Based on the idea that **financial resources should not be an impediment** to advancing gender equality or eliminating barriers facing women peacekeepers, the UN and Canada have collaborated to design a fund to **support and incentivize the increased meaningful participation of uniformed women** in UN peace operations. This Fund seeks to accelerate progress towards achieving UN targets to **increase the proportion of women** serving in uniformed military and police roles, as stated in the Department of Peace Operations' Uniformed Gender Parity (UGPS) Strategy 2018-2028.

The **primary recipients of the fund are troop- and police-contributing countries (T/PCCs)**. UN organizations that wish to implement and test innovations will have secondary access.

### Funding Modalities

1. **Barrier Assessments**
   - Funding to conduct an assessment of barriers and of good practices for the meaningful participation of uniformed women within military and police institutions. Barrier assessments are mandatory to receive flexible project funding.

2. **Premiums for Gender-Strong Units**
   - Financial premiums to T/PCCs for the deployment of gender-strong units, which may serve as an incentive to rapidly, responsibly and sustainably increase the meaningful deployment of women to UN peace operations. To qualify, the unit must also exceed UGPS targets by at least 5%.

3. **Flexible Project Funding**
   - Allows T/PCCs and/or UN organizations to access financial assistance to support evidence-based activities and the deployment of trained and eligible uniformed women.

### What is a Gender-Strong Unit?

A gender-strong unit is defined as a unit (typically a military battalion or formed police unit) that includes substantial representation of women overall and in positions of authority, has provided gender-equity training to all unit members, and has adequate equipment and other materiel to ensure parity of deployment conditions for women and men peacekeepers.

### Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning

All projects must include robust internal monitoring and evaluation procedures. The Fund’s mandate to provide innovative solutions requires a comprehensive evaluation of its efforts. In recognition of the need to move from incremental to transformational change, the Fund is also able to adapt based on evaluation results reported in order to remain flexible in its approach.

### Risk Mitigation

Specific risk and mitigation strategies will be developed by applicants for each project that is funded, as part of the proposal submission process. While the risks outlined will be specific to each project, as a criterion for consideration, each proposal should explicitly address the safety and security of all women military or police personnel who are to be assisted through the proposal.
Engagement with women stakeholders through project development

Cost effectiveness

Project management and risk analysis

Recipient Organizations

- Primarily, the Fund offers assistance and incentives for T/PCCs. T/PCCs may wish to apply to the fund in coordination with civil society organizations (CSOs) and/or UN organizations
- Secondly, the Fund can support projects submitted by UN organizations which are designed to implement and test innovations. UN organizations may wish to apply to the fund in coordination with CSOs and/or T/PCCs

Eligibility Criteria for Project Funding

- Currently a UN T/PCC or serious intent to become one
- Demonstrates a high-level of commitment through a public letter of interest
- Agrees to complete a credible barrier assessment and allows the Fund Secretariat to access and publicize data from this assessment through an anonymized report
- Meets UN's due diligence requirements
- Contributes to at least one of the Fund's outcomes: expanded country-specific knowledge of barriers to uniformed women's deployment; increased meaningful deployment of uniformed women; increased national pool of uniformed women eligible to deploy; improved working conditions for uniformed women peacekeepers in UN peace operations

Additional Considerations for Selection

- Impact and strategic relevance
- Sustainable and enduring
- Innovative solutions and approaches
- Monitoring, reporting and evaluation

Examples of Possible Funding Proposals

- Training and mentorship programs for commanders and senior personnel
- Investment in infrastructure needed for more women to deploy to a mission
- National-level recruitment campaign to attract more women into service
- Roster and targeted training to elevate the skills of women personnel who may deploy

The Elsie Initiative Fund

The Elsie Initiative Fund is a joint initiative by Canada and the United Nations for uniformed women in peace operations. It is designed to address barriers to the uniformed deployment of women in UN peace operations. The Fund provides funding and support to strengthen the capacity of UN peacekeeping missions to accommodate uniformed women peacekeepers and to increase their meaningful participation.

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