Knowledge Management Fund 2020
Thematic Headline

Last year, in line with its knowledge-brokering role, the Secretariat shifted away from topic-based KMF headlines to focus more on *how* and *why knowledge is generated and used*. The 2019 themes of "Examining & Improving Policy" and "Change & Learning Processes" generated submissions that specifically built learning into their design, leading to more practical outputs, attuned to program and policy officers' work.

This way of framing the KMF also gave sufficient room to accommodate the diversity of security and rule of law initiatives within our network, offering KMF applicants the flexibility to develop ideas that tackle urgent and emerging issues in conflict-affected contexts. In 2020, the Secretariat has once again set a Thematic Headline that speaks to a larger purpose, rather than targeting specific topic areas.

KMF 2020 Thematic Headline

Harnessing Potential

Applicants' submissions will be assessed on their alignment with the above headline. Applicants may freely choose their topical focus within the Security and Rule of Law (SRoL) field: (*inter alia*) human security, justice & security sector reform, security governance, conflict & climate change, informal justice, political governance, access to justice, violence prevention, transitional justice, peacekeeping, peace processes and political representation.

Please read the explanation of the headline below carefully, as well as the subthemes. Each are instructive for how submissions will be assessed. Not every topic within the security and rule of law field will automatically be considered relevant. Each applicant will need to justify their topical focus, their approach, and how these demonstrate "Harnessing Potential" for strengthening SRoL programs and policies.

Harnessing Potential

The Security & Rule of Law sector is consumed by very real problems: violence, conflict, injustice, abuse of power, corruption; making the sector a natural theater for cynicism. However, the KPSRL Secretariat has come to recognize the value of mobilizing around promising ideas, new approaches, and catalytic innovations. With this in mind, the organizing logic of the 2020 Knowledge Management Fund will be to focus our collective energies on those small, emergent possibilities that hold the prospect for large, sweeping changes.

The first step is identifying where potential lies. Putting forward untested ideas or elevating unheard perspectives can reveal latent opportunities to do things differently. From there, the hardest part can simply be getting out of our own way, quieting the doubts and dissent that argue for following the status quo. Recognizing and then harnessing potential not only involves the ability to see what others may have missed, but also the courage to challenge convention.

Here the KPSRL Secretariat aims to use the 2020 KMF to provide our community with the necessary backing - both the encouragement and the seed funding – to see those ideas through. In return, we ask applicants to be bold in their visions, to honestly gauge and to take a responsible amount of risk, and to explain how their project will either *expose & test* or *accelerate & scale* ideas that can improve the outcomes of SRoL policy and programming.

As additional guidance, please review the following subthemes. Applicants are encouraged to demonstrate how their project will harness the potential to, either, (a) Examine & Improve SRoL Policy, or (b) contribute to Change & Learning Processes. However, applicants are free to explain how their project harnesses potential in other ways that work toward strengthening SRoL programs and policies.

- Examine & Improve Policy

There is an increasing demand for evidence and research in SRoL policymaking. While new research is being generated every day, there are still many assumptions underpinning SRoL policy that could be supported or nuanced by evidence. These might include the assumed positive effect of particular SRoL interventions or policies. There are also opportunities to put forward new policy ideas, for example, more nimble policy responses to the increasing evidence on the role of non-state security and justice providers. This subtheme encourages applicants to identify opportunities to make an impact on such issues, by seizing important junctures in policymaking, convening key players and thinkers, capitalizing on building trends, and shedding light on new policy options. Projects could focus on (*inter alia*):

- generating new evidence or identifying 'what works' within the SRoL policy field
- promoting existing evidence, demonstrating its applied potential to a wider audience
- digging deeper into an encouraging, potentially impactful emergent research finding
- seizing an opportunity to inform a policy-formation process with compelling evidence

Such projects should identify clear opportunities within a specific SRoL policy or policy area and, where possible, produce findings that, if applied, could lead to improved policy impact.

- Change & Learning Processes

This subtheme focuses on harnessing the potential for *how* change and learning happens in the field of SRoL. Specifically, projects will be assessed according to how compellingly they demonstrate their potential to galvanize, scale up, or institutionalize the mechanisms by which SRoL actors, organizations and institutions learn and adapt. This can happen in various ways: between organizations, within programs, through feedback loops between practice and policymaking, or by focusing on how insights gained or knowledge generated is identified and subsequently applied. Example areas for action might include (but are not limited to):

- opportunities to pilot, accelerate or scale up a promising new SRoL practice
- bringing more attention to an exciting area of SRoL learning and innovation
- enabling people or organizations to practically diverge from conventional practices
- allowing research methods or partnerships to adapt more effectively to fragile contexts
- overcoming barriers to embrace more adaptive programming approaches

Projects under this headline should produce new practices, test ideas or generate knowledge about change and learning processes relevant for and shareable with the wider KPSRL community.