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SUDESA INTEGRATION FRAMEWORK

*THE FOUNDATIONAL ARCHITECTURE FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT, GOVERNANCE
AND OPERATIONALIZATION*

CREATED BY

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Care to Change the World

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SUDESA Integration Framework

1. Introduction

The SUDESA Integration Framework sets forth the foundational architecture for the establishment, governance, and operationalisation of the South Sudan Development and Social Equity Agency (SUDESA). Conceived as a hybrid institution jointly owned by the Government of South Sudan and the European Union for Social Leadership (EUSL), SUDESA is designed to serve as a catalytic mechanism for advancing inclusive development, institutional resilience, and digital transformation in South Sudan and beyond.

This framework outlines the institutional identity, legal structure, strategic focus areas, and operational modalities of SUDESA, ensuring alignment with national development priorities, regional integration objectives, and the long-term vision articulated in the *Agenda for Social Equity 2074*. It is intended to guide the structured integration of SUDESA into the broader ecosystem of the Global South Institutional Architecture (GSIA), where it will function as a specialised agency with a mandate spanning digital governance, agricultural transformation, social development, and gender equity.

SUDESA is not merely an implementing body; it is a platform for innovation, diplomacy, and multilateral cooperation. Its establishment reflects a shared commitment to building institutions that are not only technically competent but also socially accountable and strategically aligned with the aspirations of the people of South Sudan. Through this framework, SUDESA is positioned to operate with legal autonomy, diplomatic recognition, and programmatic coherence, while remaining anchored in the principles of transparency, equity, and long-term sustainability.

2. Institutional Identity

Name and Legal Status

The South Sudan Development and Social Equity Agency (SUDESA) shall be established as a semi-autonomous intergovernmental institution under a co-ownership agreement between the Government of South Sudan and the European Union for Social Leadership (EUSL). It shall be registered in accordance with South Sudanese law, with provisions for international recognition and diplomatic accreditation under applicable conventions and bilateral agreements.

Vision

To serve as a transformative institution that accelerates inclusive development, digital sovereignty, and social equity in South Sudan, while contributing to regional integration and global solidarity.

Mission

To design, implement, and coordinate strategic programs that advance digital transformation, agricultural resilience, public service innovation, and gender equality, in alignment with national priorities and the *Agenda for Social Equity 2074*.

Core Values

SUDESA shall be guided by the following foundational values:

- **Equity:** Ensuring fair access to opportunities and resources for all citizens.
- **Integrity:** Upholding transparency, accountability, and ethical governance.

- **Innovation:** Promoting forward-thinking solutions and adaptive technologies.
- **Neutrality:** Operating independently of political affiliations or partisan interests.
- **Solidarity:** Strengthening partnerships across sectors, borders, and communities.

Branding and Diplomatic Positioning

SUDESA shall adopt a distinct institutional identity that reflects its hybrid nature and strategic mandate. Its branding shall be harmonised with the visual and diplomatic standards of EUSL and GSIA, ensuring coherence across affiliated entities. Diplomatic positioning shall be pursued through formal recognition by regional bodies, international development partners, and multilateral institutions, with the aim of securing privileges and immunities necessary for effective cross-border operations.

3. Governance and Ownership

Co-Ownership Model: EUSL and Government of South Sudan

SUDESA shall be established under a formal co-ownership agreement between the European Social Label (EUSL) and the Government of the Republic of South Sudan. This partnership shall be governed by a foundational legal instrument that defines the respective roles, responsibilities, and rights of each party. The co-ownership model is designed to ensure both legitimacy within the national context and alignment with international standards of institutional governance, while safeguarding the agency's operational neutrality and strategic independence.

Board Structure and Appointment Process

SUDESA shall be governed by a Board of Directors composed of representatives from both founding parties, alongside independent experts and observers from regional and international institutions. The Board shall include:

- Two permanent seats for the Government of South Sudan;
- Two permanent seats for EUSL;
- One rotating seat for a representative of the African Social Label (AFSL) or World Social Label (WOSL), as applicable;
- Up to three independent members appointed jointly by the co-owners, selected for their expertise in development, governance, or diplomacy;
- Observer status for key development partners, including GSIA, AfDB, and other strategic allies.

Board members shall serve staggered terms to ensure continuity and institutional memory. The Chairperson shall be appointed on a rotational basis between the co-owners, with provisions for co-chairing during transitional periods or strategic reviews.

Legal Autonomy and Operational Independence

SUDESA shall operate as a legally autonomous entity, with the capacity to enter into contracts, own property, and manage its own budget and personnel. Its legal status shall be enshrined in a Host Country Agreement (HCA) and supported by enabling legislation where necessary. Operational independence shall be guaranteed through internal statutes and governance protocols that insulate the agency from political interference, while ensuring accountability to its co-owners and stakeholders.

The governance model shall be designed to uphold the principles of transparency, inclusivity, and strategic alignment, enabling SUDESA to function as a credible and effective institution within both national and international development ecosystems.

4. Mandate and Strategic Focus Areas

SUDESA's mandate is to serve as a multi-sectoral development agency with a focus on institutional transformation, social equity, and regional integration. Its strategic orientation is grounded in the principles of Agenda for Social Equity 2074 and aligned with South Sudan's national development frameworks. The agency shall operate across five core domains, with cross-cutting emphasis on innovation, climate resilience, and inclusive governance.

Digital Transformation

SUDESA shall lead the design and implementation of South Sudan's digital governance architecture, including e-government platforms, digital identity systems, and data infrastructure. It will promote digital sovereignty, cybersecurity, and open data standards, while fostering public-private partnerships to accelerate digital inclusion and innovation.

Agriculture and Food Systems

In collaboration with national ministries and regional partners, SUDESA shall support the transformation of agricultural value chains through climate-smart practices, digital extension services, and market access facilitation. It will also coordinate food security initiatives and rural development programs, with a focus on smallholder farmers and women-led cooperatives.

Social Development and Public Services

SUDESA shall contribute to the modernisation of public service delivery in health, education, and social protection. It will support institutional capacity building, service digitisation, and community-based models of care, ensuring that public services are accessible, accountable, and responsive to local needs.

Gender Equality and Women's Rights

The agency shall mainstream gender equity across all programs and institutional processes. It will implement targeted initiatives to advance women's leadership, economic empowerment, and protection from gender-based violence, in alignment with national gender policies and international human rights frameworks.

Innovation and Youth Empowerment

SUDESA shall establish platforms for youth engagement, entrepreneurship, and skills development. Through innovation labs, digital hubs, and vocational training programs, it will foster a new generation of leaders and changemakers equipped to drive sustainable development and institutional renewal.

Cross-Cutting Themes

All strategic focus areas shall integrate the following cross-cutting priorities:

- **Climate resilience and environmental sustainability**
- **Data governance and ethical technology use**
- **Conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding**
- **Equity and inclusion for marginalised groups**

5.1 Host Country Agreement (HCA)

The establishment and effective functioning of SUDESA shall be governed by a Host Country Agreement (HCA) between the Government of the Republic of South Sudan and the European Social Label (EUSL), acting on behalf of the co-owners. The HCA shall constitute the principal legal instrument defining the rights, privileges, and obligations of SUDESA within the territory of South Sudan.

The HCA shall include, but not be limited to, the following provisions:

- **Legal Recognition:** Formal recognition of SUDESA as an intergovernmental institution with legal personality and the capacity to operate independently within South Sudan.
- **Jurisdictional Autonomy:** Assurance that SUDESA shall enjoy functional independence in the execution of its mandate, including the right to manage its internal affairs, personnel, and financial resources without undue interference.
- **Facilities and Premises:** Allocation of suitable premises for SUDESA's headquarters and regional offices, including provisions for security, maintenance, and access to public utilities.
- **Tax and Customs Exemptions:** Exemption from all direct taxes, customs duties, and import restrictions on goods and equipment necessary for official use, in accordance with international norms governing intergovernmental organisations.
- **Employment and Residency:** Facilitation of work permits, residency visas, and related documentation for international staff, experts, and seconded personnel affiliated with SUDESA.
- **Dispute Resolution:** Establishment of a neutral mechanism for resolving disputes arising from the interpretation or implementation of the HCA, including recourse to international arbitration if necessary.

The HCA shall be negotiated in close consultation with relevant ministries and legal authorities, and shall be ratified through appropriate legislative or executive procedures. It shall serve as the legal foundation for SUDESA's diplomatic and operational presence in South Sudan, and may be amended by mutual consent of the parties.

5.2 Diplomatic Privileges and Immunities

In recognition of its intergovernmental character and regional mandate, SUDESA shall be accorded diplomatic privileges and immunities necessary for the independent and effective execution of its functions. These privileges shall be formalised through the Host Country Agreement (HCA) and aligned with the principles of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (1961), as applicable to international organisations.

The following provisions shall apply:

- **Institutional Immunity:** SUDESA, its property, assets, and archives shall enjoy immunity from legal process, search, requisition, confiscation, or expropriation, except where such immunity is expressly waived by the agency in writing.
- **Inviolability of Premises and Communications:** The premises of SUDESA shall be inviolable. Its official correspondence, documents, and communications shall be protected from interference, censorship, or interception.



- **Privileges for Officials:** Senior officials, including the Executive Director, Deputy Directors, and designated diplomatic staff, shall be granted privileges equivalent to those accorded to diplomatic agents under international law. These may include:
 - Immunity from legal process in respect of official acts;
 - Exemption from taxation on salaries and emoluments paid by SUDESA;
 - Exemption from immigration restrictions and alien registration requirements;
 - Right to import personal effects duty-free upon first arrival.
- **Travel and Identification:** SUDESA shall issue official identification cards to its staff and may, subject to agreement with the host government, issue diplomatic or service passports to designated officials. These documents shall be recognised by relevant authorities for the purpose of travel, residency, and access to official premises.
- **Security and Protection:** The host government shall take all appropriate measures to protect the premises, personnel, and operations of SUDESA against any intrusion, disturbance, or threat, in accordance with its obligations under international law.

These privileges and immunities are not intended to shield individuals from accountability but to ensure the functional independence of the institution. SUDESA shall adopt internal codes of conduct and disciplinary procedures to address any abuse of such privileges.

5.3 Relationship with GSIA and International Partners

SUDESA shall be formally integrated into the Global South Institutional Architecture (GSIA) as a specialised regional agency, operating under the strategic guidance of the Agenda for Social Equity 2074. Its relationship with GSIA shall be governed by a Memorandum of Institutional Affiliation, which will define its role within the broader ecosystem of global social governance, regional cooperation, and development diplomacy.

Affiliation with GSIA

As a GSIA-affiliated institution, SUDESA shall:

- Participate in GSIA's annual assemblies, technical forums, and strategic reviews;
- Align its programming with GSIA's thematic clusters and regional priorities;
- Contribute to the development of shared standards, methodologies, and policy frameworks;
- Serve as a regional node for piloting and scaling GSIA-endorsed innovations and models.

Engagement with International Partners

SUDESA shall maintain structured partnerships with multilateral development banks, bilateral agencies, philanthropic institutions, and global technology providers. These partnerships shall be governed by formal cooperation agreements, joint programming frameworks, and fiduciary protocols that ensure alignment with SUDESA's mandate and governance principles.

Key international partners may include:

- **African Development Bank (AfDB):** for infrastructure, agriculture, and institutional capacity building;



- **Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and Swedfund:** for digitalisation, gender equity, and public sector reform;
- **United Nations agencies:** for technical assistance, normative guidance, and programmatic collaboration;
- **Private sector and philanthropic actors:** for innovation financing, digital infrastructure, and social entrepreneurship.

Observer and Advisory Roles

GSIA, EUSL, and selected international partners may be granted observer or advisory status within SUDESA's governance structure, enabling strategic alignment and mutual accountability. These roles shall be defined in the agency's statutes and operational protocols, ensuring transparency and institutional coherence.

6. Operational Structure

SUDESA shall be structured to ensure both strategic oversight and operational agility, with a central Secretariat supported by specialised technical departments, regional offices, and liaison units. The operational model shall reflect the agency's hybrid nature—balancing intergovernmental legitimacy with programmatic flexibility and innovation.

Secretariat and Technical Departments

The Secretariat shall serve as the executive arm of SUDESA, led by an Executive Director appointed jointly by the co-owners. The Secretariat shall be responsible for day-to-day operations, strategic coordination, and institutional representation.

The following core departments shall be established under the Secretariat:

- **Department of Digital Transformation and Data Governance**
- **Department of Agriculture and Food Systems**
- **Department of Social Development and Public Services**
- **Department of Gender Equality and Social Inclusion**
- **Department of Innovation and Youth Empowerment**
- **Office of Strategy, Policy, and Research**
- **Office of Legal Affairs and Institutional Compliance**
- **Office of Finance and Administration**

Each department shall be headed by a Director, with clear mandates, performance indicators, and reporting lines. Cross-departmental task forces may be established to address emerging priorities or complex, multi-sectoral challenges.

Regional and Local Offices

To ensure proximity to communities and responsiveness to local needs, SUDESA shall establish regional coordination offices in key states and administrative zones. These offices shall be responsible for program implementation, stakeholder engagement, and monitoring at the subnational level.

A liaison office in Addis Ababa shall be established to facilitate coordination with the African Union, GSIA, and other regional bodies. Additional liaison offices may be considered in Geneva, Brussels, or Nairobi, depending on strategic partnerships.

Staffing and Secondment Policies

SUDESA shall adopt a merit-based, inclusive recruitment policy that reflects the diversity of South Sudan and its international partnerships. Staffing shall include:

- National professionals and technical experts;
- International staff seconded by EUSL, WOSL, AFSL, or partner institutions;
- Young professionals and fellows through structured capacity-building programs.

Secondment arrangements shall be governed by formal agreements, ensuring clarity on roles, duration, and institutional accountability. All staff shall be subject to a unified code of conduct, performance appraisal system, and professional development framework.

7. Programmatic Integration

SUDESA's programmatic architecture shall be designed to ensure coherence, scalability, and strategic alignment across all levels of implementation. Its interventions shall be anchored in the Agenda for Social Equity 2074 and harmonised with South Sudan's national development plans, sectoral strategies, and regional frameworks.

Flagship Programs and Initiatives

SUDESA shall serve as the institutional home for a portfolio of flagship programs that exemplify its mandate and operational model. These shall include, but not be limited to:

- **South Sudan Sustainable Food Production and Social Equity Initiative (SSSFPS-EI):** a comprehensive framework for agricultural transformation, food security, and rural livelihoods.
- **Social Development and Empowerment Program (SDEP):** a multi-sectoral initiative focused on digital public services, social protection, and institutional capacity building.
- **Digital Governance and Innovation Platform:** a national infrastructure for e-government, digital identity, and data-driven public administration.
- **Women's Rights and Leadership Initiative:** a targeted program to advance gender equality, legal empowerment, and women's participation in governance and the economy.

Each flagship program shall be governed by a dedicated results framework, implementation plan, and monitoring system, with clear lines of accountability to the Secretariat and Board.

Alignment with Agenda for Social Equity 2074

All programs shall be explicitly mapped to the Social Global Goals and thematic pillars of Agenda 2074. This alignment shall be reflected in program design, budgeting, and reporting, ensuring that SUDESA contributes directly to the long-term vision of equitable, inclusive, and sustainable development.

Coordination with National and Regional Strategies

SUDESA shall operate in close coordination with relevant ministries, state governments, and regional bodies. Programmatic integration shall be achieved through:

- Joint planning and co-financing arrangements;
- Technical working groups and inter-agency task forces;



- Alignment with regional frameworks such as the African Union's Agenda 2063 and IGAD's development priorities.

SUDESA shall also serve as a platform for piloting and scaling innovations developed under GSIA, GSEA, and GSDA, ensuring that South Sudan remains at the forefront of institutional experimentation and policy innovation within the Global South.

8. Financial Framework

SUDESA's financial model shall be designed to ensure institutional sustainability, fiduciary integrity, and alignment with its strategic mandate. The framework shall combine public, private, and philanthropic resources through a blended finance approach, enabling long-term programmatic stability and operational independence.

Initial Capitalization and Funding Sources

The agency's initial capitalization shall be secured through a combination of:

- **Founding contributions** from the Government of South Sudan and the European Social Label (EUSL);
- **Seed funding** from development partners, including AfDB, SIDA, Swedfund, and the Nordic Development Fund;
- **In-kind contributions** such as office space, technical assistance, and seconded personnel;
- **Programmatic grants** linked to flagship initiatives under Agenda 2074.

SUDESA shall also explore innovative financing instruments, including results-based financing, social impact bonds, and concessional loans for infrastructure and digital systems.

Budgeting and Financial Management

The agency shall adopt a multi-year budgeting framework aligned with its strategic plan and programmatic cycles. Annual budgets shall be approved by the Board and subject to internal and external audits.

A dedicated Office of Finance and Administration shall oversee:

- Budget formulation and execution;
- Procurement and contract management;
- Financial reporting and donor compliance;
- Treasury and cash flow management.

All financial operations shall be governed by internationally recognised standards, including IPSAS (International Public Sector Accounting Standards), and supported by digital financial management systems.

Long-Term Sustainability Model

To ensure financial sustainability beyond the initial funding phase, SUDESA shall:

- Establish a SUDESA Development Fund, managed under independent fiduciary oversight, to pool and allocate resources for long-term priorities;
- Introduce service-based revenue streams, such as certification, training, and advisory services, particularly in digital governance and institutional reform;

- Leverage public-private partnerships to co-finance infrastructure, technology, and innovation platforms;
- Pursue multi-donor trust fund arrangements for flagship programs, with EUSL or WOSL serving as neutral fund administrators where appropriate.

All financial instruments and partnerships shall be structured to preserve SUDESA's autonomy, transparency, and alignment with its social equity mandate.

9. Compliance and Risk Management

SUDESA shall adopt a comprehensive compliance and risk management framework to safeguard its institutional integrity, ensure legal and regulatory adherence, and proactively mitigate operational and reputational risks. This framework shall be embedded across all levels of governance and implementation and aligned with international best practices.

Legal and Regulatory Compliance

SUDESA shall operate in full compliance with the laws of the Republic of South Sudan, the provisions of its Host Country Agreement, and applicable international conventions. It shall also adhere to internal statutes, codes of conduct, and sector-specific regulations governing its operations.

A dedicated Office of Legal Affairs and Institutional Compliance shall be responsible for:

- Reviewing contracts, agreements, and institutional policies;
- Ensuring alignment with national and international legal frameworks;
- Providing legal advisory services to the Secretariat and Board;
- Monitoring compliance with donor requirements and fiduciary obligations.

Anti-Corruption and Transparency Mechanisms

SUDESA shall adopt a zero-tolerance policy on corruption, fraud, and abuse of power. To this end, it shall:

- Implement a robust anti-corruption policy and internal control system;
- Establish a whistleblower protection mechanism, enabling confidential reporting of misconduct;
- Require annual declarations of interest from all senior staff and Board members;
- Publish audited financial statements and programmatic reports on a public platform.

All procurement, recruitment, and grant-making processes shall be governed by transparent procedures, with oversight from an independent audit committee reporting to the Board.

Risk	Assessment	and	Mitigation	Strategies
SUDESA shall maintain a dynamic risk management system, identifying, assessing, and mitigating risks across strategic, operational, financial, and reputational domains. This system shall include:				

- A risk register updated quarterly by department heads;
- Scenario planning and contingency protocols for high-risk environments;

- Cybersecurity and data protection measures for digital infrastructure;
- Crisis response protocols for political, environmental, or health-related disruptions.

The risk management framework shall be reviewed annually as part of the agency's strategic review process, ensuring that SUDESA remains adaptive, resilient, and accountable in a rapidly evolving operational context.

10. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL)

SUDESA shall adopt a robust Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) framework to ensure that its programs are results-driven, evidence-based, and continuously improved through structured feedback and learning. The MEL system shall be integrated into all levels of planning, implementation, and reporting, and aligned with both national and international standards.

Performance Indicators

Each program and department shall operate under a defined set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), aligned with the Social Global Goals of Agenda 2074 and national development targets. Indicators shall be disaggregated by gender, age, and geography where applicable, and shall cover:

- Outputs and outcomes;
- Institutional performance;
- Beneficiary satisfaction and impact;
- Cross-cutting themes such as equity, inclusion, and sustainability.

A central MEL unit within the Secretariat shall be responsible for consolidating data, conducting evaluations, and ensuring methodological consistency across the agency.

Reporting and Accountability

SUDESA shall publish annual performance reports, financial statements, and strategic reviews, made publicly available through a digital transparency portal. Reporting obligations shall include:

- Quarterly internal progress reports to the Board;
- Annual external reports to co-owners and development partners;
- Thematic evaluations for flagship programs and cross-sectoral initiatives.

Independent audits and third-party evaluations shall be commissioned periodically to ensure objectivity and credibility.

Adaptive Learning and Strategic Reviews

MEL shall not be limited to compliance but shall serve as a tool for institutional learning and strategic adaptation. SUDESA shall:

- Conduct biannual learning forums to reflect on implementation challenges and innovations;
- Maintain a real-time digital dashboard for internal decision-making and public transparency;
- Integrate lessons learned into program design, policy development, and staff training;
- Participate in GSIA-led peer reviews and knowledge exchanges with sister institutions.



This approach will enable SUDESA to remain agile, accountable, and aligned with the evolving needs of South Sudan and the broader Global South development landscape.

Final Word

The establishment of the South Sudan Development and Social Equity Agency (SUDESA) marks a pivotal step in the country's journey toward institutional renewal, inclusive development, and regional integration. Conceived through a unique partnership between the Government of South Sudan and the European Social Label (EUSL), and anchored in the long-term vision of the Agenda for Social Equity 2074, SUDESA is more than an agency—it is a commitment to building a future grounded in equity, innovation, and resilience.

This framework provides the structural, legal, and programmatic foundation upon which SUDESA shall be built. It reflects a shared understanding that sustainable development requires not only resources and policies, but institutions capable of translating vision into action, and principles into practice.

As SUDESA moves from concept to implementation, its success will depend on the continued engagement of national stakeholders, regional allies, and global partners. It will require courage to innovate, discipline to govern, and humility to learn. Above all, it will require a steadfast focus on the people of South Sudan—whose aspirations for dignity, opportunity, and justice must remain at the heart of every decision and every action.

This document shall serve as a living instrument, subject to periodic review and refinement, as SUDESA evolves in response to emerging challenges and opportunities. It is offered not as a final blueprint, but as a foundation upon which a new chapter in South Sudan's development story may be written—with integrity, with purpose, and with hope.