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Submitted by the ATT Voluntary Trust Fund

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Arms Trade Treaty

**Twelfth Conference of States Parties**

Geneva, 24 – 28 August 2026

**CSP12 INFORMAL PREPARATORY MEETING (27-28 MAY 2026): PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE ARMS TRADE TREATY VOLUNTARY TRUST FUND (VTF) TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR)**

Dear delegates,

I have the honor to write to you regarding the discussions held within the Voluntary Trust Fund (VTF) Selection Committee since the Eleventh Conference of States Parties (CSP11).

As the VTF enters its tenth year since its establishment in 2016, the Committee has undertaken a review of VTF's key documents, namely the VTF Terms of Reference (ToR), as adopted by the Fourth Conference of States Parties (CSP4), and the VTF Administrative Rules (AR), as adopted by the VTF Selection Committee in 2016. This review has been conducted with a view to ensuring that these documents remain fit for purpose and accurately reflect the current operational realities of the Fund. The discussions have taken place in a constructive spirit, drawing on the practical experience gained through the implementation of the VTF, as well as the valuable contributions of the members of the VTF Selection Committee.

In this context, I am pleased to share the proposed revisions to the VTF key documents, as reflected in the attached documentation. With regard to the proposed revised VTF Terms of Reference, I kindly seek your consideration and endorsement at the Twelfth Conference of States Parties (CSP12). The VTF Administrative Rules is shared for your information.

The proposed changes are intended to:

- better reflect the practical realities of the Fund's operations;
- address and correct discrepancies identified between the Terms of Reference and the Administrative Rules; and
- clarify certain provisions to enhance consistency, transparency, and ease of implementation.

These revisions do not alter the fundamental objectives of the VTF but are intended to strengthen its governance framework and improve its effective functioning.

In addition to the two key documents, the Committee has also developed a template form for non-States Parties applying to the Fund, intended to enable them to indicate a clear and unambiguous political commitment to join the Treaty. This responds to requests from non-States Parties seeking guidance on what should be included in their official submissions when applying for support from the Fund. It is our expectation that this template form will help facilitate and streamline the application process for non-States Parties, while promoting clarity, consistency,

and transparency. The draft template form is presented as Attachment 2 of the proposed updated Terms of Reference.

I would be grateful for your careful consideration of the proposed changes to the VTF Terms of Reference in advance of CSP12. At the Preparatory Meeting, in May we will have a first opportunity to exchange on these proposals.

I look forward to your continued engagement and support in advancing the work of the Voluntary Trust Fund.

Please accept the assurances of my highest consideration.

Ambassador Thomas GÖBEL  
Permanent Representative of Germany to the Conference on Disarmament  
**Chair of the VTF Selection Committee**

**Attached documents for the CSP12 Informal Preparatory Meeting:**

- **ANNEX 1:** *VTF Terms of Reference – proposed amendments, including Draft Template for Demonstrating Political Will to Join the Arms Trade Treaty*
- **ANNEX 2:** *Updated VTF Administrative Rules (for information only)*



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# **VOLUNTARY TRUST FUND**

## **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**Adopted: ATT Second Conference of States Parties**

**Amended: ATT Fourth Conference of States Parties**

## TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE ATT VOLUNTARY TRUST FUND

### Purpose and Scope of the Trust Fund

1. The Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) establishes a Voluntary Trust Fund (VTF) in accordance with Article 16 of the ATT.

2. The primary objective of this Trust Fund is to assist requesting States Parties requiring international assistance to implement the ATT.

2 bis. Signatory States and other States that have shown a clear and unambiguous political commitment to ratify or accede to the Treaty may also benefit from assistance from the VTF.

3. The Conference of States Parties to the ATT shall decide on General Principles for Implementation Assistance Projects under the ATT Voluntary Trust Fund, in particular specific criteria for eligibility.

~~4. Contributions to the Trust Fund may be allocated by donors for sole use to the benefit of States Parties.~~

### Authority

4. The Trust Fund shall be administered by the ATT Secretariat, with the support of the Selection Committee, which shall be established in accordance with Article 17.4 (f) of the ATT and Rule 42 of the Rules of Procedure, to execute the functions as set out in these Terms of Reference. The administration of the VTF by the Secretariat shall be funded, as appropriate, from VTF contributions as determined by the Selection Committee annually.

5. To promote diverse and geographical representation, tThe Selection Committee shall consist of up to 15 seats, as agreed by the Second Conference of States Parties (para. 23, ATT/CSP2/2016/5). States Parties shall be appointed to be members of the Selection Committee by the Conference of States Parties, including donors as well as non-donors to the Fund, ~~to ensure diverse representation.~~ Members of the Selection Committee shall serve for two years and are eligible for reappointment.<sup>1</sup> The Selection Committee shall select one of its members to chair its deliberations. ~~The President of the Conference of States Parties and~~ ~~the~~ ATT Secretariat ~~should~~ participates in meetings of the Selection Committee in an ex officio capacity. The President of the

<sup>1</sup> In the event that one or more seats on the Selection Committee is vacated for any reason before the period of two years, a request to become a member of the Selection Committee will be circulated for a silence procedure or the next Conference of States Parties may appoint one or more States Parties to fill the seat or seats, as the case may be.

Conference of States Parties chairs the first Selection Committee meeting if the Chairperson has not been selected or appointed before the first meeting and can participate in meetings of the Selection Committee in an ex officio capacity.

6. The Selection Committee shall meet in accordance with Article 13 of the Rules of Procedure of the Conference of States Parties and draw, as appropriate, on outside expertise, in particular from UN agencies and civil society. A member of the Selection Committee that has submitted a project proposal can participate in the discussion of the proposals for that project selection cycle but does not take part in the decision making of the Selection Committee for its own proposal~~that project selection cycle~~.<sup>2</sup>

### **Operation of the Trust Fund**

7. States Parties or other entities may donate to the VTF throughout the year and may make pledges at a dedicated segment of each ordinary session of the Conference of States Parties. These donations shall be transferred to the ATT Voluntary Trust Fund, preferably within 30 days. The ATT Secretariat will keep a record of received contributions to the Trust Fund, and will inform States Parties of the amount of funds available for each cycle of the VTF.
8. On an annual basis, the ATT Secretariat will issue a call for project proposals by States requiring implementation assistance to be submitted by a date determined by the Selection Committee allowing for adequate time for the preparation of those proposals.
9. The ATT Secretariat shall conduct a pre-screening of all project proposals received by the due date against “The General Principles for Implementation Assistance Projects under the ATT Voluntary Trust Fund” as decided by the Conference of States Parties to the ATT (see Attachment) and taking into account the Guidance for the Selection Process developed by the VTF Selection Committee accordingly. The ATT Secretariat shall draft a shortlist of eligible project proposals, relying on outside expertise as appropriate and needed, for consideration by the Selection Committee.
10. The Selection Committee shall decide on the initial allocation of available funds, based on the shortlist, taking due account of the VTF operating costs for the following and subsequent years. This decision, and any subsequent allocation decisions that may be required over the course of the project year, shall follow “The General Principles for Implementation Assistance Projects under the ATT Voluntary Trust Fund” as decided by the Conference of States Parties (see Attachment) and shall be reported to the Conference of States Parties.
11. The ATT Secretariat will ensure that the grants are transferred as decided by the Selection Committee and ensure transparent accounting. It shall report to the Conference of States Parties accordingly.

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<sup>2</sup> In the case of equality of votes, the Chairperson of the VTF Selection Committee will cast the deciding vote.

12. The ATT Secretariat will evaluate reports on the implementation of projects by beneficiaries and will report to the Conference of States Parties via the Selection Committee on the outcomes of the projects. Beneficiary States may be invited to the Conference of States Parties and Working Group meetings by the ~~VTF Selection Committee~~ ATT Secretariat to present their results and answer questions.
13. Administrative details regarding the application procedure to be followed by applicants shall be elaborated by the ATT Secretariat.

### **Monitoring, Auditing and Reporting**

14. The audit provisions as per Rule 10 of the ATT Financial Rules shall be applicable to the VTF mutatis mutandis.
15. All recipients of funds shall submit a final report that should be made publicly available via the ATT Website. The final report should include a description of the outcomes, achievements and impacts as well as outline possible shortcomings and recommendations for further actions. Furthermore, the final report should include a detailed financial report on expenditures and balances. The report is due 60 days after completion of the activity financed by the Trust Fund. The ATT Secretariat shall provide technical guidelines for reporting, and shall ensure appropriate monitoring and evaluation.

### **Final Provisions**

16. These Terms of Reference will be re-evaluated by the Conference of States Parties as appropriate.<sup>3</sup>
17. In the event of a termination of the activities of the Trust Fund, outstanding bills shall be paid and the remaining donations shall be refunded.

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~~<sup>3</sup>The issue of needs and geographic balance in the operation of the Voluntary Trust Fund was raised at the Second Conference of States Parties. There was a general understanding that this issue will be reconsidered at the re-evaluation of these Terms of Reference in two years' time, as appropriate.~~

## **ATTACHMENT 1**

### **The General Principles for Implementation Assistance Projects under the ATT Voluntary Trust Fund**

#### **Eligibility Criteria**

1. Any State Party to the ATT requiring assistance in the implementation of the Treaty may submit a project proposal.
2. Signatory States and other States having shown clear and unambiguous political commitment to accede ~~or ratify to~~ the ATT requiring assistance to implement the Treaty may also submit project proposals.
3. Applicants must be the beneficiary States.
4. Assistance projects required by requesting States may be implemented by or in conjunction with UN agencies, international or regional organisations, civil society organisations or other competent implementing partners.

5. VTF project applications must contain an adequate description of the proposed project, including a description of the state of ATT implementation in the requesting country or, if the applicant is not a State Party, a plausible roadmap towards ratification/accession via a designated template. The applications should also include the following:

- a. an outline of challenges to implementation, accession/ratification,
  - a-b. a description of the aim of the project,
  - c. how ~~it~~ the VTF can help overcome the challenges identified and the added value of the project in relation to other initiatives,
  - b-d. a timeline for project implementation,
  - e. an outline of the institutional and organizational setup of the proposal, and
  - e-f. a detailed budget plan.
- 5.6. Applicants must ensure that any project funding received from the Voluntary Trust Fund does not duplicate funding received for the same or a similar project from other sources.
- 6.7. The ATT Secretariat shall consult regularly with other funding entities on projects funded and discuss options and possibilities for synergies with a view to avoiding duplication.

### **Selection Criteria**

1. The selection shall be based on a qualitative assessment of the descriptions and outlines to be submitted as specified by the eligibility criteria.
2. Priority shall be given to States Parties requiring assistance to implement the Treaty.
3. Eligible projects by Signatory States and other States requiring assistance may also be considered if the applicant has shown clear and unambiguous political commitment to accede ~~or ratify to~~ the ATT and is able to show how the envisaged projects will help to meet envisaged milestones and ultimately lead to speeding up (or enabling) the process of ratification/accession.
4. If two or more project proposals are considered to be of equal quality after thorough assessment against the quality considerations as established by the Selection Committee, ATT strategies and/or priorities established by the Conference of States Parties, including geographic requirements, shall be taken into account in the allocation of funds to beneficiary States.
5. Overlap/duplication with projects funded by other relevant funds and UNSCAR, by States Parties on a bilateral basis ~~or through other channels,~~ shall be avoided.

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**ATTACHMENT 2**

**Template for Demonstrating Political Will to Join the Arms Trade Treaty**

**This template is intended for use by States that have not yet joined the Treaty.** Its purpose is to enable such States *to demonstrate clear and unambiguous political will* to accede to or ratify the Treaty. By providing detailed responses to the questions below, States can outline existing political commitments, institutional arrangements, and strategic considerations related to joining the Treaty.

Please complete all sections as thoroughly as possible. Where applicable, attach supporting documentation or references.

**Section 1: Formal Expression of Intent**

Have government leaders publicly expressed an intention to join the ATT?

Yes  No

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If yes, provide details (e.g., official statements, announcements):

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Is this intention reflected in any political party platform?  Yes  No

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If yes, specify the party and relevant provisions:

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**Section 2: Legislative, Regulatory and Policy Framework**

Is there a dedicated Parliamentary Committee or other organization tasked with deliberating on joining the ATT?

Yes  No

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If yes, provide the name of the organization and its mandate:

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Is there a draft bill before Parliament concerning ATT ratification or accession?

Yes  No

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If yes, provide details and timeline:

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Do you have a Roadmap, National Action Plan or Strategy on Conventional Arms?

Yes  No

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If yes: When was it established? How will the proposed project help meet envisaged milestones and accelerate the process of ratification or accession?

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If no: Are you currently developing such a plan or strategy?

Yes  No

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### **Section 3: Executive and Inter-Agency Coordination**

Has joining the ATT been discussed within your National Security Council or equivalent body?

Yes  No

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If yes, provide details:

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Are there Director-General or Director-level inter-agency meetings to review the ATT?

Yes  No

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If yes, describe the structure and frequency of such meetings:

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**Section 4: External Indicators of Commitment**

Has the State participated in ATT meetings?

Yes  No

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If yes, provide details:

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Has the State consistently voted in favor of ATT-related resolutions in the UN General Assembly or First Committee?

Yes  No

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If there has been a recent change in voting behavior, explain:

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Has the State's leadership made public statements of intent to join the ATT (beyond those noted in Section 1)?

Yes  No

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If yes, provide details:

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**Section 5: Additional Circumstances**

Are there external factors or circumstances that demonstrate the State's commitment to the ATT (e.g., regional security initiatives)?

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[For information only](#)

# VOLUNTARY TRUST FUND

## ADMINISTRATIVE RULES

Geneva

Adopted: 15 November 2016

First Amendment: September 2018

Second Amendment: September 2024

**Third Amendment: MM YYYY**

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## THE ARMS TRADE TREATY VOLUNTARY TRUST FUND (VTF) ADMINISTRATIVE RULES

*References* A: *Arms Trade Treaty Text.*  
B: *Final Report of the Second Conference of States Parties, ATT/CSP2/2016/5*  
C: *VTF Terms of Reference, (ATT/CSP2/2016/WP.3/Rev.1)*  
D: *VTF Tasks and Timeline Document.*

### INTRODUCTION

1. The Second Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) established the ATT Voluntary Trust Fund (VTF) to operate under its Terms of Reference (ATT/CSP2/2016/WP.3/Rev.1).

2. The VTF is established to give practical expression to the requirements of Article 16 of the Treaty with a primary objective of assisting requesting States Parties requiring international assistance to implement their Treaty obligations.

2 bis Signatory States and other States that have shown a clear and unambiguous political commitment to ratify or accede to the Treaty may also benefit from assistance from the VTF.

3. Article 5 of the VTF Terms of Reference provides that the VTF shall be administered by the ATT Secretariat with the support of the Selection Committee. Article 14 of the VTF Terms of Reference provides that the 'Administrative details regarding the application procedure to be followed by applicants shall be elaborated by the ATT Secretariat'. Furthermore, Article 16 of the VTF Terms of Reference states that 'the ATT Secretariat shall provide technical guidelines for reporting, and shall ensure appropriate monitoring and evaluation'.

4. The VTF technical procedures and guidelines contemplated above are hereby presented as the **VTF Administrative Rules**. These Rules are essential for certainty, predictability and accountability in all VTF processes.

5. The VTF Administrative Rules shall be reviewed as and when necessary, in particular in conjunction with the VTF Terms of Reference.

### STRUCTURE OF THE VTF ADMINISTRATIVE RULES

6. Pursuant to the Treaty text, Second Conference of States Parties' decisions and the VTF Terms of Reference, the VTF Administrative Rules provide guidelines and procedures on the following aspects:

- a. Status and Aim of the VTF.
- b. Purpose of the VTF Administrative Rules.
- c. Applicability of the VTF Administrative Rules.
- d. Management of the VTF (Institutional Arrangements).
- e. VTF Relations with the Management Committee.

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- f. VTF's Mobilisation of Resources.
  - g. Relationship between the VTF and Donors.
  - h. Relationship between the VTF and Beneficiaries.
  - i. VTF's Selection Process.
  - j. Standard Conditions for Grants.
  - k. Procedures for Projects' Monitoring, Evaluation and Auditing.
  - l. Procedures for VTF's Corporate Auditing.
  - m. Enforcement of VTF's Decisions.
  - n. Final Provisions.

### **STATUS AND AIM OF THE VTF**

7. The VTF is a flexible multi-donor Fund established under Article 16 (3) of the Treaty as a mechanism to give effect to international assistance, through the deposit and disbursement of funds, for Treaty implementation. The VTF operates under its Terms of Reference as adopted by the Conference of States Parties to the ATT.

8. The VTF is administered by the ATT Secretariat assisted by the Selection Committee consisting of up to 15 members appointed by the Conference of States Parties, including donors as well as non-donors to the Fund, to ensure diverse representation.

9. The VTF aims to:

a. Assist, primarily, requesting States Parties requiring international assistance to implement their Treaty obligations.

a-bis. May also assist Signatory States and other States that have shown a clear and unambiguous political commitment to ratify or accede to the Treaty.

a.b. Mobilise resources to support States' implementation of the Treaty with respect to 'legal or legislative assistance, institutional capacity building, and technical, material and financial assistance'.

b-c. Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of international assistance through coordination and avoidance of duplication to realize effective Treaty implementation.

### **PURPOSE OF THE VTF ADMINISTRATIVE RULES**

10. The purpose of the VTF Administrative Rules is to set technical procedures and guidelines for the effective operationalization and management of the VTF.

### **APPLICABILITY OF THE VTF ADMINISTRATIVE RULES**

11. The VTF Administrative Rules shall, on adoption by the Selection Committee, apply, without exception, to the following:

- a. The ATT Secretariat.
- b. The VTF Selection Committee.
- c. States that contribute to the VTF.
- d. States presenting project proposals to the VTF.
- e. VTF grant recipient States.
- f. Professional experts appointed under the VTF.

### **MANAGEMENT OF THE VTF (INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS)**

12. The VTF is administered by the ATT Secretariat supported by the Selection Committee established in accordance with Article 17.4 (f) of the Treaty and Rule 42 of the Rules of Procedure, to execute the functions set out in the VTF Terms of Reference. The ATT Secretariat is accountable to the Conference of States Parties for the management of the VTF. The Selection Committee is tasked with the selection of projects, and oversight of VTF operations.

#### **The Role of the ATT Secretariat**

13. The administrative role of the ATT Secretariat:
- a. In consultation and with the Selection Committee, develop, maintain and review the VTF administrative procedures which include the technical application procedure as well as technical guidelines for project reporting, monitoring and evaluation.
  - b. Implement the VTF administrative rules and processes.
  - c. Develop, maintain and review processes for the calls for financial contributions to the VTF.
  - d. Work jointly with the Selection Committee's Chairperson and the President of the Conference of States Parties in developing and implementing the VTF strategy for resource mobilisation.
  - e. Develop, maintain and review processes for managing relations with donors. This entails concluding agreements with donors and providing donors with relevant donations disbursement reports and other relevant information as required.
  - f. Develop, maintain and review processes for the annual call for project proposals.
  - g. Receive and pre-screen project proposals for compliance with the agreed technical application procedure and/or eligibility criteria as contemplated in the attachment

to the VTF Terms of Reference: “The General Principles for Implementation Assistance Projects under the ATT Voluntary Trust Fund”.

- h. Prepare a shortlist of eligible project proposals and prepare pre-evaluations taking into account the Guidance for the Selection Process developed by the Selection Committee. For all other project proposals an explanation should be presented why they have not been shortlisted.
- i. Prepare and publish the VTF Selection Committee’s decisions on approved project proposals.
- j. Develop and maintain processes for managing relations with VTF beneficiaries. This entails concluding agreements with grant recipients setting out all applicable grants’ terms and conditions including recipient reporting obligations.
- k. Monitor projects according to adopted project monitoring standards and ensure the evaluation of their outcomes.
- l. Publish on the ATT website final reports as submitted by grant recipients.
- m. Where deemed necessary, facilitate the execution of audits on identified projects. To that end, the recognised professional auditors to be used for this purpose shall be appointed according to Rule 10 of the ATT Financial Rules.
- n. Prepare and publish the VTF annual substantive and financial report.
- o. Maintain records of all Selection Committee decisions.
- p. Participate in the design and execution of VTF outreach activities.

#### **The Role of the VTF Selection Committee**

- 14. The role of the VTF Selection Committee:
  - a. Determine its own schedule of work and meetings according to Article 7 of the VTF Terms of Reference.
  - b. To manage its work, the Selection Committee shall consider and approve the VTF timescale for notification to States.
  - c. Consider, adopt and oversee the implementation of the VTF administrative procedures as contemplated in paragraph 13(a) above.
  - d. Review the VTF Administrative Rules as and when necessary as specified in paragraph 5.
  - e. Consider and decide on submitted project proposals on the basis of the Guidance for the Selection Process as developed by the Selection Committee based on the “The General Principles for Implementation Assistance Projects under the ATT Voluntary Trust Fund” set out in the attachment to the VTF Terms of Reference.

- f. Participate in the implementation of the VTF resource mobilisation strategy.
- g. Review the annual VTF substantive and financial report before its submission to the Conference of States Parties.
- h. Address any other matter brought to its attention by the ATT Secretariat on project performance.
- i. Support the outreach activities of the VTF.

### **The Role of the Conference of States Parties**

15. The Conference of States Parties shall:
- a. Appoint the VTF Selection Committee.
  - b. Receive, consider and approve the annual VTF substantive and financial reports.
  - c. Consider and approve any amendments to the VTF Terms of Reference.

### **VTF RELATIONSHIP WITH THE ATT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

16. The ATT Management Committee's relationship with the VTF shall relate to the following aspects:
- a. Oversight over the budgetary implications of the use of ATT Secretariat staff for the VTF work.
  - b. Oversight over the budgetary implications of auditors utilised for the VTF.
  - c. Oversight over any other use of the ATT Secretariat's appropriation for the VTF's purpose.

### **VTF'S MOBILISATION OF RESOURCES**

17. Article 16 (3) of the Treaty provides that 'Each State Party is encouraged to contribute resources to the fund'. Consequent upon this provision, the VTF's primary source of revenue shall derive from voluntary donations by States Parties, Signatory States, other States and entities. Donations to the VTF shall, of necessity, be sought and accepted from donors who support the Treaty's object and purpose including the international principles that the Treaty upholds and advances.

18. To mobilise resources the VTF shall adopt a multi-pronged resource mobilisation strategy that includes, but not limited to, the following:
- a. Circulation of calls for financial contributions by donors. These calls shall be circulated by the ATT Secretariat to States Parties, Signatory States, other Statesies, and other entities and shall be posted on the ATT website.

- b. Creation of a dedicated VTF pledging session at each ordinary session of Conference of States Parties. The VTF pledging session shall form part of a standing Conference of States Parties' agenda item looking at International Assistance. Pledged donations should be transferred to the VTF without delay.
- c. Outreach to States and other entities for possible donations to the VTF. This direct outreach shall be facilitated by the ATT Secretariat in close cooperation with the Selection Committee's Chairperson and the CSP President.

## **RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE VTF AND DONORS**

19. The formal relationship between the VTF and donors commences when a donor makes a formal declaration of an intention to contribute to the VTF. This relationship ends when the formal obligations between the two parties are fully met.

20. Donors are important stakeholders in the continued sustainability of the VTF hence the relationship between the VTF and donors should be based on a clear delineation of each party's expectations captured in a formal agreement as necessary.

21. On a yearly basis or any other determined interval, the VTF shall issue calls for contributions to the VTF. The VTF's calls for contributions inform donors of the VTF's objectives, the nature of projects it seeks to fund and the VTF contact point for contributions.

22. On the basis of such VTF calls for contributions, donors will contact the ATT Secretariat and enter into discussions regarding the transfer of contributions to the VTF. Where necessary, this discussion will culminate in a formal agreement between the VTF and a donor. Depending on the extent of donor funding commitment, the agreement can take the form of a stand-alone agreement or a long term framework or partnership agreement.

23. Contributions and donations to the VTF can be made throughout the year.

24. For management purposes, the ATT Secretariat shall strive to have standardized agreements with donors covering the following aspects:

- a. The exact donation amount.
- b. The date by which donations shall be transferred.
- c. Arrangements on bank charges levied on funds transfer as well as currency fluctuation where applicable.
- d. Donors are encouraged to make unconditional grants but, where conditions are set, the ATT Secretariat and Selection Committee will ensure that they are respected. Any such conditionality shall be consistent with the VTF Terms of Reference and conditions of grant contained in the VTF Administrative Rules. Conditions could include, inter alia:
  - i. Funds to be used in accordance with the OECD DAC guidelines for development cooperation.

- ii. Submission of annual substantive and financial reports by VTF to donors.

25. The ATT Secretariat must ensure that donors are provided with all information necessary to facilitate the transfer of funds, including the VTF bank account details.

26. The ATT Secretariat must ensure that accounting reports to donors are submitted in compliance with agreed reporting times.

27. Unless specified otherwise by donors, funds that are not used or have been paid back by grant recipients should be fully accounted for and kept in reserve for the next VTF cycle.

### **RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE VTF AND BENEFICIARIES**

28. On an annual basis or any other determined interval, the Chairperson of the VTF Selection Committee via the ATT Secretariat shall issue calls for project proposals. To be eligible for consideration by the Selection Committee, project proposals to the VTF must be submitted in accordance with the VTF administrative procedures.

29. Once a project proposal has been approved, the ATT Secretariat shall enter into discussions with the grant recipient with a view to setting up the project's control framework to facilitate the transfer of funds as well as the project's reporting, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. On finalisation of a sound project control framework, a Grant Agreement shall be concluded between the ATT Secretariat and the grant recipient.

30. Each Grant Agreement will detail the terms of the relationship between the ATT Secretariat and the recipient. Furthermore, each Grant Agreement will cover the following aspects:

- a. Details of the beneficiary State and any implementing partner involved, with their roles in the project clearly defined.
- b. A Project Schedule.
  - i. Duration of the project with a start date and an end date.
  - ii. Project objectives, outputs and outcomes.
  - iii. Project impact on ATT implementation.
  - iv. Sustainability of project outputs and impact.
- c. Project Budget breakdown with explanations on the following line items as appropriate:
  - i. Personnel costs inclusive of consultants.
  - ii. Travel costs inclusive of visa, international/domestic transportation fares, terminal allowances, and vaccination.
  - iii. Equipment costs.

- iv. Operating costs (office space, communication, printing, interpretation and translation, transportation, bank and tax fees).
  - v. In the case of large scale or multi-year projects, an indication of the alignment of project phases (deliverables) with budget releases/instalments.
- d. Indication of the extent of the beneficiary State's in-kind contribution (e.g. personnel, office space, etc.) to the project to offset certain budget line items normally applicable to civil society organisations.
- e. Project Controls (Internal Control Mechanisms):
- i. Identification of key risks and risk management strategy.
  - ii. Project's internal controls.
  - iii. Project's monitoring, evaluation and auditing mechanisms.
  - iv. Reporting intervals.
  - v. Commitment to auditing when necessary.
31. As a pre-condition to finalising the Grant Agreement for signature, the ATT Secretariat will require each grant recipient to provide the following: all relevant banking details, a completed Project Schedule, and a memorandum of understanding or other document detailing the arrangement between the beneficiary State and the Project Implementing Partner(s), if applicable.
32. For large scale or multi-year projects, the VTF may effect payments in three instalments i.e.:
- a. ~~540~~ % after signing of the Grant Agreement.
  - b. ~~400~~ % upon receipt and approval of an interim report to the VTF.
  - c. ~~210~~ % upon receipt and approval of a final report to the VTF.
33. For smaller projects, the ATT Secretariat and the grant recipient may agree on a flexible grant payment method, which is not linked to reporting.
34. VTF funds shall only be disbursed after the Grant Agreement has been signed by the ATT Secretariat and the authorized representative of the grant recipient.
35. Funds shall only be transferred to the beneficiary State or to an entity authorised by it. Funds can only be directly transferred by the ATT Secretariat to a single payee identified by the beneficiary State. ~~A-and~~ partial payment to multiple payees may be is-not permitted only in exceptional cases. In all cases, the beneficiary State shall assume the entire responsibility for compliance with all terms and conditions imposed under the Grant Agreement.

36. Within 60 days after completion of a project, the beneficiary State(s) shall submit a final report that should be made publicly available via the ATT website.

37. If there are funds that are unused after completion of a project, such funds must be refunded to the VTF within 30 days of receipt of the invoice from the ATT Secretariat.

### **VTF'S SELECTION PROCESS**

38. The VTF project selection process shall be guided by the VTF Terms of Reference with particular reference to "The General Principles for Implementation Assistance Projects under the ATT Voluntary Trust Fund", which contains principles for the assessment of eligibility and selection of projects, and the Guidance for the Selection Process approved by the Selection Committee.

39. The VTF selection process shall have two phases as discussed below.

#### **Phase One**

40. The ATT Secretariat shall conduct a pre-screening of all project proposals received by the due date to assess compliance with the application requirements and/or Principles for Eligibility.

41. The ATT Secretariat shall, for consideration by the Selection Committee, prepare a shortlist of eligible project proposals and prepare pre-evaluations taking into account the Guidance for the Selection Process as decided upon by the VTF Selection Committee, relying on outside expertise as appropriate and needed. For all other project proposals an explanation should be presented why they have not been shortlisted.

42. To the extent possible the ATT Secretariat will endeavour to advise the Selection Committee of any overlap/duplication with projects funded by UNSCAR or other entities.

#### **Phase Two**

43. At this stage, the Selection Committee shall consider the shortlisted project proposals by applying the VTF Terms of Reference, including its Attachment containing Principles for the eligibility and selection of project proposals, and the Guidance for the Selection Process based thereon, which include:

- a. Qualitative assessment of project proposals in terms of projects objectives, output and outcomes as presented on the proposal.
- b. Eligible projects by Signatory States and other States requiring assistance may also be considered if the applicant has shown clear and unambiguous political commitment to accede to the ATT and is able to show how the envisaged project will help to meet envisaged milestones and ultimately lead to speeding up (or enabling) the process of ratification/accession.

- c. If two or more project proposals are considered to be of equal quality after thorough assessment against the qualitative criteria as established by the Selection Committee, the ATT strategies, and/or priorities established by the Conference of States Parties, including geographic requirements, shall be taken into account in the allocation of funds to beneficiary States.
  - d. Consideration of any information on projects proposals overlap/duplication with other projects.
44. As required, shortlisted project proposals could be considered against OECD DAC guidelines for development cooperation, as well as any other conditionalities applied to contributions.
45. The Selection Committee shall decide on the list of project proposals to be funded by the available VTF budget per project cycle.

#### **STANDARD CONDITIONS OF VTF GRANTS**

46. For purposes of accountability and uniformity in the management of grants, the set of standard grant conditions listed below should be imposed on all VTF grants.

#### **Duration and Implementation Period**

47. Unless agreed otherwise, all VTF projects shall have an implementation period of a maximum of one year starting immediately after the signing of a Grant Agreement between the ATT Secretariat and the grant recipient. Projects of longer duration and later commencement date shall also be considered.

#### **VTF Budget Cap**

48. A budget cap for project proposals shall be set on an annual basis and included in the call for project proposals. If nothing else is decided, the default cap is US\$100,000. A reasonable adjustment can be decided by the Selection Committee upon a case by case basis for project proposals by several applicants (joint project proposals) or for proposals with multiple beneficiaries. In this case, early consultations ~~f~~with the Selection Committee through the ATT Secretariat ~~]~~ are encouraged before the application is submitted.

49. Personnel costs in project proposals should not normally exceed 45% of the total project costs. In exceptional circumstances where highly specialised professional skills are required to implement a VTF project at a rate exceeding 45% of total project costs, a detailed motivation should be submitted together with a project proposal for consideration and decision by the Selection Committee.

#### **Project's Co-funding**

50. The VTF shall be open to co-funding of projects. However, VTF applicants are encouraged to secure a project funding partner prior to applying to VTF for project co-funding and required to do so by the time the Selection Committee considers the proposal for approval.

## VTF Grants Payment

51. Approved funds shall only be paid after a Grant Agreement has been signed by the ATT Secretariat and a duly authorized representative of the grant recipient, with all relevant project control documents completed and attached to the Grant Agreement.

52. The right to a grant is forfeited if a grant recipient fails to submit the required documents that are a precondition of signing of the Grant Agreement (see paragraph 31) within the timeframe stipulated by the VTF.

53. In the absence of a satisfactory explanation, if project reports demonstrate lack of progress or progress falling short of agreed schedule of deliverables, the VTF may withhold further grant transfers. This will, however, only be done after consultation with the affected grant recipient and the Selection Committee Chairperson and Head of the ATT Secretariat.

54. Further grants transfer shall only resume once a satisfactory corrective intervention has been carried out and evidence on the ground supports success of intervention.

## Reporting Requirements

55. VTF grant recipients must comply with the reporting requirements set out in Grant Agreements. These may include the following:

- a. Interim report(s) accounting for project activity progress and financial expenditure.
- b. Final report to be submitted within 60 days after completion of a project. The final report should include a description and evaluation of the project outcomes, achievements and impacts as well as outline possible shortcomings and recommendations for further actions (substantive report). Furthermore, the final report should include a detailed financial report on expenditures and balances (financial report) and copies of the associated expenditure verifications. Final reports shall be made publicly available via the ATT website.

56. Interim reports shall be used by the VTF as one of the tools to monitor progress in projects.

57. Furthermore, interim reports will assist the VTF to identify projects at risk of time and cost overrun. Projects with identified risks shall be carefully monitored by the VTF to ensure that project risks are properly mitigated in time by the grant recipient.

58. Submitted reports shall be in a prescribed format based on the project's schedule of activities and deliverables as well as detailed budget breakdown.

59. All reports, interim or final, shall be signed by the authorized representative of the grant recipient.

60. Failure by the VTF grant recipient to, without good cause, submit mandatory project reports may result in one or combination of the following:

- a. VTF's withholding of subsequent installments.

- b. VTF's recovery of part or all of the grant already transferred to the recipient.

#### **Repayment of unused funds**

61. Upon completion of a project, the grant recipient must repay to VTF any unused funds to the extent that these funds exceed the estimated cost of collection, as determined by the VTF.
62. Repayment is to be made to the VTF, without further delay, with the repayment properly referenced to the project that the funds were used for.

#### **Extension of the period for using the funds**

63. If a grant recipient is unable to use funds within the project implementing period, the recipient may apply for an extension of the time in which to use the grant. The application for an extension of time must be submitted to the ATT Secretariat as soon as the recipient realizes that an extension is necessary and no later than 30 days before the End Date of the project.
64. On consideration of an extension motivation, previously submitted interim reports and other relevant factors, the ATT Secretariat shall decide either to grant or not to grant the extension after consultation with the Selection Committee Chairperson.

#### **Grant Funds Recovery**

65. A grant recipient bears responsibility to comply with all terms and conditions of the grant contained in the Grant Agreement. Failure by the grant recipient to fulfill the grants obligations may result in the VTF's recovery of all or part of the grant. Grounds for the VTF's recovery of the grant include the following:
  - a. **Funds have not been used within the specified time.** Following consultation with the grant recipient, a repayment demand may be made for funds that are not used within the period specified in the decision.
  - b. **The grant has been used for matters other than the intended purpose.** A repayment demand may be made for funds that have been used for purposes other than those specified in the Grant Agreement.
  - c. **The recipient has neglected the obligation to report.** If a grant recipient fails to comply with obligations to submit an interim report and/or a final report, the VTF may demand repayment of all or part of the grant.
  - d. **The recipient has knowingly submitted incorrect information.** If the VTF becomes aware that a grant recipient has knowingly submitted incorrect information, in particular information that has a significant bearing on the viability or effectiveness of the project, the VTF may demand repayment of all or part of the grant. This applies regardless of whether or not the funds have been used.

66. An application concerning deferment of recovery may be submitted by the grant recipient to the VTF no later than 14 days before the day on which repayment of the demanded funds is to be made. The ATT Secretariat takes decisions on deferment after consultation with the Selection Committee Chairperson.

67. An application concerning adjustment of recovery is to be submitted to the VTF and must have been received no later than 14 days before the day on which repayment of the demanded funds is to be made. In taking a decision on request for adjustment of recovery after consultation with the Selection Committee Chairperson, the ATT Secretariat shall take into account all relevant facts.

## **PROCEDURES FOR PROJECTS' MONITORING, EVALUATION AND AUDITING**

68. The adoption of sound and appropriate governance procedures will help ensure the sustainability of the VTF's funding and operations. For purposes of achieving accountability and transparency in the implementation of VTF funded projects, all projects shall be subject to monitoring and evaluation procedures.

69. The project design information submitted by the grant recipient as a prerequisite for the Grant Agreement shall form the basis of project's monitoring, evaluation and auditing. As part of the Grant Agreement, grant recipients are required to institute effective internal control measures to ensure realization of the project's substantive goals and financial targets. It is this project information that VTF shall use as a monitoring and evaluation yardstick.

70. Both the VTF and the recipient shall, at the level of the Grant Agreement, agree on the project major activities, milestones and timeframes to be closely considered under project monitoring and evaluation.

### **Project Monitoring**

71. Project monitoring is the assessment of progress made in a project towards set project targets as set out in the Grant Agreement.

72. The VTF shall, *inter alia*, use the following methods of project monitoring:

1. **Verification of Submitted Project Reports.** The mandatory projects reports that grant recipients are required to provide shall be verified by VTF against the Grant Agreement content with particular reference to project activity schedule and financial expenditure plan.

On verification if projects reports are found to be consistent with Grant Agreement schedules, the VTF will indicate a '*go ahead*' and release relevant project funds. However, in the event where reports verification demonstrates an inconsistency with the agreed project plan, the VTF will enter into consultation with the recipient with a view to getting the project back on track.

In addition to regular reports, the grant recipient shall alert the VTF regarding deviations from the agreed project goals and financial terms when such deviations are suspected or become apparent, together with the grant recipient's planned responses to these deviations.

2. **On-site Monitoring Visits by VTF (ATT Secretariat) Staff.** When deemed necessary the VTF may dispatch its own (ATT Secretariat) staff to attend selected VTF funded events or consultations as a participant with a mandate to observe if the project is progressing according to plan.
  3. **Monitoring by Third Party Stakeholder.** VTF can request independent participants or experts at VTF funded events to provide independent reviews on the event organization.
73. With project monitoring being a shared responsibility between the VTF and grant recipient, each of the project monitoring methods shall be deployed by VTF with the full knowledge and cooperation of the recipient.
74. Any monitoring result that points to a project's deviation from the set project activity schedule and budget plan shall lead to a discussion between the VTF and the recipient with a view to get the recipient to institute immediate remedial actions to rescue the project from the detected deviation.
75. Projects with detected deviations may be classified as risk projects that may be subjected to full auditing by appointed professional auditors.
76. Monitoring costs incurred by the recipient shall be included in the project's costs. Monitoring costs incurred by the VTF (ATT Secretariat.) staff shall be carried by the VTF.
77. In case of contingencies such as a coup d'etat, international or non-international armed conflicts, the ATT Secretariat will, after consultations with Chairperson of the VTF Selection Committee, write a letter to the beneficiary requesting to put the project activities on hold until the situation improves sufficiently for project activities to continue. In this regard, no expenditure is to be incurred (i.e., no money should be spent) on the project until the situation stabilises and the activities can be recommenced. The beneficiary needs to keep the ATT Secretariat informed of further developments and alert the ATT Secretariat as soon as the situation improves so that the project activities can restart under satisfactory conditions.

## Project Evaluation

787. Evaluation is a systematic and objective assessment of an ongoing or completed project to determine how a project's funded activities impact on the achievement of a project's objectives and set outcomes. The aim of evaluation is to determine the project's:
- a. **Relevance**, the extent to which the project is suited to existing priorities and policies.
  - b. **Effectiveness**, the extent to which the project has attained its stated objectives.
  - c. **Efficiency**, the extent to which the project results were attained on time and within budget.
  - d. **Impact**, the positive or negative changes or effects that the project results have on the surrounding circumstances.

- e. **Sustainability**, the extent to which the project's benefits can continue after the project has finished.

798. Project evaluation shall be primarily carried out by the grant recipient and should be included in the project's final report submitted to the VTF.

8079. Evaluation results and lessons learnt shall provide useful information to both VTF and recipients for future decision-making purposes.

### **Project Auditing**

810. Auditing is an objective examination and evaluation of a project's financial statements to ensure that records are a fair and accurate representation of the transactions they claim to represent.

824. In the context of VTF, auditing shall be conducted for purposes of ensuring that VTF is able to manage project financial risk that may be due to a variety of reasons.

832. The grant recipient is required to cooperate with VTF on all audit matters.

843. Though audits can be conducted randomly, projects identified as risk projects shall be particularly considered for auditing.

854. Projects shall be identified as a risk and subjected to auditing if they present one or a combination of the following factors:

- a. The recipient fails to submit the mandatory interim or final report.
- b. The recipient fails to repayfund unused fundsmoney to VTF.
- c. The project experiences budget overrun.
- d. The project experiences time overrun.
- e. Financial impropriety is suspected.

865. Where a need for auditing is identified, the VTF shall appoint an independent professional auditor with requisite skills for such assignment.

876. Audit results and recommendations shall be considered by the VTF and could, after consultation with the Selection Committee Chairperson, *inter alia* lead to the following actions:

- a. Withholding of a project's further grant transfer until the negative audit finding has been adequately addressed by recipient.
- b. Demand for recovery of the funds transferred to the project.
- c. Any other action recommended by the auditors.

## **Costs for Project Monitoring, Evaluation and Auditing**

887. Costs for project monitoring, evaluation and auditing incurred by the grant recipient shall be included in the project's costs.

898. Costs for project monitoring, evaluation and auditing incurred by the VTF (ATT Secretariat) staff shall be directly carried by the VTF's budget at an amount set by the Selection Committee.

## **VTF CORPORATE AUDITING**

9089. The VTF's corporate operations shall be audited on annual basis.

910. An auditor shall be appointed in accordance with Rule 10 of the ATT Financial Rules.

921. The auditor shall issue an audit report that shall accompany the annual VTF substantive report for approval by the Conference of States Parties and presentation to donors.

932. Costs for the VTF's corporate audit shall be borne by the VTF budget.

## **ENFORCEMENT OF VTF DECISIONS**

943. The VTF Principles of Eligibility identify States as the only eligible applicants for VTF assistance. However, the Principles allow States to seek the assistance of partners in the implementation of projects. The identity of project implementing partners and their role in the project should be disclosed in the project proposal.

954. In view of the foregoing, parties to the Grant Agreement shall be the ATT Secretariat and a State that has presented a successful project proposal. Accordingly, the signing State shall directly assume the obligations arising from the Grant Agreement. The involvement of an implementing partner in the project implementation shall not absolve a State from its obligations under the Grant Agreement. To that end, the enforcement of the grant terms and conditions should be directed to the recipient State.

965. With the VTF established under the Treaty, the VTF should, after consultation with the Selection Committee Chairperson, adopt enforcement measures that are consistent with the Treaty spirit particularly Article 19 on dispute resolution. In that connection, the VTF could pursue, by mutual consent, arbitration to enforce provisions of the Grant Agreement.

## **FINAL PROVISIONS**

### **Reports to the Selection Committee**

976. In order to keep the Selection Committee informed of the status of VTF funded projects, the ATT Secretariat shall, on a quarterly basis, submit a summarized progress report to the Selection Committee highlighting key project developments and issues.

### **Reports to Conference of States Parties**

987. The ATT Secretariat shall annually prepare the VTF substantive report for each selection cycle and cause such report to be reviewed by the Selection Committee together with an audited financial statement of the VTF's operation.

998. Upon review by the Selection Committee, the VTF annual report shall be submitted to the Conference of States Parties for approval.

10099. After approval by the Conference of States Parties, the ATT Secretariat shall, without delay, present such annual report to donors and cause such reports to be published on the ATT website.

#### **VTF's relationship with other Funds**

101400. The VTF is established as an independent Trust Fund under Article 16 of the Arms Trade Treaty. The VTF may however, liaise with other Funds of common objectives for the purposes of avoiding overlaps and/or duplication in the funding of projects. The ATT Secretariat shall endeavour to liaise with these Funds.

#### **Staff Capacity**

1024. The VTF shall be administered by the ATT Secretariat, with the support of the Selection Committee. The administration of the VTF by the Secretariat shall be funded, ~~as appropriate,~~ from VTF contributions at an amount set by the Selection Committee, considering ATT staff's annual salary adjustments, as appropriate.

#### **Language**

1032. The VTF project application forms shall be in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian or Spanish. However, project proposals and reports submitted in non-English languages French and Spanish should be accompanied by an English translation.

#### **Amendment and Review of the Rules**

1043. On adoption by the VTF Selection Committee, these rules shall take immediate effect. Any proposed amendment or review to the Rules shall be presented by the ATT Secretariat to the Selection Committee for consideration and adoption.

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