

Update on Implementation Efforts on the Repositioning of the UN Development System

Information Note

Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS – Annual Session 2023

I. Introduction

1. This information note is presented to the Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS and provides an overview of UNOPS' implementation efforts on the repositioning of the UN development system.

II. Supporting the United Nations Resident Coordinator (RC) system

2. Management and Accountability Framework (MAF): UNOPS has been actively participating in the Development Coordination Office (DCO) led efforts aimed at strengthening the MAF for the RC system. This covers two areas of accountability: i) RC input on performance management of UN Country Team (UNCT) representatives; and ii) contribution of UNCT members into the assessment of RC performance.
3. More specifically, UNOPS includes specific performance objectives related to UNCTs into the performance appraisals of all UNOPS Country Directors and Representatives, and to improve global consistency we introduced an organization-wide objective in 2020 and this was updated in 2022 in line with the new MAF. UNOPS Regional Directors also ensure input from the relevant RCs is in the performance assessments of the respective colleagues. UNOPS continues the work on the organization-wide alignment of the UNCT cooperation through a standard UNCT objective across the organization, while taking into consideration the relevant UNCT/inter-agency group agenda set by RCs and feedback from the respective RCs at the end of the performance cycle.
4. In 2021, UNOPS participated in the 180 peer feedback pilot for RCs, along with other UN entities, whereby UNCT members provided feedback on RC leadership behaviours in alignment with the RC Leadership Profile.
5. Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator (RC/HC) Talent Pipeline: In an effort to help further expand the pool of potential candidates for RC/HC functions, UNOPS continues to actively encourage our staff to pursue RC/HC roles as part of their career development and supports their application to the RC/HC Talent Pipeline. UNOPS continues to put forward highly qualified and diverse colleagues for consideration to partake in the RC/HC Talent Pipeline. UNOPS senior staff members also participate in the selection and assessment for these. We currently have one UNOPS staff member serving as a RC, two are in the RC/HC Pool and two are part of the RC/HC Talent Pipeline.
6. Other relevant HR-related updates: In 2022, UNOPS introduced a pilot with a new bespoke 360 feedback tool for leadership roles. This 360 feedback tool includes key areas related to the UN Leadership Framework - the HLCM Leadership Commitments and the UN Values and Behaviours. 47

UNOPS colleagues completed it in 2022 and we have opened it up again in 2023. As we move through the pilot we hope to use this to inform talent management initiatives.

7. UN Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG) cost-sharing: Our fee-for-service business model is unique in the UN system. UNOPS does not directly receive any assessed or voluntary (core/non-core) contributions and is paid for services rendered. The UNOPS cost-sharing contribution in support of the RC system amounted to USD2.46M for 2023. It was paid in full and in a timely manner.
8. 1 percent coordination levy: UNOPS is in full compliance with the relevant legislation, official guidance and interpretations for the collection and transfer of the 1 percent coordination levy. For the period from January 2020 to April 2023, USD2.16M were generated and transferred to the Special Purpose Trust Fund from the 1 percent coordination levy.

III. Advancing system-wide support to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

9. Support to the UNSDG, other relevant inter-agency fora and engagement at the regional level: As a member of the UNSDG, UNOPS plays a critical role in contributing to more effective and efficient development cooperation and results. At the working level, we participate in UNSDG inter-agency Task Teams and Working Groups. UNOPS' work in the UNSDG Business Innovations Group (BIG) in particular is detailed under IV. Advancing the efficiency agenda. Since 2016, UNOPS has been a full and equal member of the Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) and we are also represented in the High-Level Committee on Management (HLCM) and the High-Level Committee on Programmes (HLCP). UNOPS is a member of the Regional Collaborative Platforms (RCPs) in all regions and participates in a number of Issue-Based Coalitions (IBCs).
10. Strengthening system-wide analysis, planning and reporting through the Cooperation Framework: UNOPS is improving its ability to engage with the UN development system and accelerate SDG achievement through the UNCTs and the Common Country Analysis (CCA)/Cooperation Framework process by providing its expertise in infrastructure and procurement. Infrastructure and procurement will be critical for the achievement of the SDGs, including climate action. UNOPS has conducted research in collaboration with the University of Oxford which has shown that the achievement of 92 percent of SDG targets are underpinned by the development of infrastructure services. Sustainable procurement is central to the achievement of SDG 12.
11. UNOPS' support will come from a new initiative, the National Infrastructure and Procurement Context and Opportunity Assessments (NIPCOA). The NIPCOA is being set up to assist partners in achieving the SDGs. The infrastructure part of the assessment will identify key challenges that governments face in terms of utilizing infrastructure to achieve the SDGs. Similarly, the procurement assessments will identify key systemic challenges pertaining to regulatory frameworks, anti-corruption measures, and system performance. The NIPCOA assessments will then identify how to link those challenges to project concepts that can accelerate the country's ability to achieve the SDGs. These project concepts will then be embedded within the Cooperation Framework so that the UN can support the relevant national government implement projects that align with accelerating their achievement of the SDGs. The NIPCOA is currently being piloted across eight countries (Ecuador; Guyana; South Sudan; Madagascar; Serbia; Georgia; Pakistan; and the Philippines). Our ambition is to scale the initiative across all countries where

UNOPS works. UNOPS looks forward to working with other UN entities and partner governments to use infrastructure and procurement to accelerate the achievement of the SDGs.

12. Capacity development of personnel: In mid-2022, UNOPS created a new internal working group. The focus was on the SDGs and it was established across functions and regions. The SDG Working Group identified a need to better articulate and understand how UNOPS can add value to the UN development system and increase the impact of our work at the country level. To this end, UNOPS entered into a partnership with the UN System Staff College to develop a tailored SDG specific learning programme for UNOPS leaders and emerging leaders.
13. The objective of the programme is to create a reflective environment to equip the participants with tools to lead the UN reform and navigate complex environments, understanding the positioning of UNOPS at the country level in the new post-pandemic context and its implications for the global system and for the UN. The course will consist of eight modules and take place over six months, utilizing a hybrid approach including self-study e-learning modules, live virtual sessions and in-person workshops, starting in mid-2023.
14. Examples of some of the topics which the modules will cover are:
 - Country programming and the new generation Cooperation Framework;
 - Unpacking UNOPS' strategic goals and leveraging our role as non-programmatic resource for implementation;
 - Upholding UN norms and values in the often-growing contested contexts and environments, and mainstreaming social and environmental safeguards; and
 - Engaging in North-South, South-South, triangular, and public-private partnerships.

IV. Advancing the efficiency agenda

15. UNSDG BIG: UNOPS is a member of the BIG and the Director of the Shared Services Centre is the interim member of the BIG representing UNOPS. We will continue participating and push for the efficiency agenda initiatives to be materialised. UNOPS also contributes with our cost share of the DCO budget according to the prorated formula.
16. Mutual recognition: UNOPS continues to be a strong advocate for the use of mutual recognition between UN system entities. To this end, we are represented at the Mutual Recognition working groups both within the UNSDG BIG and at the HLCM. UNOPS is already able to utilize UN sister entity processes once permission has been granted and hopes to be able to generate more efficiencies within other entities by encouraging the use of our own platforms which depend upon mutual recognition. The best example of this for UNOPS is UN Web Buy Plus, articulated below.
17. Efficiencies and Global Shared Services: UNOPS is an active participant in the Global Shared Services (GSS) Task Team and has been the co-chair until recently along with WFP. One of the five GSSs the Reference Group agreed to prioritize is UN Web Buy Plus which UNOPS manages. As for the other efficiency agenda initiatives, UNOPS currently co-chairs the Business Operations Strategy (BOS) Task Team. When it comes to the Common Back Office (CBO) UNOPS, jointly with UNICEF, is in the process of preparing a proposal to host CBO services in Amman, Jordan.

18. The UN Web Buy fee has been reviewed and reduced to move toward a cost recovery model and offer the best value-for-money procurement services to the UN system. The new fee structure is as follows: 3.5 percent up to USD200K; and 2.5 percent above USD200K. UNOPS wishes to propose the establishment of an inter-agency user group to discuss further possible scenarios of collaboration and Long Term Agreements (LTA) sharing through the platform.
19. In 2022, UNOPS saw USD15.2M efficiency gains, reported through the annual efficiency reporting facilitated by DCO and our country-level BOS review. For UNOPS GSS (Bangkok Shared Service Centre) remains the main driver of efficiency gains with USD13.1M or 86 percent. The implementation of BOS across 79 UNOPS country offices resulted in efficiency gains of over USD0.85M in 2022 with administrative services generating the largest efficiencies with 64 percent.

V. Delivering results in the reinvigorated UN development system

20. Taking the implementation of the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) mandates forward: The UNOPS restated strategic plan, 2022-2025 was developed based on the fast-tracked midterm review. It outlines how the provisions of the QCPR have been embedded in the context of its role and operating model, including through strong emphasis on the SDGs and sustainable implementation. The plan emphasizes UNOPS' role to expand implementation capacity through its cost-effective project services providing collaborative advantage for partners in the UN system and beyond.
21. UNOPS expands implementation capacity through three services models:
 - Support services: Solving routine, often simple problems, at low cost;
 - Technical advice: Helping partners decide on ill-defined issues, based on our track record of dealing with similar problems; and
 - Integrated solutions: Implementing complex projects with interrelated parts by applying systematic, comprehensive approaches, combining support services with technical advice.
22. Through its core competencies in infrastructure, procurement and project and programme implementation UNOPS can respond in support of all SDGs in any country. The UNOPS presence and substantive focus is ultimately a factor of the demand of its partners.
23. UNOPS will build on its significant experience from responding in countries in special and fragile situations, and harness capacity in health, climate and renewable energy, based on experience and in response to demand.
24. UNOPS will further develop its capacity to respond through sustainable implementation considering cross-cutting economic, social and environmental concerns. It will more systematically engage in common country analysis to impart its competencies in public procurement and infrastructure.
25. Regular reporting on the implementation of the strategic plan, including relevant aspects of the QCPR implementation, is provided in conjunction with the Executive Director's annual reports to the Executive Board.
26. Small Island Developing States (SIDS): UNOPS is gradually increasing its support to SIDS. UNOPS operates in all SIDS regions supporting development efforts of SIDS across all SDGs. Some of the

examples of UNOPS' work include the design and implementation of sustainable off-grid energy solutions in Papua New Guinea; the improvement of national capacity for long-term infrastructure planning and decision-making in Saint Lucia; and the procurement of critical essential medication and COVID-related equipment across SIDS. Going forward UNOPS aims to work more towards developing a portfolio approach in support of SIDS. This would allow us to work in greater coordination with the UN system and other partners as well as to work towards reducing operational costs that are often high in SIDS.

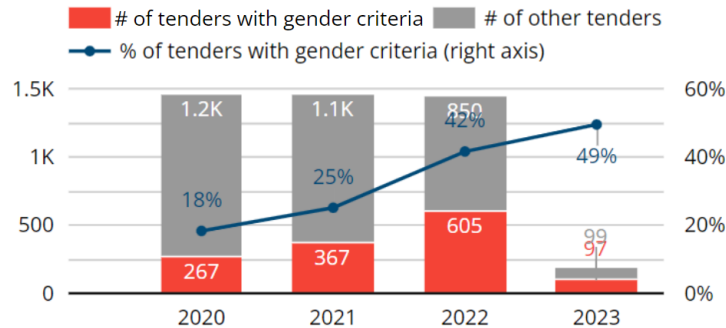
27. In the coming period UNOPS will work on the development of the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda (ABA) through broad consultations with stakeholder networks and on institutionalisation of ABA implementation through a dedicated hub in line with the 2020 Secretary-General's Report on the Implementation of the QCPR (A/75/79–E/2020/55). UNOPS expects to strengthen climate action in infrastructure and supply chains and help SIDS mobilise financing by providing technical expertise to identify relevant funding sources and prepare investment-ready projects.
28. Update on strengthening the joint impact for the SDGs: UNOPS can be a resource for implementation capacity for all the Goals while intensifying its focus on those Goals where it has significant experience or anticipates particular demand. This does not mean that UNOPS presumes a normative policy mandate; rather, it is a reaffirmation of the commitment to deploy efforts and capacity for purpose and to help partners achieve their objectives. During 2022, UNOPS introduced a systematic way for all projects to map the 'primary' and 'secondary' Goals to which they contribute. The mapping was used in the portfolio review, 2022, as a basis for understanding where the organization has experience. Initial analysis shows that whilst UNOPS contributes to all the Goals, it has made significant contributions to Goals 3 and 16. In December 2022, UNOPS commissioned a thematic evaluation covering 12 project case studies. The projects were selected based on criteria to provide robust representation of service lines, country typology, regions, partner types, and Goals 3, 7 and 13. The review found clear evidence of causal pathways to change, though contributions vary, depending on factors such as the nature and stage of the project. Most projects contribute to more than one Goal. In response to the expectations of Executive Board, UNOPS needs to establish and resource organizational capacities for monitoring and evaluation. As a self-financing organization, considerations for embedding those capacities may include:
- How annual, strategic thematic evaluations are an integral part of refining and rolling out UNOPS organizational strategy, reinforced by an expanded results framework with ambitions for impact, contributions and management results that underpin the institutional theory of change;
 - How quality management can be strengthened through project-level monitoring, tracking of progress and assessments, documentation of knowledge, learning and management of risk, which can be synthesized and embedded into future project design; and
 - How the three service models can contribute to partner objectives and development goals, directly and indirectly, including how UNOPS can track, report and, ultimately, increase its knowledge of contributions to the Goals.
29. Other contributions to SDG acceleration: Procurement is core to UNOPS' mandate and as such we have developed key policy and procedures which play a crucial role and enabler in accelerating the achievement of the SDGs. With public procurement representing in many developing countries approximately 15-22 percent of GDP¹, UNOPS recognizes that sustainable procurement is not isolated to what products are purchased, but also how they are purchased and from whom. Procurement that

¹[The World Bank - Procurement for Development](#)

includes sustainability considerations is a powerful and positive catalyst for sustainable development - creating jobs, addressing inequalities, protecting our environment and increasing stability by building trust in government. UNOPS procures over USD1.3B annually, and we have a unique and privileged opportunity as well as significant responsibility to use procurement to drive sustainable development, and not, by the missed opportunity, undermine development potential.

30. UNOPS approaches SDG acceleration via its Sustainable Procurement Framework in three ways. Firstly by the general guidance that is embedded within the procurement policy that allows for, and encourages sustainability considerations at each stage of the procurement process. Secondly, through the development of mandatory requirements that must be included in UNOPS tenders. This is based on the different contract and solicitation types, as well as the different categories or spend. Thirdly, UNOPS has developed specific programmes to accelerate and maximise its efforts in the area of supplier sustainability and supplier diversity and inclusion.
31. The UNOPS supplier sustainability programme DRiVE, is a digital, data driven innovation within eProcurement that allows UNOPS to ensure that suppliers act responsibly and in accordance with the UN Supplier Code of Conduct and UNOPS sustainable development objectives. DRiVE allows UNOPS, in an automated manner, to identify potential high-risk suppliers and engages with the market to mitigate those risks. Since the roll-out of DRiVE UNOPS has been able to screen 7,821 suppliers in 3,151 tenders from 167 countries. This provides a comprehensive insight into the sustainability maturity of different markets and industries.
32. Furthermore, UNOPS Possibilities (UP) programme (including UP Forums) accelerates access to the local suppliers in developing markets and enhances capacity of diverse suppliers to bid in public procurement tenders. This is particularly critical as much of UNOPS' procurement activities are in markets that contain suppliers that are challenged in their ability to gain access to the opportunities presented by UNOPS' project implementation.
33. Lastly, UNOPS sets minimum requirements based on sustainability criteria for the products, services, and works delivered to partners as part of UNOPS' projects. This requires the inclusion of sustainability criteria in the tender. The inclusion of specific criteria is determined based on various considerations, including the sustainability needs and the market maturity. The inclusion of gender criteria in tenders since 2020 is a clear example of how this commitment from UNOPS has made a direct impact. Mandatory requirements are reinforced by the UNOPS corporate Gender Action Plan and commitments. Since the introduction of these mandatory criteria, the organization shifted from 18 percent of online tenders awarded in 2020 including gender considerations to current indications of 49 percent as of February 2023.

Inclusion of gender considerations in UNOPS tenders*, Jan 2020 - Feb 2023



*Note that data combines selection of SP indicator "Gender issues" in eSourcing platform and keyword search of the gender criteria in the Criteria list tab.

34. Over the years of inclusion this has resulted in USD3B of award amount.

Sustainable Procurement (SP) Indicators included in tenders

Note that one tender can include multiple SP indicators, in those cases tender count and award amount is duplicated.

SP indicator ⓘ	SP Category	# of tenders	Awarded Amount (USD) -
Gender issues	Social	1,273	3B
Human and labour rights	Social	371	2.4B
Biodiversity protection	Environmental	272	2.3B
Other considerations	Other	801	972M
Social health and well-being	Social	138	818M
Sustainable resource use	Environmental	808	426.7M
Local communities	Social	217	228.3M
Prevention of pollution	Environmental	454	204.8M
Climate change	Environmental	170	82.3M
UN Global Compact	Other	231	61.9M
Supply chain sustainability	Economic	70	40.7M
Total Cost of Ownership	Economic	28	10.1M
Limited competition i.e. MSME/WOB/YOB/DIB	Economic	8	320.2K

35. This comprehensive approach to the procurement process enhances the overall contribution and impact of UNOPS projects to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

VI. Conclusion

36. UNOPS embraces UN values and principles in all its actions. It is essential for us to increasingly assess the effect of contributions by expanding implementation capacity for the SDGs and Our Common Agenda. UNOPS remains highly committed to supporting the positive reforms undertaken in the UN development system.