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Conclusions of the High-level Working Group on Programme Criticality

Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

I. Introduction

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the report of the Secretary-General on the conclusions of the High-level Working Group on Programme Criticality ([A/69/530](#)). During its consideration of the report, the Committee met with representatives of the Secretary-General, who provided additional information and clarification, concluding with written responses received on 18 February 2015.

2. In its resolution 67/254 A, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit for consideration and approval at the sixty-ninth session of the Assembly a report containing the final conclusions of the High-level Working Group on Programme Criticality. The Secretary-General indicates that the report contains the final conclusions of the Working Group and is submitted pursuant to the resolution (see [A/69/530](#), para. 3).

II. Background

3. In the report, the Secretary-General states that the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination approved the United Nations security management system guidelines for acceptable risk in 2009 and that, in 2010, the High-level Committee on Management established the Working Group on Programme Criticality, chaired by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). The programme criticality framework was approved by the High-level Committee on Management and endorsed by the Chief Executives Board in 2012, and rolled out to 12 priority countries in 2012 and 2013. A slightly revised framework was then developed and approved by the High-level Committee on Management and the Chief Executives Board in 2013 (*ibid.*, paras. 4 and 5).



4. The Secretary-General indicates that the framework details guiding principles, including applicability, accountability, quality assurance, approval and the programme criticality process; the programme criticality methodology and criteria for assessment; programme criticality as part of the security risk management process; and the programme criticality support structures of the United Nations system. He also indicates that the framework contributes to informed decision-making by outlining a process for determining the programme criticality levels for specific activities carried out by United Nations personnel within a given geographical location and time frame. In the report, it is stated that, as programme criticality is not a planning process or a product, it does not affect intergovernmental oversight and accountability to legislative bodies (*ibid.*, paras. 6 and 7). Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the guidelines for determining acceptable risk focus exclusively on the management of security risks rather than all forms of risk; however, in countries affected by health-related emergencies, programme criticality assessments, which use a comprehensive and structured methodology, can help to assess the criticality of programmes.

5. The Secretary-General indicates that, to date, support has been provided to 15 countries and training sessions on programme criticality have been carried out with United Nations teams at the country level and various Headquarters personnel. An independent review of programme criticality conducted in January 2014 concluded that, overall, the programme criticality framework was working as intended and that no major immediate changes to the current framework were envisaged. It is expected that programme criticality will continue to be supported by the Steering Committee and the Coordination Team on the basis of voluntary contributions and that training efforts will be prioritized to ensure that programme criticality is mainstreamed into the operations of the United Nations system (*ibid.*, paras. 10-14).

III. Funding

6. The Secretary-General states that support for the roll-out has been provided on a low-cost basis, with seven participating agencies or departments making voluntary contributions to the cost of the independent review of programme criticality and UNICEF funding 50 per cent of the secretariat and other programme criticality support activities (*ibid.*, para. 8). Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the overall cost of the programme is \$379,040, an amount that includes the development and testing of the programme criticality e-package, support for global management and coordination, training and the independent review of programme criticality. The Committee was also informed that the costs of the secretariat mainly consist of staff salaries, specifically for one P-4 staff member from UNICEF working at 50 per cent on programme criticality for 2.5 years (from 2011 to 2014) and, currently, for one P-2 staff member from UNICEF working at 50-75 per cent on programme criticality. The Committee was provided, also upon enquiry, with the following table showing the breakdown of the overall cost according to contributions by participating organization.

(United States dollars)

<i>Agency/department</i>	<i>Programme criticality coordination costs (Secretariat and roll-out support, including training)</i>	<i>Programme criticality e-tool (English and French versions)</i>	<i>Programme criticality independent review</i>	<i>Total</i>
DSS	10 000	—	10 000	20 000
DPA	—	—	10 000 (in process)	10 000
DPKO/DFS	—	—	10 000	10 000
OCHA	10 000	—	16 000	26 000
UNDP	10 000	—	10 000	20 000
UNHCR	10 000	—	10 000	20 000
UNICEF	244 000	9 040	—	253 040
WFP	10 000	—	10 000	20 000
Total	294 000	9 040	76 000	379 040

Abbreviations: DSS, Department of Safety and Security; DPA, Department of Political Affairs; DPKO, Department of Peacekeeping Operations; DFS, Department of Field Support; OCHA, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs; UNDP, United Nations Development Programme; UNHCR, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; UNICEF, United Nations Children's Fund; WFP, World Food Programme.

7. Upon enquiry as to the funding of the contributions of United Nations Secretariat departments, the Advisory Committee was informed of the following:

(a) The \$20,000 contributed by the Department of Safety and Security was funded from the extrabudgetary Trust Fund for Security of Staff Members of the United Nations System;

(b) The \$10,000 committed by the Department of Political Affairs is to be funded from the extrabudgetary trust fund in support of political affairs (the contribution is currently being processed);

(c) The \$10,000 contributed by the Departments of Peacekeeping Operations and Field Support was funded from the support account for peacekeeping operations;

(d) The \$26,000 contributed by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs was funded from the extrabudgetary Trust Fund for Strengthening the Office of the Emergency Relief Coordinator.

8. The Advisory Committee was further informed, upon enquiry, that the requirement of \$10,000 contributed by the Departments of Peacekeeping Operations and Field Support mentioned in paragraph 7 (c) above was not reflected in the proposed budget for the support account for peacekeeping operations for the 2013/14 period (A/67/756), as the requirement had not been identified at that time. Nor was the requirement reflected in the related budget performance report (A/69/653), as it did not constitute a major variance to be captured in that report. **The Advisory Committee considers that the requirement should not have been charged to the support account for peacekeeping operations and intends to address this matter further in the context of its consideration of the Secretary-**

General's upcoming report on the proposed budget for the support account for peacekeeping operations for the 2015/16 period.

IV. Conclusion

9. The Advisory Committee recognizes the importance of the programme criticality framework for informed decision-making as part of the security risk management process and its contribution to staff safety and security. The Committee is of the view, however, that the Secretary-General's report lacks details on the operational functioning of the initiative.

10. The Advisory Committee was informed that, subsequent to resolution 67/254 A, the General Assembly adopted resolution 69/133, in which it encouraged the Secretary-General to continue consistent implementation of the programme criticality framework as an operational tool allowing informed decisions on acceptable risk to United Nations personnel. **In this context, the Advisory Committee notes that the Secretary-General's report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 67/254 A and regrets that the report does not contain the final conclusions of the High-level Working Group on Programme Criticality for the Assembly's consideration and approval as requested in resolution 67/254 A.** Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was provided with the full report of the High-level Working Group (see annex). **In this regard, the Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to submit, as soon as possible, a report containing the final conclusions of the High-level Working Group to the Assembly for its consideration and approval.**

Annex

United Nations System Programme Criticality Framework

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A. Introduction

1. The programme criticality framework is a common UN system framework for decision-making that puts in place guiding principles and a systematic structured approach in using programme criticality as a way to ensure that programme activities can be balanced against security risks.
2. The current document is a revision of the programme criticality framework approved by the High Level Committee on Management (HLCM) on 17 October 2011, and subsequently endorsed by the Chief Executives Board (CEB) in its autumn 2011 session. This revision is based on the lessons learned from applying the framework in a number of countries between October 2011 and December 2012.
3. Programme criticality¹ (PC) is an important component of the United Nations Security Management System's (UNSMS) Guidelines for Acceptable Risk, approved by the CEB in April 2009.² PC is not a security function but is required for ensuring that critical programmes are implemented within levels of acceptable risk.

B. Guiding Principles

Applicability

4. The applicability of Programme Criticality is as defined in the UNSMS Policy Manual Chapter III: Applicability of United Nations Security Management System. A determination of programme criticality takes place through a PC assessment. Such assessments should be conducted for all activities that involve UN personnel.
5. Whilst the timing of undertaking programme criticality assessments should be determined at field level based on context and need, undertaking a UN-wide programme criticality assessment is mandatory in areas with residual risk levels of "high" and "very high", as determined in the Security Risk Assessments (SRAs). A PC assessment is also beneficial when deciding how and when to undertake activities in areas where residual risk is determined to be "medium".

Accountability

6. Primary accountability for programme criticality is with UN senior management at the country level. The Resident Coordinator (RC) is accountable for the conduct and quality of programme criticality assessments at country level. Where there is a peacekeeping or special political mission in place, and where the Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSB)/Head of Mission has a mandate to coordinate UN activities in country, he/she has the final accountability.
7. The Designated Official (DO) is accountable to the Secretary-General, through the Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security (USG DSS), and is responsible for the security of UN personnel, premises and assets throughout the country or designated area. The DO is responsible for ensuring that the goal of the UN Security

¹ The concept of 'criticality' is to be understood to mean the critical impact of an activity on the population, not necessarily on the organisation.

² [CEB/2009/HLCM/INF.1](#).

Management System is met in his/her country or area.³ As such, the DO uses the results of the PC assessment and endorses the decisions taken at country-level, taking both the PC assessment and the SRA into consideration.

8. In areas where other UN presences/envoys or their staff are operating, all activities involving UN personnel should be part of a given PC process under the existing leadership on the ground. However, it is likely that separate PC assessments would need to be carried out for each designated area.

9. Heads of UN entities operating in country (resident and non-resident) are required to ensure that their respective entities participate in a joint UN system PC assessment and use the results in the determination of acceptable risk. Each UN entity should allocate the needed capacity to do so.

Quality assurance

10. The quality of a specific PC assessment is the responsibility of the UN leadership on the ground.

11. The Programme Criticality Steering Committee (PCSC) at HQ level is responsible for providing quality assurance of the PC framework and its implementation. This entails responsibility for oversight and review of the PC framework. In addition, the PCSC is responsible to ensure that quality PC assessments are undertaken in country areas where this is needed, and where this is not the case, take action to ensure that the assessment takes place or is revised appropriately.⁴ As part of this role, the PCSC can recommend that the EGPC be convened to make a determination on PC levels for a specific setting, as described in further detail below.

The programme criticality process

12. The determination of the criticality level for specific UN activities within a given geographic location and timeframe is termed a programme criticality assessment.

13. The output of the PC assessment is a list of activities determined to be within four levels of programme criticality, PC1-PC4. PC1 activities are considered most critical.

14. With the help of the PC methodology and tool (described in detail below), the UN team in country⁵ rates which activities are PC2, PC3, PC4, and finally which are PC1. It is crucial that PC assessments are done jointly by the UN system in country as a whole and not by individual UN entities in order to provide a reality check by in-country experienced peer reviewers.

15. In identifying PC levels, the PC methodology uses existing UN planning frameworks already agreed at country level. It is thus not a planning framework.

³ United Nations Security Management System Policy Manual Chapter II: Section B Framework of Accountability for the United Nations Security Management System.

⁴ See Terms of Reference for PCSC (annex I). Further details on the PCSC can be found in Section E below.

⁵ The DSS role in this step is a programmatic one. DSS should list the outputs/activities that it sees as important, and should not be viewing any activities listed in this step from a threat and/or risk perspective.

16. The output of the PC assessment, that is the list of rated activities, along with the SRA that covers the corresponding geographic location and according to the policy for Determining Acceptable Risk, assists country level decision makers in determining which activities should be enabled based on the agreed level of acceptable risk. This helps to ensure that UN personnel do not take unnecessary risk and work on those activities that are likely to most contribute to existing UN strategic results. The framework also allows country-level programme managers to establish if programme activities or implementation modalities need to be redesigned in order to be within known acceptable risks and/or to reduce the risk.

17. In conjunction with undertaking PC assessments, the Security Management Team (SMT) must also ensure that a current SRA, outlining the residual risk levels, is in place.

Approval of programme criticality

18. Approval of levels PC1 – PC4 is given by the RC and in mission settings by the SRSG/Head of Mission as applicable, in line with the accountabilities outlined above. The final decision on which activities are enabled based on acceptable risk is with the DO.⁶

19. In situations where an activity involving UN personnel is determined to be PC1 **and** its implementation is associated with very high levels of residual risk, the Executive Head of the relevant UN entity must certify that the activity is PC1 and that it can be implemented in situations with very high residual risk. In such cases the final approval to enable that activity in a situation of very high residual risk is given by the USG DSS.

C. Overview of Programme Criticality methodology and criteria for assessment

20. The PC methodology provides a structured approach to determine programme criticality. The PC tool assists in applying this structured approach.

21. A programme criticality assessment has eight steps as follows:

1. Establish geographical scope and timeframe
2. List strategic results (SRs)
3. List UN activities/outputs (involving UN personnel)
4. Assess contribution to strategic results
5. Assess likelihood of implementation
6. Evaluate activities/outputs with PC1 criteria
7. View PC level results, form consensus within the UN system and approve final results
8. Agree on a process to address and manage the results of the PC assessment

⁶ See United Nations Security Management System Policy Manual Chapter II: Section B Framework of Accountability for the United Nations Security Management System.

22. Each step is described in further detail below. The criteria being used to assess activities/outputs are (1) Contribution to each of the SRs and (2) Likelihood of implementation. The contribution scores are averaged and multiplied by the likelihood of implementation score. The result determines the PC2-PC4 level for each of the considered activities/outputs.

23. To assist in completing the steps of a PC assessment, an excel-based tool is available. A separate PC guidance document is under development to provide further assistance and useful pointers in conducting a PC assessment.

Step 1 — Establish geographical scope and timeframe

24. The first step establishes the geographical scope/area and timeframe for the programme criticality assessment.

- ☐ The geographical scope/area of a PC assessment should be the same as the geographical area of the SRA, where possible, since this will make it easier to compare the result of the PC assessment to the residual security risk. Any differences in the areas should be noted and changes to either the PC area or an SRA area should be reflected in the next regular PC assessment.
- ☐ As a minimum, the PC assessment must be revisited every 12 months.
- ☐ In addition to the above, triggers for undertaking a PC assessment are changes in existing strategic plans or a significant change in the situation/programmatic conditions.
- ☐ Since individual activities may change in importance while strategic results remain the same, a Representative of a UN entity operating in-country could flag the possible change in programmatic conditions to the UN team on the ground at any time and ask for a review of the PC assessment.
- ☐ Scope and timeframe must be agreed before the next steps of the PC assessment are initiated.

Step 2 — List strategic results

25. The second step is to list the strategic results that the United Nations will work towards in the geographical area in the agreed timeframe.

- ☐ The SRs should be taken from the various existing planning documents that the UN system uses, such as the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), the Integrated Strategic Framework (ISF), the Consolidated Appeal (CAP) or other planning documents.
- ☐ The methodology allows for entering up to 6 SRs by geographical area.
- ☐ Results should be described in ‘change’ language, which describes a change in the situation of an affected population, the performance of a service, the allocation of national resources, the existence of needed policies or any other observable change.

Step 3 — List activities/outputs involving United Nations personnel

26. The third step is to enter a list of all the activities or outputs the UN system wishes to implement in the said geographical area and timeframe, using UN personnel.

- The UN team in country must agree in advance whether activities or outputs should be listed. Listing outputs, at the level defined in the below footnote,⁷ is recommended rather than activities.
- If the activities/outputs do not require the presence of UN personnel to be implemented, they are not listed.
- The same list of activities/outputs should also be provided to DSS to undertake the “programme assessment” part of the SRA.
- Activities are inputs (things that we do to achieve an output) while outputs are the results we seek to achieve. Activities that are similar can be grouped together and entered once in the tool. It is important that there is agreement at the country level on whether to use outputs or activities and whether to group activities for each PC assessment so that entries are comparable.

Step 4 — Assess contribution to strategic results

27. The fourth step is to assess how each of the activities/outputs contributes to each of the strategic results.

- This assessment is on a 0-5 scale, with ‘0’ representing ‘no contribution’ and ‘5’ representing ‘very high contribution to success’. The scores for the activity’s contribution to each strategic result are averaged in the tool to get a score for that activity’s total contribution to all the strategic results.
- It is critical that this step is undertaken by inter-agency groups to ensure peer review. The scoring is in essence relative and without having a common understanding between agencies of the scoring level comparison becomes futile.
- Before embarking on scoring all activities, a number of activities/outputs should be jointly rated by the inter-agency peer review group to set benchmarks for the scoring. This should include discussing how to score activities/outputs that can be termed as ‘enablers’ to programmes, such as coordination, policy/political advice, management and logistics support, etc.
- The framework does not affect UN activities implemented by third parties (government, I/NGOs, private sector, etc.) as long as such activities do not require UN personnel.

Step 5 — Assess likelihood of implementation

28. The fifth step requires the assessment of each activity/output according to its likelihood of implementation.

⁷ ‘Outputs are changes in skills or abilities and capacities of individuals or institutions, or the availability of new products and services that result from the completion of activities within a [development] intervention *within the control of the organization*. They are achieved with the resources provided and within the time period specified’ (UNDG, Results-Based Management Handbook, 2011: <http://www.undg.org/docs/12316/UNDG-RBM%20Handbook-2012.pdf>).

- This assessment is conducted using a 1-5 scale identical to the likelihood scale used in the SRA (1: very unlikely, 2: unlikely, 3: moderately likely, 4: likely and 5: very likely).
- What is being assessed is whether we have the resources and capacity to implement the activities/outputs listed within the established timeframe. We are not assessing whether the activities themselves will be successful. The question ‘how do you know you can do this?’ is a useful pointer in this step.
- This is a subjective assessment of relative likelihood and should be guided by such variables as acceptance by local actors, logistics, availability of personnel, funding, etc. One variable that is not considered in judging likelihood of implementation is the security environment, because this variable has already been taken into consideration in the SRA.
- All activities/outputs must be assessed against the same variables and these must be agreed ahead of scoring.
- The importance of this step is a reality check of the ability to implement. UN entities should be able to justify the likelihood of implementation, and therefore it is encouraged to use as verifiable criteria as possible.

Step 6 — Evaluate activities with PC1 criteria

29. The sixth step is to evaluate each activity/output to see if it meets the criteria for PC1.

- There are two possible criteria for an activity to be considered a PC1 activity:
 - a. Either the activity is assessed as lifesaving (humanitarian or non-humanitarian) at scale (defined as any activity to support processes or services, including needs assessments), that would have an immediate and significant impact on mortality; or
 - b. The activity is a directed activity that receives the endorsement of the Office of the Secretary-General for this particular situation.
- If an activity meets either of these two criteria, it could be considered a PC1 activity and can be (but does not have to be) conducted in very high residual risk.
- Care should be taken to keep activities identified as PC1 to a minimum, because they could put UN personnel at very high residual risk.

Step 7 — View PC level results, form consensus within the UN system and approve final results

30. The seventh step is to view the PC levels of the various activities/outputs, form consensus within the UN system that this is the final rating agreed and finally approve the agreed results.

- Once agreed by the programme managers/peer reviewers, the final results must be validated by the UN team in country and approved by the RC or SRSG/Head of Mission as applicable (see paragraphs 18 and 19 above).

- In the unlikely event that consensus is not reached at country level, an Executive Group on Programme Criticality (EGPC),⁸ at USG level, can intervene to mediate and/or ultimately decide.

Step 8 — Agree on a process to address and manage the results of the PC assessment

31. The final step is to implement the results of the PC assessment. This entails using the results with the relevant SRA(s) and the policy on Determining Acceptable Risk to determine which programmes will be enabled based on an agreed level of acceptable risk. This may also include looking further into the application of risk mitigation measures for certain activities/outputs, and/or decisions on programme management. UN teams should define a process for implementation according to their contexts.

D. Programme Criticality as part of the SRM

32. The output of a PC assessment sits within the security management system as a core input to security decision making. It is one side of the balance when making decisions on whether a UN programme stays and delivers. The other side of the balance is the statement of the risk present at the current time, after the implementation of security risk management measures, in a specific location where the programme is being delivered; referred to as residual risk.

33. While the final decision-making on acceptable risk requires both the output of a PC assessment and determined residual risk levels, and these two components must be comparable, there are clear separations in determining PC and residual risk. Accordingly, two key principles must be adhered to in order for the process to be completed correctly:

- a. Risk level has no impact on programme criticality. There must be no consideration of risk level when determining PC.
- b. Programme criticality has no impact on risk level. There must be no consideration of PC when determining risk level.

34. As outlined above, a PC assessment is undertaken by the United Nations system at country level when there is a change in existing strategic plans or a significant change in the situation/programmatic conditions, specific to a geographical location. The PC methodology and tool will be used to assign one of four programme criticality levels (PC1, PC2, PC3 or PC4) to each activity/output. A relevant SRA provides residual risk levels and suggests risk mitigation measures to lower risk. These steps form the Security Risk Management process.

35. This process will allow the principles set out in the Guidelines for Acceptable Risk to establish the maximum level of residual risk that is acceptable for a specific level of programme criticality. Figure I below depicts this relationship between programme criticality level and residual risk within the Guidelines for Acceptable Risk. Accordingly, it is permissible to implement:

⁸ See Terms of Reference for EGPC (annex II). Further details on the EGPC can be found in Section E below.

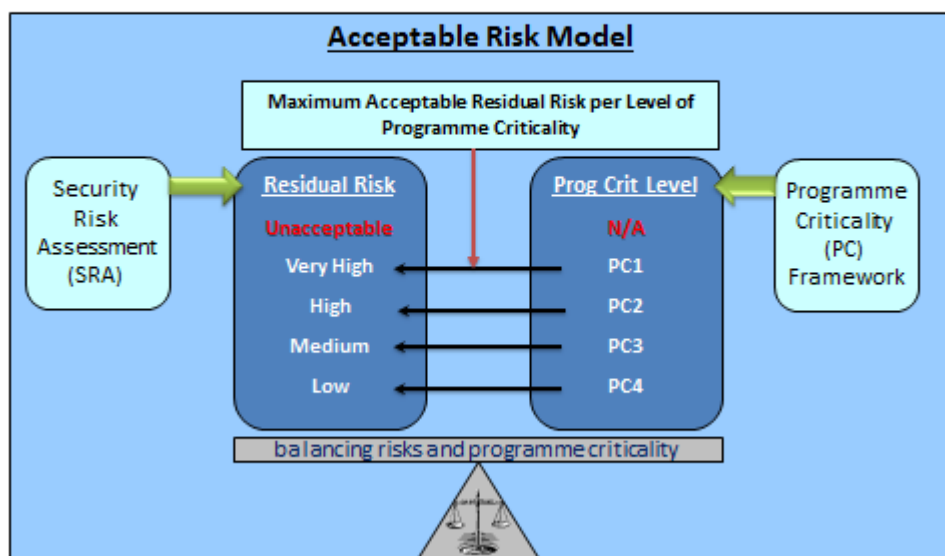
- PC1 activities only in **very high** residual risk environments;
- PC1-PC2 in **high** residual risk environments;
- PC1-PC2-PC3 in **medium** residual risk environments;
- PC1-PC2-PC3-PC4 in **low** residual risk environments.

Of course, it is possible (and often preferable) to conduct an activity in lower residual risk, but it is not permitted to accept more risk than assigned in the Acceptable Risk Model.

Figure 1

Balancing security risk with programme criticality

Conceptual Overview: Acceptable Risk Model balances Security Risk (SRA) with Programme Criticality (PC1-PC4)



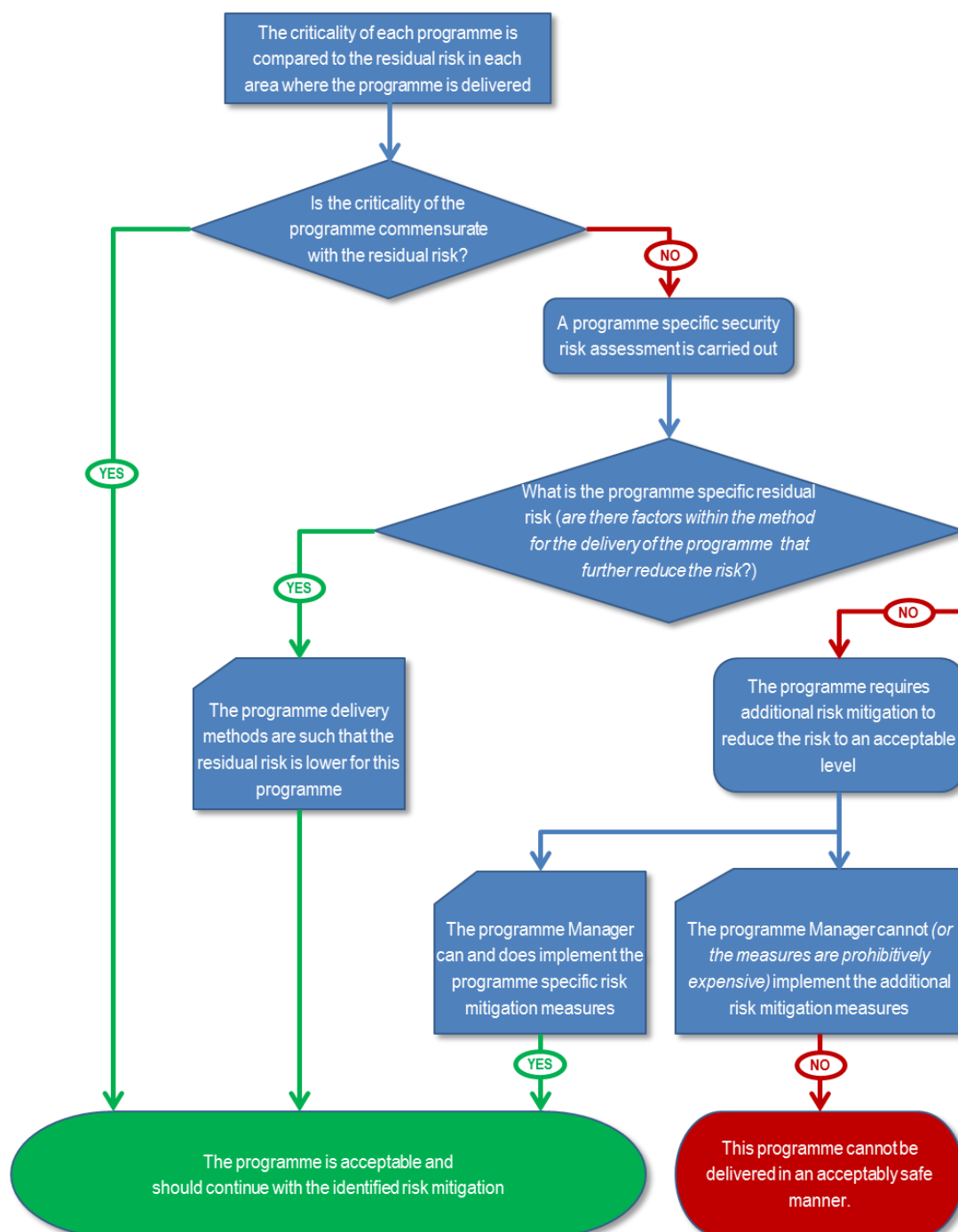
Operationalization of results

36. The output of the PC assessment will direct who, what, when and where UN programmes that require the presence of UN personnel can stay and deliver at an acceptable level of risk. While the SRA and PC processes are carried out separately, for the output of PC to be used effectively for security risk management decisions, there must be a clear statement of post security risk management residual risk to staff and programmes in every area where the programmes are to be delivered. For the Acceptable Risk Model and the PC framework to function appropriately, both residual risks and programme criticality must be realistically assessed.

37. Once the process of determining programme criticality is done, there are additional steps that need to be taken based on programme specific SRAs, as appropriate, to enable programme delivery. These steps are shown in figure II. Ultimately, together with a statement of residual risk, the PC level will inform managers in the field *what* can be delivered *where* with the presence of UN personnel. The information generated from the comparison of the PC level and the

residual risk level for a specific area will thus make it possible for managers to determine programme delivery strategies, where further risk mitigation measures might be needed, possible staff deployments, etc.

Figure 2
Security Risk Management enabling programmes



E. Programme Criticality Support Structures

38. The Executive Group on Programme Criticality, convened at USG level, is in place to facilitate rapid decision-making where there is an impasse and/or in the unlikely event that consensus on programme criticality levels is not reached at country level.⁹

39. Further, in specific fast evolving crisis situations, there may be a need to rapidly make a determination of PC levels to inform decisions on how to stay and deliver. In such situations, the EGPC can be convened within 24 hours by the Chair to determine PC levels for a particular setting and timeframe. The determination of PC levels in such a situation will be made in a manner to suit the context. Where relevant, the EGPC may agree to address only those activities that are to be considered PC1, and thereafter instruct the country level leadership to undertake a PC assessment for activities of levels PC2-PC4. Decisions taken must be recorded and shared with all concerned entities. Such an EGPC meeting can be requested by any UN system entity.

40. Beyond the situations described above, the Programme Criticality Steering Committee¹⁰ is the main point of contact for UN teams and senior leaders on programme criticality. The PCSC is responsible for providing quality assurance of the PC framework and its implementation. This entails responsibility for oversight and review of the PC framework. In addition, the PCSC is responsible to ensure that quality PC assessments are undertaken in country areas where this is needed, and where this is not the case, take action to ensure that the assessment in question takes place or is revised appropriately. As part of this role, the PCSC can recommend that the EGPC be convened to make a determination on PC levels for a specific setting, as described above.

41. The PCSC is supported by a technical level Programme Criticality Coordination Team (PCCT) and its Secretariat. It is envisaged that these mechanisms be dissolved once a number of agreed indicators, outlined below, are in place.

42. Indicators of success for completion of the PCSC role are:

- ☐ PC framework and guidance documents have been approved;
- ☐ PC framework has been disseminated to all UN teams on the ground;
- ☐ Briefings on PC have been held with relevant HQ fora;
- ☐ Successful completion and use of the results of a PC assessment in a significant number of countries, including in a few mission settings;
- ☐ A significant PC expert pool of UN personnel from various agencies/ departments with solid knowledge of the PC framework and methodology is in place;

⁹ See EGPC Terms of Reference (annex II).

¹⁰ See PCSC Terms of Reference (annex I).

- Expertise on PC is maintained and mainstreamed within agencies/departments;
- Agreed plan (which is joint to the extent possible) to roll out PC and have capacity for PC individually within agencies/departments.

Validity of the PC framework

43. The PC framework will be reviewed on a biennial basis, the review to be overseen by the PCSC.

Annex I

Terms of Reference

Executive Group on Programme Criticality (EGPC)

1. The Executive Group Programme Criticality (EGPC) was established by the CEB on 28 October 2011.
2. The purpose of the EGPC is to reinforce the decision making process established through the “Programme Criticality Framework,” which is a common UN system framework and methodology to define levels of programme criticality, and thus to inform decision-making within the guidelines for acceptable risk.
2. The EGPC will have the following functions:
 - a. In the event that there is an impasse and/or lack of consensus on programme criticality levels at country level, the EGPC can either intervene to mediate or convene to determine PC levels for the specific situation in question.
 - b. In specific fast evolving crisis situations, there may be a need to rapidly facilitate a determination of PC levels to make urgent decisions about acceptable risk for UN staff. In such situations, the EGPC can be convened within 24 hours by the Chair to determine PC levels for a particular setting and timeframe. The determination of PC levels in such a situation will be made in a manner to suit the context. Where relevant, the EGPC may agree to address only those activities that are to be considered PC1, and thereafter instruct the country level leadership to undertake a PC assessment for activities of levels PC2-PC4. Decisions taken must be recorded and shared with all concerned entities.
 - c. The EGPC shall not meet or act as an appellate body.

Composition and Working Modalities

3. The EGPC shall be convened at USG level, and chaired by (TBD). This will be on biannual rotating basis.
4. The EGPC shall be comprised of the following organizations of the UN Security Management System: OCHA, UNDP, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, WHO and up to two Executive Heads of UN organisations/USGs of Secretariat Departments, ideally those with the largest operational footprint in the affected country. DSS will participate as an observer.
5. Any UN system entity can contact the Chair and request that the EGPC convenes.
6. If needed, secretariat support for the EGPC will be provided by the PCCT Secretariat. If there is no PC Secretariat in place, such functions shall be covered by the office of the EGPC Chair.

Annex II

Terms of Reference

Programme Criticality Steering Committee (PCSC)

Background

1. The Programme Criticality Steering Committee (PCSC) was established by the HLCM on 7-8 March 2013 to provide oversight and quality assurance over the UN System's work on Programme Criticality, as outlined in the UN System Programme Criticality Framework.
2. The PCSC replaces the Working Group on Programme Criticality (PCWG), which was initially established by the HLCM in June 2010 to define levels of programme criticality, develop a common framework for decision making within the Guidelines for Acceptable Risk and support a roll-out of the PC framework. Following completion of the work of the PCWG, the PCSC is established to function as the main oversight body of programme criticality.

Functions

3. The PCSC is responsible to:
 - Be the main point of contact for UN teams and senior leaders on programme criticality;
 - Provide oversight of implementation of programme criticality;
 - Provide advice on the need for review of the PC Framework;
 - Provide quality assurance of the PC framework and its implementation, which entails ensuring that quality PC assessments are undertaken in country settings where this is needed, and where this is not the case, take action to ensure that the assessment in question takes place or is revised appropriately. The PCSC will not take a pro-active role in this regard, but rather respond to concerns raised;
 - As part of providing quality assurance, the PCSC can recommend that the Executive Group Programme Criticality be convened to break an impasse (see EGPC ToR for further details on the EGPC role).
4. The PCSC will provide updates on Programme Criticality to the HLCM and CEB upon request.

Composition and Working Modalities

5. The PCSC shall be convened at Director level, and chaired by [TBD]. The PCSC shall be comprised of the following organizations of the UN Security Management System: DOCO, DPA, DPKO, DSS, FAO, OCHA, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, and WHO.
6. The membership of the PCSC is open; any UN system organization can request to become a member of the PCSC.
7. The PCSC shall convene at a minimum every 4 months. Meetings can occur as needed within these minimum intervals.

8. The PCSC is supported by a technical level Programme Criticality Coordination Team (PCCT) and its Secretariat. The PCCT is chaired at the technical level by the same organization chairing the PCSC. It is envisaged that the PCSC and PCCT will be dissolved based on the following agreed indicators:

- ☐ PC framework and guidance documents have been approved;
 - ☐ PC framework has been disseminated to all UN teams on the ground;
 - ☐ Briefings on PC have been held with relevant HQ fora;
 - ☐ Successful completion and use of the results of a PC assessment in a significant number of countries, including in a few mission settings;
 - ☐ A significant PC expert pool of UN personnel from various agencies/ departments with solid knowledge of the PC framework and methodology is in place;
 - ☐ Expertise on PC is maintained and mainstreamed within agencies/departments;
 - ☐ Agreed plan (which is joint to the extent possible) to roll out PC and have capacity for PC individually within agencies/departments.
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