



**Executive Board of the
United Nations Development
Programme, the United Nations
Population Fund and the
United Nations Office for
Project Services**

Distr.: General
30 June 2025

Original: English

Second regular session 2025
25 to 29 August 2025, New York
Item 11 of the provisional agenda
UNOPS strategic plan, 2026-2029

The UNOPS strategic plan, 2026-2029

Summary

Why UNOPS is a United Nations partner for impact

The strategic plan, 2026-2029, anchors UNOPS in General Assembly resolution 65/176 which established UNOPS as a United Nations organization. For over 30 years it has expanded partners' implementation capacity, providing infrastructure, procurement and project management services across development, humanitarian and peace efforts. The plan charts a path for UNOPS to scale up and speed up impact through practical solutions, fulfilling its role as a demand-driven, non-programmatic service provider with a self-reliant operating model.

The plan is aligned with the quadrennial comprehensive policy review and informed by developments in the international context, including lagging progress on the Sustainable Development Goals and climate action. It emphasizes that the agile, efficient and cost-effective implementation of UNOPS can help activate the Pact for the Future and reinforce the Secretary-General's reform efforts.

UNOPS is guided by United Nations values and human rights. The plan sets the direction for accelerating the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and bridging implementation gaps affecting hundreds of millions of vulnerable people, and billions more in future generations. UNOPS will collaborate and manage for impact based on knowledge and learning from eight mutually reinforcing non-programmatic missions.

With a mission to help people build a more peaceful, fair and sustainable world, UNOPS pursues a vision for the world where all people have access to human rights, peace and sustainable development, supported by sustainable, resilient and inclusive infrastructure and effective and transparent use of public resources in procurement and project management.

What UNOPS implementation services offer to partners

The plan illustrates how the UNOPS value-add is a function of its practical solutions for agile implementation, furnishing partners in the United Nations system and beyond with services and knowledge to advance United Nations objectives.

UNOPS can partner with the United Nations, governments of programme and donor countries, intergovernmental institutions, international and regional financing institutions, foundations, the private sector, and non-governmental organizations. It can expand implementation for a range of multilateral partnerships.

UNOPS is a resource for infrastructure, procurement and project management services, including financial management and human resources. Its complementarity lies in its ability to de-risk implementation, complementing the upstream policy advice and development financing enabled by entities in the United Nations system and beyond.



UNOPS brings United Nations values and human rights to the marketplace for implementation of sustainable development, humanitarian and peacekeeping efforts. It delivers through efficient support services, effective technical advice and integrated solutions.

UNOPS seeks to collaborate more within the United Nations system through practical solutions for coalitions and consortiums. It seeks to help the system act in a more integrated fashion based on competences for development policy advice and norm-setting, development financing, and implementation of practical solutions.

UNOPS seeks to bring its comparative advantages to bear collaborating with other United Nations entities involved in implementation. The eight comparative advantages of UNOPS practical solutions complement other entities by de-risking implementation for impact in the following ways:

- (a) *Agile, efficient cost-effectiveness with global reach*, expanding and contracting country presence in response to demand; available for resident coordinators, humanitarian coordinators, and special representatives of the Secretary-General to help bridge implementation gaps, advancing national priorities and responding in complex emergencies, including where UNOPS is non-resident;
- (b) *Expertise in matching public and private partners for implementation*, including in special or fragile situations and across development, humanitarian and peace efforts;
- (c) *Capacity to enable implementation of global multilateral partnerships* through secretariat service for networked multilateralism to accelerate countries' achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and climate action;
- (d) *Professional management of partners' projects, programmes and portfolios guided by United Nations values* for sustainable, resilient and inclusive implementation;
- (e) *Efficient global support services*, location-independent global shared services for human resources and supply-chain management, including through 'UN Web Buy Plus';
- (f) *Effective technical advice for public implementation capacity in contexts of market failure*, particularly assistance and capacity development for public management of infrastructure, procurement and projects, including use of resources in institutions and their supply chains;
- (g) *Collaboration for integrated solutions with partners in the United Nations and beyond* responding to global, regional and country-level implementation needs in multiple sectors and contexts, including design for transparent public management to unlock implementation; and
- (h) *Commitment to manage for impact and value for money* through transparent, efficient and cost-effective use of resources, based on fee-for-service with full cost recovery.

How UNOPS is managed

The plan commits UNOPS to values of respect, integrity, professionalism and accountability, remaining true to its mandate and the highest United Nations standards. It outlines arrangements for governance and management, with organizational structures ensuring segregation of duties, aligned with the demand-driven operating model.

The plan builds on UNOPS reforms to increase agility, trust and transparency, and sets out to further optimize operational efficiencies and leverage the quintet of 'UN 2.0' skills. It commits UNOPS to further enhance capacities for:

- (a) Strategic partnerships and agile deployment;
- (b) Capabilities to measure and manage for impact;
- (c) Climate action in projects and across the organization;
- (d) Implementation of process innovation and digitalization;
- (e) Robust risk management and accountability frameworks;
- (f) Accountability for organizational culture and engagement; and
- (g) Accountability for results.

The results framework, 2026-2029, is aligned with the UNOPS mandate, with targets for management and implementation and principles for project-level targets to gauge impact. It will reinforce accountability for achievement of the priorities set in the plan.

Elements of a decision

The Executive Board may wish to endorse the UNOPS strategic plan, 2026-2029, and recognize its anchoring in resolution 65/176, on the UNOPS mandate and governance, and resolution 79/226, on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review.

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I. Why UNOPS is a United Nations partner for impact

A. Mandate for United Nations objectives

1. Established by the General Assembly UNOPS is grounded in the principles of the United Nations Charter: peace, justice, human dignity, tolerance and solidarity.¹

2. In 1995, UNOPS became a “separate and identifiable entity.” The first decision² emphasized that UNOPS would undertake implementation, which is its core expertise, in complementarity with the United Nations system. Since then, its non-normative implementation role has been set by Member States’ resolutions and decisions.³

3. In 2010, the General Assembly established UNOPS as a “United Nations organization” with governance on a par with others, but as a demand-driven, non-programmatic service provider with a self-reliant operating model. The resolution⁴ set the UNOPS mandate and governance and the scope of its project services, and reaffirmed decisions encouraging UNOPS to engage with partners in the United Nations system and beyond.

4. The resolution⁵ reaffirmed the UNOPS role as a central resource for the United Nations system in procurement, contract management civil works and physical infrastructure development, including related capacity-development activities; and recognized the potential for value-adding contributions through the provision of efficient, cost-effective services to partners in project management, human resources, financial management and shared services. It encouraged UNOPS to enhance engagements as a service provider to actors in the development, humanitarian and peacekeeping arenas.

5. In 2023, the Executive Board welcomed the return of UNOPS to its original mandate of providing infrastructure, procurement and project management services.⁶ It encouraged UNOPS to analyse and report on contributions of service delivery to the operational results of partners, the expansion of partners’ implementation capacity, and achievement of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.

6. UNOPS seeks to bring its comparative advantages to bear collaborating with other United Nations entities involved in implementation. Guided by United Nations values anchored in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,⁷ it supports countries in accelerating achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and climate action. It mainstreams the Goals and integrates climate- and environment-responsive approaches.⁸ This plan charts a path for impact, with aspirations to scale up and speed up to bridge implementation gaps affecting hundreds of millions of vulnerable people in challenging contexts, and billions in future generations.

7. With a mission to help people build a more peaceful, fair and sustainable world; UNOPS pursues a vision for the world where all people have access to human rights, peace and sustainable development, supported by sustainable, resilient and inclusive infrastructure and by effective and transparent use of public resources in procurement and project management.

¹ San Francisco, 1945

² Decision 1994/12, paragraph 1

³ General Assembly resolutions 48/162 and 65/176, and decision 48/501; and Executive Board decisions 94/12, 2008/35, 2009/25, 2010/7, 2010/21, 2012/5, 2013/23, 2016/19, 2017/26, 2019/12, 2020/20, 2021/20, 2022/24, 2023/4 and 2023/16

⁴ Resolution 65/176, reaffirming decisions 2009/25 and 2010/21

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Decision 2023/16

⁷ Resolution 217 (III)

⁸ Resolution 79/226, paragraphs 9 and 35

B. 2030 Agenda and beyond

8. In 2015, Member States set the 2030 Agenda: “Transforming our world”,⁹ and adopted the Sustainable Development Goals. The Paris Agreement¹⁰ sought to combat climate change, and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda¹¹ set ambitions for development financing.

9. In 2025, progress on most Goals – and climate action – is off track¹² and the promise of multilateralism is under pressure. The world is facing a poly-crisis: finance, energy and food systems are under stress, compounded by the climate emergency and geopolitical divisions. The defining principle of the 2030 Agenda – to leave no one behind – is at stake.

10. Complementing the policy advice and development financing of others, UNOPS can help bridge the implementation gap. The estimated \$4 trillion gap in financing is about 1,500 times the annual UNOPS delivery. Pressures are mounting on traditional development finance, but other sources are available: global financial assets under management are estimated at \$460 trillion.¹³ UNOPS is intent on helping scale up and speed up implementation to support countries’ achievement of the Goals based on funds mobilized by its partners, helping unlock implementation with Official Development Assistance in market-failure contexts.

11. This plan, aligned with guidance in consecutive quadrennial comprehensive policy reviews¹⁴ and the repositioning of the development system,¹⁵ highlights the complementarity and comparative advantages of UNOPS implementation services. At global, regional and country levels UNOPS collaborates within the United Nations system to support national priorities.¹⁶

12. In 2024, Member States adopted the Pact for the Future,¹⁷ recognizing risks and opportunities in times of profound global transformation. They agreed on 56 actions to protect the needs and interests of present and future generations. UNOPS enables partners’ efforts to invest in the social and economic development of children and youth, protect the rights of young people and strengthen youth participation at the national and international levels.

13. When announcing the ‘UN80 Initiative’, the Secretary-General underlined that “the need is great and the goal is clear: an even stronger and more effective United Nations that delivers for the people and is tuned to the 21st century”. UNOPS is an agile resource for partners seeking to collaborate in a more coherent and integrated value chain.

14. While traditional development aid and United Nations system funding are under pressure, the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development¹⁸ provided a unique opportunity to reform financing. In that context, UNOPS can implement for partners based on different types of financing; support capacity development to bridge infrastructure gaps;¹⁹ and enhance transparency in public procurement.²⁰

15. UNOPS is a resource for Member States, the United Nations and other partners. It is a potential implementation partner for the Doha Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries,²¹ the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for Small Island Developing States,²² and the Gaborone Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2024–2034.²³ UNOPS stands ready to collaborate with the African Union and its partners to move forward

⁹ Resolution 70/1

¹⁰ Paris Agreement

¹¹ Resolution 69/313

¹² Sustainable Development Goals Report 2024

¹³ Global Outlook on Financing for Sustainable Development, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2025

¹⁴ Resolutions 71/243, 75/233 and 79/226

¹⁵ Resolutions 72/279 and 76/4

¹⁶ Resolution 79/226

¹⁷ Resolution 79/1

¹⁸ Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development (‘FFD4’) outcome document, 2025 – first draft

¹⁹ Ibid., paragraph 17

²⁰ Ibid., paragraph 22.b

²¹ Resolution 76/258

²² Resolution 78/317

²³ Resolution 79/233

Agenda 2063 and its second 10-year implementation plan (2024-2033), and the New Partnership for Africa's Development.²⁴ UNOPS is already supporting several middle-income countries.

16. UNOPS will redouble its efforts to reach the most vulnerable people. In 2024, the world population exceeded 8 billion, living in 193 countries and a number of territories, almost half in low-income and lower-middle-income countries. About 1.3 billion people lived in the 92 most vulnerable countries: 880 million in 45 least developed countries, 479 million in 32 landlocked developing countries, and 65 million in 39 small island developing States. About a quarter of the world's population live in fragile or conflict-affected contexts. They include 324 million extremely poor people residing in 33 countries in fragile and conflict-affected situations. Hundreds of millions of vulnerable people live in middle-income countries facing specific challenges. More than 40 per cent of the people struggling on less than \$2.15 a day live across 26 low-income-countries, 17 of them racked by conflict or fragility. Nearly all are particularly vulnerable to climate change, and most are either in debt distress or at high risk of it. Only six low-income-countries are likely to achieve middle-income status by 2050.

17. The global outlook attests to the interlinkages among sustainable development and drivers of conflicts, climate change, disaster risks, humanitarian crises and complex emergencies.²⁵ Sustainable development underpins peace, and sustained peace enables development. Societies are more resilient when they uphold human rights, the rule of law, gender equality and women's empowerment, inclusion and diversity; nurture their children and youth; and respect the rights of people with disabilities, those living with HIV/AIDS, the elderly, indigenous people, refugees and internally displaced persons, and migrants.²⁶

C. UNOPS partners for impact

18. Through eight non-programmatic missions UNOPS will hone internal knowledge and learning for impact. The mutually reinforcing networks will enable vertical and horizontal collaboration across the organization. Internal learning and transfer of knowledge on effective projects will increase demand-readiness for complementarity and comparative advantage through collaboration with other United Nations entities.

19. The UNOPS portfolio of projects arises from partners' demand for project services. The eight areas express needs recognized at the Sustainable Development Goals Summit, 2023²⁷ but do not represent an exhaustive list of issues, nor a prioritization of UNOPS activities over the next four years. They do not present programmatic intentionality, but readiness to collaborate when called.

20. The non-programmatic missions are internal 'practice areas' for knowledge and learning, similar to those of global private-sector service providers in engineering or consulting. Such organizations have similar operating models based on full cost-recovery and fee-for-service. They will help to hone UNOPS experience, knowledge and learning to engage in partnerships that accelerate sustainable development, bridge implementation gaps in challenging contexts, and leave no one behind. They will enhance readiness to respond with project services for collaboration to:

(a) *Address the interconnected challenges of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution.* This triple planetary crisis constitutes an existential threat. About 3.6 billion people live in areas highly susceptible to climate change and each year 21.5 million people are displaced by related disasters. Sustainable, resilient and inclusive infrastructure and public procurement are essential to combat the climate emergency and the planetary crisis. UNOPS remains committed to the principles of the United Nations Plan of Action on Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience.²⁸

(b) *Increase energy access and accelerate the transition away from fossil fuels, promoting renewable energy and energy efficiency.* By 2030, an estimated 660 million people will lack electricity access and around 1.8 billion will go without clean cooking fuels and technologies. The energy sector is responsible for 73 per cent of greenhouse gas

²⁴ A/57/304, annex

²⁵ Resolution 79/226, paragraph 19

²⁶ Ibid, paragraph 14

²⁷ Resolution 78/1

²⁸ DP/OPS/2013/3, paragraph 51

emissions.²⁹ UNOPS is committed to supporting partners in providing access to energy for all, transitioning away from fossil fuels in a just, inclusive and equitable way.

(c) *Advance just digital transformation, promoting developing countries' access to and use of digital infrastructure, technology and data.* At least 2.6 billion people remain offline, and only 50 per cent of the rural population use the Internet (compared to 81 per cent of the urban population). The critical services that support development run on connectivity and data. The underlying infrastructure must be available, affordable and safe – and UNOPS can implement digital infrastructure, technology and data.

(d) *Support the transition to sustainable food systems.* Hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition remain a global crisis. An estimated 28.9 per cent of the global population were moderately or severely food insecure in 2023.³⁰ It is expected that 582 million people will be chronically undernourished by 2030, more than half of them in Africa³¹. UNOPS has improved infrastructure for food distribution, in agricultural productivity and in promoting efficient supply chains, contributing to sustainable, resilient food systems.

(e) *Support small island developing States in increasing resilience to environmental and economic shocks and harness the benefits of a sustainable ocean economy.* Sixty-five million people live across 39 small island developing States and 18 territories. They have limited opportunities for economic diversification, coping with natural disasters, expensive infrastructure, high trade costs and debt distress. UNOPS can expand partners' capacity for implementation of the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for small island developing States.³²

(f) *Address root causes of fragility, advance equity, and strengthen the resilience of communities affected by conflict and disaster.* The world is facing the highest number of violent conflicts since World War II. A quarter of humanity lives in places affected by conflicts. The number of forcibly displaced people reached 120 million in 2024. Climate change contributes to increasing displacement and conflict escalation. UNOPS brings to bear the comparative advantage of its implementation role for partners' humanitarian assistance and peacebuilding efforts³³ in countries facing humanitarian emergencies and conflict or post-conflict situations. While responding to immediate needs, UNOPS seeks to build resilience through longer-term development and is attentive to fostering self-reliance and promoting development in accordance with national plans, needs and priorities.³⁴

(g) *Enhance the availability of essential supplies, equipment and facilities for quality health care and services.* About 4.5 billion people worldwide lack access to basic health services and 2 billion experience financial hardships from health-care costs. In 2030, 2 billion people will live without safely managed drinking water, 3 billion without safely managed sanitation, and 1.4 billion without basic hygiene services. Between 2030 and 2050, climate change is expected to cause about 250,000 additional deaths each year from malnutrition, malaria, diarrhoea and heat stress. UNOPS has experience with partners' health projects and programmes, addressing complex challenges and building sustainable, resilient health systems, including in challenging contexts.

(h) *Provide essential and sustainable goods, services and infrastructure, rooted in the social development values of the United Nations Charter and the 2030 Agenda, to reduce inequalities and achieve inclusive social development.* For the first time this century, per-capita gross domestic product (GDP) growth in half of the world's most vulnerable countries is slower than that in advanced economies. Almost 700 million people live in extreme poverty (less than \$2.15 per day) – three-quarters in Sub-Saharan Africa or in fragile and conflict-affected countries. Forty-four per cent of the global population – around 3.5 billion people – live on less than \$6.85 per day (the poverty line for upper-middle-income countries). The consequences disproportionately affect women, children and young people. UNOPS seeks to mainstream social safeguards, strengthen gender equality³⁵ and social inclusion, promote capacity development, and foster socio-economic development and jobs across its projects and activities.

²⁹ Ibid., paragraph 51

³⁰ Food Security and Nutrition in the World, Food and Agriculture Organization, 2024

³¹ Ibid.

³² Resolution 78/317

³³ Resolution 65/176, reaffirming decision 2010/21

³⁴ Resolution 79/226, paragraph 46 and 49

³⁵ United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women 3.0

21. The UNOPS experience and expertise from practical solutions is more advanced in some areas than in others. Deliberate effort to learn and develop knowledge will enable UNOPS to collaborate with a stronger focus on actions, results, coherence, progress and impact.³⁶ UNOPS has decades of experience in infrastructure, procurement, and other project services. It seeks to collaborate with partners in designing and managing projects, and to account for their effects on people's lives and country capacities.

22. Consistent with Executive Board decisions,³⁷ the UNOPS results framework, 2026-2029, sets principles for project-level assumptions and targets to manage for impact throughout the life cycle of relevant projects and programmes. The nine impact principles guide project design for effective implementation, to achieve United Nations objectives, benefit people and institutions, and advance partnerships and solutions:³⁸

- (a) Advance global goals;
- (b) Benefit countries and context;
- (c) Enable mitigation and adaptation to climate change;
- (d) Benefit people, including women and youth;
- (e) Develop capacity for institutions;
- (f) Build capacity for suppliers and implementing partners;
- (g) Support strategic partnerships and coalitions;
- (h) Transfer effective practical solutions;
- (i) Innovate new solutions.

II. What UNOPS implementation services offer to partners

23. UNOPS value creation is a function of its agile implementation services advancing United Nations objectives by enabling partners, helping people in need, and supporting countries. UNOPS will design and manage for impact of its infrastructure, procurement, and project management services, even in the most challenging contexts. It will gear capabilities for speed and targeted responses; scale effective solutions across partners and contexts; and support strategic partnerships and coalitions.

24. Everything UNOPS does is in partnership. Partnerships span the funding partners and clients it implements for, and the knowledge partners it collaborates with. UNOPS builds its capabilities for scale by capturing experiences and transferring knowledge across partners and contexts while seeking opportunities to innovate.

25. The UNOPS mandate encourages partnerships with the United Nations, governments of programme and donor countries, intergovernmental institutions, international and regional financing institutions, foundations, the private sector and non-governmental organizations. Thus, it can expand implementation capacity for public-private partnerships,³⁹ vertical funds, and other types of multilateral partnerships enabling North-South, South-South, and triangular cooperation. UNOPS sees mandates demarcating lines of complementarity, not division. It will collaborate to help the United Nations system act in a more integrated way based on competences for development policy advice, norm-setting, development financing, and implementation of practical solutions.

26. The UNOPS operating model is based on full cost recovery: its partners ultimately determine its interventions. As a demand-driven organization, UNOPS assesses which partnerships to engage with based on its mandate, non-negotiable United Nations standards for ethics, safety and security, and intent to accelerate the 2030 Agenda. UNOPS maintains clear boundaries for what it will and will not do. It will not: (a) support development activities that do not directly or indirectly contribute to countries' achievement of the Goals; (b) enable partners' greenhouse gas emissions if there are workable net-zero alternatives responding to partner needs; or (c) engage in impact investment using seed capital from the UNOPS reserves. UNOPS operates in challenging contexts,

³⁶ Resolution 79/226, paragraph 23

³⁷ Decisions 2021/20 and 2023/16

³⁸ Annex 1: Results framework, 2026-2029

³⁹ Resolutions 64/222 and 73/291

prone to risks due to instability or market failure. It will develop its guidelines on ‘risk appetite’ to de-risk opportunities in high-risk contexts, and systematically consider complementarities of collaborating with United Nations organizations, including as knowledge partners.

27. UNOPS project services are flexible and modular. They span infrastructure, procurement and project management, including human resources and financial management; practical solutions typically combine two or more. UNOPS enables implementation of partners’ programmes, funds and grants, and provides secretariat services for global multilateral partnerships advancing United Nations objectives.

28. UNOPS expands partners’ implementation capacity in two mutually reinforcing ways: (a) capacity to support and manage partners’ implementation; and (b) technical expertise for capacity development in areas of mandate. It has three service models:⁴⁰ (a) efficient support services, (b) effective technical advice, and (c) combining the two as integrated solutions for global, regional or country-level implementation.

29. Partners demand different types of services. Efficient support services for human resources and procurement are mainly in demand by United Nations agencies, funds, and programmes. Technical advice in developing capacities of national institutions to plan and manage infrastructure, procurement and projects is mainly in demand by programme countries. Demand for integrated solutions is increasing from all partners. UNOPS services are differentiated to respond to partners’ needs. It continues to optimize its support services and harness capacity for effective integrated solutions, maximizing value while remaining cost-competitive.

A. Complementarity of practical solutions de-risking implementation

30. UNOPS has over three decades of experience implementing partners’ humanitarian, peace and development efforts. Aligned with United Nations objectives and normative imperatives, UNOPS is a resource for co-design, de-risking implementation of high-impact initiatives. UNOPS solutions provide a versatile tool for cost-effective action managed for impact.

31. UNOPS embraces the call of consecutive quadrennial comprehensive policy reviews to seek comparative advantages based on mandates and roles, and enhance the utilization of resources and unique expertise of United Nations entities.⁴¹ UNOPS will collaborate to enhance system-wide coherence, coordination, harmonization, efficiency and transparency, reduce duplication and build synergies.⁴² It will collaborate with partners to pilot arrangements and incentives that increase the coherence and integration of country-level implementation.

32. The UNOPS implementation role complements the development policy advice of partner organizations that have global normative mandates and programmes. UNOPS operates in the most challenging contexts and provides secretariat services for global multilateral partnerships.⁴³ Partners finance the practical solutions that UNOPS implements. Its cost-recovery and fee-for-service operating model instils focus on value for money through efficient and effective project services.

33. External studies highlight the UNOPS comparative advantage for efficient and effective implementation,⁴⁴ and the Executive Board has encouraged the United Nations system to take advantage of UNOPS project services.⁴⁵ UNOPS is an agile implementation resource for Member States’ long-term vision in the Pact for the Future, moving towards a more effective, efficient and impactful United Nations system.⁴⁶

34. With its mandate and expertise, UNOPS can de-risk activities through transparent public management of infrastructure, procurement and projects – including in challenging contexts

⁴⁰ DP/OPS/2023/6, paragraph 40

⁴¹ Resolution 79/226, paragraph 10

⁴² Resolution 79/226, paragraph 96

⁴³ Action at Scale, UNOPS, 2025, page 23

⁴⁴ DP/OPS/2017/5, JIU/REV/2018/3, and JIU/REV/2018/5

⁴⁵ Decision 2013/23 and 2017/26

⁴⁶ Resolution 79/1, action 45

experiencing market failures – while providing technical advice to develop related national capacity.⁴⁷

35. UNOPS complements the efforts of resident coordinators, humanitarian coordinators, and special representatives of the Secretary-General, but cannot, and does not, impose itself upon them. It is a resource for practical knowledge and capacity with a track record of implementing through infrastructure, procurement and project management services.

36. UNOPS is a proponent of the mutual recognition principle, ready to engage in partnerships for cost-effective country-level implementation – including through location-independent global shared services and local procurement.⁴⁸ UNOPS co-chairs the business innovation group and is committed to providing practical solutions for harmonizing business practices at all levels.

37. UNOPS provides comparative advantage by de-risking partners' implementation while allocating the cost of operational risk management at source:

(a) *For United Nations entities*, it provides agile and cost-effective human resources and procurement support services, increasing efficiencies and reducing capacity costs of pre-deployment.

(b) *For programme countries and international financial institutions*, it provides planning and management of infrastructure, procurement and projects, while providing technical advice for assistance to develop related institutional capacity, including for supply chains attentive to cross-cutting environmental and social concerns and safeguards.

(c) *For donor countries and other partners*, it provides tested cost-effective project, programme and portfolio management capabilities for tailored integrated solutions, including secretariat services for global multilateral partnerships.

38. UNOPS has global reach, deploying with agility to support the most vulnerable countries and fragile contexts, where risks are high and people's needs are gravest. UNOPS implementation services help create synergies enabling partners to span and bridge humanitarian, development and peace efforts.

39. UNOPS manages implementation through country and multi-country offices organized in lean regional structures, and global portfolios. UNOPS deployment expands and contracts with partners' needs. UNOPS can enter into host country agreements, but in many countries it is a non-resident agency without critical-mass or capacity for dedicated country-level representation.

40. UNOPS welcomes the enhanced country-level structures of the development system and is intent on working more strategically with resident coordinators. It appreciates the impartial country-level leadership and the Management and Accountability Framework for resident and non-resident organizations. It utilizes the dual reporting model for country directors, contributes in full to cost-sharing and enables agency-administered levy payment.

41. The UNOPS management fee must cover engagement in United Nations coordination, planning and reporting. This includes capturing lessons learned for future deployment for partners and countries with similar needs. UNOPS is committed to engage, while recovering the cost of time, including where it is non-resident.

42. UNOPS seeks to engage in operational collaboration with governments and partners in the United Nations country teams, including for United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks. It can support common country analyses in assessing capacity needs for public procurement and infrastructure. It is typically deployed based on 'fee-for-service', but can contribute its expertise and advice for country-level assessment and planning.

43. UNOPS is developing its capabilities to measure and manage for impact. In accordance with its non-programmatic mandate, this does not include country programmes like those of agencies, funds and programmes funded through contributions, nor programmatic evaluation. Notwithstanding its non-programmatic mandate,⁴⁹ UNOPS uses external evaluation to gain and

⁴⁷ A/RES/79/226, paragraph 38

⁴⁸ FFD4, 2025, paragraph 40.c

⁴⁹ Decision 2023/16

report project-level insights into effective solutions. It uses indices such as the multidimensional vulnerability index⁵⁰ and the human development index as part of its portfolio analysis.

B. UNOPS expertise in implementation

44. UNOPS expertise in, and capacity for, implementation spans infrastructure, procurement and project management.

Infrastructure

45. UNOPS plans, designs and constructs sustainable, inclusive and resilient infrastructure. It advises governments on making infrastructure more effective, and its expertise is increasingly recognized. Infrastructure systems underpin the achievement of all sustainable development goals and most targets.⁵¹ The gaps in sectors such as energy, transport, information and communications technology, water and sanitation, constrain access to essential services, employment opportunities, economic growth and sustainable development. Least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States in particular need support to develop reliable, resilient and sustainable infrastructure.⁵²

46. Infrastructure is more than construction. It connects communities, removes barriers for children attending school, supports families in ensuring livelihoods and health, provides access to essential services, and is the cornerstone of a modern economy. Adequate and inclusive infrastructure can help reduce inequality, and is critical for sustaining peace. Women and marginalized groups comprise most infrastructure users. Infrastructure must respect rights and respond to the needs of all people – women, men, girls, boys, young, old, and disabled.

47. In 2018, infrastructure investments required until 2030 were estimated at about \$90 trillion.⁵³ Most infrastructure investments are long-term, locking in development and spending paths for decades. The prioritization of investments must therefore be informed by associated life-cycle costs. The UNOPS infrastructure approach enables partners to consider more systematically the long-term effect when interventions are prioritized and designed.

48. The built environment and construction sector accounts for an estimated 39 per cent of global carbon emissions.⁵⁴ UNOPS contributes to a more sustainable construction sector by promoting resource circularity and efficiency, and focusing on climate mitigation and adaptation. UNOPS seeks partnerships with academia, coalitions and other partners to expand the effect and reach of its technical expertise. This includes reducing the carbon footprint of infrastructure and supporting the decarbonization of sectors such as energy, transport and buildings.

49. Evidence-based decision-making helps public partners plan and manage their infrastructure systems and the impact of their investments. Elucidating the effect of trade-offs creates a basis for prioritization. UNOPS advises on the design of implementation modalities, helping governments explore various financing options.

50. UNOPS can support common country analyses and the development of cooperation frameworks that capture infrastructure needs aligned with the Goals, nationally determined contributions, national adaptation plans, and priorities for leaving no one behind. This supports prioritization across numerous sectors, public enabling assets for justice, and social infrastructure for health, education and housing.

51. UNOPS offers technical advice to strengthen countries' capacities for effective infrastructure asset development and life-cycle management, and design and implementation, creating confidence for finance mobilization.⁵⁵ Upon request, it provides advice to strengthen institutional capacities to originate, prepare and support high-impact infrastructure projects.⁵⁶

⁵⁰ Resolution 78/332

⁵¹ DP/OPS/2023/6, paragraph 46

⁵² FFD4, 2025, paragraph 17

⁵³ DP/OPS/2023/6, paragraph 53

⁵⁴ DP/OPS/2023/6, paragraph 49

⁵⁵ FFD4, 2025, paragraph 22.o

⁵⁶ FFD4, 2025, paragraph 28.k

52. Recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction provide opportunities to increase resilience. Disaster risk reduction measures can be integrated into the restoration of infrastructure and societal systems to revitalize livelihoods, economies and the environment. UNOPS is attentive to linkages among humanitarian, development and peace efforts at the national level in countries facing humanitarian emergencies. Immediate response is pivotal, while focus on longer-term development efforts is essential to build resilience.

53. UNOPS will integrate climate risk screening across its infrastructure portfolio and seek to:

- (a) reduce damage to critical infrastructure and disruption of basic services, in line with the Sendai Framework;
- (b) promote the use of nature based-infrastructure, utilizing ecosystems and built infrastructure to provide essential services, in line with the United Nations Framework Convention for Biological Diversity; and
- (c) collaborate with partners, suppliers and communities to reduce emissions across the value chain through design improvements, optimizing procurement practices and encouraging the adoption of low-carbon technologies and processes.

54. A clearer division of labour within the United Nations system, based on expertise, could reinforce quality standards for infrastructure and allow more cost-effective approaches, including for investments. This would help to ensure a more coherent United Nations approach and the critical mass for needed institutional knowledge.

Procurement

55. UNOPS is a central United Nations resource for procurement,⁵⁷ enabling partners to plan and implement sustainable, transparent, and cost-effective public procurement, and develop the capacity of local supply chains and public institutions.

56. Public procurement affects all the Goals and has transformational potential to drive sustainable, resilient and inclusive development. Institutional capacity development for sustainable and transparent public management of procurement expands the impact and availability of resources for bridging implementation gaps.

57. Public procurement expenditure ranges from 12.6 per cent of GDP in high-income countries to 14.4 per cent in low-income countries.⁵⁸ A conservative estimate suggests that global public procurement amounts to some \$10 trillion annually. The value of a 2 per cent optimization would exceed annual official development assistance.

58. Public procurement can be an agent of change, promoting social inclusion, fairness, value for money, and supply chain resilience. It can also have negative effects, such as locking in unsustainable economic, environmental and social practices; excluding and marginalizing vulnerable groups; and entrenching vulnerabilities and risks.

59. There are two mutually reinforcing paths to transparent, equitable and just public management of procurement: (a) free up resources through efficiencies and transparency to avoid loss from fraud and corruption; and (b) increase effectiveness through sustainable, resilient and inclusive choices. Small changes can have big effects that reverberate across the economy and society.

60. Procurement is fundamental to everything UNOPS does. It has more than 30 years of procurement experience, and its approaches have repeatedly been recognized as ‘best practices’.⁵⁹ The UNOPS procurement principles, anchored in resolution 69/273, have been endorsed by the Executive Board.⁶⁰

61. UNOPS can develop countries’ capacity for impact through sustainable and transparent public procurement and sustainable supply chains. It has diagnostic tools to assess national procurement capacity, including to inform common country analyses. It has experience in identifying practical solutions to the findings of assessments undertaken by others.

⁵⁷ Resolution 65/176

⁵⁸ DP/OPS/2023/6, paragraph 61

⁵⁹ DP/OPS/2021/4

⁶⁰ Decision 2023/16

62. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) suggests that between 10 per cent and 25 per cent of the value of a public contract may be lost due to corruption,⁶¹ which translates to a possible loss of at least \$1 trillion in public procurement. UNOPS can support countries in strengthening their institutional capacity for accountability and efficiency, introducing mechanisms and transparent procurement systems⁶² to enhance oversight in contexts prone to market failures.

63. UNOPS has practical approaches to capacity development interventions that enhance transparency, anti-corruption and sustainability. Its tools are based on best practices. Digitalization will enable effective public procurement, whether through (a) management of the supply chain through e-procurement tools, or (b) enabling market transparency and surveillance to optimize value for money.

64. Procurement is about ‘value for money’. The choices countries make through public procurement today will have wide-reaching effects tomorrow. UNOPS supports countries in developing institutional capacity to manage procurement for impact. Its informed approach helps balance procurement risks and impact, including for emergency response.

65. UNOPS promotes national procurement and the involvement of local actors.⁶³ It promotes entrepreneurship among women and youth, and facilitates the growth of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises.⁶⁴ UNOPS is attentive to environmental and social safeguards and can support even small suppliers in the most vulnerable countries to include sustainability elements in their goods and services.

66. UNOPS explores ways to stimulate circular economy and life-cycle costs, and reduce waste generation through reduction, reuse and recycling. It is committed to sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources. By reducing the greenhouse gas emissions in supply chains, it can reduce partners’ footprint. UNOPS works with suppliers to help partners understand scope 3 emissions in their procurement choices.

67. UNOPS produces the annual statistical report on United Nations procurement and hosts the United Nations Global Marketplace. To further the ‘collaborative benefit of mutual recognition’ principle, UNOPS develops long-term agreements with suppliers and makes them available within the Marketplace, or through UN Web Buy Plus, its global e-commerce solution.

68. UNOPS seeks to engage partners early, to assess needed capacity and the potential effect of different procurement options. UNOPS engages in collaborative partnerships for cost-effective procurement, sourced locally or as location-independent global shared services. It continues to enhance its e-commerce solution, and expand the range of available products, sustainable and ethical alternatives, and options for circular economy and carbon-neutral goods.

Project and programme management

69. UNOPS is committed to sustainable implementation management through tailored projects, programmes and portfolios designed to measure and manage for impact. Systematic project management is essential to accelerate achievement of the Goals and bridge implementation gaps within the constraints of time and resources.

70. All Goals are realized through implementation. UNOPS project management is a technical discipline of organizing implementation activities in projects, programmes and portfolios. The UNOPS end-to-end value chain for practical solutions comprises: (a) identification and development of opportunities; (b) managing implementation; (c) completing and closing the project.

71. Project and contract management are foundational to implementation of infrastructure; procurement and sustainable supply-chain management are foundational to project and programme implementation. UNOPS expertise in financial management is essential for managing implementation of partners’ programmes, funds and grants; including through secretariat services for networked multilateralism and global multilateral partnerships. Skilled and committed personnel are a prerequisite for all implementation, and UNOPS offers flexible, tailored human

⁶¹ DP/OPS/2023/6, paragraph 66

⁶² FFD4 2025, paragraphs 13 and 22.b

⁶³ Ibid., paragraph 32.e.iv

⁶⁴ Ibid., paragraph 16

resources solutions for United Nations partners across peace and security, humanitarian and development efforts.

72. To increase effectiveness, UNOPS will engage with its partners to more deliberately design and manage for impact. It will apply a more systematic approach to foresight in the medium- and longer-term priorities of its different types of partners, and learn and adapt faster, based on what works and what does not.

73. Strategic knowledge management is a prerequisite for effective integrated solutions, and entails systems that provide ready access to project information. UNOPS wants to become better at replicating effective theories of change for similar objectives. UNOPS seeks new ways to attract and retain the right people, underpinning their work with improved digital systems to support: (a) implementation in accordance with time, cost and scope; (b) recurrent engagement with partners on implementation status and changes; and (c) data and information for ex-ante and ex-post assessment and generation of knowledge.

74. Providing capacity for design and management of effective implementation can make available finance more effective and build confidence for attracting new resources. UNOPS can thus contribute practical solutions to advancing the ambitions set in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, Goal 17, and in the Seville outcome document.⁶⁵

75. UNOPS has procedures and guidance for sustainable implementation but wants to do more to drive and incentivize consistent approaches. It remains committed to reinforcing the mainstreaming of climate action, gender equality, and environmental and social safeguards into the projects it designs with its partners.

76. UNOPS enables sustainable implementation by putting systems in place that make it easier to assess options, reduce opportunity loss, and make the right choices when new engagements are designed and agreed. UNOPS will engage more systematically with partners to design interventions with a succinct theory of change, including by considering additionalities that mitigate risks.

77. UNOPS wants to make the right promises and keep them. It also wants to make it easier for its managers to say no to projects that are not commensurate with United Nations values, the imperatives of the Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the Sustainable Development Goals.

78. UNOPS believes its ongoing transformation efforts will strengthen its ability to engage with partners to design and manage initiatives for impact. It will continue to review and revise its project management processes, further powered by digital systems supporting the solution-oriented culture of its personnel, and capabilities to capture and analyse the contributions of the projects it implements.

C. Implementation goals, 2026-2029

79. UNOPS will adhere to qualitative requirements to ensure its implementation activities are managed for impact. Its commitments are framed by three goals and nine principles reinforcing accountability for sustainable implementation for impact and engagement through the United Nations system.

80. The implementation goals and principles (see box below) provide a reference for what UNOPS does to ensure sustainable, resilient and inclusive infrastructure, procurement and project management when it enables partners, helps people in need, and supports countries. Not all principles are relevant for all projects, but where they are, it is expected that adherence to them will increase the quality of outputs and their contributions to the realization of ambitions for impact.

Implementation goals and principles

<i>Goals</i>	<i>Principles</i>
<i>Enable partners through cost-effective project services</i>	Implement for impact Implement for capacity development of suppliers Implement for capacity development of implementing partners

⁶⁵ FFD4, 2025

<i>Help people in need through sustainable implementation</i>	Implement for people in need Implement for gender equality and social inclusion Implement for response to climate change
<i>Support countries in accelerating achievement of the Goals</i>	Implement for the Goals Implement for country priorities Implement for procurement and infrastructure capacity

III. How UNOPS is managed

A. Governance and management structures

81. UNOPS governance arrangements, based on resolution 65/176, are consistent with those of other United Nations organizations. The Executive Director is accountable to the Executive Board and the Secretary-General, and the United Nations Board of Auditors provides external audit. UNOPS stands ready to support Executive Board efforts in strengthening its governance and oversight functions. The Executive Director reports to the Executive Board annually on implementation of the strategic plan in accordance with the relevant results framework.

82. The UNOPS Audit Advisory Committee provides external, independent strategic advice to the Executive Director and reports to the Executive Board. Its independence and free access to the Board were enhanced in 2023.⁶⁶ In 2019, the Executive Board took note ⁶⁷that the Secretary-General had established a client board through which the Executive Director annually invites partners' advice on operational matters.

83. UNOPS internal oversight functions are aligned with its implementation role and mandate. The Internal Audit and Investigation Group and the Ethics Office provide oversight and advice to the Executive Director and report annually to the Executive Board. In 2022, the independence of both functions was reconfirmed and their capacities strengthened.

84. UNOPS has an organizational structure with two Assistant Secretaries-General reporting to the Under-Secretary-General.⁶⁸ One is responsible for delivery and partnerships, the other for management and policy. The two pillars enable segregation of duties and internal checks and balances.

85. UNOPS implementation services are based on a demand-driven operating model, which is unique in the United Nations system. UNOPS is designated an 'other entity'⁶⁹ and manages its finances and reserves as a going concern, including to secure funding for medium-term initiatives to better inform, design and deliver projects for impact.

86. Activities of programmatic entities are predominantly financed through core and non-core contributions for non-exchange transactions. In contrast, UNOPS provides services in exchange for full recovery of direct and indirect costs, the latter through 'fee-for-service' for immediate and potential future management costs. The indirect cost covers its institutional backbone at country, regional and headquarters levels, including representation, policies, knowledge, reporting and reserves.

87. To be agile, UNOPS structural arrangements must expand and contract as appropriate. Its capacity must be deployed in different places as a response to the nature and volume of efforts required by its partners. UNOPS must be ready and able to respond with agility, through core capabilities that can be put to purpose for a range of practical solutions, when and where called upon. Technical expertise for non-programmatic missions and differentiated partnerships may increase its readiness to respond.

88. The UNOPS capacity for management is driven by values of respect, integrity, professionalism and accountability. True to its mandate and the ideals and principles of the United Nations, UNOPS continues to strengthen its expertise and culture to better support Member States.

⁶⁶ DP/OPS/2023/6, paragraph 120

⁶⁷ Decision 2019/12

⁶⁸ DP/OPS/2023/CRP.4

⁶⁹ United Nations system chart, 2025

The quintet of skills promoted through UN 2.0 – data, digital, innovation, foresight, and behavioural science – is our reference for a forward-thinking culture characterized by agility, creativity, learning and adaptability.

B. Transformation to scale up and speed up

89. UNOPS will continue to optimize the quality, effectiveness and efficiency of its implementation services and management capacity to scale up and speed up at global, regional and country levels. UNOPS management has prioritized seven key areas, summarized below.

Strategic partnerships and agile deployment

90. UNOPS will strengthen its approach for effective strategic partnerships, optimizing upstream engagement that results in downstream deployment of practical solutions at scale. This may include flexible internal arrangements for vertical and horizontal collaboration to support: (a) country analysis and planning; (b) learning and knowledge transfer for opportunity development and innovation; and (c) stand-up and close-down of country presence.

Capabilities to measure and manage for impact

91. UNOPS will continue to embed institutional capabilities to measure and manage for impact, and more systematically learn from implementation. This is a strategic response to external recommendations and requests⁷⁰ to increase transparency of contributions and prioritize attention to learning and design of projects focused on outcomes and impact. It will also maintain capacity for external thematic evaluation

Climate action in projects and across the organization

92. UNOPS will integrate emission reductions and climate resilience across its operations and projects. This will entail target pathways ranging from corporate emissions reduction and value-chain engagement, to office-level optimization and project-level integration. UNOPS focuses on a just climate transition, ensuring alignment with national and regional climate objectives. It will endeavour to safeguard its personnel, operations and physical assets from exposure to natural disasters.

Implementation of process innovation and digitalization

93. UNOPS will continue to implement the process innovation and digitalization programme. It will deliver simplified and streamlined processes in human resources, procurement, finance, and project management, and will automate those processes using digital solutions.⁷¹ In addition, the programme focuses on improving the use of data to support evidence-based decisions, and supporting the access of UNOPS personnel to knowledge, expanding their capacity to manage through the progressive roll-out of artificial intelligence. This will include dashboards for real-time corporate performance and risk management; and data and systems for management, knowledge and learning on the efficiency, effectiveness and impact of projects.

Robust risk management and accountability frameworks

94. UNOPS will continue to implement its accountability framework and embed robust risk management across the organization, guided by six principles: (a) internalize the United Nations system's risk environment and sharing with other entities; (b) consider risk as integral to decision-making; (c) balance risks and opportunities of strategic and operational objectives; (d) promote operational agility at all levels; (e) ensure segregation of duty and effective risk governance; and (f) continuously enhance a fit-for-purpose enterprise risk management framework.

Accountability for organizational culture and engagement

95. UNOPS is committed to reinforcing a forward-thinking and ethical organizational culture characterized by agility, creativity, learning and adaptability. It continues to advance this priority,⁷² including its commitment to an organizational culture that reinforces United Nations values while responding to partner demand for implementation services.

⁷⁰ Decisions in 2021/20 and 2023/16; and resolution 79/226

⁷¹ DP/OPS/2025/3

⁷² Decision 2024/22

Accountability for results

96. UNOPS will establish senior-level accountability compacts for results, reinforcing achievement of implementation and management targets across the organization's two pillars. Transparency will be enabled through digital dashboards, and regular management review will form the basis for course correction. UNOPS personnel will continue to align individual performance objectives to the organization's strategic goals.

C. Management goals, 2026-2029

97. Through transparent management practices, UNOPS will instil trust in the organization while preserving its operational agility. Its management commitments are framed by four goals and twelve principles reinforcing accountability for managing the organization in accordance with United Nations values and statutory requirements.

98. The management goals and principles (see box below) summarize how UNOPS intends to balance management of its people, partners, processes and financial resources. This will further reinforce accountability for managing the organization in accordance with General Assembly resolutions, Board decisions, and relevant policies established by the Secretary-General.

Management goals and principles

<i>Goals</i>	<i>Principles</i>
<i>People culture</i> accountable to United Nations values	Manage gender parity and geographical representation at all levels Manage talent to meet partner expectations Manage accountability for organizational culture and personnel engagement
<i>Partner value</i> through scalable solutions for impact	Manage organic growth Manage response to emerging needs Manage partner relationships
<i>Process excellence</i> for cost-effective management	Manage speeding up through optimal processes and systems Manage risks and issues identified by audit Manage scaling down corporate emissions
<i>Financial stewardship</i> as the foundation for partner trust	Manage prudent use of budget resources Manage long-term financial viability Manage transparent and timely financial reporting to partners