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REPORT

Steps Towards a Voluntary Trust Fund for the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

DAVID C. ATWOOD · LUIZA DELAFLORA CASSOL



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Abbreviations

ATT	Arms Trade Treaty
CSP	Conference of States Parties
ESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
MSP	Meeting of States Parties
ODA	United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs
TPNW	Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNSCAR	United Nations Trust Facility for Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation

Executive Summary

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) was developed in response to the growing recognition of the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons. In addition to establishing a set of prohibitions, the TPNW contains positive obligations. Article 6 of the Treaty requires States Parties to provide assistance to individuals under their jurisdiction affected by the past use and testing of nuclear weapons and to take measures to remediate environments contaminated by such activities. Article 7 establishes obligations on States Parties in a position to do so to assist and cooperate with other States Parties in implementing the Treaty as a whole, including in fulfilling the victim assistance and environmental remediation commitments.

Since the Treaty entered into force in 2021, States Parties have devoted sustained attention to the practical implementation of these obligations. This focus was central to the outcome of the First Meeting of States Parties (MSP), including the Vienna Action Plan. Subsequent work has been carried forward through the informal working group on victim assistance, environmental remediation, and international cooperation and assistance.

At the Third MSP in March 2025, the Co-Chairs of this working group were tasked with preparing a stand-alone report containing recommendations for potential guidelines, technical provisions and terms of reference towards the aim of establishing an international trust fund for victim assistance and environmental remediation at the First Review Conference.[1]

This report aims to support the work of the TPNW States Parties by reviewing relevant trust fund models, including the Arms Trade Treaty voluntary trust fund; the United Nations Trust Facility for Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation; the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific multi-donor trust fund for tsunami, disaster and climate preparedness; and the United Nations voluntary trust fund for victims of human trafficking. The main operational features of these funds are noted in the matrix below. This report further presents possible options for a TPNW trust fund, with a view to inform the Co-Chairs' stand-alone report. It does so with the understanding that decisions on next steps towards establishing a TPNW trust fund will be taken in a challenging international context, facing increasingly scarce resources to deliver on the objectives of the trust fund.

Consideration of a trust fund will need to address several core questions: its nature and purpose; its institutional home; how decisions are made and funds administered; sources of financing and eligible recipients; and the size and duration of grants. In addressing these issues, States Parties should bear in mind that trust funds can evolve over time in response to changing needs—early decisions are not irreversible, and perfection should not become the enemy of the good. Regardless of the institutional model chosen, certain functions, such as sustained fundraising, will be essential for any credible mechanism. Nonetheless, choices made at the Review Conference will shape the direction of future work, and three options are therefore presented for consideration.

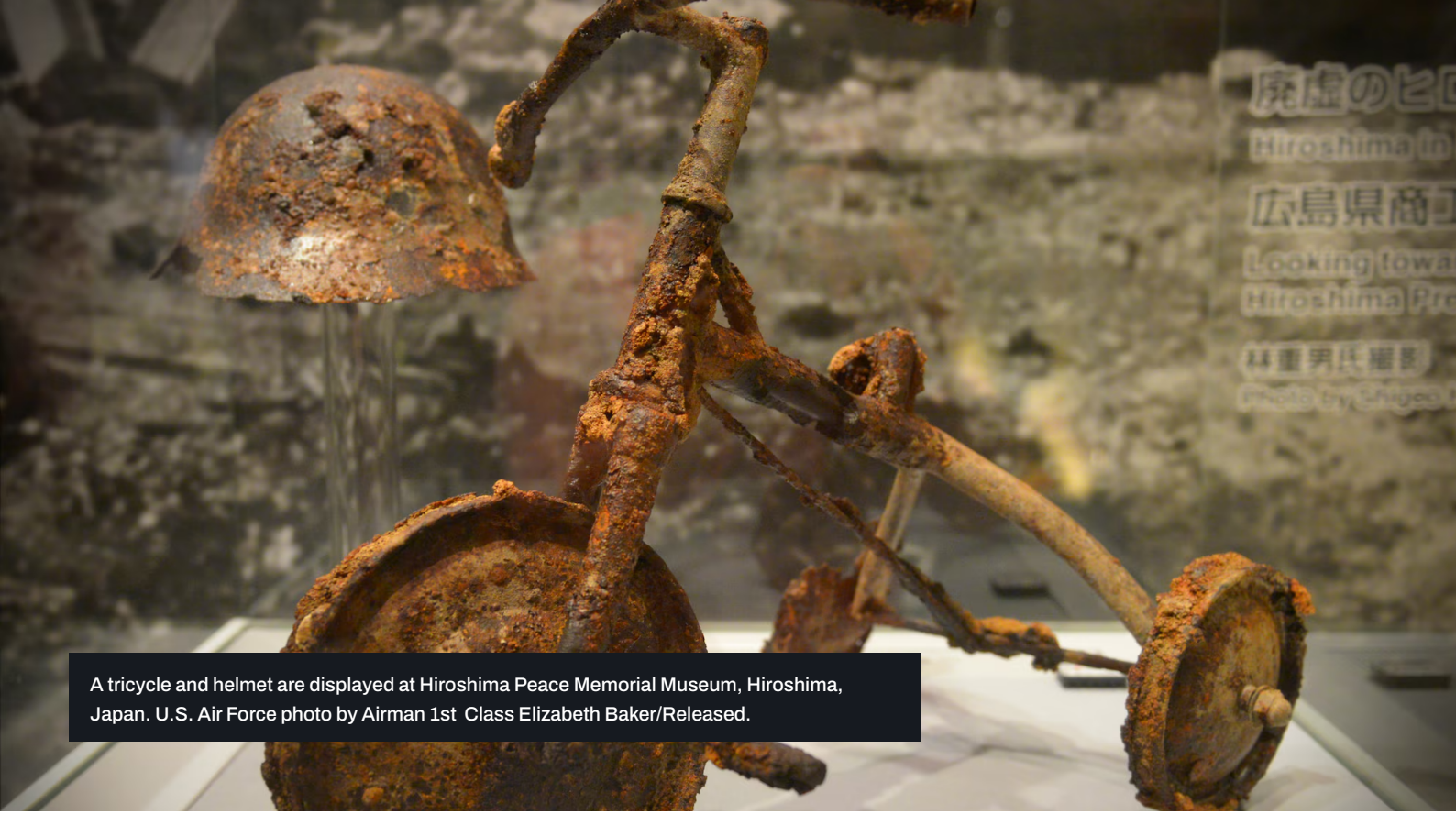
1 TPNW, *Report of the Third Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons*, TPNW/MSP/2025/11/Rev.1 (6 May 2025), Annex II, Decision 3, https://docs.un.org/TPNW/MSP/2025/11/Rev.1

	Arms Trade Treaty Voluntary Trust Fund	Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation	Trust Fund for Climate Preparedness	Trust Fund for Victims of Human Trafficking
Purpose	International assistance for Treaty implementation	Assistance towards ratification and implementation of arms regulation instruments processes	Capacity-building for regional tsunami, disaster, and climate preparedness	Humanitarian, legal, and financial support to victims of trafficking
Home	ATT	ODA	ESCAP	UNODC
Administration	ATT Secretariat	ODA staff team	ESCAP dedicated secretariat	UNODC Project GLOX42
Decision-making	Selection Committee, with prescreening done by the ATT Secretariat	ODA, with recommendations from the Strategic Planning Group	Fund's Advisory Council	Fund Manager, with advice from Board of Trustees
Financing	Governments and private sector	Governments	Governments and international financial institutions	Member States, IGOs and NGOs, private sector, and public at large
Contributions	Annual call for financial contributions	Annual call for financial contributions	Continuous outreach to potential donors	Continuous outreach to potential donors
Projects	Legal or legislative assistance; institutional capacity-building; and technical, material and financial assistance	Support universalization and implementation of relevant global instruments on arms regulation	Strengthen regional cooperation in disaster and climate preparedness; empower local action in coherence with global, regional and national commitments	Protect and empower survivors through emergency aid, legal assistance, psychosocial support, education, and reintegration services
Recipients	States Parties, partnered with UN agencies, IOs and regional organizations, and civil society or other competent organizations	NGOs and research institutes, UN system partners, regional organizations	UN agencies and IOs, governments, academic institutions, and civil society; possible partnerships with private sector	Organizations that provide direct victim-centred assistance
Proposals	Annual call for proposals, aligned with Treaty priorities	Annual call for proposals, based on identified priorities	Occasional calls for project proposals, based on strategic priorities	Periodic calls each year for specific project types
Grants	Limited to USD 100,000; one-year duration	Limited to USD 100,000 for small-scale projects and USD 150,000 for field operations; one-year duration maximum	Limited to USD 30,000 for grants up to one-year duration; USD 250,000 for programme grants up to two-year duration	Limited to USD 20,000 for grants of up to one-year duration; USD 60,000 for grants up to two-year duration

The first option would place the trust fund under the responsibility of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (ODA), following a mix of the models of the Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation (UNSCAR) and the multi-donor trust fund for tsunami, disaster and climate preparedness. This option would require a General Assembly resolution or a decision by the Secretary-General. ODA would assume overall management of the fund, benefiting from established financial management systems. However, such an arrangement could limit certain design choices—for example, contributions would be open beyond the TPNW States Parties. Although ODA would retain final decision-making authority over funded projects, decisions could be informed by a strategic planning group for advising on overall strategy and projects to be funded. TPNW States Parties could decide to limit the make-up of this body to trust fund donor States, as is the case with the Trust Facility, but consideration could be given to including as observers former donors, beneficiary States, representatives of non-governmental organization and affected communities, and other United Nations entities, considering the general guideposts on inclusion provided by the TPNW. A decision would be needed on the types of actors, including governments, that could be eligible to receive project funding. The trust fund would necessarily need to cover the costs of its own administration. Beyond general operating costs, dedicated professional staff capacity would be required at half- or full-time, depending on administrative burden.

A second option would be for TPNW States Parties to establish the trust fund either as a stand-alone entity, with its own independent facility for administering the fund, or as a part of a dedicated secretariat for the TPNW as a whole, following the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) model. This option could be taken through a decision by the States Parties at the TPNW Review Conference. The approach would allow States Parties to retain control over participation and governance of the trust fund. A selection committee could be created to oversee the fund's operations and to determine which projects receive support. States Parties would define which and how many entities (States Parties, signatory States, others) would make up the selection committee. In addition, States Parties would be able to define which entities would be allowed to contribute to the trust fund and to apply for project funding, choosing perhaps to go beyond the outlines of these features of the ATT voluntary trust fund. To broaden the resource base of the TPNW trust fund, thereby increasing the potential funding available, the fund could be opened to contributions from non-States Parties and other entities, including from the private sector. Costs for administration of the trust fund would necessarily be paid from the fund itself.

A third option suggests an incremental route to the establishment of a trust fund. A roadmap could be adopted at the First Review Conference; the process of developing an agreed roadmap would both build knowledge of recipient needs and funding potentialities and provide a flexible path forward for the establishment of a trust fund. First, States Parties could collect improved data on victim assistance and environmental remediation needs, as well as on the levels and types of resources available for addressing these needs, thereby improving the capacity to match requests and offers of assistance. Second, an initiative could be launched to map potential funding sources and identify areas for potential collaboration with other entities undertaking work on overlapping concerns. Third, once data on needs and resources has been collected and suitably assembled, States Parties could then use the Fourth Meeting of States Parties to secure agreement on establishing a trust fund as proposed under options 1 or 2, or to establish an interim trust fund, without prejudice to future institutional arrangements, such as requesting ODA to host the trust fund from its establishment until the Second Review Conference. Such an initial trial period would allow for a better understanding of the fund's operational costs and administrative needs, and help to assess overall demand for and long-term sustainability of a TPNW trust fund.



A tricycle and helmet are displayed at Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, Hiroshima, Japan. U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Elizabeth Baker/Released.

Introduction

The realistic assessment of the humanitarian and environmental consequences of nuclear weapon testing and use is a key component of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). As such, the Treaty contains 'positive obligations' in its articles 6 and 7 regarding assistance to those who have been affected by testing or use of these weapons, including the remediation of areas contaminated. These articles are among the most innovative aspects of the TPNW, offering opportunity to advance the humanitarian narrative and address the injustices caused by nuclear testing. In this, the TPNW follows the basis of other humanitarian disarmament treaties, such as the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

Since its entry into force in 2021, the TPNW States Parties have reiterated the importance of these obligations and their implementation, underlined in the Declaration and the Vienna Action Plan, which emerged from the First Meeting of States Parties (MSP) in 2022. An international trust fund has been proposed as one of the ways that such implementation could be pursued, through the mobilization and application of resources for supporting victim assistance and environmental remediation (see box 1). Discussions about such a trust fund—including purpose and feasibility—have been ongoing since 2022, primarily in the context of the informal working group on victim assistance, environmental remediation, and international cooperation and assistance.

In advance of the First TPNW Review Conference in November–December 2026, this report outlines key elements and choices to be made to enable the realization of a trust fund for the TPNW. The report begins by providing a brief background to the concerns of this 'humanitarian disarmament' treaty. It then traces the emergence of the trust fund idea as one avenue for addressing the challenges of victim assistance and environmental remediation. The report then presents four case studies of existing trust funds which

highlight features that could be adapted to a TPNW trust fund. The cases considered are:

- the Arms Trade Treaty voluntary trust fund;
- the United Nations Trust Facility for Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation;
- the ESCAP multi-donor trust fund for tsunami, disaster and climate preparedness; and
- the United Nations voluntary trust fund for victims of trafficking in persons, especially women and children.

The report then outlines operational and administrative elements from these trust funds that are potentially applicable to the case of the TPNW, and elucidates three options for consideration by the States Parties as they prepare for further discussion on a trust fund at the First Review Conference. The report concludes with final reflections on the way forward.

Box 1. Why a TPNW Trust Fund?

In the Vienna Action Plan, agreed at the First Meeting of States Parties of the TPNW, Action 29 commits States Parties "to discuss the feasibility of, and propose possible guidelines for, establishing an international trust fund for States that have been affected by the use or testing of nuclear weapons, taking into account relevant precedents for such a trust fund".[2] Initiatives towards a TPNW trust fund rest firmly within the 'positive obligations' of articles 6 and 7.

The victim assistance and environmental remediation themes arise from plentiful evidence of the long term and intergenerational harm resulting from nuclear weapons use and testing. Documented impacts of nuclear harm include serious health consequences—such as cancers, vascular diseases, genetic disorders—as well as psychological trauma and persistent social stigma.[3] As well, there are social and economic impacts, including the displacement of entire communities, causing disproportionate burden on indigenous communities, and damage to cultural heritage. Environmental harm has included extensive pollution of marine ecosystems and radioactive contamination in and around areas of testing,

2 Ibid., Action 29.

3 See Harvard Law School International Human Rights Clinic and Conflict and Environment Observatory, *Facing Fallout: Principles for Environmental Remediation of Nuclear Weapons Contamination* (Cambridge, MA: President and Fellows of Harvard College, June 2022), https://hrp.law.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Facing-Fallout-2022.pdf ; see also Harvard Law School International Human Rights Clinic and Conflict and Environment Observatory, *Confronting Conflict Pollution: Principles for Assisting Victims of Toxic Remnants of War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Law School, September 2020), https://hrp.law.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Confronting-Conflict-Pollution.pdf

with devastating effects on local ecosystems. Additional forms of harm have also been documented resulting from the production, manufacturing, and transport of nuclear weapons.[4]

This legacy suggests different dimensions of nuclear harm that projects supported by a TPNW trust fund could seek to address. Such projects could include:

- providing medical infrastructure equipment to treat cancer and cardiovascular diseases;
- technical assistance involving sending medical specialists to train local professionals;
- sponsoring particular types of medical and other research initiatives;
- the development of tested technologies and processes for addressing environmental challenges associated with radioactive contamination;
- long-term waste management and measures to prevent exposure to contaminated sites; and
- capacity-building assistance to affected countries in devising strategies, policies and programmes to provide victim assistance at the domestic level.[5]

There is much to be done to address nuclear harm. A TPNW trust fund could support a range of projects of different scope and duration, resources and commitment permitting. There are lessons to be learned from the victim and survivor assistance experience of other humanitarian disarmament agreements such as the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

4 See the useful summary of such evidence provided in Matthew Bolton, *Environmental and Humanitarian Action to Address Nuclear Harm* (New York: International Disarmament Institute, Pace University, 2017), https://cpb-us-w2.wpmucdn.com/blogs.pace.edu/dist/0/195/files/2017/10/Humanitarian-Action-to-Address-Nuclear-Harm-5-wqd6d8.pdf ; see also a survey of individual testimonies from affected regions in Rebecca Davis Gibbons, "Achieving Nuclear Justice: A Survivor-Centric Framework", in *From the Margins to the Mainstream: Advancing Intersectional Gender Analysis in Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament*, ed. Renata Hessmann Dalaqua (New York: United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, 2018), 98–105. See also Oemwa Johnson, *Kiribati National Statement during the Third MSP,* Statement delivered on behalf of the Kiribati youth delegation (6 March 2025), https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/nuclear-weapon-ban/3msp/ statements/6March_Kiribati_Art6-7.pdf

5 For example, one area for further study is the disproportionate impact of ionizing radiation on women and children, including effects on the reproductive system; see ICRC, *Third Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons: Working Paper* (ICRC, 18 February 2025), para. 6, https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n25/040/37/pdf/n2504037.pdf ; See also Harvard Law School International Human Rights Clinic and Conflict and Environment Observatory, *Facing Fallout*, 2022; Harvard Law School International Human Rights Clinic, *Designing a Trust Fund for the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons: Precedents and Proposals* (Cambridge, MA: President and Fellows of Harvard College, January 2023), https://humanrightsclinic.law.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/011323_Trust-Fund-Report-Combined.pdf ; Bonnie Docherty, "From Obligation to Action: Advancing Victim Assistance and Environmental Remediation at the First Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons", *Journal for Peace and Nuclear Disarmament* 3, no. 2 (2020): 253–264, https://doi.org/10.1080/25751654.2020.1842657



Signing Ceremony for the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, UN Photo/Kim Haughton.

Background to TPNW Trust Fund Discussions

The TPNW was adopted at the United Nations on 7 July 2017 by a vote of 122 States in favour, one against, and one abstention.[6] It was opened for signature on 20 September 2017. Following the deposit of the fiftieth instrument of ratification or accession with the Secretary-General on 24 October 2020, the Treaty entered into force on 22 January 2021, in accordance with article 15.

The Treaty includes a comprehensive set of prohibitions on participation in any nuclear-weapon-related activities. States Parties undertake not to develop, test, produce, acquire, possess, stockpile, use, or threaten to use nuclear weapons. The Treaty also prohibits the deployment of nuclear weapons on national territory and the provision of assistance to any State in carrying out activities prohibited under the Treaty.

The Treaty is underpinned by the growing recognition of the catastrophic humanitarian and environmental consequences that would result from any further use of nuclear weapons and that the only guarantee against their use would be the complete elimination of such weapons. Articles 6 and 7 address victim assistance and environmental remediation, and international cooperation and assistance, respectively.

Article 6 requires States Parties to provide assistance to individuals under their jurisdiction who have been affected by previous nuclear-weapon use or testing, including provision of age- and gender-sensitive assistance to medical care, as well as psychological, social and economic support. It

6 General Assembly, *Draft Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons: Voting Results*, A/CONF.229/2017.L.3/Rev.1 (7 July 2017), https://s3.amazonaws.com/unoda-web/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/A.Conf_.229.2017.L.3.Rev_.1.pdf

also charges States Parties with taking necessary measures for the environmental remediation of areas that have been contaminated by such use or testing.[7]

Article 7 requires States Parties to cooperate to facilitate the implementation of the Treaty, including "the right to seek and receive assistance, where feasible, from other States Parties". Furthermore, States Parties in a position to do so should "provide technical, material and financial assistance to States Parties affected by nuclear-weapon use or testing" as well as "assistance for the victims".[8]

While the TPNW does not explicitly mention the concept of justice, these 'positive obligations' represent a broad conception of nuclear justice as being at the heart of the Treaty and a driving force for steps in operationalizing its implementation, such as a trust fund.[9]

At the First MSP in 2022, to support the humanitarian concerns of the Treaty, States Parties adopted a declaration committing to a world free of nuclear weapons and the Vienna Action Plan.[10] The Declaration reiterated that:

> The humanitarian spirit of the Treaty is reflected in its positive obligations, aimed at redressing the harm caused by nuclear weapons use and testing. We will strengthen international cooperation among States parties to advance the implementation of the positive obligations of this Treaty. We will work with affected communities to provide age- and gender-sensitive assistance without discrimination to survivors of the use or testing of nuclear weapons, and to remediate environmental contamination.[11]

Section III of the Vienna Action Plan presents a series of actions (19–32) for furthering "victim assistance, environmental remediation and international cooperation and assistance" (see box 2).[12] Among these, Action 29 commits States Parties "to discuss the feasibility of, and propose possible guidelines for, establishing an international trust fund for States that have been affected by the use or testing of nuclear weapons, taking into account relevant precedents for such a trust fund".[13] The purpose of the fund in part would be "to provide aid to assist survivors and to support measures toward environmental remediation."[14]

The First MSP also established a Coordination Committee to oversee the conduct and organization of intersessional work, and, in support of this, established an informal working group on victim assistance, environmental remediation, international cooperation and assistance.[15] Part of the charge of the working

7 TPNW, Article 6, https://treaties.unoda.org/t/tpnw

8 Ibid., Article 7.

9 See Davis Gibbons, "Achieving Nuclear Justice: A Survivor-Centric Framework", 50. Gibbons notes, "The justice mechanisms of compensation, policy change, acknowledgement, apology and data collection can work in tandem to create a system of nuclear justice. These mechanisms could help inform the ongoing intersessional work of TPNW states parties on victim assistance and environmental remediation".

10 TPNW, *Report of the First Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons*, TPNW/MSP/2022/6 (New York: United Nations, 21 July 2022), Annexes 1 and 2, https://docs.un.org/en/tpnw/msp/2022/6

11 Ibid., Annex I, para. 10.

12 Ibid., Annex II, §III.

13 Ibid., Action 29.

14 Ibid., Annex II, Action 29.

15 Ibid., Annex III, Decision 4(a) and d(iii).

group has been the consideration of the function and feasibility of such a trust fund. This process has been co-chaired by Kazakhstan and Kiribati. The work pursued by the group in the intersessional period, between the First MSP in 2022 and the Second MSP in 2023, included a series of consultations on the topic of an international trust fund with States, civil society, and affected communities.[16]

Box 2. Vienna Action Plan, Section III (abridged)

For all States Parties:

Action 19: To engage with relevant stakeholders, including international organizations, civil society, affected communities, and indigenous peoples, and youth... .
Action 20: To engage and promote information exchange with States not party to the Treaty that have used or tested nuclear weapons... on their provision of assistance to affected States parties ... .
Action 21: To establish national focal points ... .
Action 22: To adopt or adapt and implement relevant national laws and policies ... .
Action 23: To coordinate and develop mechanisms ... to facilitate the provision, by States parties in a position to do so, of ... cooperation and technical, material and financial assistance that might be required by affected States parties to implement the Treaty's victim assistance and environmental remediation provisions.
Action 24: To cooperate with the United Nations system, relevant international, regional or national organizations, relevant non-governmental organizations, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies, and bilaterally ... in the development of their implementation framework.
Action 25: To conduct all [related activities] ... in accordance ... with the principles of accessibility, inclusivity, non-discrimination and transparency and in coordination with affected communities ... in a manner that is age- and gender-sensitive ... .
Action 26: To review the implementation framework as well as implementation of articles 6 and 7 regularly ... .
Action 27: To recognize the importance of information exchange for the implementation of articles 6 and 7.
Action 28: To consider developing a voluntary and non-burdensome format for reporting ... .

Action 29: To discuss the feasibility of, and propose possible guidelines for, establishing an international trust fund for States that have been affected by the use or testing of nuclear weapons ... . [emphasis added]

16 TPNW, *Report of the Co-Chairs of the Informal Working Group on Victim Assistance, Environmental Remediation, International Cooperation and Assistance (Kazakhstan and Kiribati),* TPNW/MSP/2023/3 (New York: United Nations, 16 October 2023), https://docs.un.org/en/TPNW/MSP/2023/3. Notable contributions from this process include Harvard Law School International Human Rights Clinic, *Designing a Trust Fund for the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.* The present report echoes many of the features of this early paper and subsequent papers by the Clinic. See also ICAN, *An International Trust Fund for Victim Assistance and Environmental Remediation: Briefing Note and Recommendations from ICAN* (ICAN, 16 February 2023), https://www.icanw.org/international_trust_fund_recommendations

For States Parties affected by nuclear weapons use or testing:

Action 30: To assess the effects of nuclear weapons use and testing with respect to areas under their jurisdiction or control … .
Action 31: To develop national plans for implementation of their victim assistance and environmental remediation obligations, which include budgets and time frames.

For States Parties in a position to do so:

Action 32: To act upon their obligation under article 7 (3) to assist those States parties with clearly demonstrated needs for external support, by contributing to the mobilization of resources and the provision of technical, material and financial assistance to States parties affected by nuclear weapons use or testing … .

At the Second MSP, the Co-Chairs of the working group submitted a report containing recommendations for decisions to be made pertaining to Actions 19–32 of the Vienna Action Plan, in which one of the areas addressed was possible guidelines for a voluntary trust fund.[17] The working group was charged with continuing focused discussions and submitting a report to the Third MSP with recommendations and possible guidelines for establishing an international trust fund for victim assistance and environmental remediation as a priority at the Third MSP.[18]

At the Third MSP, the Co-Chairs of the working group submitted a report containing recommendations for decisions to be made, particularly focused on establishing a trust fund, including needs, benefits, feasibility, and recommendations. The report described efforts which had been made to reach agreement on the core elements of potential terms of reference for such a fund and guiding principles for its operation.[19] A number of stakeholders also contributed written input on the trust fund to the Third MSP.[20]

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17 TPNW, *Report of the Co-Chairs of the Informal Working Group on Victim Assistance, Environmental Remediation, International Cooperation and Assistance (Kazakhstan and Kiribati)*, TPNW/MSP/2023/3 (New York: United Nations, 16 October 2023), **https://docs.un.org/en/TPNW/MSP/2023/3**

18 TPNW, *Report of the Second Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons,* TPNW/MSP/2023/14 (New York: United Nations, 13 December 2023), Annex II, Decision 4 (a) and (b), **https://docs.un.org/en/TPNW/MSP/2023/14**

19 TPNW, *Report of the Co-Chairs of the Informal Working Group on Victim Assistance, Environmental Remediation, International Cooperation and Assistance (Kazakhstan and Kiribati)*, TPNW/MSP/2025/4 (New York: United Nations, 5 February 2025), **https://docs.un.org/en/TPNW/MSP/2025/4**

20 See, in particular, TPNW, *Designing a TPNW Trust Fund to Address the Effects of Nuclear Weapons,* working paper submitted by Harvard Law School International Human Rights Clinic, TPNW/MSP/2025/NGO/10 (New York: United Nations, 17 February 2025), **https://docs-library.unoda.org/Treaty_on_the_Prohibition_of_ Nuclear_Weapons_-ThirdMeeting_of_States_Parties_(2025)/TPNW_MSP_2025_NGO_10_Harvard_IHRC.pdf** ; TPNW, *Improving Governance and Implementation of the TPNW Trust Fund: Lessons from Kazakhstan's Victim Assistance and Remediation Efforts*, working paper submitted by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation Kazakhstan and Steppe Organization for Peace, TPNW/MSP/NGO/9 (New York: United Nations, 17 February 2025), **https://docs-library.unoda.org/**

During this process, States Parties have raised a number of concerns, and consensus has yet to be reached on some operational elements of a trust fund. In particular, it has been noted the importance of ensuring that a trust fund can safeguard the integrity of the treaty and uphold its objectives, credibility, and authority; that it is capable of effectively meeting and addressing victim-assistance and environmental remediation needs; and that it be designed to ensure its viability, effectiveness, and sustainability over the long term.[21]

Accordingly, the working group proposed that discussions should continue until the First Review Conference in the hope that States Parties might agree at that stage to establish the fund.[22] Hence, at the Third MSP, States Parties mandated the Co-Chairs of the working group to submit a 'stand-alone' report no later than four months before the First Review Conference, based on:

> ... wide and inclusive consultations among States Parties, with the contribution of relevant stakeholders, containing recommendations for States Parties' consideration on possible guidelines, technical provisions and/or terms of reference of an international trust fund for victim assistance and environmental remediation ... with the aim of establishing, if feasible, such a trust fund at the first Review Conference.[23]

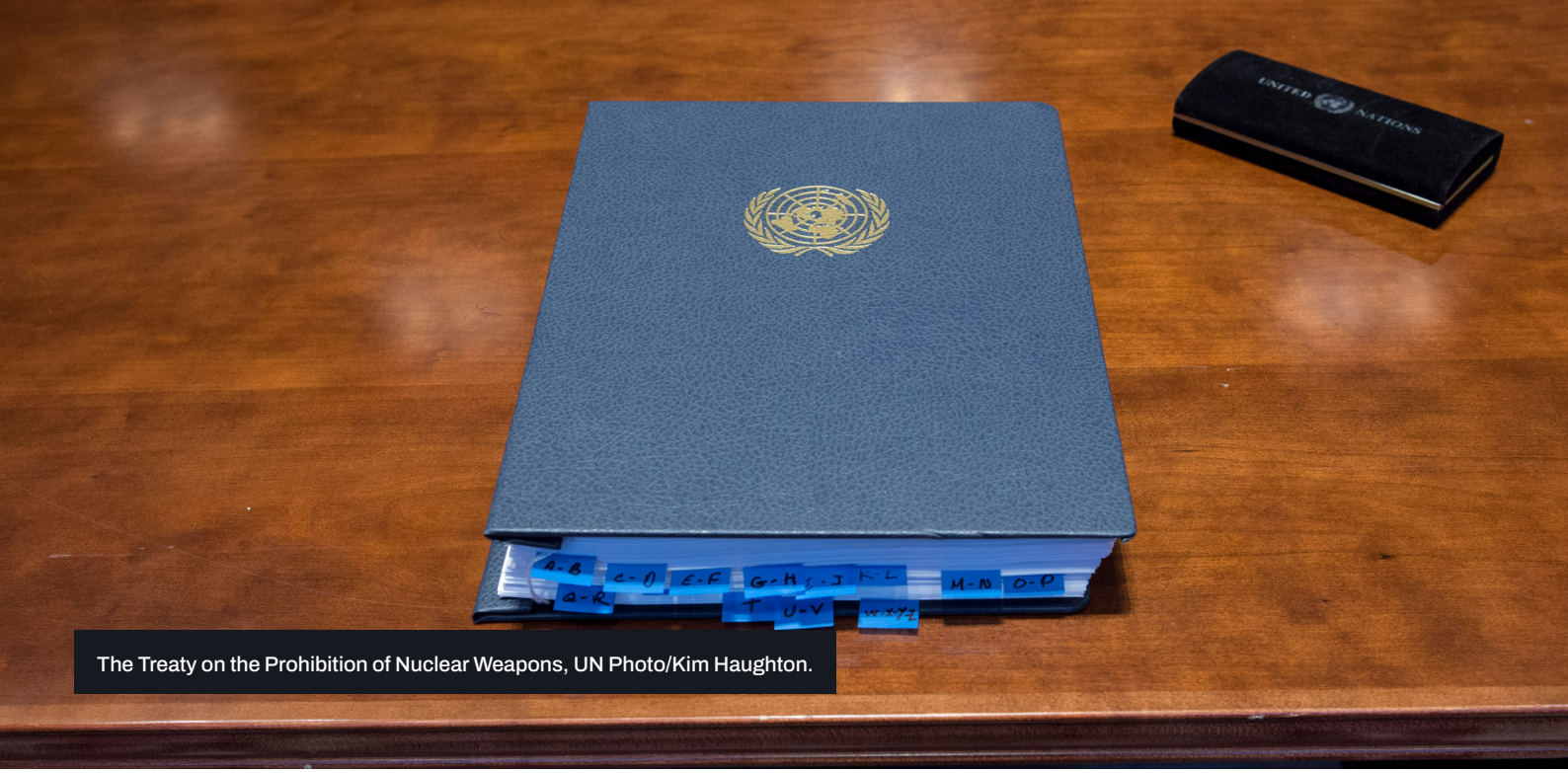
This report seeks to provide food for thought on options for the operational and administrative elements of a TPNW trust fund. With this abbreviated history in mind, the next sections turn to existing models of trust funds and possible options with a view to informing the working group and States Parties for further consideration in its work preparing for the First Review Conference at the end of 2026.

Treaty_on_the_Prohibition_of_Nuclear_Weapons_-ThirdMeeting_of_States_Parties_(2025)/TPNW_MSP_2025_NGO_9_Friedrich_Ebert_Foundation_Kazakhstan_&_STeppe_Organization_for_Peace.pdf ; and TPNW, *Policy Recommendations on Trust Fund*, working paper submitted by Affected Communities and Allies Working Group for a Nuclear Free World, TPNW/MSP/2025/NGO/2 (New York: United Nations 17 February 2025), https://docs-library.unoda.org/Treaty_on_the_Prohibition_of_Nuclear_Weapons_ThirdMeeting_of_States_Parties_(2025)/TPNW_MSP_2025_NGO_2_ACAWG_Trust_Fund.pdf

21 TPNW, *Report of the Co-Chairs (Kazakhstan and Kiribati),* para. 35, https://docs.un.org/en/TPNW/MSP/2025/4

22 Ibid., paras. 31 – 32.

23 TPNW, *Report of the Third Meeting*, Annex II, Decision 3 (a), (b), and (c), https://docs.un.org/en/TPNW/MSP/2025/11/Rev.1



The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, UN Photo/Kim Haughton.

Existing Models of Voluntary Trust Funds

Voluntary trust funds are widely used by international institutions and treaty bodies. For this report, four such funds have been selected for examination because their nature and modes of operating illustrate possible applications to a trust fund for the TPNW.

Arms Trade Treaty Voluntary Trust Fund

In the process of the negotiation of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), it was already anticipated that assistance to States joining the Treaty might be required for implementing its obligations. Hence, in the text of the ATT, which was adopted by the General Assembly on 2 April 2013 and entered into force on 24 December 2014, provision is made for the establishment by States Parties of a voluntary trust fund.[24] A formal decision to establish the ATT fund was made at the Second Conference of States Parties (CSP) in August 2016 with the decision to adopt the terms of reference for the fund.[25] Although the Depositary for the ATT is the Secretary-General (art. 27), the operationalization of the ATT is set up separately through the establishment of its own secretariat (art. 18) to assist States Parties in the implementation of the Treaty.

24 "A Voluntary Trust Fund shall be established by States Parties to assist requesting States Parties requiring international assistance to implement this Treaty. Each State Party is encouraged to contribute to the fund"; United Nations, *The Arms Trade Treaty*, Article 16.3, https://treaties.un.org/doc/Treaties/2013/04/20130410%2012-01%20PM/Ch_XXVI_08.pdf; General Assembly, The Arms Trade Treaty, A/RES/27/234 B, 11 June 2013, https://treaties.un.org/doc/source/docs/A_RES_67_234-B-E.pdf

25 ATT, *Final Report*, ATT/CSP2/2016/5 (Geneva: Arms Trade Treaty, 26 August 2016), III.23, https://old.thearmstradetreaty.org/hyper-images/file/Final_Report_ATT_CSP2_2016_5.1/Final_Report_ATT_CSP2_2016_5.pdf

The ATT fund is described as a "flexible, multi-donor trust fund", established as "a mechanism to give effect to international assistance, through the deposit and disbursement of funds, for Treaty implementation".[26] As such, it aims to assist requesting States requiring international assistance to implement Treaty obligations, mobilize resources to support particular implementation obligations, and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of international assistance through coordination and avoidance of duplication of efforts.[27] General categories of assistance that the fund is intended to support include legal and legislative assistance; institutional capacity-building; and technical, material, and financial assistance.[28]

The fund is administered by the ATT Secretariat,[29] with the support of a Selection Committee. The Committee comprises up to 15 seats held by States Parties to the ATT (including donors and non-donors to the Fund; there are currently 10 seats held). Members of the Committee are appointed by the CSP.[30] This Committee, following pre-selection from among project proposals by the secretariat, decides on the list of projects to be supported and the amount of funding for each.[31] The Committee also has oversight responsibilities of administrative procedures for the fund.[32]

The Selection Committee makes an annual call, circulated by the secretariat, for voluntary contributions to financially support the projects of the fund. Contributions may come from States Parties, other States and entities, including from the private sector.[33] Informal solicitation by some State Parties for voluntary contributions for the fund began in 2016 and the Selection Committee made its first formal call for contributions in November of that year. These efforts produced sufficient funding for the fund to accept proposals for 2017 and 2018.[34]

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26 ATT, *Voluntary Trust Fund Administrative Rules* (Geneva: Arms Trade Treaty, 15 November 2016), para. 7, https://old.thearmstradetreaty.org/hyper-images/file/VTF%20Administrative%20Rules%20(Rev%202)-Final%20-23%20Sept%202024/VTF%20Administrative%20Rules%20(Rev%202)-Final%20-23%20Sept%202024.pdf

27 Ibid., para. 9.

28 ATT, "Voluntary Trust Fund", https://old.thearmstradetreaty.org/voluntary.html

29 The costs of operating the Arms Trade Treaty, including its secretariat, are borne largely by States Parties (by assessment) and by signatory and observer States (related to CSP costs); see Carina Solmirano, "Arms Trade Treaty Status of ATT Finances" (Geneva: Arms Trade Treaty, 28 August 2025), https://old.thearmstradetreaty.org/hyper-images/file/ATT_CSP11_Master%20PPT_Agenda%20item%2012_Matters%20pertaining%20to%20Financial%20Contributions_ATTS_Status%20of%20ATT%20Finances/ATT_CSP11_Master%20PPT_Agenda%20item%2012_Matters%20pertaining%20to%20Financial%20Contributions_ATTS_Status%20of%20ATT%20Finances.pdf

30 ATT, *Voluntary Trust Fund. Terms of Reference,* ATT/VTF18/2018/SEC/251/ToR.Cons.Dr.v1.Rev1, https://old.thearmstradetreaty.org/hyper-images/file/VTF%20Terms%20of%20Reference/VTF%20Terms%20of%20Reference%20adopted%20by%20CSP4%20(ATT.VTF18.2018.SEC.251.ToR.Cons.Dr.v1.Rev1).pdf

31 Ibid.

32 ATT, *Voluntary Trust Fund Administrative Rules*, para. 14.a – i.

33 Ibid., para. 17. Historically, contributions to the VTF have come only from States Parties. Donors are encouraged to make unconditional grants, but, if donor preferences are indicated, certain conditions apply. ATT, *Voluntary Trust Fund Administrative Rules*, para. 24. d.

34 ATT, *Report on the Work of the Voluntary Trust Fund for the Period August 2017 to July 2018*, ATT/VTF/2018/CHAIR/359/Conf.Rep, https://old.thearmstradetreaty.org/hyper-images/file/ATT_CSP4_VTF_Report_EN/ATT_CSP4_VTF_Report_EN.pdf ; see also Arms Trade Treaty, *Statement by the Chairman of the Voluntary Trust Fund Selection Committee to the 1st Preparatory Meeting ATT CSP3* (Geneva: Arms Trade Treaty, 16 February 2017), https://old.thearmstradetreaty.org/hyper-images/file/20170216_VTF_SC_Chairs_Statement_to_1st_Prep_Mtg_CSP3-2/20170216_VTF_SC_Chairs_Statement_to_1st_Prep_Mtg_CSP3-2.pdf

Donors can contribute throughout the year. Some beneficiary States have made modest end-of-year contributions as well, often in the form of in-kind support for project activities, such as venue costs, transport, or bi-lateral assistance.[35] As of July 2025, the fund had received a total of USD 12.9 million in voluntary contributions from 29 States.[36] While the fund was quite well provisioned in its early years, there has been a decline in contributions over time. Funding decisions for projects are based on available resources and not on pledges.[37] The costs of the secretariat are met from fund contributions at an amount set by the Selection Committee.[38] As management of the fund became a larger part of the work of the secretariat, it proved necessary to add a full-time fund officer. The remuneration of this officer to date has been less than 7% of the total contributions to the fund.[39] Although there is no publicly available breakdown of administrative costs, from 2017 through 2024 the fund had total expenditures of approximately USD 10 million, of which administrative costs were approximately USD 1.3 million, or about USD 165,000 per year.[40]

Funding proposals must come from States, with priority given to States Parties requiring assistance to implement the Treaty. Signatory and other States may also be considered for support, provided they show "clear and unambiguous political commitment to accede to the ATT" and how the grant would facilitate ratification or accession to the Treaty.[41] The States Parties consider being open to such proposals as furthering the universalization of the Treaty. Assistance projects may be implemented by or in conjunction with United Nations agencies, international and regional organizations, civil society organizations, and other suitable partners.[42] Such partners may also receive funds for project implementation but the beneficiary State assumes all responsibility for compliance with the terms of the grant.[43]

In general, project grants are limited to a duration of one year and a maximum amount of USD 100,000 (although grants may be larger if the project is to be implemented by more than one State or there are multiple beneficiaries).[44] The one-year limit for projects has implications for the sustainability of the work being undertaken through grant funding.

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35 Correspondence with expert, February 2026.

36 See ATT, *Report on the Work of the ATT Voluntary Trust Fund for the Period August 2024 to August 2025*, ATT/VTF/2025/CHAIR/830/Conf.Rep (Geneva: Arms Trade Treaty, 24 July 2025), https://old.thearmstradetreaty.org/hyper-images/file/ATT_CSP11_VTF_Report%20on%20the%20Work%20of%20the%20VTF%20for%20the%20Period%202024-2025_EN/ATT_CSP11_VTF_Report%20on%20the%20Work%20of%20the%20VTF%20for%20the%20Period%202024-2025_EN.pdf

37 Yoko Owatari, "Status of VTF Finances and Projects" (Geneva: Arms Trade Treaty, 28 August 2025), https://old.thearmstradetreaty.org/hyper-images/file/ATT_CSP11_Master%20PPT_Agenda%20item%2010_International%20Assistance_ATTS_Status%20of%20VTF%20finance%20and%20projects/ATT_CSP11_Master%20PPT_Agenda%20item%2010_International%20Assistance_ATTS_Status%20of%20VTF%20finance%20and%20projects.pdf

38 Arms Trade Treaty, *Voluntary Trust Fund Administrative Rules*, para. 101.

39 Owatari, "Status of VTF Finances and Projects".

40 Ibid. The amount USD 165,000 was calculated by dividing total administrative costs of USD 1.3 million by eight years (2017–2024).

41 Arms Trade Treaty, *Voluntary Trust Fund Terms of Reference,* 4.

42 Roughly 25% of ATT VTF projects are self-implemented by States and up to 75% make use of implementing partners; correspondence with expert, February 2026.

43 Arms Trade Treaty, *Voluntary Trust Fund Terms of Reference, para. 35.*

44 Arms Trade Treaty, *Voluntary Trust Fund Administrative Rules,* paras. 47–48.

Appropriate procedures and content requirements for the fund have been developed regarding project application, project implementation, and project reporting and evaluation.[45] To date, the fund does not require external evaluation of its projects unless requested by donors. Project evaluation is primarily carried out by the grant recipient and is included in the project final report submitted to the fund.[46]

Although not a formal evaluation of the work of the fund, examination of its operations as well as of projects undertaken, including lessons learned, is a regular agenda item at the annual CSP, based on an annual report prepared by the secretariat.[47]

United Nations Trust Facility for Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation

The United Nations Trust Facility for Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation (UNSCAR) was established in response to the call by the Second Review Conference of the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons in 2012 for the exploration of means of ensuring "the sustainability of assistance, including improving trust fund arrangements" for implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons.[48] In 2013, UNSCAR was established through the Office of Disarmament Affairs (ODA) by the Secretariat.[49]

Its mandate, while including implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons as a core priority, addresses a broad range of conventional weapons concerns.

UNSCAR is a United Nations-managed fund that is flexible, multi-donor, and designed for rapid small-scale interventions on specific thematic priorities.[50] Among the types of projects UNSCAR seeks to support are those aimed at universalizing/implementing international (conventional) arms regulation instruments, supporting impactful activities of civil society organizations, and developing national action plans.[51]

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45 See ATT, "Voluntary Trust Fund", https://old.thearmstradetreaty.org/voluntary.html

46 Arms Trade Treaty, *Voluntary Trust Fund Administrative Rules*, para. 78.

47 For example, ATT, *Report on the Work of the ATT Voluntary Trust Fund (VTF) for the Period August 2024 to August 2025* (Geneva: Arms Trade Treaty, 24 July 2025), https://old.thearmstradetreaty.org/hyper-images/file/ATT_CSP11_VTF_Report%20on%20the%20Work%20of%20the%20VTF%20for%20the%20Period%202024-2025_EN/ATT_CSP11_VTF_Report%20on%20the%20Work%20of%20the%20VTF%20for%20the%20Period%202024-2025_EN.pdf

48 General Assembly, United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, A/CONF.192/2012/RC/4, Annex I, II.D.5 (e), 18 September 2012, https://docs.un.org/en/A/CONF.192/2012/RC/4

49 To reduce programme supporting costs, a dedicated sub-account under an ODA trust fund was created; see Tak Mashiko, "UN Trust Facility for Supporting Cooperation in Arms Regulation: Opportunities for Financing Technical Assistance in the Field of Conventional Arms and Ammunition Management", BWC Working Group Meeting, 9 August 2023, https://docs-library.unoda.org/Biological_Weapons_Convention_Working_Group_on_the_strengthening_of_the_ConventionSecond_session_%282023%29/2023_08_09_UNSCAR_for_BWC_Working_Group_0.pdf

50 UNSCAR, "2025 Call for Proposals", 3, https://front.un-arm.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/UNSCAR-2025-Call-for-Proposals.pdf

51 Ibid, 5.

UNSCAR is administered by ODA, which issues annual calls for proposals. The selection process is undertaken in coordination with the Strategic Planning Group, which is made up of UNSCAR donor States. The group advises on UNSCAR's annual priority areas and recommends projects to be funded.[52] ODA makes the final decision on which projects to support in a given year.

UNSCAR is funded by voluntary donations sought from governments. In addition to the annual call, appeals for donations are made at the biennial MSPs and Review Conferences.[53] To date, UNSCAR has received contributions from 17 States, and has financed 155 projects in 148 countries on a total budget of USD 15 million. Currently, UNSCAR estimates that USD 1.5–2.0 million is required to support its annual target of 15–20 projects, including the administrative costs for mission travel and human resources.[54]

Various types of organizations are eligible to apply for support, including United Nations entities,[55] regional organizations, non-governmental organizations, and research institutes. States seeking to benefit from UNSCAR support are required to work with an eligible organization that will then submit a proposal on behalf of the State. In any case, applicant organizations submitting proposals with a particular country focus must demonstrate that the government of the country in question would support the proposed activity. In addition, UNSCAR projects are assessed to ensure they align with assistance needs identified by Member States in their Programme of Action national reports. [56]

The duration of grants is typically up to one year, although proposals for continuing previously supported work are encouraged.[57] There are two categories of funding. Category 1, up to USD 100,000, supports projects that seek to promote national legislative processes; undertake action-oriented research or public awareness campaigns; and organize meetings or workshops. Category 2, up to USD 150,000, supports projects involving field operations, such as weapons marking, tracing, or destruction, including projects which may require significant procurement for implementation.[58] In addition, UNSCAR accepts proposals for 'special circumstances' projects of up to USD 150,000, intended to provide rapid-response support to emergency situations, such as to secure explosive stockpile facilities posing an immediate safety risk.[59]

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52 See ODA, "Conventional Arms Initiatives: UNSCAR", **https://disarmament.unoda.org/en/conventional-arms-initiatives/unscar-un-trust-facility-supporting-cooperation-arms-regulation**

53 Ibid.

54 See UNSCAR, "UNSCAR Trust Facility - Fact Sheet", **https://unodaweb.unoda.org/public/2026-02/2026%20UNSCAR%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf** . In 2023, the UNSCAR team was composed of one manager (P-3/4 position funded by UNSCAR), one JPO/intern (in-kind contribution or no cost), and one administrative and financial assistant (part time). The administrative costs in 2023 amounted to USD 250,000, although this amount varies by year. See Mashiko, "UN Trust Facility for Supporting Cooperation in Arms Regulation" ; See UNSCAR, "UNSCAR Call for Contributions 2025–2026", **https://unodaweb.unoda.org/public/2025-11/UNSCAR%20Call%20for%20Contributions%202025-2026%20October%202025.pdf**

55 For example, the 28 UN entities that participate in the Coordinating Action on Small Arms (CASA).

56 See UNSCAR, "UNSCAR Trust Facility - Fact Sheet"; UNSCAR, "2025 Call for Proposals", 4, 8.

57 For example, the work of the International Action Network on Small Arms has been supported for several years because its network and advocacy work are seen as important to the advancement of the civil society contribution to implementation of the UNPOA.

58 UNSCAR, "2025 Call for Proposals", 7.

59 UNSCAR, "UNSCAR Call for Contributions 2025–2026".

The operations and management of UNSCAR have been reviewed according to United Nations internal regulations and rules, and regularly reviewed by the Strategic Planning Group. However, to date, there is no publicly available evaluation report.[60]

The costs of administering UNSCAR are met by voluntary contributions. Costs include United Nations staff positions to provide not only financial and administrative support, but also substantive and technical support for funded projects and activities. No assessed contributions are used to support UNSCAR.[61] Among the challenges of meeting the expectations of UNSCAR are the annual funding cycles requiring constant resource mobilization, limited staffing, and globally decreasing voluntary contributions.[62] These are not uncommon challenges facing voluntary trust funds, and on occasion there have been delays in project approval and the release of funds to implementing organizations.

ESCAP Multi-Donor Trust Fund for Tsunami, Disaster and Climate Preparedness

The ESCAP multi-donor trust fund for tsunami, disaster and climate preparedness was established in 2005 under the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), following the tsunami of 2004.[63] The trust fund is the sole regional funding mechanism for multi-hazard early warning systems.[64] It works to support regional and national initiatives on such systems "for greater resilience to ocean- and climate change-related disasters in the region".[65]

The trust fund aims to support projects that adopt one or more of the Trust Fund Strategy 2025–2030 approaches: projects that strengthen regional cooperation in disaster and climate preparedness; that mainstream science, technology and leverage innovation; and that institutionalize and empower local action in coherence with global, regional and national commitments.[66]

The trust fund is administered by a dedicated secretariat which provides day-to-day management and systematic monitoring and evaluation support, including the tracking of financial resources and the

60 Correspondence with expert, April 2026.

61 Mashiko, "UN Trust Facility for Supporting Cooperation in Arms Regulation".

62 Ibid. The gap between the expectation and capacity is widening. As the result of the 2025 Call for Proposals, UNSCAR received a record-high 103 applications, of which 17 projects were selected for UNSCAR funds in 2026.

63 The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific is the regional development arm of the United Nations for the Asia-Pacific region. The Trust Fund was established through the Phuket Ministerial Declaration on Regional Cooperation on Tsunami Early Warning Arrangements; see ESCAP, *Phuket Ministerial Declaration on Regional Cooperation on Tsunami Early Warning Arrangements* (Phuket: 29 January 2005), https://www.unisdr.org/2006/ppew/tsunami/pdf/phuket-thailand.pdf ; while the Trust Fund was not set up through a General Assembly resolution, it was welcomed in resolutions A/RES/60/15 and A/RES/62/91; correspondence with expert, March 2026.

64 ESCAP, *ESCAP Trust Fund for Tsunami, Disaster and Climate Preparedness: Strategy 2025–2030*, 12, https://repository.unescap.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/1272b946-5f6a-415e-a99c-c79959362034/content

65 ESCAP, "Advancing Multi-Hazard Early Warnings for All through Regional Cooperation", ESCAP/81/13, 31 January 2025, https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/d8files/event-documents/2500043E_1.pdf

66 See ESCAP, "Call for Proposals: Preparing for Multi-Hazard Risks along Coastal Hotspots", 17 November 2025, https://www.unescap.org/news/call-proposals-preparing-multi-hazard-risks-along-coastal-hotspots

preparation of strategic plans and annual reports.[67] It consists primarily of a programme officer, with administrative support. Technical support and guidance are provided by ESCAP's Information and Communications Technology and Disaster Risk Reduction Division. The secretariat also provides technical guidance to partners to maximize project outcomes and promote synergies across initiatives, resource mobilization, and the trust fund itself. The ESCAP Grants Committee oversees financial procedures and ensures compliance with United Nations regulations and rules.[68]

Funding and policy decisions are made by the trust fund's Advisory Council. This body comprises key donors (i.e., any donor with a 20% share of the unspent balance of the trust fund) and the ESCAP secretariat. Former donors, beneficiary countries, and United Nations partner organizations attend Council meetings as observers. An Expert Review Panel, comprised of experts from ESCAP member States, undertakes technical appraisals of the proposals received by the trust fund and conducts other substantive reviews at the request of the Advisory Council.[69] The fund maintains close partnerships and coordination with various United Nations entities and other international organizations.[70]

The trust fund was established in 2005 through a USD 10 million contribution from Thailand, followed by USD 2.5 million from Sweden and subsequent contributions from other States.[71] The trust fund accepts contributions from governments and international financial institutions, and it is working to explore new funding options, for example through foundations.[72] Beyond direct financial contributions, several donors provide in-kind assistance, such as staffing, as well as co-financing arrangements and technical contributions for specific projects.[73] In 2024, financial contributions and co-financing support from governments and the Asian Development Bank totaled USD 1.14 million, bringing the cumulative total of contributions to USD 17.33 million.[74] At the end of 2024, the fund had a total unspent balance of USD 1.3 million, of which about USD 180,000 had been approved for 2025 activities and programme support costs.[75]

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67 ESCAP, *ESCAP Trust Fund for Tsunami, Disaster and Climate Preparedness: Strategic Note 2021–2024* (Bangkok: ESCAP, 2020), 14, **https://repository.unescap.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/bef82222-ec5f-4c1d-8a24-325c7e8369ac/content** ; the Trust Fund team is built into the larger Disaster Risk Reduction section of the organization ; correspondence with expert, March 2026.

68 ESCAP, *ESCAP Trust Fund for Tsunami, Disaster and Climate Preparedness: Strategy 2025–2030*, 14.

69 Ibid., Annex C.

70 Such as United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC-UNESCO); it also coordinates with World Meteorological Organization (WMO), International Telecommunication Union (ITU), International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (ICRC), United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); Ibid., 21.

71 Ibid., 2; see ESCAP Trust Fund for Tsunami, Disaster and Climate Preparedness Informal Briefing Event, 23 January 2023, **https://indico.un.org/event/1003809/** ; and John Mathiason, "Final Report: Evaluation of the Trust Fund for Tsunami, Disaster and Climate Preparedness" (DeftEdge Corporation, 2025), 6, **https://repository.unescap.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/7ec34e26-39e5-4688-ba9a-4345e7eafd96/content**

72 ESCAP Trust Fund for Tsunami, Disaster and Climate Preparedness, *2024 Annual Report*, ESCAP/5-TR/44 (Bangkok: ESCAP, 2025), 1, **https://www.unescap.org/kp/2025/escap-multi-donor-trust-fund-tsunami-disaster-and-climate-preparedness-2024-annual-report** ; ESCAP Trust Fund for Tsunami, Disaster and Climate Preparedness, *Strategic Note 2021–2024*, 22–23.

73 Mathiason, *Final Report*, 17.

74 ESCAP Trust Fund for Tsunami, Disaster and Climate Preparedness, *2024 Annual Report,* 1.

75 Ibid., 23.

The direct costs of administration are covered by the trust fund itself, including one Programme Officer (P3) and a small non-project budget to support project monitoring and general operating costs. Secretariat functions are also supported through in-kind support from ESCAP to cover one Programme Assistant (G5). Programme support costs were negotiated upon establishment of the trust fund to a reduced amount of 4% for implementing partners and 3% for ESCAP. Non-project costs amount to approximately USD 200,000 annually. Non-project (secretariat) budgets are approved on an annual basis. In certain years, some staffing has been covered directly by a donor through Junior Professional Officer arrangements.[76]

The trust fund makes occasional calls for project proposals.[77] It employs a flexible approach to who is eligible to apply and receive funding. In the most recent call of November 2025, applications can come from governments, and other United Nations bodies and multilateral entities; academic institutions; and non-governmental and civil society organizations having relevant expertise. In the case of joint applications (which are encouraged), proof of not-for-profit status is required for the lead entity; however, joint applications with private sector entities are welcomed.[78]

In the current call for proposals, two types of grants are available: grants of USD 10,000 to 30,000 to support projects of up to one-year duration, and programme grants of USD 100,000 to 250,000 for projects to be implemented within one to two years. The programmatic approach prioritizes "sustained funding over many project phases" over project-based allocation. Programmes are selected for funding with a long-term vision towards the implementation of the current Trust Fund Strategy. Funding for subsequent programme phases is raised for Advisory Council endorsement, and depends in part on available funding, needs, and continued alignment with strategy. Such programmatic proposals are suitable for multi-country and regional/subregional cooperation efforts.[79]

In terms of reporting, project implementers are required to submit biannual progress reports and a final report on completion of the project. They are also expected to develop an impact monitoring framework and are required to report on project achievements to ESCAP. Furthermore, for programmes receiving more than USD 400,000, implementers are required to commission an independent evaluation at the end of the project to assess whether the objectives have been achieved.[80] ESCAP conducts assessments, due diligence, monitoring, and evaluation of all projects to ensure quality and impact, and for lessons learned.[81]

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76 Correspondence with expert, March 2026.

77 The ESCAP Multi-Donor Trust Fund for Tsunami, Disaster and Climate Preparedness Strategic Note 2021–2024 provides a full description of the programmatic approach employed by the Fund, including its approach to strategic partnerships; see ESCAP Trust Fund for Tsunami, Disaster and Climate Preparedness, *Strategic Note 2021–2024,* **https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/d8files/event-documents/TTF-Strategic-Note-2021--2024-rev-20210201.pdf**

78 See ESCAP, "Call for Proposals: Preparing for Multi-Hazard Risks along Coastal Hotspots", 17 November 2025, **https://www.unescap.org/news/call-proposals-preparing-multi-hazard-risks-along-coastal-hotspots**

79 Ibid.

80 Economic and Social Council, "ESCAP Multi-Donor Trust Fund for Tsunami, Disaster and Climate Preparedness in Indian Ocean and Southeast Asian Countries", E/ESCAP/CDR(2)/3, 8 April 2011, **https://docs.un.org/en/E/ESCAP/CDR(2)/3** ; The current call for proposals is for projects of maximum USD 250,000. In the past, projects under USD 400,000 were constituent parts of a larger programme (e.g., a project of two phases of USD 250,000 each, with an evaluation of the whole programme at the end of the second phase); correspondence with expert, April 2026.

81 ESCAP Trust Fund for Tsunami, Disaster and Climate Preparedness, Strategy 2025 – 2030 Call for Proposals, 6, **https://drive.google.com/file/d/1PhfHhvcdPV-5HPrb4jHEBzYY_nU352au/view**

The trust fund itself has been evaluated independently in 2011, in 2018, and most recently in 2025. A central conclusion of the latest evaluation is that the trust fund "continues to provide a useful source of funding for innovative and effective efforts by regional institutions to address the problem of tsunamis and other related hazards".[82]

United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Human Trafficking

The United Nations voluntary trust fund for victims of trafficking in persons, especially women and children seeks to provide "... humanitarian, legal and financial aid to victims of trafficking in persons through established channels of assistance, such as governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations ...".[83] The fund was established as part of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, adopted by the General Assembly on 12 August 2010.[84]

The fund supports front-line organizations that provide essential, victim-centred assistance to victims of human trafficking with the aim to protect and empower survivors through emergency aid, legal assistance, psychosocial support, education, vocational training, and reintegration services.[85]

It is administered by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). UNODC manages the fund through Project GLOX42, created in September 2011 and established by General Assembly resolution A/RES/64/293, to facilitate the administration of the fund. Its primary activities include installing a permanent Trust Fund Secretariat for the management of the fund and related elements and inaugurating a Small Grant Facility.[86] UNODC is designated as the Fund Manager.[87]

The trust fund operates through voluntary contributions. UNODC encourages donations from Member States; intergovernmental, non-governmental, and private-sector organizations; as well as the public at large. Whereas initially only undesignated contributions were accepted, contributors are currently allowed to express a preference for which region their contribution will support, although they cannot specify which projects are supported.[88]

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82 Mathiason, *Final Report*, 17.

83 General Assembly Resolution, United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, A/RES/64/293, Art. 38, https://www.unodc.org/documents/commissions/CCPCJ/Crime_Resolutions/2000-2009/2009/General_Assembly/A-RES-64-293.pdf

84 Ibid.

85 Voluntary Trust Fund, *Annual Report 2024. Supporting Victims, Strengthening Response. A Year in Review* (Voluntary Trust Fund Secretariat, 15 August 2025), 4, https://www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking /UNVTF/2024_UNVTF_Annual_Report.pdf ; in 2024 the Fund funded 58 civil society projects across 32 countries. These projects supported victims of forced labour, forced begging, pornographic material production, recruitment into armed groups, forced marriage, forced criminal activity, forced organ removal, and child trafficking in sports; see ibid., 11–12.

86 See Phil Marshall and Martina Melis, *Management of the Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking, Especially Women and Children: Mid-Term Independent Project Evaluation* (Vienna: UNODC, 2014), https://www.unodc.org/documents/evaluation/Independent_Project_Evaluations/2014/GLOX42_Mid-term_Independent_Evaluation_Report_December_2014.pdf

87 Voluntary Trust Fund, "Terms of Reference", §III.

88 Ibid., §V; Correspondence with expert, February 2026.

In 2024, 12 Member States contributed a total of approximately USD 1 million, and private contributions amounted to a total of about USD 9,000.[89] Of total expenditures of about USD 1.2 million, USD 300,00 was used to cover the administration of the fund, including staff and other personnel costs, supplies, and travel. In general, in addition, a 13% programme support cost is applied to all annual expenditures to cover United Nations administrative and support services.[90] Donations remain "below the Board of Trustees' annual target of USD 2 million, which is the funding level deemed necessary to sustain a predictable and stable grant-making process that can meet the growing demand from civil society organizations working on the frontlines".[91]

The fund makes periodic calls each year for specific types of projects in five regions: Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Central Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Middle East and North Africa. Each call specifies whether it is global or regional, its thematic focus and priority issues, the duration, and the application requirements. These calls are based on evidence-based assessments of human trafficking patterns by UNODC.[92]

Grants are ultimately decided by UNODC as the Fund Manager, with advice from the Board of Trustees. The Board is composed of five members, who are experts in the area of victims of trafficking, from geographically diverse parts of the world, and may come from civil society organizations or be nominated by governments. Board members serve terms of three years and are appointed by the Secretary-General.[93] The Board helps to set strategic direction for the fund, ensures alignment with the fund's mandate, and oversees the grant selection process.

The process of selecting projects is as follows. The Fund Manager, with assistance from a UNODC evaluation panel, reviews submitted project proposals, drawing on relevant expertise from the wider United Nations system as needed, and provides a short list of possible projects for support to the Board of Trustees. The Board provides advice on these and submits views to the Fund Manager, which makes the final decision on projects to be supported and on the allocation of funds.[94]

The fund supports both short-term projects, up to USD 20,000 for up to one year; and medium-term projects, up to USD 60,000 for up to two years.[95]

The work of the fund has been independently evaluated twice, most recently in 2023, covering mid-2014 to mid-2022. The evaluation report covers several key areas, such as effectiveness and impact, strengths and weaknesses, and makes a series of recommendations. A core conclusion of this evaluation is that

89 See Voluntary Trust Fund, *Annual Report 2024*, 51.

90 Ibid., 47.

91 Ibid., 39.

92 Correspondence with expert, February 2026.

93 The selection process up to the point of the appointment by the UN Secretary General is described more fully in Suman Lederer and Monica Portillo, *Management of the Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children: Mid-term Independent Project Evaluation* (Vienna: UNODC, 2023), 10, **https://www.unodc.org/documents/evaluation/Independent_Project_Evaluations/2023/Mid-term_Evaluation_Report_GLOX42.pdf**

94 Voluntary Trust Fund, "Terms of Reference", §IV.

95 A full break down of the projects funded by the Fund in 2024, at what length, and at what amount is shown in the Annex to ibid., 42–46.

the fund's objectives have been achieved by granting in-situ civil society organizations in the frontlines of tackling human trafficking. However, "Due to lack of continuous and long-term funding, sustainability ... remains a challenge".[96]

96 Lederer and Portillo, *Management of the Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children,* vii.



Hiroshima Lantern Festival, Richard Riley, 2011.

Key Variables for a TPNW Trust Fund

Based on the trust fund models just examined, several key variables in terms of design and operation are relevant for consideration in relation to a trust fund for the TPNW.

- **The nature and purpose of the trust fund.** What the trust fund sets out to do will shape its operational characteristics. For example, the ATT trust fund is aimed at supporting States Parties in implementing core Treaty obligations, whereas the trust fund for victims of human trafficking aims to aid non-governmental organizations providing direct services to victims of human trafficking.

- **The institutional home of the trust fund.** Where the trust fund is placed will shape how it operates. For example, the UNSCAR mechanism is fully a part of the Secretariat through ODA. The ATT trust fund, on the other hand, is a body of the ATT itself, as determined and shaped by the Conferences of States Parties.

- **The administration of the trust fund.** Who bears responsibility for management of the trust fund and how its related costs are covered are essential questions. For example, the ESCAP trust fund has a dedicated secretariat, whereas UNSCAR is administered by ODA, with staff designated to this purpose. The costs of carrying out these responsibilities in both cases are covered by voluntary contributions to the funds.

- **Decision-making on the use of resources.** Who decides which projects and entities receive grants is a pivotal variable. In the trust fund for victims of human trafficking, grant decisions are made by the Fund Manager (UNODC) with advice from a Board of Trustees made up of experts on human trafficking. For the ESCAP trust fund, funding and policy decisions are made by the Fund's Advisory Council.

- **Financial foundations of the trust fund.** Who may financially contribute to the trust fund shapes its capacity and sustainability. Depending on the fund, donors may include governments, United Nations agencies, international and regional organizations, the private sector, and even individuals. Contributions, in some cases, can be 'earmarked' for specific use, as with the trust fund for victims of human trafficking. Soliciting funds may be done through regular calls as with the trust fund for victims of human trafficking, by special outreach as with the ESCAP trust fund, or through appeals at meetings of States Parties as with UNSCAR.

- **Types of projects supported.** Which projects are supported depends on the overall purpose and strategic planning of the fund. For example, the trust fund for victims of human trafficking focuses on victim-assistance projects, while the ESCAP trust fund seeks to support projects closely tied to themes outlined in its current strategic plan.

- **Potential recipients of support.** What entities receive project funding depends partly on the nature of the institutions permitted to apply. Entities can be limited to States Parties, signatory States, and other States, as with the ATT trust fund; or NGOs in the case of the trust fund for victims of human trafficking; or be more widely encompassing, to include United Nations partners, international and regional organizations, and NGOs and civil society, as in the case of UNSCAR.

- **Criteria for proposal selection.** What proposals are selected is grounded in the overall strategic and policy goals of the fund and the proposing organization's experience and expertise in relation to those goals. Other criteria for selection include the expected outcomes, a detailed budget, and the legal status of the proposing entity (e.g., not-for-profit, in the case of ESCAP proposals).

- **Size and duration of grants.** What is the size and duration of a grant is determined by what a given proposal would contribute to the strategic goals of the trust fund. These factors will also be shaped by the realities of available resources. The trust fund for victims of human trafficking, for example, makes short-term grants of USD 20,000 for up to one year and medium-term grants of USD 60,000 for up to two years. The ESCAP trust fund supports both short-term projects with limited budgets, and longer-term programmes of work (i.e., multi-project) with budgets up to USD 250,000.

- **Monitoring and evaluation.** How the impact and performance of a project is evaluated depends on the mechanisms the trust fund sets in place for projects and for the trust fund itself, as well as on the nature of projects undertaken. Evaluation can rely mainly on self-assessment by the grant recipient, if there is limited available capacity, as with the ATT trust fund, or require the application of a 'robust monitoring framework' by project grant recipients as with the ESCAP trust fund, or even by external evaluation of the project as is the case with the trust fund for victims of human trafficking. Additionally, evaluating fund operation is important for its long-term sustainability, relevance, and effectiveness; both the trust fund for victims of human trafficking and the ESCAP trust fund provide for periodic independent evaluations of their operations.

Formal and informal discussions on a TPNW trust fund to date have devoted attention to variables like the ones shown above. The next section outlines three options for consideration by TPNW States Parties drawing on the institutional and operational variables addressed above and taking account of questions still to be addressed.

Options for a TPNW Trust Fund

Given the specificities of the TPNW context, the approaches taken in the establishment of other trust funds cannot simply be replicated in a trust fund for the TPNW. In considering options for a TPNW trust fund, a number of core issues remain to be resolved, including:

- **Institutional questions.** The TPNW currently lacks a dedicated secretariat or implementation support unit-type structure to support treaty implementation and related functions, including the management of a trust fund. The presentation of the options begins from the assumption that some kind of institutional base will be required to establish and administer such a fund.

- **Financial viability.** Questions remain regarding the financial resources that might be available over time for a TPNW trust fund, as well as what entities might be able to contribute to it. The feasibility of any trust fund depends, first and foremost, on the actual availability and receipt of sustained, dedicated funding.

- **Needs assessment.** While there is broad consensus on the needs that a TPNW trust fund would seek to address, detailed assessments of those needs—including scope, costs, duration, and to what extent such needs could feasibly be addressed by the trust fund—have yet to be undertaken.

Three options are outlined for further consideration towards resolving these issues, drawing on insights from the cases illustrated above. While the options are presented as discrete, there are elements of each that could be applicable to the others. Each option offers distinct strengths and limitations.

Option 1. Base the Trust Fund in the Secretariat

A first option draws on practices of the UNSCAR and ESCAP trust funds. As the Secretary-General is the designated depositary of the TPNW, a trust fund could be placed under the purview of the Secretariat, to be administered by ODA. Establishing the fund in this manner would require a General Assembly resolution or a decision of the Secretary-General.[97]

ODA would assume overall management responsibilities for the operation of the trust fund. This situation has the advantages of drawing from established and robust processes of financial management and distribution, relieving TPNW States Parties of having to establish and finance a separate administrative entity.[98] Such a decision, however, would prevent the trust fund from being limited to TPNW States Parties

97 See United Nations Secretariat, *Administrative Instruction: Establishment and Management of Trust Funds*, ST/AI/2026/1 (15 March 2026), paras. 2.2–2.4, https://docs.un.org/en/st/AI/2026/1

98 See ibid.; United Nations, *Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations*, ST/SGB/2013/4 (1 July 2013), https://docs.un.org/en/st/SGB/2013/4 ; United Nations, *Establishment and Management of Trust Funds*, ST/SGB/188 (1 March 1982), https://docs.un.org/en/st/SGB/188 ; United Nations Secretariat, *Administrative Instruction: General Trust Funds*, ST/AI/284 (1 March 1982), https://docs.un.org/en/st/AI/284

only. To enable consensus, States Parties could potentially employ silent procedures, if required to ensure agreement on potential funders.[99]

In addition, ODA would necessarily maintain final decision-making authority over which projects are funded.[100] Nevertheless, this process could be supported by the creation of a body like the UNSCAR Strategic Planning Group, which could shape calls for proposals and provide advisory input on the project selection process.

The composition of a TPNW strategic planning group could include only donor States and ODA. Former donors, beneficiary countries, United Nations entities, affected communities, and NGO representatives could be permitted to attend group meetings as observers, with a selection process to be established by States Parties.

Given that a TPNW trust fund would have a core mandate to support victim assistance and environmental remediation,[101] States Parties could, during each Review Conference, provide policy guidance on priority areas for resource allocation, adopting a strategic plan for the work of the trust fund. This would enable the strategic planning group to align its recommendations with the strategic plan for the duration of the corresponding review cycle. These processes could also be further informed by consultations with civil society organizations, affected communities, and other relevant stakeholders.[102]

Financial resources for operations and project support could be solicited via annual appeals to a wide range of potential donors, including governments, United Nations entities, other intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector.[103] Such appeals could include requests for in-kind contributions, such as providing venues for meetings or staffing, as well as for co-financing arrangements and technical contributions for specific projects.[104] To secure initial funding, a pledge meeting could be held at the Review Conference, and additional calls for such pledges could be made at subsequent MSPs.

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99 See United Nations, ST/AI/2026/1, para. 3.1: "In accordance with financial regulation 3.12 and financial rule 103.4, a voluntary contribution, whether in cash or in kind, may be accepted if the following criteria are met: (a) Its purposes are consistent with the mandates, policies, aims and activities of the Organization; (b) Its acceptance shall not create any direct or indirect additional financial liability unless approved by the General Assembly". The acceptance of voluntary contributions is also governed by the terms of reference of the trust fund, which must be consistent with United Nations regulations and rules, and may specify donor eligibility criteria. ODA would follow these guidelines for accepting contributions. For an example of the silent procedure process used by ESCAP, see ESCAP, *Process for Placing Draft Resolutions under the Silent Procedure* (Bangkok: ESCAP, 2022), **https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/d8files/2022-03/CS78-process_for_placing_draft_resolutions_under_the_silent_procedure.pdf**

100 See United Nations, ST/AI/2026/1, para. 3.4: "The decision-making authority with respect to the acceptance and management of any voluntary contribution, including its allocation and utilization, shall be vested solely with the United Nations."

101 TPNW, *Report of the first Meeting of States Parties to the TPNW,* (21 July 2022), TPNW/MSP/2022/6, **https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3984999?v=pdf**

102 In other arms control and disarmament treaties, there is an existing practice to include the "participation of survivors and affected communities in all stages of assessment, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation", which could be adapted by TPNW States Parties; see James Revill, Renata Hessmann Dalaqua, and Wilfred Wan, "The TPNW in Practice: Elements for Effective National Implementation", *Journal for Peace and Nuclear Disarmament* 4, no. 1 (2021): 26, **https://doi.org/10.1080/25751654.2021.1930737**

103 See United Nations, ST/AI/2026/1, para. 2.1.

104 Mathiason, *Final Report*, 17.

Once sufficient funds are secured to ensure the long-term viability of the trust fund, periodic calls for proposals based on a strategic plan could be made by ODA. Applications for project support could be opened to TPNW States Parties, along with United Nations system partners, regional organizations, NGOs, affected groups, and research institutes.

Administrative costs would be charged to contributions made to the trust fund. The United Nations charges all contributions for programme support costs associated with the implementation of fund activities and other indirect costs, which is set at a 13% rate.[105] Like UNSCAR, the trust fund could be set up as a dedicated sub-account under an ODA trust fund, with an arrangement for reduced rates.[106] In addition to general operating costs, there would be a need for designated staff time, for example, a Programme Officer (P3) position at half- or full-time, depending on the activity of the trust fund, with additional administrative support. Likely overall annual administration costs are estimated to be around USD 200,000.[107]

The cost and duration of projects to be supported would have to be adapted to fulfil the operational needs of victim assistance and environmental remediation. Two types of grants could be offered. Short-term grants could support projects with attainable outcomes over a relatively short period (e.g., one year), requiring relatively small amounts of funding (e.g., up to USD 100,000). Programme grants could support multiple, related projects requiring more substantial and sustained funding over a considerable period of time, perhaps in phases of up to USD 250,000 for up to three years, with the possibility of renewal—such as might be required for environmental remediation work.

As a United Nations-hosted funding mechanism, a TPNW trust fund would necessarily have to conform to regular United Nations practices,[108] including requirements for both financial and substantive reporting.[109] The UNSCAR and ESCAP models offer clear guidelines regarding criteria for types of projects sought and their content, reporting requirements, budgeting, and other features. These models could provide a guide for such elements of a TPNW trust fund.

105 United Nations programme support cost rates are typically as follows: 13% on voluntary contributions where the United Nations has primary and overarching programmatic responsibility and is the direct recipient of funds; 7% on voluntary contributions supporting inter-agency or Delivering As One programmes under valid collaborative arrangements; and 3% on pass-through projects implemented by other United Nations entities, NGOs, or governments, where the United Nations's role is limited to oversight functions and fund administration; see ST/AI/2026/1, para. 1.4; and United Nations, *Finance and Budget Manual, Version 1.0* (New York: Department of Management, Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts, October 2012), 87.

106 Mashiko, "UN Trust Facility for Supporting Cooperation in Arms Regulation".

107 As noted previously, in 2023, the annual administrative costs of UNSCAR were about USD 250,000. For ESCAP, these annual costs are generally around USD 200,000.

108 See United Nations, ST/AI/2026/1; ST/SGB/2013/4; ST/SGB/188; and ST/AI/284.

109 See United Nations, ST/AI/2026/1, paras. 7.1, 7.4, and 7.5.

Option 2. Make the Trust Fund a Direct Treaty Responsibility

A second option draws on the model of the ATT trust fund. A TPNW trust fund could be set up under the independent authority of the TPNW, which could be accomplished by a decision of the States Parties at the Review Conference.

In choosing this option, States Parties would need to decide whether to establish the trust fund with its own independent facility for administering its work, while seeking to maintain the current working relationship with ODA for the general operations of the TPNW (such as conference services); or to establish a dedicated secretariat or implementation support unit for the TPNW, responsible for overseeing the full operations of the Treaty, including the trust fund, similar to the case of the ATT Secretariat.

In the former case, assuming that acceptable arrangements could be made with ODA for continuing current arrangements in relation to the TPNW, administrative and financial rules and procedures for the operation of a trust fund would need to be established, in addition to determining the physical locale for the independent facility and costs thereof. While pursuing an independent facility might be a longer-term goal of States Parties, it would nevertheless require a level of commitment similar to that supporting the ATT Secretariat, which has become a central implementation mechanism of that Treaty. In either case, it would be expected for administration costs of the trust fund to be covered by its contributions.

In the latter case, the ATT trust fund model gives a general idea of what an independent secretariat and a multi-project trust fund would cost. The estimated costs of the ATT Secretariat for 2026 are approximately USD 620,000, covering three staff positions (P-2, P3, and P4). These costs are financed through assessed contributions from States Parties.[110] In addition, there is one dedicated trust fund officer; that position is funded through voluntary contributions. Necessary staffing levels in the TPNW case would depend on the requirements for Treaty implementation initiatives, as well as administrative costs based on the nature and number of projects undertaken by the TPNW trust fund.

Regardless of the choice made, a number of other features of the ATT trust fund model could apply to the operation of a TPNW trust fund. For example, a selection committee could be established, with members selected at an MSP or Review Conference. This body would oversee the operation of the trust fund and would have final say over which projects are selected for support, following pre-selection by the administrative body from applications received. Following the ATT trust fund model, this committee would be comprised of 15 States Parties, whether or not they have donated to the trust fund.

A TPNW trust fund could issue a regular call for project proposals. Such a call would specify the criteria for project selection (those criteria being decided by MSPs), and clearly articulate requirements to be met in applications.

110 ATT, "ATT Provisional Budget Estimates for the Financial Year 2026" (Geneva: ATT Secretariat, 27 May 2025, https://old.thearmstradetreaty.org/hyper-images/file/ATT_CSP11_ATTS_Provisional%202026%20Budget%20Estimates_EN/ATT_CSP11_ATTS_Provisional%202026%20Budget%20Estimates_EN.pdf

Project applications could be limited to TPNW States Parties, signatory States, or other States, as with the ATT. On the other hand, given the core mandate of the TPNW, States Parties could decide to include non-State implementing partners, such as international bodies, NGOs, research institutes, and even private sector actors, as potential applicants for support.

Funds could be sought through an annual call for voluntary contributions. States Parties could decide to restrict what entities could contribute (e.g., only States Parties) and whether contributions could be earmarked. Restricting contributions to States Parties, at least at the outset of a trust fund, could enable better orientation of the work, but would restrict the overall level of funding available for project support. In an initial phase, contributions could be restricted to States Parties for the first five years. Following a review of trust fund operations and its financial health, contributions could be opened to States that have not yet acceded to the Treaty. It could also be decided to accept contributions from NGOs, the private sector, and others—a step which would potentially increase overall funding available.

Given that financial resources are likely to be limited at the outset of a trust fund, as with UNSCAR and the ATT, initial grants would accordingly need to be limited in size and duration.

Option 3. A Step-by-Step Approach

A third option could be for TPNW States Parties to adopt a series of steps at the Review Conference to build knowledge of recipient needs and funding options in order to provide a flexible route towards establishment of a trust fund. Two initial steps could be taken in parallel.

One such step could be to seek better data with regard to victim assistance and environmental remediation needs,[111] as perceived by States Parties, as well as the levels and types of resources that might be available for addressing these. This could be done through several routes. One approach, drawing on the Biological Weapons Convention article X experience with assistance and cooperation, could be to create a database to which States Parties could submit requests for and offers of assistance,[112] individually or in collaboration with other States or international organizations (see box 3). Such a mechanism could help all States Parties to better understand recipient needs and available resources, as well as potentially facilitate direct support through bilateral arrangements.

A decision to establish such a database could be taken at the Review Conference. It could be managed by ODA, and hosted on a dedicated website for TPNW States Parties. The initial costs for developing and hosting the platform are estimated to be USD 30-50,000, plus additional part-time staff costs.[113] Voluntary contributions from States Parties could help to cover initial costs, which could be pledged at the Review Conference. Other options for maintaining the database could be explored, such as by a civil society organization. States Parties could also provide dedicated funds for such an arrangement.

111 For a useful general discussion of needs assessment in relation to the positive obligation under articles 6 and 7, see Revill, Dalaqua, and Wan, "The TPNW in Practice", 23–26.

112 ODA, "Assistance and Cooperation Database", BWC Article X Assistance and Cooperation Database, https://bwc-articlex.unog.ch/

113 Correspondence with expert, March 2026.

Box 3. BWC Article X Assistance and Cooperation Database

At the Seventh Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) in 2011, it was decided to establish "a database system to facilitate requests for and offers of exchange of assistance and cooperation among States Parties", with a particular focus on strengthening cooperation and assistance under article X.

States Parties were invited, individually or jointly with other States or international organizations, to submit "any requirements, needs or offers for assistance, including in terms of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information regarding the use of biological and toxin agents for peaceful purposes". The database is used to match requests for assistance with suitable offers.

The database is administered by the Treaty's implementation support unit and it is open to all States Parties. The decision further required the unit to submit an annual report detailing the operation of the database, and for its operation of the database to be reviewed at the subsequent Review Conference.[114]

A second such step could be to compile potential funding sources and areas for cooperation. While such information would be an ongoing need of the trust fund, the Review Conference could establish a Subsidiary Body to begin this work as a part of making a realistic initial assessment of available resources for the trust fund. States Parties could be asked in advance of the Review Conference to prepare descriptions of needs and pledges of contributions as evidence in weighing the potential financial viability of a trust fund.

Work on the commitments of articles 6 and 7 will necessarily bring the Treaty into a relationship with many international bodies with overlapping concerns.[115] The Subsidiary Body could convene consultations with likely partner bodies to assess areas where collaboration might take place, hence strengthening the potential impact of the work of the trust fund. In addition, the preparation of technical requirements and procedures, as well as cost estimates, could be a part of this initiative.

The Review Conference could decide on processes (e.g., asking the working group to continue its work or creating the above proposed Subsidiary Body) and time frames for building these elements into the preparation for the establishment and implementation of the trust fund, as one element in its consideration of advancing the overall implementation of articles 6 and 7.

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114 Seventh Review Conference of the States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention, *Final Document*, BWC/CONF.VII/7 (Geneva: 22 December 2011), https://docs.un.org/BWC/CONF.VII/7

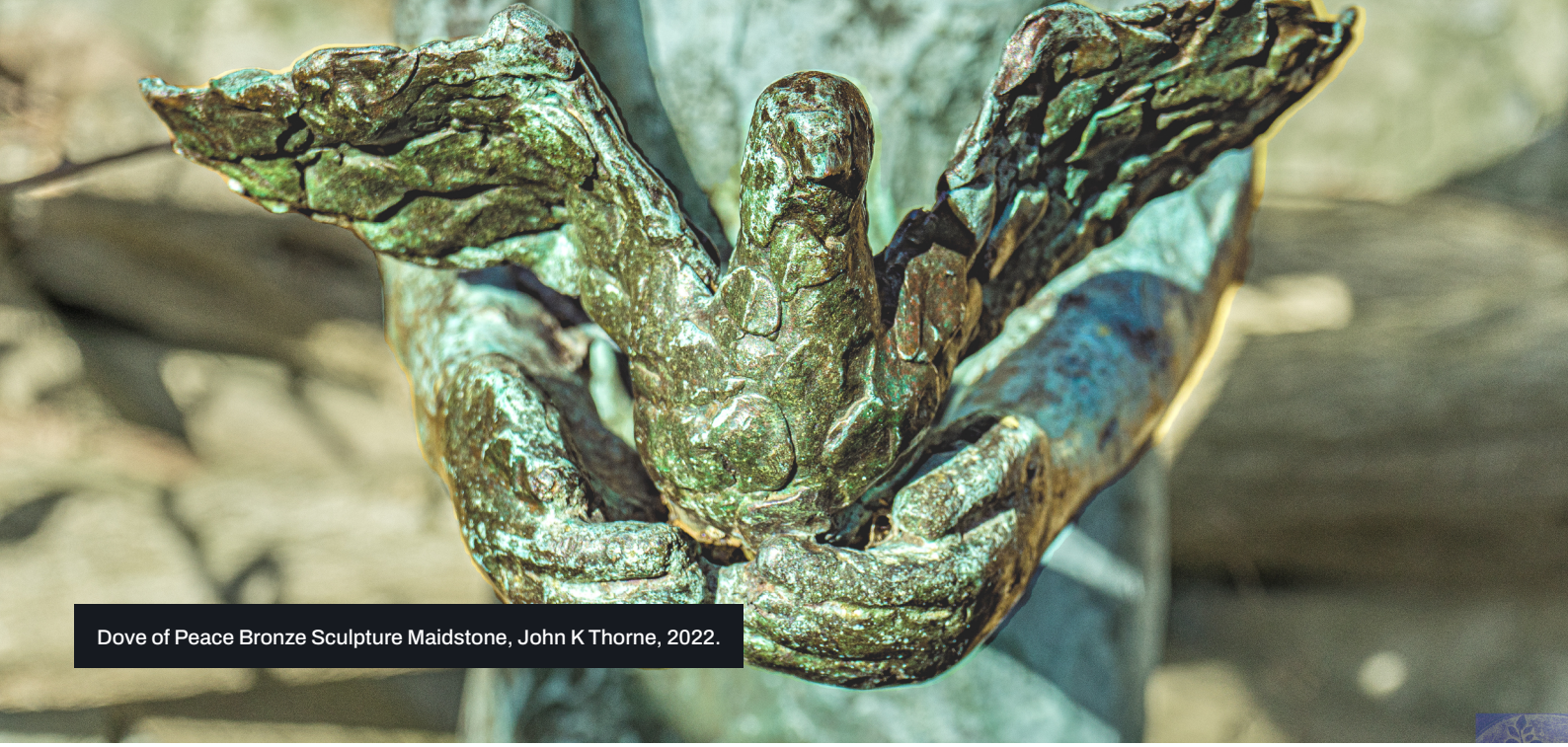
115 Such as United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR), and International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA); the IAEA, for example, has a range of assistance programmes, see IAEA, "Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency", https://www.iaea.org/topics/nuclear-safety-conventions/convention-assistance-case-nuclear-accident-or-radiological-emergency ; IAEA, "Response and Assistance Network", https://www.iaea.org/services/networks/ranet ; and IAEA, "Technical Cooperation Programme", https://www.iaea.org/services/technical-cooperation-programme

Upon an agreed time frame and steps, once enough insight into needs and potential financial or in-kind contributions has been collected to illustrate the potential viability and sustainability of a trust fund, a subsequent step could then be for States Parties to decide on the establishment of a TPNW trust fund. At that stage, at the Fourth MSP, States Parties could decide to (a) proceed with the establishment of a permanent trust fund, in line with options 1 or 2 above; or (b) establish a trust fund on an interim basis as a means of testing operational and financial sustainability.

Should States Parties opt for an interim arrangement, a temporary trust fund could be set up for the remainder of the review cycle, to be administered by ODA, without prejudice to future institutional arrangements for the TPNW. Drawing from the model of the trust fund for victims of human trafficking, a project could be registered installing a temporary trust fund secretariat under ODA.[116] This temporary fund could be set up as a sub-account to ODA, to reduce project support costs. An initial trial period would allow for a better understanding of a trust fund's operational costs and administrative needs, and help to assess overall demand and long-term sustainability of a trust fund, including whether the temporary structure corresponds to the needs of the Treaty. At the same time, it should be recognized that establishing a temporary trust fund would entail significant administrative and resource pressures, comparable to those required to establish a permanent fund, which should be factored in when considering the options. At the Second Review Conference, the institutional arrangement could be extended, revised, or terminated, as appropriate.

This option takes a less direct route than the others. However, its practical nature suggests a possible roadmap towards a trust fund that is both viable and sustainable in the long term.

116 See above United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Human Trafficking, 23.



Dove of Peace Bronze Sculpture Maidstone, John K Thorne, 2022.

Reflections

Multilateral approaches to international problem-solving are under increasing stress. Advances in weaponry, arms proliferation, and contemporary security and strategic realities further complicate the picture. Moreover, resources for meeting humanitarian needs are ever scarcer. These realities shape the context within which eventual decisions about a TPNW trust fund must sit.

This report has sought to offer some orientations for the further deliberations which lie ahead over the next several months. It is hoped that these will assist States Parties as they seek to make progress towards a feasible and sustainable trust fund mechanism.

In addition to what is offered in the previous sections of this report, some additional observations are presented here for consideration.

- **A trust fund or not?** Whatever the differences that have emerged in discussions since 2022, there is general support for moving forward with the idea of a trust fund. In furthering this idea, additional deliberation could be useful on the place of this idea within the overall commitments undertaken as part of the Vienna Action Plan. What is the best fit for a trust fund, given those other priorities? How might a trust fund assist the overall implementation of the Vienna Action Plan commitments?

- **Getting started financially.** A trust fund remains only an idea until there are actually funds to use. Option 3 made some suggestions as to how this might be approached. At a minimum, some means must be found for creating a pool of funds to get a trust fund underway. Short of the somewhat ambitious proposal in Option 3 of creating a 'needs and resources' database, a start could nevertheless be made by a few States Parties in a position to do so making initial pledges, for example through a pledging session tied to the TPNW meeting calendar. All States Parties, including affected States, could be encouraged to contribute through financial or in-kind assistance. Such a step could provide an early reality test for judging the viability of a trust fund in the short term.

- **Nothing possible without an administrative mechanism**. States Parties have so far not decided to create the equivalent of an implementation support unit for the Treaty as a whole. However, any decision to go forward with a trust fund will require some administrative capacity, and it is absolutely essential for a functioning trust fund. This theme runs throughout the cases and options in this report.

- **Assessing needs and costs of meeting them**. Some States Parties have expressed the concern that a needs assessment in relation to victim assistance and environmental remediation is required before establishing a trust fund. The kinds of needs to address are broadly understood. However, the establishment of a trust fund with some initial resources could provide funding for projects that could more specifically define needs of particular types in particular places, as well as the methods and costs of addressing them. Option 3 suggests one way forward on this.

- **Keeping civil society and affected communities central**. While there is no consensus among States Parties concerning inclusion of such actors in decision-making for the trust fund, ways could be found to include them in the vision for the work of the trust fund and its implementation, as per the principles outlined in the Declaration of the First MSP and the related commitments of the Vienna Action Plan. Creative ways could be found, for example, for such actors to serve in an advisory capacity in trust fund processes, and commitment to purposeful consultations could be made part of normal practice for TPNW meetings.



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