct financial spot checks, which is separate to the company that conducts the micro assessments and audits. This is different to OCHA’s practice in the CBPFs that it manages fully, where HFU staff members conduct the spot checks themselves. Since the company is not based in South Sudan, it conducts the spot checks in batches. In December 2018, for example, the company conducted 60 financial spot checks (see figure 4 below for the number of financial spot checks conducted each year – this shows considerable variation from 133 spot checks in 2016 to 29 in 2017 and 501 in 2018). Depending on the number of NGOs to be checked, the company provides a team of six to seven consultants for a maximum of three weeks. Each consultant covers a total of six to ten NGOs and, on average, spends a day in the NGO office.

41. Once UNDP has selected partners for spot checks, it shares the list with the company. The company requests the NGOs to provide a transaction list and samples a minimum of the 60% of the value of funding used in the last quarter. It compares the transaction list with the HACT financial reporting and then gives the NGO a list of the documents that it needs and seven to ten days’ notice to put these together. The aim of the advance notice is to enable partners to transport any documents held in the field or abroad (for international procurement) to the main office. The company also reviews the micro assessment report as well as any previous spot check or audit reports in advance of visiting the NGO.
The company focuses on gaps identified by the micro assessment and any previous financial spot checks in order to report on the NGO's progress in addressing these gaps. Through the review of documents and interviews with the NGO's staff members, the company might identify new gaps or issues.

42. The spot check report identifies any expenditure that was not adequately supported by documentation and ineligible expenditures, notes any reporting on incidents and verifies the condition of assets that the partner has listed. The report categorizes findings into low, moderate or significant risk. It also makes recommendations on the findings and UNDP asks the NGOs to develop an action plan to respond to these. NNGOs, in particular, found the financial spot checks helpful, with the feedback enabling them to improve their financial systems and also helping them to prepare for audits. The information from each spot check is recorded in the GMS section on monitoring since the spot check is financial monitoring.

43. When the company started working on financial spot checks, it identified a lot of issues since many NGOs were not used to providing supporting documentation. Over time, NGOs have become more familiar with the documentation required and there are far fewer issues. For example, the company conducted 35 financial spot checks in August 2018 and seven NGOs were categorized as low risk because they had all the documentation in place. Only one NGO was categorized as a significant risk because it had failed to follow its own procedures for competitive procurement and also had several issues with its paperwork and oversight (such as verifying that contractors had completed their work). This is reflected in UNDP’s reporting on financial spot checks to the Advisory Board (AB) in November 2018 and February 2019. It stated that all the recommendations for 92 financial spot checks were ‘moderate’, denoting that NGO partners had met the minimum criteria of the agreed-upon implementation procedures.

Challenge: The financial spot check company’s practice of providing NGOs with a list of documents that it intends to review in advance risks negating the point of a spot check. This is because it gives NGOs that might be intent on falsifying documentation or covering up missing documents sufficient time to undertake these activities.

2.2.4. Audits

44. An external audit firm conducts independent audits of all SSHF-funded projects. UNDP has long-term agreements (LTAs) with a number of audit firms and conducts a competitive procurement process for each batch of audits (UNDP usually commissions two batches of audits per year). Companies that have LTAs with other UN agencies are also eligible to apply. The same audit company that conducts the micro assessments has been successful in securing the contract for the audits for the past three years (since February 2016). The contracting process usually takes a month.

45. UNDP prepares a list of audits that need to be conducted in advance. Since 2016, the smallest batch of audits was for 56 projects and the largest for 145 (figure 4 below shows the total number of audits conducted each year). Since the audit firm is not based in South Sudan, it deploys a team of 9-14 staff members for each batch of audits. The amount of time required for the audit depends on the size of the grant but, on average, each audit requires one staff member to spend two to four days at the NGO’s office. The company reviews documents on the NGO’s internal controls and does a ‘walk through’ of the mechanisms to check that they are functioning properly. The audit firm does not conduct external checks (for example, whether quotes from suppliers are genuine) unless there is a query or an indication that the partner is a high risk. For example, out of the batch of 145 audits, it undertook additional follow up in around five to seven cases. This appears to be a different approach to the audit firms in Somalia and the occupied Palestinian territory, for example, where they pursue a more active approach to checking documents, particularly procurement documents, in order to identify mismanagement or fraud.

46. NGOs found the audit process was not time-consuming or demanding. One NNGO described how NGOs used to be afraid of them “but now no one is scared of audits”. Another NNGO described it as less rigorous and intensive than the audits and financial spot checks of other UN agencies.

47. Once the audit report is complete, UNDP enters the information into both its own system and the GMS. UNDP also reports on audits completed to the Advisory Board. Of the 299 audits on which it reported between 2016 and June 2018, only one (from 2016) received a qualified opinion. In addition, in 2018, UNDP reported a reduction in management letter comments.
2.2.5. Performance management of partners

48. The GMS enables all CBPFs to track and assess partner performance, using a range of criteria and information sources. These include capacity assessments, project monitoring, financial spot checks and the timeliness of narrative and financial reporting. The GMS aggregates the scores and assigns a rolling aggregate risk level for each partner (high, medium or low). However, in accordance with global CBPF policy, partners do not have access to their risk rating on the GMS so they cannot track when their risk rating has changed. This can sometimes prove challenging. In one example, a UN member of the logistics cluster had been rated as a medium risk, possibly due to the late submission of a report. Although the cluster selected it to implement an important project for which only this UN agency had the capacity, it was unable to receive the full budget required because of its risk rating. UN agencies can also face a challenge when one sector or part of the agency (such as nutrition) receives a higher risk rating and this affects funding to other sectors (such as logistics).

2.2.6. Compliance issues

49. South Sudan is a complex conflict-affected environment in which the looting and seizure of assets by both government and opposition forces has been widespread since the conflict started in December 2013. Authorities at both national and local levels also seek to divert aid, particularly food aid. OCHA’s review of access in 2018 highlighted cases of looting, theft (including burglaries at aid agency compounds) and bureaucratic impediments. Corruption is endemic and there have been (unproven) allegations of bribery against aid agencies. Therefore, as part of its risk management approach, UNDP requires partners to report theft, losses and fraud of SSHF funding on a quarterly basis. Initially, around 80 per cent of partners complied with the reporting request but UNDP has now made it a compliance issue for NGOs during financial spot checks and reporting has improved.

50. Although the MPTFO is the AA and responsible for managing funding to UN agencies, at country level, OCHA collects information from UN agencies using a similar quarterly self-reporting system to UNDP. Half the reports of losses identified in Table 6 came from UN agencies. UN agencies handle fraud cases in line with their internal procedures and, for SSHF funding, the agency’s headquarters informs the MPTFO. However, the HFU does not receive this information and may only find out about cases long after they have been closed.

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[24] Data on the number of audits and financial spot checks based on relevant SSHF annual reports.
51. UNDP reports the information that it receives through the quarterly reporting mechanism to the AB. Table 6 below summarizes the incidents of theft, loss, fraud and write-offs reported to the AB from late 2016 to February 2019 (this shows the number of cases, with the dollar value of the theft/loss/fraud or write-off in parentheses. In some cases, the dollar value was not stated.). This shows a very small number of cases for the context and several AB members as well as UN agencies raised concerns about this, given the operating context and also the incidents that UN agencies identify for their own funding. One AB member said, “None of us can believe that it’s a true picture” while another asked, “How is this possible?” A third noted that the failure of the audits to identify a single case of mismanagement or fraud “makes me question the value of the audits.”

52. UN agencies highlighted that they identify a much higher level of incidents of theft, loss and, in some cases, fraud. For example, one UN agency had 10-15 incidents involving theft, fire and fraud in 2018. Another UN agency’s partners self-reported at least one case of loss (due to looting or other reasons) per month. Other agencies, such as FAO and UNICEF, have invested heavily in capacity to conduct program monitoring and financial checks, supporting partners to strengthen their systems but also actively seeking to identify any mismanagement of funds.

Table 6: Reporting on Theft, Loss, Fraud and Write-Offs, 2016-2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Theft</th>
<th>Loss</th>
<th>Fraud</th>
<th>Write-off</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>February 2019</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 2018</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 ($7,375)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2 ($36,885)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2018</td>
<td>2 ($844)</td>
<td>1 ($2,000)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2018</td>
<td>3 ($4,000)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2017</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (UN)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2017</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3 (UN)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2017</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2017</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2 ($108,270)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2016</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2016</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

53. Some interviewees suggested that the low level of self-reporting for SSHF funding could be because NGOs were afraid of losing funding or other punitive actions as a result and that it was important to communicate the need for openness. One NNGO mentioned that its nutrition centre had been damaged in fighting in both 2018 and 2019. It had shared the information with the OCHA office and cluster at field level as well as the national cluster in Juba. This suggests that NGOs might be sharing information on losses through conflict in other fora, if not through UNDP’s reporting system.

54. In addition to the concerns about UNDP’s risk management procedures highlighted above, a 2018 audit of UNDP’s Country Office identified a number of weaknesses in its oversight of SSHF projects. This included inconsistent follow-up on the quarterly reporting that NGOs are expected to provide, no indication that NGOs had reached the minimum threshold of fund utilization before being eligible for the next funding advance, and inconsistent certification and verification of Funding Authorization and Certification of Expenditure (FACE) forms. The last of these is a particular concern because the financial spot check company compares NGO transaction lists against the FACE form before sending partners a sample of documents that it intends to review. UNDP had put in place a management action plan in response to the audit’s recommendations.

Challenge: Given the South Sudan context, UNDP’s low level of reporting on theft and losses and the lack of identification of any incidence of fraud point to the need to strengthen the risk management mechanisms in order to address the concerns of AB members and other stakeholders.

[28] Data from minutes of relevant Advisory Board meetings
2.3. Implications of the global standardization of CBPFs

55. CBPFs have standardized increasingly since the issuing of the 2015 Policy Instruction and the change in name across the funds in 2016. In South Sudan, the fund changed its name from a CHF to the more standard South Sudan Humanitarian Fund. Since 2017, all CBPFs have started using a Common Performance Framework (CPF) that makes it easier for donors and other stakeholders to look at how the CBPFs are performing against their five principles of inclusiveness, flexibility, timeliness, efficiency and risk management. Similarly, the CBPF annual reports now have a harmonized format that has sought to make it easier for donors to review results across the different funds. For example, the 2018 annual report made it clear which results related to projects funded in 2017 but completed in 2018 and which related to projects funded in 2018. These aspects of standardization have made the CBPFs more transparent.

56. The GMS has been perhaps the strongest tool for promoting standardization across the funds, through standard templates for proposals and reporting. It has also increased the transparency of the CBPFs by making data across the funds easily accessible through the Business Intelligence portal. The HFU found the GMS extremely useful but there was a concern that it was sometimes difficult to keep up with developments in the GMS, despite the support offered by HQ, simply due to workload pressures. UNDP appreciated that the GMS was a comprehensive project management tool. Partners and cluster coordinators had different views on the GMS's benefits and ease of use. While some (particularly NGOs) found the GMS a good tool and easy to use, others complained that it was not user-friendly. In particular, some NGO partners found it time-consuming to have to enter individual cells from an Excel sheet into the budget format rather than being able to upload or copy across the entire budget.

57. Although the CBPFs have global guidelines, these should be adapted to suit different country contexts. Therefore, the SSHF has its own operational manual, last updated in April 2019, and a risk management framework that analyzes risks specific to South Sudan. In order to provide partners with greater flexibility in a potentially volatile environment, the localized guidelines allow partners to move up to 20 per cent between budget lines, compared with the 15 per cent recommended in the global guidelines. However, some UN interviewees noted that the country level procedures required them to submit financial reports at a different time to their global agreement with the MPTFO, which is the AA. Based on that agreement, UN agencies are not required to submit financial reports to OCHA but the HFU sets its own reporting deadlines through the GMS. If UN agencies do not comply with this, it can raise their risk rating, which then has implications for the level of funding that they can receive (as described in section 2.2.4 above).

58. One aspect of the standardization of CBPFs is the global agreement that OCHA will take on NGO grant management responsibilities in the four countries where UNDP still has this. This will improve efficiency in a number of ways. The simplest is that there will no longer be a requirement to upload financial risk management information, such as audit reports, into two separate systems. Having responsibility for both financial and programmatic oversight in one entity should also improve efficiency because it will no longer be necessary to share information across two separate teams. As noted in section 1.4, although the fund has a joint UNDP-OCHA TS in theory, in practice, despite weekly meetings, there were challenges with sharing information on findings from financial and programmatic monitoring in a timely way as well as financial and programmatic information on project implementation. Finally, some interviewees discussed whether consolidating NGO grant management responsibilities in OCHA will improve cost-efficiency, although the HFU will need to increase in size to take on the full range of responsibilities for NGO grant management. Donors expressed a strong willingness to pay for adequate oversight, which gives OCHA the opportunity to ensure that, when it takes on NGO grant management responsibilities, it puts in place a strong risk management system that addresses the weaknesses and concerns identified in section 2.2.

59. During the field visit for the case study, the evaluation team held discussions with OCHA senior management as well as the HFU on preparations for the transition of the NGO grant management function. This included discussions about the length of time required to procure any outsourced services, such as audits, and to recruit staff. As a result of the discussions, OCHA started putting in place measures to scale-up its capacity for the additional responsibilities in a timely way, including requesting additional budget resources from the AB.

60. UNDP planned to discuss with OCHA how it could facilitate a smooth transition, including what it would be required to do in the first few months of 2020 (for example, to close projects started in 2019 under agreements with UNDP). Its view was that the handover process would be smooth because the two agencies had been working together at country level for many years, which had built up sufficient trust.
In South Sudan, as in five other CBPF countries, the MPTFO is responsible for receiving all donor contributions and managing funding to UN agencies. As with NGO grants, this means that the MPTFO is responsible for financial oversight and OCHA is responsible for following up on program implementation at country level, since the MPTFO does not have an in-country presence. At country level, the HFU has sought to overcome the problem of not having comprehensive oversight of SSHF funding to UN agencies by holding the latter to the clause in the allocation letter that requires them to adhere to the reporting requirements in the SSHF Operational Manual.

2.4. Capacity of the humanitarian system

2.4.1. Leadership and management of the SSHF

In South Sudan, the fund management structure reflects UNDP’s MA role in a joint OCHA-UNDP TS that supports the HC to discharge his responsibilities in relation to the SSHF. As with the 2015 evaluation of the SSHF, this evaluation found that partners, particularly NNGOs, generally appreciated the HFU’s responsiveness, support and willingness to respond to queries. The fund manager, who is the head of the OCHA HFU, had been in post throughout the evaluation period and all stakeholders (but particularly donors) praised his leadership and management. Some cluster coordinators also highlighted his communication skills and role in knowledge management, particularly in ensuring that allocation processes reflected experiences and lessons from the past. There were some concerns that, when he had worked in other contexts on a temporary basis, particularly at the end of 2018, fund processes had not worked as smoothly (see section 3.1.3 for views on the second SA in 2018).

The HFU reports to the OCHA deputy head of office but the current head of office is also engaged and supportive to ensure effective fund management. At the time of the field visit, they were both playing an active role in managing the efficient transfer of NGO grant management responsibilities to OCHA since the fund manager had recently moved to a new position. The HFU and OCHA support the HC and AB to perform their functions, in particular during the allocation process. South Sudan has had two HCs during the evaluation process – one from May 2015 to July 2017 and the current HC from August 2017. Section 4.2 discusses the HC’s leadership and the SSHF’s contribution to strengthening this.

The SSHF has an AB with equal representation from the UN (two persons), NGOs (one INGO member and one NNGO member) and donor representatives (two persons). In addition, one non-contributing donor has observer status. The HC chairs the AB with both OCHA and UNDP as members representing the TS. The AB’s role in the allocation process changed during the evaluation period. Prior to the first SA in 2017, each cluster coordinator presented a cluster-specific strategy to the AB for the latter’s decisions on cluster envelopes. Since then, cluster coordinators discuss their priorities and funding requirements in a peer-to-peer review at the ICWG in order to develop an overall proposal for cluster envelopes. A couple of ICWG representatives then present this proposal to the AB, chaired by the HC, for approval. While the AB has accepted this change in the allocation process, one member noted that the rationale for decisions or the link between project timeframes and cluster indicators were not always clear because AB members only receive summaries of the ICWG discussions. This has led donors to ask a lot of questions in AB meetings.

The AB engages actively in allocation processes. For example, when the HFU put forward an urgent request for funding from an NGO that had been conducting a WASH project in Mangateen IDP camp with a grant from the IOM-managed Rapid Response Fund (RRF) at the February 2019 AB meeting, the AB did not rush into a decision. Rather, it requested further information and analysis, including on a vulnerability assessment or mapping of the population of Mangateen camp and the exit strategy for the proposed 6-month project. The AB has also engaged in risk management, requesting additional information and clarification from UNDP that has resulted in regular updates at AB meetings (though one AB member complained that UNDP did not provide supporting documents relating to its risk management function sufficiently in advance of AB meetings, leaving little time to examine them and prepare questions).

While the AB engages actively in allocation processes, it also accepts that its role is advisory and that final decision-making authority rests with the HC. Therefore, in December 2018, although some AB members had reservations about the HC’s decision to make a $2 million RA for Ebola preparedness and response, they did not obstruct the process. Donor representatives on the AB recommended that OCHA consult with the RRF, DFID and ECHO to ensure that the RA

[31] See, for example, South Sudan CHF (2015a) 2016 First Round Standard Allocation Strategy Paper - draft
complemented their bilateral contributions.

67. A few AB members felt that it was important for the AB to have the opportunity to discuss strategic issues and broader fund-related issues, such as the CPF, rather than spending most meetings discussing allocation processes. One highlighted that the February 2019 AB meeting had been better than most because the agenda items were strategic and there were more substantive discussions. A couple of interviewees also underlined the importance of creating sufficient space for discussion and, in particular, for NGOs to make their voice heard.

2.4.2. The HFU’s management capacity

68. The HFU’s competence and capacity is fundamental to a CBPF’s effectiveness and, in South Sudan, UNDP’s role as MA is also a factor. Figure 5 below outlines the structure of the OCHA HFU. UNDP has a team of six staff members to manage NGO grants, in addition to the HFU.

69. As noted above, partners generally found the HFU approachable and helpful. The HFU plays an important role in the allocation process, including by conducting the first review of project proposals to ensure that they comply with the intent of the allocation strategy paper and participating in Strategic Review Committees (SRCs) to promote transparency and consistency in the decision-making process while maintaining its neutrality (see section 3.1.3 for further details). With some staff turnover in mid-2018, a number of cluster coordinators raised concerns about the questions and feedback received on project proposals, which suggested insufficient programmatic knowledge within the HFU or which were asked very late in the allocation process.

Figure 5: SSHF Humanitarian Financing Unit structure

70. The SSHF cost structure comprises four elements: (1) MPTFO/Administrative Agent fee, equivalent to 1 per cent of donor contributions (2) UNDP/Managing Agent Program Support Cost (PSC), equivalent to 7 per cent over and above the amount allocated to NGOs (3) UNDP/Managing Agent audit cost, equivalent to 1 per cent over and above the amount allocated to NGOs; and (4) OCHA/HFU cost plan including requirements for the M&R Specialists, presented to the AB on an annual basis. Figure 6 below shows these four elements of SSHF management costs. The total costs represented

[32] Based on the South Sudan HFU Organisational Chart with Summarised Roles (2018).
[33] SSHF (2017b) Minutes of Advisory Board Meeting, 7 June 2017 – final version
5.4 per cent of donor contributions in 2015. This percentage has varied as the level of donor contributions has fluctuated but, in 2018, the costs represented 7.2 per cent of donor contributions. It should be noted that the HFU costs in figure 6 are based on the planned figures presented to the AB rather than final expenditure numbers. Since OCHA charges actual costs rather than a percentage, if it does not spend the full amount, it returns the unspent balance to the fund. This is transparent because the AB can see exactly how OCHA has used the funding. UNDP and MPTFO fees are taken as a percentage of NGO funding allocations and donor contributions respectively so the issue of unspent funds being returned does not arise.

71. The HFU gradually increased its staffing numbers by one each year from 2015 to 2018, going from nine to 12 staff members (including M&R specialists who are UN Volunteers and therefore a cost-effective way to staff the team). It is impressive that, on a relatively modest budget, the team is able to manage the complete allocation process (from allocation scoping paper to getting HC approval for projects), provide training and support to NGO applicants, conduct programmatic assessments of NGO partners and monitoring of all partners, produce annual reports, support the HC and AB, and engage with donors to mobilize resources (or support the HC’s resource mobilization efforts). By comparison, UNDP’s fees, which have tended to be much higher than OCHA’s costs, cover capacity assessments, signing contracts with NGOs, disbursing funds to NGOs and financial risk management of NGO grants. The cost of auditing NGO projects is charged separately to UNDP’s fees.

72. While donors expect value for money from CBPFs, cost is an unhelpful performance indicator because it is important for OCHA to invest adequately in strong management and robust monitoring and risk management processes, particularly when it takes on NGO grant management in 2020. Donor interviewees indicated that they are willing to cover the costs of active risk management.

Figure 6: SSHF total management costs, 2015-18[34]

[34] Data on OCHA HFU costs provided by the HFU. Data on UNDP fees and audit costs have been calculated on the basis of allocations to NGOs. MPTFO fees have been calculated on the basis of donor contributions.
2.4.3. The capacity of the clusters to manage allocations

73. In South Sudan, cluster coordinators and the ICWG play a critical role in allocation processes. This is because, as described above, they are responsible for identifying the most urgent priorities both within and across clusters and for agreeing on the cluster funding envelopes that are presented to the AB. The allocation and project selection process are discussed in more detail in section 3.1.3.

74. Cluster coordination operates relatively well at Juba level, particularly as clusters have fully-dedicated coordinators as well as NGO co-coordinators. However, sub-national cluster coordination is more challenging. This is partly because the cluster focal points have other responsibilities. Weak sub-national cluster coordination affects SSHF processes because it means that NGOs that do not have offices in Juba have less access to technical and other forms of support. Also, although national cluster coordinators should consult their sub-national counterparts during SSHF allocation and prioritization processes, some interviewees suggested that this was not systematic. OCHA has sought to support sub-national coordination, providing briefings and guidance and also protecting clusters from political interference, such as being requested to conduct an assessment in a particular location. It has also initiated joint OCHA-ICWG field visits to enable cluster coordinators to gain a better understanding of field realities.

2.4.4. The capacity of partners to deliver SSHF projects

75. Ultimately, the SSHF can only meet its objectives if it is able to fund partners that have access to areas with the greatest humanitarian need and that have capacity to deliver timely, coordinated and high-quality programs. Section 3.3 below examines how the SSHF selects the best-placed partners, including UN agencies if they have the greatest capacity to procure core pipeline items and enable frontline service delivery through the provision of transport and air services. It also outlines the SSHF’s efforts to increase the number and diversity of eligible partners. Section 3.4 below then explores the extent to which SSHF partners are incorporating cross-cutting issues into their projects in order to deliver quality assistance that takes account of those with specific needs and vulnerabilities.

76. One of the main challenges with responding to humanitarian needs in South Sudan since the conflict is the ability of aid agencies to work in both government and opposition-held areas. While it was not possible to undertake a detailed examination of the SSHF’s coverage during the field visit, section 5.2 discusses the issue of access and humanitarian principles in further detail.
3. Activities and outputs: To what extent are CBPFs supporting partners to meet the most urgent humanitarian needs in a way that is timely and consistent with Grand Bargain priorities?

This section of the report examines the fund’s performance in delivering key activities and outputs, including the identification of priority needs, selecting the best-placed partners, and supporting the delivery of program quality.

3.1. Contextually relevant and in line with HRPs

3.1.1. Alignment with the HRP and strategic priorities

77. The SSHF has been closely aligned with the HRP throughout the evaluation period and allocation strategy papers have tended to state that projects must be in the HRP in order to be eligible for funding.\[35\] Currently, the SSHF only funds projects that are in the HRP. This enables the SSHF to strengthen the humanitarian architecture because it provides incentives for partners to participate in the HRP development process. However, as some cluster coordinators pointed out, needs always exceed the amount of funding that clusters can reasonably request in the HRP. This means that some projects that are aligned with cluster (and HRP) priorities are excluded. It can also be challenging for NGOs to have their projects included in the HRP. In addition, if a partner does not have a project in a specific sector in the HRP (such as protection) it cannot receive funding from that cluster to incorporate it with a project in another sector. The SSHF could fund projects outside the HRP, like some donors, though this risks undermining the HRP process. The AB needs to weigh up the pros and cons to both approaches for each SA. It should be noted that the SSHF has the flexibility to fund activities outside the HRP in response to unforeseen needs through RAs (if funding is available).

78. Figure 7 below shows the level of HRP requirements and funding received, together with SSHF and CERF funding between 2015 and 2018. As mentioned in Table 2, the SSHF accounted for between five and nine per cent of total HRP funding (with the highest contribution of 9.2 per cent in 2015 and the lowest of 4.9 per cent in 2016, when SSHF funding decreased by around 40 per cent).

Figure 7: HRP appeal and contributions, SSHF contributions and CERF allocations, 2015-18\[36\]

79. Throughout the evaluation period, SA strategies have been based on HRPs and explicitly linked to their strategic objectives (SO). However, RAs have addressed new emergencies or threats, such as the outbreak of fighting in and around Wau in 2016 (through the first RA), the spread of the conflict across the Equatorias from July 2016 (through the second RA for core pipeline supplies) and preparedness for the risk of Ebola spreading from the Democratic Republic of Congo to South Sudan at the end of 2018.


\[36\] Data on HRP budgets and contributions from OCHA’s Financial Tracking Service, data on SSHF contributions obtained from Annual Reports 2015-2018 and data on CERF allocations obtained from https://cerf.un.org/what-we-do/allocation-by-country
80. Until 2018, CBPF annual reports did not detail how much SSHF funding was allocated to each SO in the HRP. However, the 2018 annual report shows that, while the largest proportion of the funding (60 per cent) was directed at SO1 to save lives, the second largest proportion (23 per cent) supported SO3, sustaining community capacity to cope with significant threats (see Figure 8 below).

Figure 8: Links between SSHF Standard Allocations and 2018 HRP SO

81. SO1 in the 2018 HRP was the first time that an HRP SO had included a reference to multi-sector assistance since 2015. SO1 in the 2019 HRP also mentions integrated multi-sector assistance. The SSHF allocation strategy papers for the second SA in 2018 and for the first SA in 2019 both reflect this and state that the allocations will promote integrated programming. However, the HRPs do not support multi-sector programming beyond the SO or indicator level (for example, including WASH indicators in the nutrition sector) so that projects are still in sectoral silos. As discussed in the next section, there are also challenges with financing multi-sectoral assistance through the cluster system. As a result, the SSHF had not financed integrated multi-sectoral programs though it had funded separate projects that aimed to deliver multi-sectoral assistance.

3.1.2. Contextually relevant funding

82. In response to a volatile conflict, the SSHF has sought to ensure that funding responds to rapidly changing needs (see section 4.2). This includes reviewing and, if necessary, changing geographical and other priorities for each SA (although still aligned with HRP priorities). For example, the allocation strategy paper for the first SA in 2017 prioritized the two famine-affected counties of Leer and Mayendit as part of 25 counties selected on a variety of needs data. Due to the level of funding to these counties in the first half of 2017, they were not prioritized in the second SA strategy paper. The remainder of this section assesses the extent to which specific aspects of SSHF funding are contextually relevant or not.

Short-term funding

83. Clusters have generally funded projects for six months, which may be due to the tendency to change geographical priorities between the first and second SAs. In addition, there is a widespread view that the SSHF is intended to address emergency needs and, therefore, a short timeframe is appropriate (although the data on the length of allocation processes in section 3.2 shows that the SAs, which are the main channel for funding, are not designed for rapid response). Another possible reason for the short-term funding is that, when clusters have been forced to reduce partner requests because of the limited funding available, they have preferred to shorten project timeframes rather than cut activities. As a result of the cluster tendency to fund six-month projects, a number of NNGOs were unaware that it was possible to...
obtain funding for longer projects.

84. There are many understandable reasons for the short-term funding and it is relevant for activities such as one-off distributions or to enable food security projects to align with agricultural seasons. However, several interviewees highlighted the challenges with this, particularly since the conflict situation has stabilized since the second half of 2018 and the context is one of chronic crisis and needs. One of these is simply the burden of having to undergo a project application process that is onerous for NNGOs, in particular, every few months. For some partners, six-month projects did not allow sufficient time to procure items or recruit staff. In some cases, short-term projects were inappropriate for the type of activities being undertaken. For example, school feeding programs need to align with the school calendar because it does not make sense to provide food for six months and then stop the project. Protection activities require time to build trust with communities and also time to deliver, with interruptions in services potentially causing harm. There was one example of an NNGO that set up a program to support survivors of gender-based violence (GBV). However, the funding ended after six months, just when the NNGO had built community confidence and raised expectations. For mine action projects, it is a challenge to deliver a six-month project with funding from the first SA because project areas are flooded during the rainy season. Some partners apply for nine-month projects from the first SA in a year, which is the maximum that some clusters will allow (although the April 2019 version of the SSHF Operational Manual allows for a maximum timeframe of 12 months, in line with CBPF global guidance). They then apply for more funding for the same project from the second SA so that they can continue activities till the end of the year or for longer. However, they run into the challenge of overlapping funding with questions about whether they are duplicating staffing or other costs. As a result, even though longer-term funding would make more sense, some partners tend to apply for six-month projects from each SA, which then increases the administrative burden on both the TS and partners. An NNGO suggested that it would be preferable if the SSHF provided 12-month funding but made use of the flexibility available through project revisions to respond to changing needs.

85. Although the changes in priority locations for each SA makes it difficult for partners to apply for continued funding for their projects, some interviewees suggested that the SSHF ends up funding the same project for two or more years but on a repeated six-monthly basis, which is dysfunctional. While the AB has encouraged clusters to stop providing repeated funding to the same projects, some cluster coordinators argued that this was not realistic if the SSHF wanted to fund NNGOs. This is because NNGO partners cannot secure funding to continue their activities from other sources. Also, as noted above, in some sectors, such as protection, there is a strong rationale for continued engagement with communities.

Integrated programming

86. As outlined in the previous section, recent SSHF allocation strategy papers have aimed to promote integrated programming. A lessons-learned exercise after the second SA in 2018 suggested that that the TS should consider funding multi-cluster projects because providing a comprehensive package of services would improve the efficiency of the response. According to one cluster coordinator, currently, partners have parallel systems for delivering complementary services such as nutrition and WASH in the same locations because they are funded for two separate projects. An integrated approach is also more relevant for responding to the needs of affected communities, who do not experience needs in sectoral siloes. However, multi-sectoral programming has proved to be challenging in practice because of the cluster system. When clusters review project proposals, they score them for that specific sector and do not have a formal mechanism to review attempts to incorporate other sectors, such as WASH and health components in a nutrition project. At the time of the field visit, there was no process for sharing a proposal across clusters so partners had to submit separate proposals to each cluster. One interviewee mentioned that, even within the protection cluster, each sub-cluster had a separate review process so the NGO was asked to submit separate proposals for activities in the same location. The risk with this approach is that there is no guarantee that all the different sectoral components of the project will get funded (though no interviewee gave an example of one component remaining unfunded). Despite these bureaucratic obstacles, a few NGO interviewees provided examples of providing multi-sectoral assistance.

87. OCHA and the HFU recognized the need for finding practical solutions to the challenges of multi-sectoral programming and held an informal brainstorming session during the evaluation team’s field visit. The SSHF has since financed multi-sector projects through the second SA in 2019.

[40] SSHF (2018c) Action points following SSHF Technical Secretariat SA2 lessons learnt session on 14 September 2018
Grant size

88. A number of interviewees questioned whether the minimum grant size of $100,000 set by the SSHF is relevant and appropriate. This is particularly because most clusters seem to provide funding at the minimum grant level. One concern was that clusters were using the threshold as a way of dividing their envelopes across as many partners as possible rather than prioritizing in a strategic way. However, some cluster coordinators argued that providing a large number of relatively small grants was a strategic approach to promoting localization and inclusion or ensuring wider geographical coverage. A few felt that the minimum was too high for certain types of projects, e.g., those that involve one-off deliveries of items; for more staff intensive services rather than procurement; or for funding local NGOs to provide assistance in the deep field. Also, small NGOs believed that it excluded them from accessing the SSHF because they were not deemed to have sufficient capacity to manage $100,000.

Figure 9: SSHF allocations including numbers of partners and projects, 2016-2019

89. The challenge with small grants of $100,000-200,000 is that, given the very high operating costs in South Sudan, it can be difficult to achieve results. UN agencies found it particularly difficult to achieve impact with the small grants and they mainly used them to fill critical gaps, but even a large NGO argued that this was a limitation because it often had to cut staffing and other costs to stay within the ceiling. Another consequence of smaller grants is a reduction in project timeframes, with the consequences highlighted above. Alternatively, partners are asked to reduce their budget but without reducing activities or beneficiary numbers, which puts them in a difficult position. The large number of small grants also increases the TS's workload, because it has to process them all, and also risk management costs such as for audits, monitoring and financial spot checks. Figure 9 above shows SSHF allocations with the number of projects and partners from 2016-2019. This demonstrates that even though the funding allocated in 2018 was almost $30 million less than in 2016, the number of projects and partners was higher. Similarly, the number of partners in 2019 was higher than in 2018, even after only one SA. The SSHF developed the graphic to prompt discussion within the ICWG. Table 7 shows the average size of SSHF grants in each year, which has grown increasingly smaller, even though the HFU has raised the minimum grant threshold from $50,000 to $100,000.

* 2019 data is as of April 2019
3.1.3. Transparent identification of high-quality projects

90. As noted in section 2.4.1, the allocation process has evolved with cluster coordinators and the ICWG now playing the main role in identifying priorities and allocating funding envelopes between clusters. The HFU facilitates a lessons learned exercise after each allocation process to ensure that the process improves continuously. In general, stakeholders felt that the allocation process worked well, with ICWG members able to question and hold each other to account. However, some cluster coordinators commented that the peer review process in the ICWG could turn into a competition for funding rather than fostering collaboration, particularly if a cluster makes a funding request that is disproportionate to the total allocation. The lessons-learned process for the first SA in 2019 also identified that the peer review process can turn into a bargaining for cluster envelopes and there is also a risk that, without consensus on critical priorities, resources can be spread thinly over too many clusters and locations.[43]

91. A number of interviewees highlighted that the first SA in 2019 had been a more problematic process than previous allocations. There were several reasons put forward for this. One was a lack of sufficient communication about the selection of priority counties. In the past, clusters had selected the geographical priorities but for the 2019 SA, the scoping paper listed the priority counties based on inter-sectoral severity scales without advance consultation. Stakeholders disagreed with the list of counties and there was some adjustment in the final allocation strategy. Other reasons were that there was insufficient advance notice of the allocation and the process was started immediately before Christmas, just as many stakeholders were going on leave. This considerably reduced the time available to prepare proposals in time for the mid-January submission deadline and also the time available to discuss cluster priorities, select Strategic Review Committees (SRCs) etc.

92. Once the allocation strategy paper has been finalized in consultation with cluster coordinators and the AB, it is launched as a call for the submission of proposals. These are reviewed by cluster SRCs in a process whereby individual members score projects and then convene to agree the overall score for each project. The HFU participates in the meeting and suggests issues that the SRC should take into consideration though it plays a neutral role and does not get involved in the SRC’s decision-making. Some interviewees pointed to a perception of a conflict of interest in SRCs, particularly amongst NNGOs. This is because SRC members are often also applying for funding. Cluster coordinators indicated that the applicant is asked to leave the room when their organization’s project is being discussed in the SRC. Although an NNGO that had participated in SRCs described the process as fair and transparent, there was a suspicion that SRC members tended to collude with each other to get their projects funded. As a result, there was a suggestion that SRC members should not be applicants for SSHF funding. The argument against this was that it would be difficult to find cluster members with adequate technical expertise to review projects who were not applicants. NNGOs that had not received SSHF funding also suggested that there would be greater confidence in the transparency and fairness of the process if an NGO Forum Secretariat representative (rather than committee members or NNGO staff) was a member of the SRC. This was also deemed to be problematic since the Secretariat is very small and already stretched. Although it is challenging to generate confidence in the SRC review process across a diverse range of organizations, it is important because partner engagement in clusters depends on trust.

93. The extent to which cluster coordinators provide feedback to organizations that have had their proposals rejected varied. One NNGO had received no feedback from one cluster but another had offered a joint feedback session to all.

Table 7: SSHF average grant size, 2016-2019[42]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Allocation</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average grant</td>
<td>$385,000</td>
<td>$332,000</td>
<td>$237,000</td>
<td>$207,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Good practice: The HFU’s commitment to improving the allocation process through systematic lessons-learned exercises is an example of good practice.

NGOs that had not received funding. While the NNGO appreciated this offer, it did not feel comfortable discussing the
feedback in public and expressed a preference for bilateral feedback. The SSHF does have a mechanism so that partners
dissatisfied with the allocation process can make a complaint. An NNGO had made use of this mechanism when it felt that a funding decision was unfair because it was not funded despite its presence in a particular county while another NNGO that did not have a presence there was funded.

94. A cluster coordinator pointed out that, once each cluster informs the HFU about which projects have been fund-
ed, there was no consolidated information on which organizations and projects had been funded. Although the annual
report provides this information, this appears long after allocations have been made.

3.1.4. The use of cash and vouchers in line with Grand Bargain commitments

95. The use of cash and vouchers is one way to deliver multi-sector programming. However, cash-based program-
ming is still in its infancy in South Sudan, hampered by a range of factors including widespread insecurity, weak and
poorly integrated markets, limited financial service providers, and hyperinflation. Functioning markets are particularly
difficult to find in remote locations where there are few local traders and a limited or irregular supply of goods. Even in
urban settings, there are limitations to the use of cash, such as protection concerns, particularly for female beneficiar-
ies. Nevertheless, there has been a willingness to experiment with cash and find ways of overcoming contextual limi-
tations. The 2018 HRP for South Sudan actively promoted the use cash-based programming and set a target of five per
cent of the total financial requirements of the Plan to be distributed in the form of cash or vouchers. Some clusters are
already integrating cash within their sector strategies – primarily the food security and livelihoods (FSL) cluster (which
anecdotally channels approximately 20 per cent of its assistance via cash-based programs), as well as the emergency
shelter and non-food items cluster, which has piloted the use of cash transfers for shelter in PoC sites.

96. The HFU works in close collaboration with the inter-cluster Cash Working Group to ensure that cash-based pro-
gramming is appropriately integrated within cluster strategies for specific allocations, and that cash-oriented SSHF
project proposals are technically sound. It was not possible to track the amount of funding distributed via cash-based
programming within SSHF-funded projects during the evaluation period. At the start of 2019, however, a cash marker
was added in the GMS. As well as tagging particular projects as using cash, implementing partners are required to
estimate the proportion of the project budget that will be distributed via cash/vouchers. Looking ahead, this will allow
the HFU to monitor cash-based programming within its allocations and track progress against any future cash-related
targets within the SSHF-funded elements of the HRP.

97. While there is a clear push to increase the amount of assistance delivered via cash-based programming within
the HRP, and by extension within SSHF allocations, there are also obvious limitations and risks. Interviewees highlighted
a number of issues, including the increased susceptibility of cash to manipulation and diversion; and the limitations of
project timeframes within SSHF allocations. Section 3.1.2 has already discussed some of the limitations of short-term
funding. Interviewees also described six-month projects as leaving little time for assessments and analysis of the fea-
sibility of cash-based programming, nor for training of staff and communities on the introduction of cash/vouchers as
a new modality, nor for post-project learning.

[45] The use of CBT was suspended in Juba’s protection of civilians’ camp in July 2016 because of protection concerns after reports of women
being attached when leaving the camp to buy food - Enfield, S. (2018) Cash-based Programming in South Sudan, K4D Helpdesk Report, Institute of Developmen
et Studies, October 2018
3.2. Effectiveness and efficiency of processes to allocate and disburse funding

3.2.1. Efficiency and timeliness of SSHF allocation and disbursement processes

98. The SSHF operational manual outlines the workflow for both SAs and RAs, with an indicative number of working days for each step.\[48]\ In the case of SAs, the steps from the development of the allocation strategy to disbursement should take 76 working days while, for RAs, the steps from consultation on the activation of the reserve to disbursement should take 32 working days. While the number of days for a RA is similar to that of the Somalia Humanitarian Fund (SHF), the SA process is 13 days longer than the SHF’s 56-63 working days. However, in practice, the SSHF SA process has been much shorter than outlined in the operational manual (see table 8 below).

Table 8: Average numbers of days for SSHF allocation processes, 2016-18\[49]\[48]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key steps in the allocation process</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allocation launch to HC approval of selected projects</td>
<td>SA 38</td>
<td>RA 19</td>
<td>SA 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HC approval of NGO project to first payment[50][48]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HC approval of UN agency project to first payment</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

99. In the 2018 CPF, the SSHF set itself targets for the average duration of allocation processes from the launch of an allocation strategy to the HC’s approval of selected projects. These were 24 working days for SAs and 15 working days for RAs. The SSHF made two SAs and one RA in 2018. It achieved an average of 26 days from allocation launch to project approvals for the SAs and 22 days from launch to project approvals for the RA (see table 8). The SSHF slightly exceeded its target for the SAs because of the large number of funding applications (figure 9 highlighted the very large number of projects funded) and a more rigorous review process. It also exceeded the target for the RA in 2018, which was for Ebola preparedness and response, because of the complexity of the problem and related coordination and planning.\[51]\ As table 8 demonstrates, the SSHF has made steady progress in reducing the average number of days for SAs from 2016 to 2018. While this is positive, several interviewees as well as the SSHF 2017 annual report noted that the short timeframe for developing project proposals makes it difficult to ensure their quality.

100. Some interviewees also highlighted challenges with very short deadlines (of 24-48 hours) for responding to comments on proposals. This was particularly problematic when partners were expected to respond to comments over a weekend because it was difficult to consult program staff or those in the field. Also, NNGO staff tend not to have access to the internet (or even electricity) over the weekend, which made it very hard for them to respond on time. One INGO that had submitted five proposals to different sectors, some for the same location, had only a week to respond to three rounds of comments, which placed a considerable burden on its grant management team. Partners were under a lot of pressure to meet these short response deadlines because they were afraid that failure to do so would affect their performance rating and, as a consequence, their risk rating. Despite the short timeframe for many of the steps in the allocation process, one interviewee argued that it was helpful to have a timeline that applied to the TS as much as partners and cluster coordinators.

101. While timeliness is one aspect of the allocation process, the AB also discussed the timing of SAs in 2019 and whether this could link better to the timing of IPC analysis and agricultural seasons. It set up a small working group to examine the issue. The group concluded that the timing of SAs should remain the same but that the SSHF should take more of a preparedness approach so that the funding window for the rainy season included a focus on disease outbreaks or floods while the second SA at the end of the rainy season prepared for the next rainy season. The group acknowledged that there was a need to go beyond viewing the South Sudan crisis from a food security angle so it also mapped out the appropriate timing for funding for other sectors. This could result in recommendations about which...
clusters should apply for the SSHF at which time of the year.

102. Table 8 above also lists the average number of days taken to disburse funds to NGOs and UN agencies in 2017 and 2018. NGO interviewees were satisfied with the timeliness of disbursement processes. UNDP has tried to ensure smooth contracting and disbursement procedures by assigning each team member as a focal point for a number of NGO partners. This ensures that partners know who to contact and also that there is continuity of follow up from UNDP’s side.

3.3. The promotion of best-placed partners and support for localization

3.3.1. Identifying and supporting the best-placed partners to meet humanitarian needs

103. While the SSHF had no specific policy on localization or working with NNGO partners, there was clear evidence of a shift towards channelling more funding through local and national actors. Allocation strategy documents emphasized that the response should be ‘as local as possible, as international as necessary’ and made specific references to Grand Bargain commitments on localization. The SSHF is attractive to NNGOs for a number of reasons, not least the 7 per cent for program support costs allowed within project budgets; its relatively rapid disbursement of funds compared with other sources of funding; access to training on SSHF-related processes; and the catalytic effect of SSHF funding, raising the profile of individual NNGOs and increasing their ability to attract funding from other sources.

104. During the evaluation period, the SSHF put in place a number of measures to increase NNGO access to funding. This was because they are best placed to deliver frontline activities for a number of reasons. One is that NNGOs tend to be present on the ground in hard-to-reach areas and can access remote communities. They are also able to provide timely, life-saving assistance despite the logistical and security constraints that have hampered the ability of all humanitarian actors in South Sudan to respond. Thirdly, research and some NGO interviews have highlighted how NNGOs are often the first responders in an emergency. Measures to support NGO access to funding included a rule that prevented ‘pass-through’ funding by UN agencies or INGOs to NNGOs; a lowering of the minimum grant amount for NNGOs from $200,000 to $100,000; and additional weighting for NNGO projects during project proposal review processes (NNGO projects automatically get extra points in the scoring process). INGOs are also frontline responders in South Sudan and have accounted for much of the coverage of the response (see below), strategy papers for specific allocations repeatedly stress the primacy of frontline activities, stating that UN agencies will only be considered for funding of frontline projects ‘where there is a compelling justification that doing so represents best use of the limited resources available’.

105. The result has been a steady increase in the amount and proportion of SSHF funding channelled through NGOs, particularly NNGOs, between 2015 and 2018. In 2015, NNGOs received 11 per cent of total SSHF funding (US$10.2 million), rising to 39 per cent in 2018 (US$20.6 million). The proportion of funding to INGOs also increased, while funding going to UN agencies decreased significantly over the same period, from 59 per cent in 2015 to 21 per cent in 2018. In terms of volume, the decrease was from US$54.4 million in 2015 to US$11.3 million in 2018 (see figure 10).

[53] Tanner, Dr L. and Dr L Moro (2016) Missed Out: The role of local actors in the humanitarian response in the South Sudan conflict, Christian Aid, CAFOD & Trocaire, Oxfam and Tearfund.
[54] Tanner, Dr L. and Dr L Moro (2016) Missed Out: The role of local actors in the humanitarian response in the South Sudan conflict, Christian Aid, CAFOD & Trocaire, Oxfam and Tearfund.
106. One consequence of more funding to NNGOs appears to be a larger number of SSHF projects per year, as discussed in section 3.1.2. Figure 11 shows that there was a 20 per cent increase in the total number of projects between 2017 and 2018, with a notably large increase in the number of projects implemented by partners classified as medium-risk. This has implications for management and oversight of the fund, not least the HFU’s ability to monitor activities (also discussed in section 2.2.2), as well as the UNDP’s capacity as MA to keep up with financial spot-check and audit requirements across an increasingly large portfolio of projects.

107. Despite the steps to improve NGO access to SSHF funding, some still faced challenges in meeting eligibility requirements and securing SSHF funding. Local and national NGOs are a diverse set of organizations, from highly localized civil society organizations working in remote locations with close ties to the communities that they serve, to larger NNGOs securing SSHF grants of over $0.5 million in some cases. For smaller NNGOs, “getting a foot in the door” can be difficult. This is particularly the case for those without an office in Juba and easy access to cluster coordination meetings, those lacking reliable internet access, and associations without audited reports or references from previous donors. A number of interviewees from smaller NNGOs, including women-led organizations, actually favoured the option of ‘pass-through’ funding, on the basis that sub-granted funds would at least allow them access to small amounts of international funding for the first time in order to begin building up their organizational capacity. An INGO that co-implements protection projects with community-based organizations also highlighted that preventing sub-granting could result in undesirable outcomes, such as INGOs hiring their own social workers and other staff rather than working through, and strengthening the capacity of, national partners (one of its NNGO partners had been able to move to accessing funding directly).

[56] Source: GMS data
108. While channelling funding through NGOs is clearly a priority for the SSHF, SAs have also intermittently provided support for core pipelines and enabling activities. This funding goes primarily to UN agencies, which are best placed to undertake these activities, for the benefit of the wider humanitarian community. In addition, the RA of November 2016 specifically focused on injecting funds into core pipelines to urgently ‘mobilise additional resources for dry season priorities in the lead-up to the launch of the 2017 Humanitarian Response Plan’. UN interviewees highlighted the value of SSHF funding for unforeseen needs, such as the need for the UN Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) to relocate aid workers from conflict zones, as well as needs that are unattractive to donors, such as trucks that enable NGOs to transport supplies for frontline service delivery.

109. Interviewees had mixed views about the use of SSHF funding to replenish core pipeline requirements, resulting in what was described by one interviewee as a “vexed discussion”. Some interviewees, particularly those representing donors and NGOs, preferred to see pipelines covered by funding from other sources. In the November 2018 AB meeting, members deliberated whether to include funding for core pipelines in the first SA in 2019 and decided against this because UN agencies could access other funding sources for pipelines while the SSHF was one of the limited sources of funding for frontline NGO activities. However, a number of interviewees, including some INGO and NGO representatives, supported the use of the SSHF for core pipelines funding. They argued that well-stocked pipelines indirectly enable frontline activities, thereby impacting positively on the wider humanitarian response.

110. With a flexible approach to supporting different types of organizations according to the changing situation on the ground, the SSHF is making a genuine effort to work with the best-placed partners in order to meet humanitarian needs and fill gaps. There is considerable pressure on the fund, particularly from donors and NGOs themselves, to increase funding for NGOs, thereby contributing to collective Grand Bargain commitments and achieving a more cost-effective response. Several interviewees, however, raised concerns about the technical capacity of NGOs to work at scale, and the fiduciary and security risks of channelling large amounts of funding through national organizations in a high-risk and increasingly complicated regulatory environment such as South Sudan. Others stressed the incentives and challenges of channelling funding through INGOs and UN agencies. Given the dynamics at play, the SSHF is currently maintaining an effective balance that will need to be constantly monitored as the humanitarian situation evolves and gaps continue to emerge. Donors also need to play their part, particularly when it comes to supporting NGOs by diversifying funding sources for them, making them less vulnerable to shifts and fluctuations in SSHF funding, and building the capacity of NGOs to access bilateral funding.

3.3.2. Inclusion of, and support for, local and national actors

111. While funding for local and national actors is undoubtedly critical, it is not the only important aspect of localization; it is also vital for NGOs to have representation on the SSHF’s governance and decision-making bodies. As such, the SSHF achieves a reasonable balance of representation from different stakeholder groups within its AB, including one NGO representative as a full member of the AB and an alternate representative. SRs that review project proposals also routinely include NGO representatives (as of 2018, there were an average of 2 NGO representatives per SR – 25 per cent of total membership) with a say in which proposals were approved for funding within specific allocations.

112. NGO interviewees reported mixed experiences of participation in AB meetings and SRC processes, as well as engagement with clusters more broadly. Despite having a seat at the table, they felt that NGO voices were still not being heard. One concern was that there was only one NGO representative (and one INGO representative) on the AB although there were two donors and two UN agencies represented. They also felt that the way meetings were organized were not always conducive to their full and active participation. At the level of cluster leadership in South Sudan, there is still a shortage of NGO cluster coordinators.

[58] SSHF (2018d) Minutes of Advisory Board Meeting, 23 November 2018
Training is another key way that the SSHF TS seeks to build the capacity of all partners and improve the fund’s accessibility to NGOs. A package of training is available to all partners with projects in the HRP, covering introductory topics such as eligibility for SSHF funding, how to use the GMS, and tips on proposal writing. A second set of training is available for partners who have been selected for funding, including sessions on the risk rating methodology, risk management and monitoring. The HFU holds regular ‘open clinics’ and maintains an open door policy for advice and follow-up training on any issues. Some clusters also provide training for their members, with a focus on building the technical capacities of all partners, particularly NGOs.

**Good practice:** The FSL cluster is the only one in South Sudan with an NGO cluster co-coordinator working alongside his/her UN agency and INGO counterparts. This has gone some way to addressing the NGO representation gap and has had a positive effect on NGO participation in the cluster overall, including within SSHF-related processes.
3.4. Delivering quality programming

3.4.1. Projects based on coordinated and participatory needs assessments

114. SSHF allocation strategies show that the fund uses a range of needs analysis data to identify geographical priorities. For example, the first SA in 2017 prioritized 25 counties on the basis of a composite analysis of data relating to displacement, the IPC, global acute malnutrition rates and disease outbreaks. OCHA chairs an information-management (IM) working group that brings together cluster IM officers who produce a quarterly analysis of humanitarian needs. The ICWG meets every two weeks to discuss priority needs in order to guide the immediate response. The IM working group and the ICWG collaborate to produce an analysis of the severity of needs using an Excel tool developed by OCHA in Geneva. This combines IPC analysis with sectoral data provided by clusters, although some clusters were better at conducting needs assessments and providing data than others (the FSL cluster was cited as a champion of cross-cluster, evidence-based analysis).

115. There is a Needs Analysis Working Group (NAWG) in South Sudan, an inter-cluster body through which OCHA is seeking to broaden the data available to the SSHF for prioritization and decision-making. For example, the NAWG was planning to bring together a range of actors including UNMISS and think tanks at a retreat in June to look at overall needs in the country.

116. One challenge with the use of the severity map to guide SSHF allocations is that it is developed in October and while it might still be relevant for the first SA of the next year, there is a risk that it will be out of date by the time of the second SA. In 2019, OCHA started conducting a Periodic Monitoring Review covering January-March. This reviewed changes in the context, revised the numbers of people in need and updated the map showing inter-sectoral severity of needs, and highlighted the achievements of the response against the HRP. This should improve the needs analysis and data available to the SSHF for the second SA in 2019.

117. In terms of individual projects, implementing partners provided background on their own detailed assessment processes conducted prior to project implementation. The template for project proposals in GMS also requires partners to demonstrate their understanding of the specific context in which projects will be implemented and to provide details of needs assessments that they have undertaken or used to develop the project. A number of project proposals described consultative community processes to identify priority needs. However, at least for the projects visited, few of the beneficiaries were able to recall needs assessments or consultative community processes taking place, or at least they themselves had not been consulted. Women in particular were generally not consulted ahead of time about their situation or priority needs. They stated that project teams typically “only spoke to the village chief”, or reached out to other key figures in the community, more often than not men.

3.4.2. Identifying those most in need, including marginalized groups

118. The GMS project template requires partners seeking SSHF funding to provide a detailed description of target beneficiaries for the project. Direct beneficiaries are disaggregated by men, women, boys and girls; and categorized by status – IDP, host communities, refugees, returnees and other. Within the description of target beneficiaries, project partners are encouraged to list particularly vulnerable groups – including persons with disabilities (PwD), older people, female- or child-headed households, heavily pregnant women, etc. – and describe how the project seeks to identify, consult with, and reach those groups through the lifespan of the project. Sections on gender and protection mainstreaming provide further scope for partners to identify and describe how activities will respond to the specific needs of particularly vulnerable or marginalized groups.

119. In the case of the SSHF projects that the evaluation team visited, there was some evidence of activities reaching particularly vulnerable groups, particularly for those projects with a specific objective to target the most vulnerable e.g.,


[62] OCHA is aware that the severity analysis might hide sector-specific needs in a particular location if indicators for other sectors in that location do not show severe needs.

severely malnourished children. In other cases, however, where services were being provided to the wider community, FGD participants said that the community (rather than humanitarian organizations) generally took responsibility for ensuring access to assistance for particularly vulnerable individuals or groups. For example, beneficiaries of a project to provide community water collection points (boreholes) said that “for people who are too sick or disabled to leave their homes, their neighbours would help them and get the water”.

3.4.3. Taking account of gender, age, disability and mainstreaming protection

120. The SSHF allocation strategy papers emphasize cross-cutting issues, particularly gender, as a priority. For example, the strategy paper for the first SA in 2017 stipulates that, in order to be considered for funding, projects and activities must “Exemplify quality programming (i.e. mainstreaming of gender, protection, AAP, and conflict sensitivity) to the extent feasible in the circumstances.”[64] To promote these cross-cutting issues, the HFU attaches guidance on mainstreaming protection and gender to the allocation strategy document. However, given the very short timeframe for submitting proposals, it was not clear whether partners actually read it.

Good practice: The HFU’s practice of attaching available guidance on cross-cutting issues to each SA strategy paper is a useful first step in promoting cross-cutting issues.

121. The IASC Gender with Age Marker (GAM) is obligatory for all SSHF project proposals within GMS.[65] Partners self-assess their own projects using a set of guiding criteria which then generates an overall code from 0-4. In addition to assigning a code, there is space in the project proposal for partners to justify their chosen marker. The majority of SSHF-funded projects have scored 2a on the IASC Gender Marker, indicating that they are designed to contribute significantly to gender equality.[66] The GMS proposal template also has space for outlining how the project will respond to the needs of persons with disabilities, how protection is mainstreamed within the project approach, and assign an environmental marker setting out the expected environmental impact of the project.

122. Interviewees generally felt that incorporation of the GAM within SSHF was positive, in that it requires partners to actively consider gender- and age-related differences within project design and reporting. Similarly, space within the project template on protection mainstreaming, disability and environmental impact encourages implementing partners to at least go through the thought process of considering how to improve the quality and accessibility of projects. However, many people were skeptical about the extent to which well-written intentions to address gender, age, disability, protection and environmental concerns were being realized in practice. The team heard that descriptions within project proposals of how interventions would respond to specific needs and vulnerabilities within communities were in many cases merely “lip service”, “cut and paste from other proposals” or “a check-box exercise”. Protection mainstreaming tended to focus more on protection risks or challenges and less on mitigation measures in proposals or reporting.

123. Indeed, FGDs at project sites revealed an overall lack of attention to gender, age and disability within project design and implementation. Female beneficiaries frequently said that, while they were generally able to benefit from project assistance, they were often not consulted about their specific needs or challenges. Male beneficiaries were more positive about opportunities to meet with project staff and contribute during the project cycle. Those with particular vulnerabilities due to age, disability or other factors, either had difficulty accessing assistance (e.g. because distributions of aid did not take specific vulnerabilities into account, or people had to travel long distances to access services), or found that no assistance was available to respond to their particular needs (e.g. healthcare services were limited to essential life-saving care only, or livelihood initiatives were targeted at younger, non-disabled individuals). Due to the group nature of discussions with community members, specific protection concerns were generally not discussed and it was therefore difficult to assess the extent to which projects adequately mainstreamed protection.

[65] The GAM replaces the previous IASC Gender Marker and has been in use within GMS since mid-2018. SSHF Annual Reports do not yet incorporate reporting on the new GAM, but will do so from 2019 onwards. Reporting to date, therefore, is based on the previous IASC Gender Marker.
[66] The SSHF Annual Reports indicate that 83 per cent of projects scored 2a in 2018 and 80 per cent in 2016. Information is not available for either 2015 or 2017.
124. An NGO that specializes in assisting PwD outlined some of the challenges with ensuring that humanitarian agencies can mainstream inclusion and addressing disability into their work. One of these is the lack of data on PwD across the board. Another is having appropriate policies and then implementing these, recognizing that creating an enabling work environment for PwD requires a tailored approach. Agencies tend to assume that it is sufficient to provide training on disability and inclusion to their staff but mainstreaming requires additional effort to embed new practices. However, the main challenge is securing funding for putting in place all the necessary measures.

125. Despite the challenges, the SSHF has made efforts to finance projects that assist PwD. Box 1 provides an example of how this has enabled a disabled person to become mobile and self-sufficient.

**Box 1: Changing the life of a person with disabilities**

Due to polio contracted during his childhood, James was unable to attend primary school. Nevertheless, he was supporting his wife and four children by making small-scale handicrafts. An INGO used SSHF funding to provide James with a cash grant to start a small business next to his house. He also received a tricycle to increase his mobility. Previously, James had relied on the help of a community member, but he became self-sufficient and expanded his business.

"With this tricycle, I am now able to bring water from the river and to go to the market to buy some stock for my business on my own. Since I received this support, my income has increased. This year, I have been able to send two of my children to school and they have food to eat every day," James says.

### 3.4.4. Accountability to affected populations (AAP)

126. The GMS project template requires SSHF project partners to describe how beneficiaries will be involved in different stages of the project cycle; what information will be provided to the target population; and what feedback and complaints mechanisms will be integrated into the project design. Again, the reality of project implementation did not match the rhetoric on AAP within project proposals and reports. FGDs at project sites were generally critical of this aspect of SSHF-funded projects, particularly women, as were interviewees from a broad spectrum of different stakeholder groups during the evaluation. A number of project partners had installed complaints/feedback boxes at project sites, but these were not generally known about or used, particularly given low literacy rates within rural communities. Helplines were also common, though with poor network coverage in many remote areas of the country these were frequently inaccessible to beneficiaries. In rare cases where partners had implemented a more personalized and grassroots approach to AAP, for example, through female and male community mobilizers, beneficiaries were more positive about efforts to include them in the project cycle.

**Challenge:** Despite the SSHF promoting cross-cutting issues and AAP in allocation strategy papers and in project proposals, its partners, like the broader humanitarian community, are only mainstreaming cross-cutting issues and ensuring genuine accountability to a limited extent.

### 3.4.5. Challenges preventing effective quality programming

127. Interviews with project partners and other stakeholders revealed a number of underlying challenges that prevent the integration of cross-cutting issues and the implementation of effective AAP approaches within SSHF-funded projects. Firstly, during the review of proposals within SRCs, interviewees indicated that scant attention is paid to the cross-cutting aspects of projects and, therefore, their quality is not a major factor in decision-making processes. Moreover, the short timeframe of projects (often limited to six months), as well as budget constraints, limit the ability of project partners to adequately plan and implement more inclusive and participatory projects that take the full range of
cross-cutting issues into account. With a clear emphasis on delivery of life-saving assistance in a challenging environment such as South Sudan, quality aspects have tended to take a secondary place.

128. Another factor that militates against the mainstreaming of cross-cutting issues and ensuring AAP is a strong focus on cost per beneficiary during the project review process. Some interviewees highlighted the pressure to target as many people as possible for the lowest cost per beneficiary without consideration of the quality of an intervention. In such circumstances, partners are likely to cut the cost of ‘extras’ such as AAP mechanisms. There is a need for recognition that adapting the delivery of assistance to the needs of PwD or the elderly requires more time and effort, which increases costs. Providing specialized services to PwD is also more resource intensive than the simple procurement and delivery of items. Therefore, the SSHF could agree with the AB to use metrics other than cost per beneficiary during the project review process to take more account of qualitative issues for certain projects.

129. Interviews with project partners also revealed a mixed understanding of the range of cross-cutting issues and AAP. Indeed, there is a lack of dedicated training on these aspects of project design. Capacity building from the SSHF TS focused predominantly on fund management processes – eligibility, proposal writing, monitoring and reporting, etc. – rather than quality dimensions, such as gender, age, disability and AAP. The team heard on a number of occasions that these issues were “bigger than the SSHF” and there was a clear sense that it was not the fund’s role to fix broader systemic weaknesses within the overall response. However, given the SSHF’s significance within the broader humanitarian funding landscape in South Sudan, as well as its close alignment with the HRP and the humanitarian coordination structure, there is certainly scope for the fund to be more ambitious in taking a lead to ensure a better-quality response on behalf of affected populations. SSHF donors who would like to see the fund (and the humanitarian community more broadly) do more on cross-cutting issues could consider how best to resource technical capacity strengthening.

3.5. Outputs

130. Earlier sections focused on the selection of projects and partners best placed to deliver assistance. This section moves on to examine the outputs of SSHF-funded projects. Table 9 below summarizes SSHF allocations from 2015-18. This shows that a very large proportion of SSHF funding has been channelled through SAs, particularly in 2018. The SSHF made five RAs in 2015 but it has made less use of them since 2016 (although there was an RA in July 2016 in response to large-scale displacement due to renewed fighting in Western Bahr-el-Ghazal). According to the annual report, the decrease in SSHF contributions in 2016 reduced the HC’s ability to call for reserve allocations in response to new crises. However, the SSHF has also made use of SAs to respond to changing needs. For example, the second SA in August 2016 responded to the re-prioritization of humanitarian activities following a major escalation in the conflict that even spread to Juba.

131. In 2017 and 2018, the fund made only one RA per year (this was for core pipeline funding in December 2017 and, in 2018, this was for Ebola preparedness and response, with the process started in November but continuing into December). Due to the rainy season and the short timeframe for delivering assistance in South Sudan, in both 2017 and 2018, the SSHF made both its SAs in March and June respectively. This led to an AB discussion about the SSHF’s added value and whether it should provide more funding through RAs to increase its flexibility to respond to urgent needs. This is logical since there were a number of large-scale conflict-related displacements in both 2017 and 2018 (see Table 3) but the SSHF did not make RAs specifically to respond to these (unlike in 2015). There was general agreement in the AB that the SSHF should be able to allocate up to 25 per cent of contributions through RAs in order to respond to unforeseen needs, such as large-scale returns following the reduction in conflict.

Table 9: Summary of SSHF allocations from 2015-2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>SA ($ million)</th>
<th>RA ($ million)</th>
<th>SA Allocation (%)</th>
<th>RA Allocation (%)</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Total ($ million)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>83.3</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>92.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>67.9</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>83.5%</td>
<td>16.5%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>81.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>50.8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>82.2%</td>
<td>17.8%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>61.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>51.4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>96.2%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>53.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

132. The SSHF annual reports detail the results and outputs achieved by each cluster. Figure 12 below summarizes the number of people receiving SSHF-funded assistance by cluster. This demonstrates that the health cluster, which has been one of the largest recipients of SSHF funding (particularly in 2018), also had the largest numbers of beneficiaries.

**Figure 12: Number of SSHF beneficiaries by cluster, 2015-2018**

133. Figure 13 below provides an overview of the total number of people that the SSHF assisted from 2015-18. Unlike some other CBPFs, the SSHF ensures that it does not double or triple count beneficiaries receiving assistance from multiple SSHF-funded projects.

[70] Data for the table and two graphs drawn from relevant SSHF annual reports
Figure 13: Total beneficiaries assisted by the SSHF, 2015-2018[^1]

[^1]: The total number of beneficiaries in 2018 is probably higher than in previous years because CBPFs changed their reporting to cover projects that were completed in 2018, regardless of whether they were funded in 2018 or earlier.
4. Outcomes: In what ways do CBPFs contribute to the outcomes of strengthening humanitarian coordination and leadership?

The 2015 Policy Instruction anticipates that CBPFs will contribute to the achievement of three outcomes, i.e., improved response, better coordination and strengthened leadership. This section focuses on the SSHF’s contribution to the latter two outcomes while the next section examines its contribution to improving humanitarian response.

4.1. Better coordination

134. The SSHF has contributed to enhancing coordination and collaboration due to a number of factors that are discussed in further detail below.

4.1.1. Increased collaboration between humanitarian actors

135. As outlined in section 2.4.1, the SSHF has an inclusive AB, which provides an opportunity for a range of stakeholders to engage in SSHF prioritization and allocation processes. In particular, the AB offers NNGOs a ‘seat at the humanitarian table’ and the opportunity to be involved in discussions on the strategic priorities for SSHF allocations. While this is important to address some of the historic power imbalances in the humanitarian system, some interviewees felt that the AB was not necessarily conducive to active NNGO participation. This was partly because representatives were perhaps intimidated since there was only one national representative on an otherwise international AB and donors tended to be quite vocal. It might also be partly because a busy agenda for AB meetings did not necessarily create adequate space for NNGO representatives to make their voices heard. Other members also felt that the need to proceed quickly through a packed agenda limited opportunities for more in-depth discussions of risk management and more strategic issues.

4.1.2. Strengthened coordination mechanisms

136. The SSHF incentivizes participation in clusters and the HRP process because partners must have a project in the HRP to be eligible for SSHF funding and also because the programmatic part of the capacity assessment includes a focus on NGO participation in clusters. Cluster coordinators generally felt that the SSHF strengthened coordination because it provided a way to operationalize cluster objectives, particularly at the beginning of the year, before other funding arrived to help deliver the HRP.

137. The humanitarian operation in South Sudan is highly centralized but the SSHF has the potential to strengthen links between national and sub-national coordination. National cluster coordinators are expected to consult their sub-national counterparts during SSHF prioritization processes though the extent to which this happens varies by cluster, agency and geographical location. Interviewees in Wau suggested that SSHF funding had enabled sub-national clusters to address critical gaps. OCHA has also made an effort to bring its sub-offices into SSHF processes so that they can provide information about critical needs and gaps as well as potential partners.

138. The introduction of a peer review process in the ICWG during the SSHF allocation process has the potential to strengthen collaboration across clusters, since it is an opportunity for cluster coordinators to discuss and agree on the most important priorities for the allocation. However, several cluster coordinators felt that it led to competition for funding rather than collaboration. This was mainly because there was no clear way to assess whether one cluster’s priorities were more urgent and deserving of funding than another’s. There was also some frustration at the lack of a forum or mechanism for developing and reviewing multi-sectoral projects. Nevertheless, the four clusters which were critical to the famine response – FSL, nutrition, health and WASH – established close collaboration since they were prioritized for SSHF funding in 2017. During the first SA in 2019, these clusters shared their geographical priorities in order to encourage partners to work in the same locations. This made it easier for the FSL and nutrition clusters, in particular, to work together.
4.2. Strengthened leadership

4.2.1. HC’s engagement in the SSHF

139. The HC’s leadership of the SSHF is essential for the fund’s performance because he is ultimately responsible for providing strategic direction and for funding decisions. The current HC has supported the SSHF in two ways. The first is through resource mobilization efforts, including in donor capitals. The HC travelled frequently, including to Brussels in May 2019 to follow up on an ECHO mission to South Sudan that examined the possibility of contributing to the SSHF. The second is through advocacy on humanitarian principles and access. Interviewees provided the example of the HC travelling to Akobo in 2018 to advocate with opposition forces against the looting of humanitarian assistance though there were references to other similar missions. This can contribute to improving access at a local level, which can benefit SSHF partners.

140. The HC also felt that the SSHF strengthened the HC’s leadership role tremendously because it enabled him to fill critical gaps in the humanitarian response, ensuring that it was more coherent, and also to support activities that might be unpopular with other donors.

141. A couple of AB members raised a concern about whether the HC’s three roles as HC, Resident Coordinator (RC) and Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General (DSRSG) allowed him sufficient time to focus on managing the fund. They also queried the HC’s accountability for funding decisions. This was in the context of his decision to fund Ebola preparedness and response through an RA in 2018 even though some donors were providing bilateral support. However, there was a general recognition that the AB’s role is only advisory and that decision-making authority rests with the HC.

142. One area where the fund would benefit from leadership and strategic direction by the HC and AB is in developing an overall vision for the fund’s future. During interviews there appeared to be a lack of clarity about the fund’s purpose – was it for emergency response or gap filling or to ensure geographical coverage or to fund as many NGOs as possible? The different views on the fund’s role contributed to the challenges with ensuring strategic allocations at cluster level, as described in section 3.1.2. The lessons-learned exercise following the second SA in 2018 called for a strategy for the SSHF in order to clarify the fund’s mandate, niche and comparative advantage. This was echoed at the evaluation team’s feedback presentation to the AB at the end of the field visit.

4.2.2. Complementarity between the SSHF and other funding modalities

143. This section begins by examining the extent to which the SSHF and CERF funding to South Sudan were complementary before reviewing potential links with the South Sudan Reconciliation, Stabilization, and Resilience Trust Fund (RSRTF), which is also managed by the RC/HC/DSRSG.

144. Table 10 below presents CERF grants to South Sudan together with the amount that the SSHF allocated in each year to highlight the relative levels of funding available to partners. There was no CERF allocation to South Sudan in 2018. In 2019, the CERF allocation appears relatively large compared to the SSHF allocation but this is because the SSHF had only made one SA at the time of the evaluation visit.

145. Table 3 shows the timing of the CERF allocations from its Rapid Response (RR) window alongside the timing of SSHF allocations. Although the CERF grants in June and July 2015 coincided with the SSHF’s second SA that year, the allocation strategy makes no reference to the CERF allocations. Similarly, the CERF application documents for these two grants do not outline how they would complement SSHF funding. The June 2015 document simply notes that the SSHF was not supporting the refugee response (which was the focus on the CERF grant) due to competing priorities and the limited availability of funds. The July 2015 CERF grant application states that, “This CERF allocation is complemented by CHF and other bilateral donor contributions” but provides no further information on this.

146. The CERF grants in 2016 and 2017 came shortly after the SSHF’s first SA in both years. The SSHF allocation strategy documents make no explicit reference to CERF funding. The 2016 CERF grant application for funding to UN-
HCR for the refugee response notes that due to “dwindling” resources, the SSHF first SA had excluded funding for both the refugee response and general food distribution. The 2017 CERF grant application, in response to the food insecurity crisis, notes that the CERF application was developed in parallel to the SSHF SA and this enabled actors to ensure “complementary support to front line activities, emergency supplies, and common services such as logistics”. The application provides one specific example of UNICEF and the education cluster complementing SSHF funding for emergency school feeding through the provision of teaching and learning materials that would enable emergency education services.

147. The SSHF made an RA for Ebola preparedness in December 2018 and the CERF made an RR allocation in January 2019. The CERF application document outlines the activities financed through the SSHF and states that the CERF application was designed to avoid duplicating these (and activities funded through other sources), though without providing any details. The CERF document also notes that a Strategic Advisory Group, with donor representation and facilitated by OCHA, was overseeing funding coordination across the Ebola preparedness effort.

148. The CERF then made a second RR allocation in March 2019 for assistance to IDP returnees, in response to ongoing population movements. The SSHF had launched its first SA for 2019 in December 2018. Of the SSHF’s $34.5 million allocation, around 6 million was for some of the counties targeted by the CERF grant. However, the SSHF was not supporting returnees so there was no risk of duplication.

149. Thus, a review of CERF grant applications and SSHF allocation documents show that, although SSHF allocation strategies did not refer to CERF funding, agencies seeking CERF funding gave some consideration to avoiding duplication with SSHF-funded activities. However, there was no clear indication of positive attempts to ensure complementarity. While the SSHF allocation strategies have not attempted to ensure complementarity with the CERF, they do refer to the CERF’s life-saving criteria, which are attached to each allocation strategy paper. This is one way in which the two funds align.

Table 10: CERF and SSHF Allocations, 2015-19

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>CERF Allocation</th>
<th>SSHF Allocation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>$24.2 million</td>
<td>$92.3 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>$20.8 million</td>
<td>$81.3 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>$15.5 million</td>
<td>$61.8 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>$12.9 million</td>
<td>$53.4 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>$12.9 million</td>
<td>$34.6 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

150. Established in late 2018, the South Sudan Reconciliation, Stabilization, and Resilience Trust Fund (RSRTF) aims to bring together the capacities of development, humanitarian and peacebuilding entities in order to provide strategic financing to integrated programming that lessens the drivers of conflict and helps develop more peaceful and self-reliant communities. The fund has a steering committee comprising UN, donor and civil society representatives and chaired by the DSRSG. The MPTFO is the AA, as it is for the SSHF, and UNDP’s country office is the MA. According to the fund’s terms of reference, the Fund Secretariat, which is hosted by the DSRSG’s office, is responsible for facilitating systematic cooperation with the SSHF. Also, the SSHF fund manager will have observer status on the South Sudan RSRTF’s steering committee in order to ensure strategic cooperation between the two funds and also to strengthen humanitarian-development cooperation more broadly. In interviews, there was a suggestion that the SSHF could focus on the humanitarian caseload in the HRP while the South Sudan RSRTF supported resilience programs that are not included in the HRP. However, at the time of the evaluation team’s field visit the fund appeared to be at an early stage. This meant that it was not possible to assess the extent to which there is potential for the SSHF and the South Sudan RSRTF to complement each other for the benefit of affected populations.

[74] CERF (2016) Application for Grant Funding: South Sudan. Original Chapeau 3 March 2016 16-RR-SSD-19018
[75] CERF (2017) Application for Grant Funding Country Name: South Sudan. Original Chapeau 20 April 2017 17-RR-SSD-25251
[80] South Sudan RSRTF (2018) South Sudan Multi-Partner Trust Fund for Reconciliation, Stabilization, Resilience: Terms of Reference, 1 November 2018
5. Contribution to Improved Response and Operational Impact

This section examines the extent to which the SSHF has contributed to improving humanitarian response (which is the third outcome anticipated in the 2015 Policy Instruction), including by supporting principled humanitarian action. It also assesses how the SSHF has delivered the operational impact statement, i.e., the provision of timely, coordinated, principled assistance to save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain human dignity. The section draws on available evidence to respond to evaluation question 1 on the extent to which the fund has made a difference to people’s lives.

151. This report has already addressed a number of components of the operational impact statement. Section 3.2.1 discussed the timeliness of the SSHF’s allocation and disbursement processes. Section 4.1 examined the fund’s contribution to strengthening coordination while section 3.1.1 outlined how the fund aligns with HRPs, which are designed to provide a coordinated response. Section 3.4.1 touched on the issue of whether projects are based on coordinated needs assessments. Since principled assistance has not been addressed by the evaluation questions examined in earlier sections of the report, this is covered in section 5.2 below.

152. Quality programming that takes account of gender, age, PwD and protection concerns and that is accountable to affected populations is essential for alleviating suffering and maintaining human dignity. Sections 3.4.3 and 3.4.4 examined the extent to which the SHF is supporting these aspects of quality programming.

153. Humanitarian actors do not generally collect outcome and impact data for the often short-term projects that they implement and this is also the case with CBPF partners. A review of SSHF-funded project outcome statements and indicators in the GMS demonstrates that these are output-focused, such as ‘Vulnerable IDPs and host communities are supported with life-saving emergency shelter and non-food items’ and ‘Improved access to community based psycho-social services for 2,000 boys and 2,000 girls through engagement in life skills’. This means that the evaluation has not been able to draw upon systematic evidence about the outcomes and impact of SSHF projects.

154. The SSHF, like all other CBPFs, contributes to the HRP’s strategic objectives. However, unlike HRPs for other crises, such as Somalia and oPt, the South Sudan HRPs do not have indicators and targets to assess the achievement of cluster objectives. Therefore, there is no systematic data on outcomes or impact at the response level either for the evaluation to use.

155. There is also no quantitative data on the number of lives saved or the alleviation of suffering or how humanitarian actors maintained human dignity for the humanitarian response as a whole although it is possible to use available evidence to infer the contribution of humanitarian assistance to these results. Data on how humanitarian assistance has made a difference to people’s lives is qualitative, such as success stories and individual project examples.

156. Given the data limitations outlined above, the next section uses mainly qualitative data to describe how the SSHF has contributed to an improved humanitarian response and made a difference to people’s lives.

5.1. Improving humanitarian response and making a difference to people’s lives

157. This section of the report looks at how the SSHF has sought to address critical humanitarian needs in order to make a difference to people’s lives. It draws on a combination of documents and the team’s visits to SSHF-funded project sites. It examines the SSHF’s response to different types of crises in order to highlight how the fund can add value to the overall humanitarian response in a variety of ways.

158. The evaluation team visited four project sites in Wau and the surrounding areas in Western Bahr-el-Ghazal as well as in the Juba area. With one exception, all of the projects visited were current, enabling the team to gather real-time feedback from project partners and communities on the quality and effectiveness of the response. The team conducted gender-disaggregated FGDs with 120 key informants.

159. Overall, communities really valued the SSHF-funded projects visited. In a context of immense humanitarian need, with continuing violence and displacement, beneficiaries generally felt that the projects addressed their priority needs
and were making a real difference in their lives. Many of the people affected had been in need of assistance for some time. However, they considered the projects to be reasonably timely in terms of the gap between news of project start-up to actual delivery of assistance and services on the ground.

5.1.1. Responding to conflict-related displacement

160. From December 2013, violent conflict has created huge humanitarian needs due to large-scale displacement, a decline in already weak basic services and a worsening economic situation. There are a number of examples of the SSHF responding to spikes in the conflict and unforeseen humanitarian needs through RAs in 2015 (see table 9). As the timeline in Table 3 shows, despite the signing of an agreement to resolve the conflict in August 2015, fighting continued in the second half of 2015. It resumed in areas like Unity State and also erupted in new locations. The SSHF responded with two RAs – one to respond to the influx of displaced populations into PoC sites in September 2015 and one to re-establish and scale-up humanitarian operations in Unity State in October 2015.

161. The conflict has caused widespread displacement so that, at the end of 2018, there were nearly 2 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) and nearly 2.2 million South Sudanese refugees. In 2015, over 100,000 people sought refuge in PoC sites inside UN bases. Conditions in the PoC sites were difficult, with overcrowding and the breakdown of traditional social structures leading to the abuse of women and girls, petty criminality, and communal tensions. In 2015, the SSHF allocated USD 6 million to the CCCM cluster, enabling members to assist over 1 million people. This included improving living conditions and the delivery of services, expanding displacement tracking and monitoring in conflict-affected locations, and providing communities with better information and a stronger voice in the humanitarian response. Box 2 describes how SSHF funding made a difference to the lives of people in Bentiu PoC.

Box 2: Improving the living conditions of IDPs

In August 2014, flooding worsened, particularly affecting Bentiu PoC site where living conditions were already dire. As a result, “People were sleeping in water… Children were put on the beds and the elders did not sleep. They passed the night scooping water from the shelters… children were getting sick,” an IDP woman explained. In early 2015, aid agencies used SSHF funding to implement a site redevelopment project, expanding the camp and upgrading its infrastructure.

They constructed 8,000 robust shelters, with construction teams erecting basic structures and IDPs completing them with materials provided by an aid agency. “We are very happy. The roof is higher, there are more materials and there is more space. It reminds us of our own house,” said the IDP woman.

With SSHF funding, an INGO was running the only hospital in the Juba PoC sites. It provided integrated health care services, including primary and secondary health care, comprehensive reproductive health services and mental health services. The evaluation team visited the hospital and spoke to male and female IDPs who had used the services. While there was general unhappiness and frustration with poor living standards within the PoC site, beneficiaries expressed their appreciation for the hospital. As the only accessible medical facility, it provided a reasonable array of services and access to free medication, however limited. Restricted funding meant that medical staff were few and often over-stretched. However, the addition of community health workers had helped to improve the hospital’s outreach, particularly for persons with disabilities, elderly people and others who were unable to go to the clinic unaided.

5.1.2. Responding to famine and cholera

162. As described in Annex 5, the conflict and related displacement have significantly worsened food insecurity. In February 2017, South Sudan declared a localized famine in Leer and Mayendit counties of Unity state (see Table 3) when 100,000 people faced starvation. Following this, the SSHF made the first SA in March 2017. This prioritized frontline service delivery to locations with the most severe humanitarian needs, including the two famine-affected counties. It also prioritized FSL, nutrition, health and WASH frontline services in the two famine-affected counties as well as Koch, which had a high risk of famine. It could be argued that a coordinated humanitarian response helped to contain the famine though severe food insecurity continued to increase for the fifth consecutive year and a record six million people were severely food insecure in September 2017.

163. In 2017, South Sudan also experienced its longest and most widespread outbreak of cholera since 2011 (which had started in June 2016 and which, unusually, had continued through the dry season). The SSHF second SA, in June 2017, prioritized counties with active cholera transmission. While the allocation also prioritized frontline service delivery during the rainy season, the allocation strategy paper noted that decision-makers would consider requests for increas-
ing core pipeline supplies due to unanticipated needs such as the cholera outbreak. In responding to the localized famine as well as the cholera outbreak, the SSHF provided funding to the key sectors of FSL, nutrition, health and WASH in 2017. Box 3 below illustrates project responses to malnutrition and cholera in Jiech, Ayod county in Jonglei as well as to cholera hotspots around Juba. The team’s visit to the SSHF-funded project to provide a water supply near Juba demonstrates the project’s long-lasting impact on local communities.

**Box 3: SSHF-funded projects to address malnutrition and cholera[^91]**

The photograph on the left shows a health worker screening a child for malnutrition in Jiech, Ayod County, in Jonglei. In response to the cholera outbreak in Jiech, the SSHF also funded IOM’s Rapid Response Health Teams to conduct a mass Oral Cholera Vaccination campaign in the worst affected areas (see photograph on the right). Two rounds of vaccination, in June and July 2017, protected an estimated 9,337 people from the risk of active cholera transmission. IOM also conducted two rounds of vaccination in Bentiu and Rubkona towns with SSHF funding, reaching a further 30,577 people. The vaccination campaigns were conducted in collaboration with a range of partners, including the State Ministry of Health.

An NNGO received SSHF funding in 2017 and 2018 for improving water supply, sanitation and hygiene services in known cholera hotspots around Juba. The evaluation team visited the 2017 project site and spoke to the local community about the project. Beneficiaries described the new borehole within the community as “life changing”. Women in particular, who usually have the responsibility of collecting water, explained how they no longer had to walk two hours every day to the local stream to get water, which was often dirty. There was less sickness within the community since the installation of the borehole, combined with the training that had been delivered by the NNGO on safer practices, such as hand washing with soap and regular rinsing out of jerry cans. While there was not enough water from the borehole for everyone, particularly since people from neighbouring districts had begun using it, beneficiaries were generally in agreement that the project had made a significant positive impact on their lives.

At the time of the evaluation field visit, the NNGO was no longer responsible for upkeep of the borehole or management of other project inputs. However, before closing the project, it worked closely with community members and local authorities to ensure that the facilities were regularly maintained. It had established a water management committee – comprising both men and women – to ensure order at the borehole and to collect a small amount of money from benefitting households to cover maintenance and spare parts. The committee referred major issues with the functioning of the water supply system to the local water management authorities. As a result, the borehole and other inputs continued to function, and members of the community still felt their positive impact.

[^91]: First paragraph based on SSHF (2018) South Sudan Humanitarian Fund Annual Report 2017. Photograph on the left from OCHA and the one on the right from IOM. Rest of Box 2 based on evaluation team’s project visit.
5.1.3. Responding to a lack of basic healthcare services

164. Successive HNOs and HRPs have highlighted the lack of healthcare services in South Sudan. Even before the conflict, it was difficult to access healthcare services with only one doctor for over 60,000 people and one midwife or nurse for 50,000 people.[92] In 2016, due to the conflict, only 43 per cent of health facilities (595) were still functioning, providing very minimal services due to a chronic lack of essential medicines, limited funding and high operational costs.[93] In 2017, only 22 per cent of healthcare facilities were operational.[94] The 2018 HRP also highlighted the ongoing lack of healthcare services due to the destruction of healthcare facilities, attacks on health workers, and the shortage of both skilled professionals and drugs.[95]

165. In 2018, when one primary health centre served an average of 50,000 people, the SSHF allocated the largest proportion of funding (20 per cent/USD 10.5 million) to the health cluster. As a result, 822,000 people had access to outpatient department consultations. Boxes 4 and 5 below highlight how SSHF funding for health services helped to save lives and make a difference.

Box 4: Providing basic healthcare services[96]

In March 2018, the SSHF allocated funding to an NNGO to provide emergency health services to IDPs and host communities in conflict-affected areas of Northern Bahr-el-Ghazal. 12,287 people benefitted from maternal and neonatal healthcare. This included a 20-year old woman displaced by conflict who had returned to her village, which was a four-hour walk from the nearest health centre. Two days after her baby boy was born, he became seriously ill due to the local cultural practice of applying mud to the umbilical cord. A mobile health team provided treatment and saved the baby’s life. The woman said, “If it was not with your help, I would have lost my baby. I have witnessed similar cases, which resulted in death. Now I know it is bad to put mud on the umbilical cords of newborn babies. We do all these local things because no one showed us the right way to do it.”

Women participants in an FGD in Gytan, Western Bahr-el-Ghazal, described how difficult it had been for them to access healthcare services when there was active fighting in the area. “We had no health services; we lost a lot of children. The only services were in Wau [approximately 58kms from Gytan by road, further using paths through the bush]. We couldn’t use the road or paths because of fighting. Those who did try often died along the way. For those who made it they had to plan for a one-month trip there and back... To reach Wau for health services, you had to decide what to do with your children. If you left them behind, there was no one to find food and water for them and they might not be there when you return.” When an SSHF-funded INGO opened an emergency health and nutrition centre in Gytan, the women were amazed. “The first time we came, we couldn’t believe our eyes, we’ve never had anything like that here before. It is very much needed.” The women are able to have tests for diseases like malaria and respiratory problems and to get medicines, although they noted that there were sometimes shortages of some drugs, for example for chronic conditions.

[93] OCHA (2016a) 2017 South Sudan Humanitarian Needs Overview
[95] OCHA (2017) 2018 South Sudan Humanitarian Response Plan
Box 5: Making a difference to people's lives – an individual story[97]

During the FGD in Gytan, one woman highlighted how the health centre had made a difference to her life.

I have seven children, the eldest of which is 20 years old and the youngest is 10. I also have many grandchildren. I am the Deputy Chief of the village, which is very unusual, women are not normally allowed in such positions. Life was very difficult for me and my community before. It is different now because of the health centre. I came for treatment and it helped me get over my sickness. My children and grandchildren come too; the grandchildren come for nutritional screening. Children in my extended family are benefitting from the nutritional program and I can see what a big difference it makes.

5.2. Contributing to providing principled assistance

166. The provision of 'timely, coordinated and principled assistance' lies at the heart of the CBPF impact statement, and while the evaluation can draw on tangible evidence to determine issues of timeliness and coordination, an examination of principled assistance is more complex. While it is impossible to judge the SSHF in isolation when assessing a principle like independence, because it is inextricably linked, through the HRP and external perceptions, to the wider humanitarian community, it is possible to make some specific judgments based on primary evidence collected during the team’s field visit as well as secondary evidence (see Table 11).

[97] Source: Evaluation team project visit.
### Table 11: The provision of principled humanitarian assistance by the SSHF[^98]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle</th>
<th>Finding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Humanity</strong></td>
<td>Human suffering must be addressed wherever it is found. The purpose of humanitarian action is to protect life and health and ensure respect for human beings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Section 3 outlined how the SSHF contributed to the life-saving SO in the HRP and made some effort to identify and meet the needs of marginalized groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Impartiality</strong></td>
<td>Humanitarian action must be carried out on the basis of need alone, giving priority to the most urgent cases of distress and making no distinctions on the basis of nationality, race, gender, religious belief, class or political opinions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The evidence presented in sections 3.1 and 3.4 of this report suggests that SSHF prioritization and allocation processes have targeted those in greatest need. However, the humanitarian community as a whole faced a number of challenges with impartiality during the evaluation period. These included: (i) open conflict that restricted access to areas of humanitarian need (e.g., to Central Unity from March to June 2018), (ii) security threats against aid workers, forcing them to relocate or suspend operations (see Table 3), (iii) attempts by both the government and opposition forces to influence where aid agencies operate, (iv) looting and asset seizures by both government and opposition forces, and (v) attempts to divert food aid.[^99] Despite some attempts, e.g., to develop ‘red lines’, the international humanitarian community had failed to take “sustained, decisive collective action” to defend humanitarian principles.[^100] This makes it harder for SSHF partners to take a more principled approach because different actors take different stances, e.g., on suspending operations in the case of an attack on aid workers or a specific project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Independence</strong></td>
<td>Humanitarian action must be autonomous from the political, economic, military or other objectives that any actor may hold with regard to areas where humanitarian action is being implemented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In South Sudan, the main challenge to the independence of aid agencies has come from operational interference by local authorities. This includes wanting to be involved in the recruitment of aid agency staff and threatening agencies if a favoured candidate is not selected. In 2018, OCHA recorded 25 such incidents.[^101] OCHA has a staff member shared with the NGO Forum to address bureaucratic impediments, including operational interference. This staff member has also worked with the Ministry of Labor to provide training on humanitarian principles and develop recruitment guidelines aimed at reducing operational interference.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[^98]: The glossary of this report provides an overview of the humanitarian principles. The definitions used in the table are available at https://relief-web.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/oom-humanitarianprinciples-eng-june12.pdf.

[^99]: USIP and ODI (2018) The Unintended Consequences of Humanitarian Aid in South Sudan: Headline findings, United State Institute of Peace and Overseas Development Institute

[^100]: USIP and ODI (2018) The Unintended Consequences of Humanitarian Aid in South Sudan: Headline findings, United State Institute of Peace and Overseas Development Institute, pg. 9.

Humanitarian actors must not take sides in hostilities or engage in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature

A study has argued that international humanitarian assistance disproportionately benefits the government in Juba, both financially (by propping up the economy in Juba) and politically (enabling the government to derive legitimacy from its engagement with the humanitarian community). There have also been concerns that humanitarian assistance to PoC sites has inadvertently supported the government’s strategy of ethnic cleansing. Similarly, in other instances, humanitarian aid has been manipulated into supporting population movements that support government strategies. The title of the study makes it clear that these have been the unintended consequences of international humanitarian assistance rather than any deliberate violation of the principle of neutrality.

Like other CBPFs, the SSHF promotes collective, consensus-based decision-making – cluster coordinators, the ICWG and the AB (chaired by the HC) are the key decision-makers allocating SSHF funding. Therefore, ensuring the neutrality of SSHF funding is a collective responsibility. Section 3 also provides evidence that SSHF funding decisions are based on needs and there was no evidence of a deliberate bias of any kind.

167. Table 11 above has outlined ways in which the SSHF, and OCHA more broadly, are supporting aid agencies to adhere to humanitarian principles. Interviewees highlighted three ways in which the SSHF and the wider humanitarian community could strengthen principled responses. The first is in developing a common position on how to respond to an attack or looting incident. The dilemma for humanitarian agencies is that suspending operations conflicts with the principle of humanity because it unfairly punishes the affected community. As a result, it is difficult to sustain decisions to suspend humanitarian assistance due to a serious incident. However, the Access Working Group in Juba does attempt to come up with community-wide responses to the issues that it analyzes on a monthly basis. The second is in obtaining systematic reporting on access incidents of all kinds from SSHF partners so that OCHA can produce better evidence for principled decision-making and action. The third is SSHF training. This has focused on administrative and financial procedures rather than issues such as operationalizing the humanitarian principles.

[102] USIP and ODI (2018) The Unintended Consequences of Humanitarian Aid in South Sudan: Headline findings, United State Institute of Peace and Overseas Development Institute
6. Conclusions and Recommendations

168. The findings presented in previous sections point to the SSHF as a well-managed fund that is able to deliver timely and coordinated humanitarian assistance that contributes to saving lives. Section 3.2.1 highlighted that the fund has improved the timeliness of SAs and also that NGOs were satisfied with the timeliness of disbursements (which is less of an issue for UN agencies). Section 5.1 described how SSHF allocations have responded to spikes in the conflict and changing needs in a timely way, contributing to saving lives and making a difference to affected communities. In a context of widespread humanitarian need, participants in FGDs felt that SSHF-funded projects addressed their priorities.

169. Although the SSHF has made efforts to ensure a timely response, it has struggled with the timing of donor contributions. There is no pattern to this and, in 2018, most of the contributions arrived in the last quarter. The volume of funding is also unpredictable and the HFU has argued that the sharp reduction in funding in 2016 made it difficult for the HC to make RAs in response to new and unforeseen needs. This makes multi-year contributions, such as the one by DFID, extremely valuable for planning purposes.

170. During the evaluation period, the SSHF has been able to respond to rapidly changing needs in a volatile conflict context. Since mid-2018, however, the conflict appears to be stabilizing and, with greater access, humanitarian agencies are confronted with chronic needs. Against the background of a changing context, many questioned whether it was still relevant for the SSHF to fund short-term projects with relatively small budgets. From the perspective of cluster coordinators, this was a justifiable way to stretch limited funding. However, there is a risk that the approach becomes one of dividing up funding across a large number of partners and that projects deliver less impact for affected communities. In addition, funding projects in sectoral siloes is not only administratively burdensome but also risks not delivering relevant and appropriate assistance to affected communities that do not experience needs in siloes. The HRP has made multi-sectoral assistance part of the strategic objective of saving lives and the SSHF overcame challenges to fund multi-sector projects through the second SA in 2019.

171. The SSHF is closely aligned with the HRP and the requirement for partners to have projects in the HRP to be eligible for funding provides an incentive for them to participate in the HRP development process. It has also helped to strengthen cluster coordination and the ICWG plays a critical role in determining priorities and funding envelopes for SSHF SAs. However, ensuring that the peer review process in the ICWG is collaborative rather than competitive remains an ongoing challenge.

172. While it is difficult to assess the full extent to which the SSHF has contributed to ensuring that humanitarian assistance in South Sudan is principled, section 5.2 outlined how the SSHF has supported the principles of humanity, impartiality and independence. Maintaining neutrality in a context where the parties to the conflict seek to manipulate aid has been challenging for all humanitarian actors. It is positive that the HC has advocated for humanitarian principles with local authorities, which also benefits SSHF partners.

173. The SSHF allocation strategy papers consistently emphasize quality programming through the mainstreaming of cross-cutting issues and AAP, which are important for maintaining human dignity. There was some evidence that projects reached particular vulnerable groups, including PwD, but FGD participants described how communities, rather than aid agencies, tended to take responsibility for ensuring that vulnerable individuals or households had access to assistance. While it is positive that allocation strategies and the GMS proposal format focus on cross-cutting issues, this was not generally translated into project design and implementation. There were a number of reasons for this, including the fact that cross-cutting issues are not a major consideration in decision-making processes, which tend to focus on more easily assessed technical issues and cost per beneficiary instead. Short timeframes and limited budgets for project implementation also make it more challenging to deliver quality programming.

174. The division of NGO risk management responsibilities between OCHA and UNDP made it difficult for either entity to have a complete overview and was also inefficient because it required the use of two financial systems. It is helpful that this will be addressed with the transfer of responsibility from UNDP to OCHA. The consolidation of responsibilities within the HFU also offers the opportunity to strengthen financial risk management mechanisms since AB members expressed concerns about their robustness and ability to identify losses and fraud systematically.

175. It is encouraging that the SSHF has been able to increase funding to NNGOs significantly as the partners best
placed to have access and to work with communities. Localization goes well beyond the provision of funding so it is helpful that NNGOs are members of the AB and SRCs that review and select projects for funding, though there were some concerns about whether NNGOs were being heard adequately, due to AB composition and the way that meetings were run.

176. In a context that is changing from a dynamic conflict to one of chronic needs resulting from the breakdown of basic services, agriculture and the economy, there was a lack of clarity about the SSHF’s purpose and added value. This potentially made it more difficult for cluster coordinators to prioritize allocations because there were different views about how it should be used. As a result, a number of stakeholders expressed a desire for a clearer strategic vision for the fund.

177. In conclusion, the findings of the case study suggest that, to a large extent, the SSHF has been able to deliver ‘operational impact’ through timely and coordinated assistance to save lives, alleviate suffering and make a difference to people’s lives. This section has outlined the evaluation’s main conclusions about the SSHF’s operation. The next section lists targeted recommendations that could help to strengthen further how the fund works.

6.1. Recommendations for the SSHF

178. Based on the findings of the evaluation and the conclusions in the section above, the table below lists a small number of recommendations to help strengthen the functioning of the SSHF.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Responsible/ Priority</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| 1  | **Recommendation**: The HC and AB should review the SSHF’s objectives and niche in the context of the humanitarian response in South Sudan. They should then develop a vision for the fund’s future role to ensure that it remains relevant to the context and continues to add value to the overall response. This should include a focus on:  
1. What efforts are required to support localization  
2. How best to support the cross-cutting issues outlined in recommendation 4. This could include exploring options for more technical support in the SSHF or within clusters  
3. How to strengthen the sustainability of SSHF-funded projects, given the protracted nature of the crisis  
4. Examining ways to strengthen complementarity between the SSHF and the CERF. | HC, AB |
| 2  | **Explanation**: During interviews and at the feedback presentation at the end of the evaluation team’s visit, there appeared to be a lack of clarity around the fund’s purpose and a desire for a strategic vision to guide the fund. | |
| 3  | **Recommendation**: OCHA and the Humanitarian Financing Unit (HFU) should ensure that the actions agreed upon at global level on financial rules, risk management and assurance actions at the Managing Agent Transition Workshop in August 2019 are implemented in a timely way. This will include working with UNDP on the migration of data. | HFU, OCHA |
| 4  | **Explanation**: In view of the risk management concerns that the evaluation has highlighted, it will be important for OCHA and the HFU to ensure that they have adequate resources in place to manage the transfer of NGO grant management responsibilities from UNDP to OCHA in January 2020. | |
| 5  | **Recommendation**: The SSHF should strengthen support for principled humanitarian action as follows:  
1. HFU and OCHA should work with SSHF partners to ensure systematic reporting on access incidents.  
2. SSHF donors should ensure adequate resources for training to partners on operationalizing the humanitarian principles. This could be delivered through the NGO Forum. | OCHA, HFU, donors, NGO Forum |
| 6  | **Explanation**: While there is some evidence of ways in which the SSHF has contributed to a principled humanitarian response in South Sudan, it could be more proactive on this issue. | |
**Recommendation:** The SSHF should work with cluster coordinators, partners and the NGO Forum to identify practical ways to enable partners to deliver quality programs by mainstreaming gender and protection, addressing the needs of vulnerable groups such as Persons with Disabilities (PwD) and the elderly, and putting in place effective AAP mechanisms.

**Explanation:** Despite the SSHF's attempts to promote quality programming, there is a range of practical barriers such as a lack of knowledge about how to mainstream cross-cutting issues, and short program timeframes and small grants that make it difficult to deliver quality programs.

### 6.2. Issues for consideration and further analysis in the Synthesis Report

179. This case study identified the following issues that have broader implications for CBPFs and will be addressed in detail in the Global Synthesis Report.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Issue</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>Options for CBPFs to share learning on common challenges such as integrated programming and risk management:</strong> As the four CBPFs where UNDP is the MA transition to OCHA taking on the full range of NGO grant management responsibilities, it will be helpful for them to learn from other CBPFs about best practices in risk management. It would also be helpful for CBPFs that have not been financing integrated programming to learn from funds with experience in overcoming the challenges.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>The role of CBPFs in leading on quality programming:</strong> Delivering quality programming is a challenge across humanitarian contexts and different types of humanitarian agencies. CBPFs have an important role to play in influencing and improving the humanitarian system though they contribute a relatively small percentage of overall funding to each crisis. The synthesis report will examine what role CBPFs can and should play in pushing the agenda on quality programming.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td><strong>Implications of using CBPFs to help donors meet their Grand Bargain commitment to fund local and national responders 'as directly as possible':</strong> While CBPFs are attractive to donors because they can channel funding directly to NNGOs, there are implications for the humanitarian system and sustainability of local actors if CBPFs remain the main mechanism for donors to meet their Grand Bargain commitment. As this case study has highlighted, NNGOs have to rely on CBPFs for continued funding because they are unable to secure other sources of funding.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><strong>Prioritizing allocations effectively when the funding available can never match the scale of humanitarian needs:</strong> Cluster coordinators struggling to meet large-scale needs with limited funding have resorted to using short project timeframes and minimum grants to make funding go further. While there is no ‘miracle solution’ to prioritizing effectively to avoid a competition for scarce resources, it will be helpful to look across CBPF contexts to identify potential good practice.</td>
</tr>
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Annex 1: Evaluation purpose and scope

This annex outlines the purpose, objectives and scope of the evaluation, and summarizes the tools that were used and participation of key informants. It should be read in conjunction with the inception report, which provides a more detailed explanation of the evaluation team’s approach.

180. OCHA has commissioned this evaluation of the 18 CBPFs that it managed between 2015 and 2018 [103] in partnership with six CBPF donors. [104] It is committed to evaluating the CBPFs every three years and this is the first evaluation since they were standardized globally in a 2015 Policy Instruction and Operational Handbook [105]. Interviews during the inception phase highlighted that the evaluation provides an opportunity to take stock of standardization processes and consider how the CBPFs should now move forward, particularly in a fast changing humanitarian landscape.

Evaluation purpose and intended users

181. The evaluation has two main purposes – to improve accountability and learning, and examines the results of the humanitarian action supported by CBPFs with the purpose of drawing lessons on what has worked well. It also identifies challenges to the effective functioning in order to provide recommendations on how to continue to strengthen the CBPF as a funding mechanism in support of timely, coordinated and principled humanitarian response for affected people. It is anticipated that the evaluation will contribute to greater transparency and accountability for all stakeholders involved. [106]

182. At a global level, the intended users are the Emergency Relief Coordinator and OCHA, UNDP and MPTFO, the Pooled Fund Working Group, the CBPF-NGO dialogue platform, UN and NGO partner organizations, and the OCHA Donor Support Group. At a country-level, the stakeholders have been identified as Humanitarian Coordinators, Humanitarian Country Teams, Advisory Boards, OCHA offices including the Humanitarian Financing Unit, UNDP offices where they act as Managing Agent, representatives from the affected population, NGOs, including local NGOs, UN agencies and donor representatives.

Thematic scope

183. The evaluation assesses how CBPFs have performed against their strategic objectives and principles, as per the 2015 OCHA CBPF Policy Instruction. As required by the ToR, the evaluation also examines how CBPFs have performed against their three expected outcomes which include response, leadership, coordination and resource mobilization, and the five principles of inclusiveness, flexibility, timeliness, efficiency, and accountability and risk management in order to deliver the overall operational impact of CBPFs, which is the provision of timely, coordinated, principled assistance to save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain human dignity.

[103] During the evaluation period, CBPFs were operational in the following countries: Afghanistan, Central African Republic, Colombia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Nigeria, Myanmar, Pakistan, occupied Palestinian territory, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Turkey and Yemen. The Colombia fund closed at the end of 2018. The Haiti fund closed in 2015 and is not part of this evaluation. CBPFs are managed by OCHA. Some funds are administered by UNDP’s Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office as “Administrative Agent” and for some funds, UNDP country offices act as “Managing Agent”, i.e., they transfer money to NGOs.

[104] The evaluation is jointly funded by Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, the UK and the US.


Evaluation approach and tools

184. The inception report for this evaluation describes the approach and tools in detail and should be read in conjunction with this case study report. A summary is provided below.

Analytical framework

185. Given the primary focus of this evaluation on practical solutions rather than theory, it uses an analytical framework (see Figure below) that articulates the critical building blocks and enablers of success for CBPFs to deliver their intended impact.

Figure: Analytical framework for the evaluation

186. The framework presents a number of different factors for CBPFs that will combine at country-level to contribute to the delivery of timely, coordinated and principled humanitarian response for affected people.
Evaluation matrix

187. The evaluation examines the performance of CBPFs under four evaluation questions. Cutting across these are gender, AAP, humanitarian reforms and five CBPF principles.

- EQ1: Impact - To what extent do CBPFs make a difference in the lives of affected people by addressing the differentiated needs of vulnerable groups?
- EQ2: Outcomes - In what ways do CBPFs contribute to strengthening the outcomes of humanitarian response, leadership and coordination and to what extent are CBPFs likely to remain relevant for future humanitarian contexts?
- EQ3: Activities and outputs - To what extent are CBPFs supporting partners to meet the most urgent humanitarian needs in a way that is timely and is consistent with Grand Bargain priorities?
- EQ4: Inputs - Is the management of CBPFs fit for purpose and do they operate efficiently?

188. Annex 2 presents the evaluation matrix, which provides the structure for this report. It includes the four evaluation questions and 13 sub-questions, indicators, methods and tools for data collection and analysis.

Data collection methods and sources

189. The team uses a mixed-methods approach for data collection and analysis. While much of the data collected was qualitative, it also gathered quantitative data in the form of (i) financial and funding data, (ii) project-related data on age and gender, and (iii) metrics related to fund disbursement.

190. The main methods for data collection and analysis for the case study include the following:

- Document and literature review (see annex 3 for a bibliography);
- Financial and project-related data analysis;
- Semi-structured key informant interviews (see annex 2 for a list of interview participants);
- Gender-disaggregated community engagement.

191. A summary of the utilization of these methods is given in the table below.

### Table: Summary of data collection methods and sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tools and methods</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Document and literature review</td>
<td>33 documents cited in this case study report, drawing from a repository of around 200 documents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key informant interviews</td>
<td>120 key informants in Juba and Western Bahr-el-Ghazal. 39% female and 61% male.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community engagement</td>
<td>151 community members from 4 SSHF-funded projects in Western Bahr-el-Ghazal and Juba (53% male and 47% female)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
192. The box below details the approach to the country visit.

**Box: Country visit process**

Preparation for the country included carrying out a light preliminary **desk review**, which focused on gathering evidence against the evaluation matrix to be explored in greater depth in-country. The team agreed an itinerary which included meetings with key stakeholders, field visits and community engagement prior to their arrival in country. The visit commenced with a brief **kick-off meeting** in country with evaluation stakeholders to orientate the team to the national context, provide background on the evaluation approach, methods and tools, and to enable an initial exploration of key issues.

A series of **semi-structured interviews** with key in-country informants both at national and field level were undertaken, together with visits to project sites and **focus group discussions** with affected populations. Towards the end of the visit, a **feedback workshop** was held with the Advisory Board (AB) and the Humanitarian Funding Unit (HFU), to present and discuss preliminary findings, to fill gaps in evidence, to check the validity of the findings, and to foster ownership.

Following the visit, the team produced a short **interim update**. A detailed data analysis was then undertaken which informed the preparation of this **country report**. The five reports will feed into a broader analysis for the **evaluation synthesis report**.

**Gender and equity**

193. The team applied a gender sensitive approach and sought to examine the extent to which the CBPF addresses issues of equity. Evaluation questions specifically refer to gender, inclusion and vulnerability and through the review of literature, key informant interviews, and the team's direct engagement with communities, the evaluation has sought to analyse and assess the extent to which the differential needs, priorities and voices of affected people have been considered in the design, selection, implementation and monitoring of CBPF-funded projects. The team has been able to draw on the CBPFs’ use of the IASC Gender Marker (and, as of 2019, the Gender with Age Marker).

**Approach to confidentiality**

194. The team’s stakeholder analysis highlighted the potential for some issues to be sensitive. In order to mitigate participants’ concerns and to maximize the opportunities to elicit relevant information, the team undertook interviews based on an agreement that it would not attribute details to a specific person or agency. It also adopted this approach for community FGDs. The team filed notes from the interviews and discussions digitally in secure online storage.

**Limitations**

195. The inception report identified a number of limitations linked to the quantity and quality of the evidence. For the team, inconsistencies between data reported in the annual reports and the information contained in GMS posed a particular challenge during data analysis and synthesis. In case of any conflicts between data from annual reports and the GMS, this report has used data from annual reports.

196. This report is the product of a two-week field visit that included visits to four project sites. There are limitations to what can be achieved in a relatively short period of time, particularly in terms of collecting feedback from communities and project beneficiaries.
# Annex 2: Evaluation matrix

Presented below is the evaluation framework, consisting of evaluation questions, sub-questions, indicators, data sources and analytical methods.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation Questions/Sub-questions</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>IMPACT</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</table>
| EQ1: To what extent do CBPFs make a difference in the lives of affected people by addressing the differentiated needs of vulnerable groups? | • Evidence that CBPF-funded projects have contributed to saving lives  
• Evidence that CBPF-funded projects have contributed to alleviating suffering and maintaining human dignity regardless of gender, age, disability, ethnicity or other factors.  
• Evidence that the selection and implementation of CBPF-funded projects adhere to the humanitarian principles  
• Evidence of the timeliness of proposal review and disbursement  
• Evidence of the timeliness of project implementation (in relation to the starting point of the crisis) |
| 1.1 To what extent do CBPFs contribute to the provision of timely and principled assistance to save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain human dignity? |            |
| EQ2: In what ways do CBPFs contribute to strengthening the outcomes of humanitarian response, leadership and coordination and to what extent are CBPFs likely to remain relevant for future humanitarian contexts? |            |
| 2.1 Improved response: To what extent are CBPFs able to meet newly emerging needs in a timely and flexible manner and to identify and adapt to future changes? | • Evidence of mechanisms for identifying newly emerging needs in ongoing crises and in new contexts  
• Evidence of the timeliness of proposal review and disbursement in response to new emergencies  
• Evidence of the flexibility of CBPFs to adapt to changes in context  
• Evidence of CBPF ability to adopt new technology and innovate  
• Evidence of CBPF management capacity to scan the horizon and of flexibility to adapt to changes  
• Evidence of the extent to which CBPFs have enabled donors to improve the flexibility and reach of unearmarked humanitarian funding |
| 2.2 Better coordination: How do CBPFs contribute to a coordinated humanitarian response? | • Evidence of the contribution made by CBPFs to increasing collaboration between humanitarian actors (local, national, international) and coordination within the humanitarian system (clusters)  
• Evidence that HCs and CBPF Advisory Boards ensure that CBPF-funded projects are coordinated with the broader humanitarian response when making funding decisions and are implemented in line with the HPC  
• Evidence that donors take account of CBPF funding when making funding decisions |
| 2.3 Strengthened leadership: To what extent do CBPFs strengthen the leadership of the HC? | • Evidence of ways in which CBPFs strengthen the leadership and coordination function of HCs  
• Evidence of strategic decision-making processes  
• Evidence that the HC adheres to the Operational Handbook for the CBPFs. |
| 2.4 To what extent do OCHA and HCs use CBPFs strategically? | • Evidence that HCs take account of other mechanisms and sources of funding (including bilateral funding) during CBPF allocations  
• Evidence that HC decisions are based on the comparative advantage of CBPFs and other funding mechanisms  
• Evidence that CBPFs are meeting urgent, prioritized needs  
• Evidence that OCHA has an organization-wide approach to humanitarian financing? |
| **OUTCOMES**                       |            |
| EQ3: To what extent are CBPFs supporting partners to meet the most urgent humanitarian needs in a way that is timely and is consistent with HRP priorities and cross-cutting issues? |            |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>EQ1: To what extent do CBPFs make a difference in the lives of affected people by addressing the differentiated needs of vulnerable groups?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>
| 1.1 To what extent do CBPFs contribute to the provision of timely and principled assistance to save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain human dignity? | • Evidence that CBPF-funded projects have contributed to saving lives  
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• Evidence of the timeliness of proposal review and disbursement  
• Evidence of the timeliness of project implementation (in relation to the starting point of the crisis) |
| EQ2: In what ways do CBPFs contribute to strengthening the outcomes of humanitarian response, leadership and coordination and to what extent are CBPFs likely to remain relevant for future humanitarian contexts? |               |
| 2.1 Improved response: To what extent are CBPFs able to meet newly emerging needs in a timely and flexible manner and to identify and adapt to future changes? | • Evidence of mechanisms for identifying newly emerging needs in ongoing crises and in new contexts  
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• Evidence that the HC adheres to the Operational Handbook for the CBPFs. |
| 2.4 To what extent do OCHA and HCs use CBPFs strategically? | • Evidence that HCs take account of other mechanisms and sources of funding (including bilateral funding) during CBPF allocations  
• Evidence that HC decisions are based on the comparative advantage of CBPFs and other funding mechanisms  
• Evidence that CBPFs are meeting urgent, prioritized needs  
• Evidence that OCHA has an organization-wide approach to humanitarian financing? |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EQ4: Is the management of CBPFs fit for purpose and do they operate efficiently?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.1 To what extent do CBPFs support overall resource mobilization for HRPs?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Evidence of HC/HCT efforts to raise funds for CBPFs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Level of CBPF funding to HRP projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Evidence on whether CBPFs are able to mobilize multi-year contributions from donors against multi-year HRPs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Are CBPFs managing risks appropriately, and is there sufficient oversight and accountability, including monitoring and reporting systems?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Evidence that CBPFs have risk management systems in place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Evidence that CBPF accountability and oversight mechanisms operate effectively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Evidence that CBPF managers are adequately resourced to ensure oversight and accountability, including monitoring and fraud case management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Evidence that CBPF reporting systems strike a balance between accountability and minimizing transaction costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3 Has the global standardization of CBPFs (as per the Policy Instruction, Operational Handbook and Common Performance Framework) increased efficiency?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Evidence of added value of harmonization resulting from the global standardization of CBPFs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Evidence of the added value of the GMS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Evidence of the functionality and transparency of Umoja</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Evidence that global standardization has reduced management costs of CBPFs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Evidence that global standardization has reduced transaction costs for fund recipients over the evaluation timeframe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Evidence that harmonization of CBPFs is balanced with flexibility to adapt to local contexts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4 Is there sufficient capacity in the humanitarian system to manage CBPF processes and deliver CBPF projects?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Evidence that capacity at a global level is adequate to lead, manage and retain oversight of the CBPFs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Evidence that the capacity of the HC, the Advisory Board, OCHA (the HFU) at a country-level is adequate to fulfill their governance, management and technical advisory roles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Evidence that the clusters are able to meet their strategic and technical review responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Evidence that the quantity and quality of humanitarian partners is sufficient to deliver high quality CBPF projects</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Annex 3: Interview participants

Persons consulted during the South Sudan case study visit are listed below. The team interviewed a total of 120 persons, 39 per cent of whom were women.

Alain Noudehou, Humanitarian Coordinator, South Sudan
Alexandra Hilal Guhr, Head of Development Cooperation, Deputy Head of Mission
Alexandros Yiannopoulos, Humanitarian Advisor, DFID
Alfred Khamis, Executive Director, COER
Alistair Short, FSL Cluster Coordinator, WFP/FAO
Amaniyo Gloria, Executive Director, Community Initiatives for Peace and Development
Andrea Cullinan, GBV Sub-Cluster Coordinator, UNFPA
Andrea Noyes, Deputy Head of Office, OCHA
Andrea Suley, Deputy Representative, UNICEF
Angelo Kwoe, Hope Vision Organization
Asar ul Haq, Shelter/NFI Programme Manager, IOM
Atimakia Christine Madra, Project Manager, AWHO
Atio Mazindo Cosmas, Field Finance Officer, COER
Ayaka Amano, Programme Officer, UN Mine Action Service
Babette Schots, Protection Coordinator, Danish Refugee Council
Both Gatkwoth, Executive Director, HACO
Bufrus Afaneisio Mustafa, MSE Assistance, COER
Cornelius Weira, Shelter/NFI Cluster Coordinator, IOM
Cristina Mena, WASH Cluster Co-coordinator, NRC
David Throp, South Sudan Humanitarian Fund Manager
Denis Ogwal, Assistant Health Officer, IHO
Denis Okello, Project Development Coordinator, Real Medicine Foundation
Dina Aburmishan, Nutritionist, WFP
Dionne Gutierrez, Senior Resource Management Officer, IOM
Dr. Argata Guracha Guyo, Emergency Coordinator, WHO
Dr. Jeff Okello, Chief Executive, THESO
Dr. Kamil Kamaluddeen, Resident Representative, UNDP
Dr. Stephen Duk, Head of Programs, UNIDO
Dr. C. B. Uday Raj Naidu, Health Cluster Co-lead, Save the Children

Dr. David Chany Adok, Public Health Officer, WHO
Duop Joseph, Nutrition sub-national roving co-coordinator, Action Against Hunger
Edwin Marita, Senior Program Coordinator, CMD
Ekwse Msoni, Humanitarian Affairs Officer, OCHA
Elina Summer-Galou, IsraID
Elizabeth Mayer, Shelter/NFI Cluster Co-coordinator, WVI
Elizabeth Otieno, Assistant Director, CINA
Emmi Antinoja, Information Management, OCHA
Evelyn Winkler, Humanitarian Affairs Officer, OCHA
Fabiana Lubetkin, UNHAS
Francesca Cazzato, Child Protection Sub-Cluster Coordinator, UNICEF
Francois Bellet, WASH Cluster Coordinator, UNICEF
Geoff Andrews, Country Director, Medair
Geoffrey Ojok, Program Director, Real Medicine Foundation
Getahun Amogne, External Relations Officer, WFP
Gifl Sibanada, World Vision South Sudan
Gordon Lam, Executive Director, Dialogue and Research Initiative, NGO Forum
Guillain Lwesso Mununga, International Medical Corps UK
Hanna Carlsson, First Secretary, Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Affairs, Embassy of Sweden
Heather Blackwell, Head of Office, ECHO
Heidi Dessecker, Programme Officer, World Relief International
Hellen Turkia Joseph, Director, LWDO
Henry Taban, Executive Director, Rural Action Against Hunger/Chairman, NGO Forum
Hermann Ouedraogo, Nutrition Cluster Coordinator, UNICEF
Isaac Macha, IM Officer, WFP
Ismail Bashir, Hope Vision Organization
Jakani Driuni, Executive Director, LCED
James Avery, Operations Coordinator, Humanity & Inclusion
James Buolle Dimo, MSE, COER
James Haranja, Head of Wau Sub-Office, UNHCR
James K. Kamau, Finance Consultant, Rhoem Consulting Ltd
James Mat Gay, Programme Director, Nile Hope
Jasper Okodi, Education Specialist, NRC
Jennifer Shortt-Banda, Resource Mobilization Manager, UNICEF
Jessica Cochran, Logistics Cluster Coordinator, WFP
Jimmy Joseph Jamba, Programme Manager, NSDO
John Macharia, Country WASH Coordinator, Oxfam
John Ndiku, Humanitarian Affairs Officer, OCHA
John Rutaro, Grants Manager, NRC
Joseph Mogga, Education and Child Protection Specialist, CMD
Justus Vundi, IM Officer, WFP/Food Security Cluster
Kassa Negalign, Medical Logistics, WHO
Kata Geoffrey, Programme Manager, Rural Women for Development South Sudan
Kate Kakela, Protection Cluster Coordinator, UNHCR
Kavita Belani, Housing, Land and Property, UNHCR
Khamis Alfred, Executive Director, Apt Succor Organisation
Kristin Pristupa, Humanitarian Affairs Officer/Access and CM Coord Unit, OCHA
Lea Mascaro, Project Development Manager, ACTED
Linet Omwange-Oumar, Internews
Lonyik Emmanuel, Data Analyst, OCHA
Maker Ajack Alier, Impact Actions
Margaret Fozia, Coordinator, AWHO
Marieke Denissen, Regional Humanitarian Coordinator for the Horn of Africa, Embassy of the Netherlands
Maureen Oyuru, Administrative Associate, OCHA
Maya Mason, Programme Manager, Flying Team, Humanity & Inclusion
Megan Weaver, Programme Coordinator, International Medical Corps UK
Meredith Maynard, Relief International
Meron Berhane, CBPF Unit, OCHA NY
Milcah Langat, Donor Relations Officer, UNICEF
Misso Godfrey Alfred, Head of Programs, Hold the Child Organisation
Ntanto Mlopana, FSL INGO Cluster Coordinator, World Vision
Oliver Bakata Frazer, Head of Programmes, Abyei Development Association
Ontibile Dingert, M&E Officer, IOM
Paul Doctor, Information Officer, NGO Secretariat, NGO Forum South Sudan
Peter Opio, Public Health Engineering (PHE) Team Leader, Wau, Oxfam
Peter Wata, OCHA Sub-Office, Wau
Pierre Vauthier, Acting Representative, FAO
Rabeea Ahmed, Cash Expert, Inter-Agency Cash Working Group
Rashid Kheir, Programme Specialist, Head, UNDP SS Humanitarian Fund
Repent Taban David, Executive Director, NSDO
Richard Okello, CCCM Cluster Coordinator, IOM
Richard Taban, Field Coordinator, Islamic Relief
Ronald Raju Gomes, Administrative Coordinator, Humanity & Inclusion
Safari Djumapili, Head of Field Coordination, OCHA South Sudan
Samuel Julio Daba, Field Supervisor, COER
Sarah Alex, Cash and Grants Advisor, DanChurchAid
Sarah Alifonsina Peremona, Programme Manager, ABSA-CA
Sherrie Lilian R., Monitoring & Evaluation Officer, LCED
Signe Guro Gilen, Minister Counsellor, Deputy Head of Mission, Royal Norwegian Embassy
Simon Cammelbeeck, Deputy Country Director, Operations, WFP
Soro Mike Hakim, Chief Executive Officer, SPEDP
Stamatia Boskou, CCCM Cluster Co-coordinator, ACTED
Stella Night, Nutrition Coordinator, Islamic Relief
Stephen O’Malley, Head of Office, OCHA South Sudan
Thomas Tut Gany, Executive Director, CMD
Tom Mpagi, Senior Partner, TMK & Co.
Tya Maskun, Head of Operations, IOM
Victor Libiter White, WASH Coordinator, NSDO
Vincent Wanyama, Country M&E Coordinator, NRC
Yusuf Abdi Salah, Head of Sub-Office, Wau, OCHA
Zacharia Alexander, Data Clerk, COER
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OCHA (2016a) 2017 South Sudan Humanitarian Needs Overview
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Annex 5: Humanitarian context

This annex outlines the context in which the evaluation is being undertaken, including the humanitarian situation in South Sudan, and an overview of the SSHF.

Context of the humanitarian situation in South Sudan

197. South Sudan has been affected by conflict since December 2013, resulting in large-scale displacement (both within the country and to neighbouring countries). Internally displaced persons (IDPs) have often been displaced multiple times.\(^{[107]}\) At the end of 2018, there were nearly 2 million IDPs and nearly 2.2 million South Sudanese refugees.\(^{[108]}\) As highlighted by the timeline in Table 3, despite the formation of the Transition Government of National Unity of the Republic of South Sudan in April 2016, violent conflict continued. However, the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan, signed in Addis Ababa in September 2018, has reduced the intensity of the conflict.

198. The conflict and the resulting economic decline have further reduced the government’s ability to provide basic services, particularly healthcare and education. The conflict, displacement and lack of development have also destroyed livelihoods and weakened the ability of families to cope with the protracted crisis as well as sudden shocks. Over 80 per cent of the population lives below the absolute poverty line.

Conflict and food insecurity

199. Farmers are mostly women and they, together with their families, have been displaced from their land, resulting in reductions in agricultural productivity and high levels of food insecurity. In 2017\(^{[109]}\), South Sudan was one of four countries at risk of famine. In February 2017, there was a declaration of localized famine in Unity State, where 100,000 people faced starvation. IPC analysis showed that a record 6 million people would be severely food insecure by September 2017. In September 2018, IPC analysis showed that food security was deteriorating more slowly than before, partly due to the provision of humanitarian assistance, but predicted that 5.2 million people would be severely food insecure from January-March 2019. This severe food insecurity, combined with inadequate water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and health services has resulted in continued high malnutrition rates.\(^{[110]}\)

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\(^{[107]}\) OCHA (2018a) 2019 South Sudan Humanitarian Needs Overview
\(^{[108]}\) OCHA (2018) 2019 South Sudan Humanitarian Response Plan
\(^{[110]}\) OCHA (2018a) 2019 South Sudan Humanitarian Needs Overview
Despite the significant humanitarian needs, humanitarian access has been restricted by the conflict and violent attacks against aid workers and assets. In 2018, there was a total of 760 humanitarian access incidents reported, over half of which involved violence against humanitarian staff and assets. 15 aid workers were killed while delivering humanitarian assistance, taking the total of those killed since the start of the conflict in December 2013 to at least 112.\[111\] Also in 2018, over 500 aid workers were relocated because of insecurity, which disrupted the provision of humanitarian assistance and protection services. In addition, large parts of the country become inaccessible during the rainy season (from July to December) due to underdeveloped roads and airstrips. For example, around 70 per cent of the country's road network is inaccessible during the rainy season and fixed-wing aircraft can use less than 10 airstrips in the wet season.\[112\] With the signing of the Revitalized Agreement, humanitarian access has improved considerably. In 2019, humanitarian actors could access most of the country without major incidents. However, bureaucratic impediments, such as the imposition of fees and taxes, and operational interference continue to hinder the delivery of humanitarian assistance. Aid agencies are also the target of criminal activities and ambushes.\[113\]

[112] OCHA (2018a) 2019 South Sudan Humanitarian Needs Overview
Background to the South Sudan Humanitarian Fund

Objectives of the SSHF

201. The SSHF aims to address the most urgent humanitarian needs and to assist the most vulnerable people in South Sudan. It is closely aligned with the HRP, financing activities that have been prioritized as the most urgent and strategic to meet critical humanitarian needs. It is also able to fund immediate response to sudden-onset, unforeseen crises.

Management structure

202. The HC oversees the Fund and decides on SSHF funding allocations. Since UNDP is the Managing Agent for grants to NGOs, a joint OCHA-UNDP Technical Secretariat (TS) that is led by OCHA manages the Fund on a day-to-day basis and supports the HC, together with the SSHF Advisory Board (AB) and the cluster coordination structure – cluster coordinators and the Inter-Cluster Working Group (ICWG).

203. The UNDP MPTFO serves as the Fund's Administrative Agent (AA) while UNDP serves as the Managing Agent (MA). The MPTFO receives contributions from donors, disburses funds to participating UN organizations according to the HC's decisions, and provides financial reports and statements. The UN agencies assume full responsibility for the funds that they receive from the AA and provide related financial and narrative reports. The MPTFO also transfers funds to UNDP as the MA for onward transfer to NGOs.[114]

Allocation strategy

204. In South Sudan, the Standard Allocation process is bottom-up. The Allocation Strategy paper summarizes the strategic intent of the allocation and provides a framework for clusters to prioritize. The clusters define priority geographical areas and needs that are discussed and agreed in the ICWG, together with funding envelopes per cluster. ICWG representatives present the priorities and justification for the envelopes to the AB, chaired by the HC for discussion and approval. The SSHF made two Standard Allocations each year during the evaluation period. The one at the beginning of the year is intended to kick-start the humanitarian response. A second allocation halfway through the year enables the humanitarian community to review priorities and fill critical funding gaps.

205. Once OCHA publishes the allocation strategy paper with a call for proposals on the HC's behalf, partners have a set time in which to respond. OCHA reviews the proposals to ensure that they comply with the intent of the allocation strategy paper. Cluster committees then review and score proposals and also conduct a technical review. Once proposals are approved by the HC, the MPTFO disburses funding.

206. The SSHF has two 'windows' for its Reserve Allocations. The 'emergency response window' enables the HC to address unanticipated and time-critical humanitarian needs. Only pre-assessed partners with a low or medium risk rating are eligible for funding from this window. The 'underfunded window' enables the HC to fund critical priority needs in the HRP that have not been funded through the Standard Allocations and have not received, or are unlikely to receive, funding from other sources. The RA process is designed to be quicker, with the HC consulting the AB on the decision to activate the process, unless this is impractical due to extraordinary circumstances or would delay the decision-making process significantly. All existing partners are eligible for funding from the underfunded window. At the HC's discretion, it is also possible to make an exception and fund a humanitarian organization that is not already an SSHF partner. Such new partners are subject to the standard risk management policies and procedures and their proposals must undergo the standard technical and quality review processes.[115]