

## UNOPS As-Is data - summary

1. The **United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)** is a United Nations organization providing implementation services for partners' development, humanitarian, and peacekeeping efforts. Established with a self-reliant operating model by **UN General Assembly decision 48/501**, UNOPS began operating as a separate and identifiable entity on **1 January 1995**, following its origins within UNDP dating back to 1973. Headquartered in **Copenhagen**, UNOPS marked its **30th anniversary in 2025** with average annual delivery of nearly **USD 3 billion** over the past five years.
2. In 2010, **GA resolution 65/176** reaffirmed decisions on the UNOPS **mandate and governance**. Most recently the Executive Board in 2023, reaffirmed the mandate and position as a **demand-driven, non-programmatic service provider**. Its core role is implementation - delivering infrastructure, procurement, and project management services complementing the broader UN system's support of Member States and other partners. Unlike normative or programmatic UN entities, UNOPS does not design or manage based on global development programmes funded by Member States; instead, it is an agile resource for **expanding partners' implementation capacity**, de-risking delivery and developing capacity, providing value for money through professional, accountable project and programme execution for impact.
3. The **UNOPS strategic plan, 2026–2029** sets out a clear ambition to accelerate progress toward the **2030 Agenda** by bridging implementation gaps, at scale and with speed. The organization focuses through eight mutually reinforcing, non-programmatic missions to accelerate the SDGs and climate action, even in the most challenging contexts. It offers services through three models: (a) efficient support services, (b) effective technical advice, and (c) integrated solutions combining both. All UNOPS efforts are rooted in the five mandated functional services: **infrastructure, procurement, project management, human resources, and financial management**; and all delivered on a **full cost-recovery, fee-for-service basis**. The average **cost recovery rate** for 2026-2027 is capped at 5.3% (5.1%, 2024-2025). In 2024, the actual management expense over project expense was 4.1%.
4. Operationally, UNOPS has **global reach and deploys with agility**, annually implementing over **1,100 projects across more than 130 countries** on behalf of more than **200 partners**. In 2024 alone, it procured **\$1.7 billion** in goods and services from over 5,800 suppliers, managed **\$380 million in grants**, and administered approximately **9,500 personnel and 20,000 contracts** on behalf of partners across 157 countries. Its main partners include UN entities, international financial institutions, donor and programme countries, vertical funds and multilateral initiatives. Additionally, UNOPS provides **hosting arrangements** for 13 entities.
5. Financially, UNOPS operates under a **self-financing, pre-funded model**, receiving project cash advances before implementation. For 2024, total project delivery amounted to approximately **\$2.7 billion** - in IPSAS compliant audited financial statements reported as **\$1.48 billion** of principal expense and **USD 1.38 billion** of agent expense. Assets totaled **\$3.8 billion**, largely reflecting advances received for project delivery. Net equity was **\$374 million**, and post-employment benefit liabilities are fully funded. This financial model underpins the UNOPS operational agility while limiting reserve accumulation.
6. UNOPS maintains a **globally distributed, project-based workforce** on contract modalities designed for agility and scalability. As of December 2025, UNOPS employed approximately **5,500 personnel worldwide**, deployed across headquarters, regional offices, multi-country and country offices. **Senior management** (P6/D1-USG level) comprised 56 personnel, excluding hosted entities. Its personnel model relies primarily on **short-duration, extendable contracts**, rather than traditional

fixed-term staff appointments, reflecting its self-financed, demand-driven operating model. In addition, the UNOPS **Global Shared Services Centre** (GSSC) is a corporate delivery platform of transactional services.

7. UNOPS functions as a **highly integrated technology development house**, maintaining a lean, technically proficient IT organization built on a cloud-first and modern development mindset. This allows it to act as an internal service provider and an external technology partner at the same time.

8. UNOPS is governed by the **UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS Executive Board**, like other UN organizations supported by independent internal audit, investigations and ethics, and an audit advisory committee. Management ensures robust accountability and risk management, and maintains an external investment committee advising on treasury. Implementation and management is monitored against the strategic results framework, with results, transparent portfolio analysis, and external thematic evaluations of impact reported annually to the Board. Collectively, these arrangements ensure the integrity of the unique UNOPS operating model, enabling its role as a **specialized, operationally focused UN organization**, uniquely positioned to translate financing and policy into tangible results on the ground through efficient, cost-effective, transparent, and scalable implementation.

9. The utility and broad demand for the tightly ringfenced UNOPS fee-for-service implementation expertise is illustrated by the **many countries and different types of contexts** in which it enables partners by expanding their implementation capacity to accelerate the SDGs. Since 1995, the demand for the UNOPS services has grown. The 2024 snapshot distributes the \$2.7 billion delivery as follows:

- (a) Demand for UNOPS agile implementation remained particularly high in countries in **special or fragile situations** which accounted for 66% of delivery, other programme countries accounted for 25%, and 9% in a global portfolio delivered across multiple countries.
- (b) Project services delivered in response to demand from other **UN entities** remained stable at around half a billion, or 20%. The services in demand by other **partners** was distributed as follows: programme countries 13%; donor countries 17%; vertical funds and multilateral initiatives 15%; international financial institutions 29%; and regional and other intergovernmental organizations 6%.
- (c) UNOPS can support implementation for all **SDGs**. In 2024, ten main SDGs accounted for 91%, implemented through 973 projects. SDG 3 and 16 accounted for 51%, 499 projects; SDG 1, 9, 10, 11, 13 and 17 accounted for 33%, 405 projects; and SDGs 2 and 4 accounted for 7%, 69 projects.

10. The above illustrates how UNOPS with marginal overheads is able to put its **operating model** behind a broad range of partners' intent to accelerate SDGs, by bringing **UN values and intent to the marketplace** for humanitarian, development and peacekeeping implementation, including in the most challenging contexts. UNOPS is a unique and agile resource in and of the UN system.

11. In sum, the UNOPS **comparative advantages** de-risk implementation through:

- (a) **Agile**, efficient cost-effectiveness with **global reach**;
- (b) Expertise in **matching public and private partners** for implementation;
- (c) Capacity to enable implementation of global **multilateral partnerships**;
- (d) **Professional management** of partners' projects, programmes and portfolios **guided by UN values**;
- (e) Efficient global **support services**;
- (f) Effective **technical advice** for public implementation **capacity in contexts of market failure**;
- (g) Collaboration for **integrated solutions** with partners in the UN and beyond; and
- (h) Commitment to **manage for impact** and **value for money**.