Operational Instruction Ref. OI.IPMG.2025.07
Project Management

This OD will become effective on the 07th of May; until then, refer to OI.IPS.2022.04 Project Management.

1. **Authority:**

1.1 This Operational Instruction (OI) is promulgated by the Director of the Infrastructure and Project Management Group (IPMG) under the Operational Directive (OD) on the Management of UNOPS Partners and Resulting Agreements, on the basis of a delegation of authority from the Executive Director.

2. **Purpose**

2.1 The purpose of this OI is to outline the requirements for the management of UNOPS services under Engagement Agreements (as defined in the OD on the Management of Partners and Resulting Agreements) and their related projects, as further detailed in the Project Management Manual (PMM).

3. **Effective Date**

3.1 This OI shall become effective 7 May 2025.

4. **Consequential Changes**

4.1 This OI shall supersede and abolish OI.IPS.2022.04: Project Management. The purpose of this revision is to reflect the relevant changes related to the internal restructure of IPMG.

4.2 For details on the changes related to the new Portfolio Oversight Committee (POC), which may have some impact on the Implementation and Closure Stages, refer to the OI.IPMG.2025.01 - Acceptance of Engagement Agreements.

[signature redacted]

Steven Crosskey

Director, a.i., Infrastructure and Project Management Group

1. Introduction

1.1. The purpose of this OI and the Project Management Manual (PMM) are to ensure that the delivery of all UNOPS engagements and their related projects are managed with consistent quality, efficiency and control.

1.2. The PMM provides instructions and guidance on project management activities throughout each stage of the project lifespan. The PMM applies to all UNOPS engagements and their related projects, as defined in the OD on the Management of UNOPS Partners and Resulting Agreements. The PMM, Part I: Guidelines provides guidance and an understanding of relevant project management principles. The PMM, Part II: Requirements provides mandatory, recommended and optional requirements for the project lifespan.

1.3. A project is defined as a temporary organization that creates one or more outputs. A project is contained within an engagement, as per the OI on the Acceptance of Engagement Agreements. Project outputs are achieved by completing work packages.

1.4. UNOPS organizes the management of engagements and their related projects into five stages: (i) Opportunity Stage, (ii) Pre-engagement Stage, (iii) Initiation Stage, (iv) Implementation Stage, and (v) Closure Stage. All five stages are mandatory, and are collectively referred to as the 'project lifespan'.

1.5. Projects are identified as Category 1, 2 or 3, as defined in the PMM, during the Opportunity Stage to facilitate their management in accordance with their risks. Categorization criteria are based on the regulatory level, their risks and the professional judgement level required, resulting in the project management level of effort needed to deliver the project. A project shall inherit the highest category of its related work packages.

1.6. For each stage of a project, there are mandatory requirements (inputs, activities and outputs) that are applicable for the duration of the project. All projects, whether categorized as Category 1, 2 or 3, shall comply with the mandatory requirements identified for each category, as outlined within the PMM, Part II: Requirements.

1.7. The PMM also outlines recommended activities and outputs, based on industry best practices, which are not mandatory but highly recommended for effective risk management.

1.8. The PMM also outlines optional activities and outputs, which are not mandatory but may be considered on the basis of professional judgement.

1.9. The Project Executive may determine whether to add recommended or optional activities and outputs to a project.

2. General Principles

2.1. Engagements and their related projects shall be managed in accordance with the following general principles:

2.1.1. All UNOPS engagements shall meet the highest standards of principled performance for delivering projects with consistency and integrity and removing uncertainties through well-defined standards and best practices. This shall be implemented by ensuring the following:

i. Adequately resourced project teams that have clearly identified roles and responsibilities, with qualified personnel focused on directing, managing and delivering the project.

ii. Adequate planning, monitoring and control and other quality management processes to reduce uncertainties and maximize opportunities related to UNOPS' legal obligations, as well as the expectations of UNOPS partners and other stakeholders;

iii. That the UNOPS Project Success Criteria[1] are consistently monitored and measured throughout the project lifespan, as applicable; and

iv. Manage engagements and their related projects in a uniform manner that ensures a consistent approach to delivery.

2.1.2. UNOPS shall strive to advance sustainable implementation practices in the management of all projects. This shall be reflected in the development of national capacity, the promotion of social (including gender and diversity), economic and environmental sustainability and improved efficiency throughout the project lifespan.

3. General Requirements

3.1. The Requirements identified in the PMM, Part II: Requirements set out mandatory requirements for all stages of the project lifespan.

3.2. Engagements and their related projects shall be categorized in accordance with the PMM to determine the level of project management effort and risk mitigation required and to ensure that the appropriate level of the project management methodology is applied.

3.3. The Engagement Authority authorizes the Project Executive to direct the project throughout its lifespan in accordance with the PMM, Part II: Requirements.

3.4. All engagements and their related projects shall at all times have UNOPS personnel assigned to direct them and manage them from the Opportunity Stage through the Closure Stage. Any handover between or within these stages shall be carried out correctly and documented in oneUNOPS.

3.5. An engagement and its related projects shall comply with the requirements in the PMM, as per its project categorization. This includes all mandatory project management documents required throughout the project lifespan, which shall be uploaded to the oneUNOPS engagement shared drive.

3.6. All engagements and their related projects shall complete quarterly assurance during the Implementation Stage.

3.7. All engagements and their related projects shall proactively identify, document and manage risks. All risks, issues and lessons learned shall be documented throughout the project lifespan.

3.8. Refer to the PMM for the mandatory general activities, which apply during all stages of the project lifespan.

1. https://drive.google.com/file/d/1_0yBLiw4NM5N-YqeuDmG0Tr7BPFSXwUS/view

4. Stage Requirements

4.1. Opportunity Stage

4.1.1. The purpose of the Opportunity Stage is to develop an opportunity into a potential project.

4.1.2. During this stage, a Project Executive and Business Developer shall be assigned, the opportunity developed, a Proposal prepared and the opportunity recorded in oneUNOPS, including a risk assessment, for approval or cancellation.

4.2. Pre-engagement Stage

4.2.1. The purpose of the Pre-engagement Stage is to develop a potential project into a feasible project. The Pre-engagement Stage requires the definition of the scope, schedule, outputs and budget, risks and quality requirements, among others, to be defined in collaboration with partners.

4.2.2. In order for the Engagement Authority to be able to make a decision on whether or not UNOPS should proceed with the engagement and its related projects, the mandatory requirements of the Pre-engagement Stage shall be completed. This includes, but is not limited to, consulting lessons learned, approving the project management category, completing the social and environmental screening, and creating the Project Initiation Documentation (PID) (draft), if applicable, and the Legal Agreement (draft) in order to complete the Pre-engagement Stage in oneUNOPS for approval or rejection.

4.2.3. The Pre-engagement Stage shall only be submitted to the relevant Engagement Authority, with the appropriate Delegation of Authority (DoA), for their approval once an acceptable level of project documentation has been created and the Reviewers have carried out an initial review.

4.3. Initiation Stage

4.3.1. The purpose of the Initiation stage is to legally formalize and initiate one or more projects.

4.3.2. In order for the Engagement Authority to complete the engagement approval, the mandatory requirements of the Initiation Stage shall be completed. This includes, but is not limited to, the completion of the PID (as applicable), the Implementation Plan (draft, as applicable) and the signing of the Legal Agreement, in addition to the engagement risk assessment in oneUNOPS, mobilization activities for the Project Manager and budget approvals.

4.3.3. The Initiation Stage shall only be submitted to the relevant Engagement Authority, with the appropriate DoA, for their approval once all required project documentation is final and the Reviewers have made recommendations.

4.4. Implementation Stage

4.4.1. The purpose of the Implementation Stage is to implement a project and complete the project outputs. The Implementation Stage is the delivery of project outputs to the agreed scope, schedule, budget and quality requirements. The project will be continuously implemented, reported and managed through planning, delivering and monitoring and control activities. Implementation is to be as per the Legal Agreement between UNOPS and partners, the PID (if applicable), the approved Implementation Plan (baseline) (if applicable), and the approved Quarterly Plans (if applicable). All mandatory requirements and associated processes shall be as per the PMM, Part II: Requirements.

4.4.2. As per the 'Planning' activities in the PMM, the Implementation Plan and Sub-plans (as applicable) shall be completed and approved no later than during the first quarter of the Implementation Stage.

The Implementation Plan and cash flow forecast for each subsequent quarter shall be updated, and a Quarterly Plan created. The Quarterly Plan shall be approved on a quarterly basis.

4.4.3. As per the 'Delivering' activities in the PMM, the project shall be directed, managed and delivered on an ongoing basis. The project shall be assured on a quarterly basis. The work packages, their deliverables, and the project outputs shall be completed and handed over as per the Implementation Plan.

4.4.4. As per the 'Monitoring and Control' activities in the PMM, progress on work packages shall be monitored and controlled. Any changes to work packages, and consequent effects on the project and the engagement shall be controlled and Legal Agreement amendment request approvals or rejections shall be completed, as required.

4.5. Closure Stage

4.5.1. The Closure Stage is the last stage in the project lifespan. The purpose of the Closure Stage is to operationally and financially close a project, in accordance with the Closure Plan and, after all outputs have been handed over to partners, as per the Legal Agreement. A Closure Manager shall be assigned in order to manage both the operational and financial closure activities.

4.5.2. During the operational closure process, a Final Narrative Report shall be submitted and a No-objection Letter obtained from the Funding Source, if applicable.

4.5.3. During the financial closure process, the Final Financial Report shall be submitted and any refund or recovery process completed, as applicable. Finally, the Closure Manager and Project Executive, having completed their duties, can be released.

4.5.4. Closure shall be in accordance with UNOPS Financial Rules and Regulations together with the PMM. Further guidance on the financial closure of projects is available on the Project Closure Stage[2] intranet page.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1. Projects within an engagement shall be managed by the Business Developer, the Project Manager and the Closure Manager, within the respective stages, as defined in the PMM.

5.2. Projects within an engagement shall be directed by the Project Executive with the support of the Project Board, as applicable. The Project Manager shall not undertake a role on the Project Board as either the Project Executive, Senior Supplier or Senior User.

5.3. In all situations, the Multi Country Office Directors, Country Directors, Country Managers (as relevant), the Head of Programme, the Head of Support Services and the Project/Programme Management Office (PMO) Manager (if applicable) shall be consulted in the development and implementation of projects within an engagement.

5.4. The Infrastructure and Project Management Group (IPMG) shall be responsible for the following:

5.4.1. Facilitate the effective implementation of the PMM by providing necessary trainings and supporting guidance material, templates and other related documents for effective and efficient project management;

---

2. https://www.google.com/url?sa=D&q=https://intra.unops.org/operations/finance/project-finance/project-closure-stage&ust=1744787220000000&usg=AOvVaw2Znnbj7r4uCGPLV2OpYuAQ&hl=en

5.4.2. Periodically reassess and update the requirements and activities in the PMM;

5.4.3. Ensure the progressive integration of the PMM requirements and processes for UNOPS activities and facilities in oneUNOPS and/or other related IT system components;

5.4.4. Provide oversight of the effective implementation of mandatory requirements in this OI; and

5.4.5. Ensure that this OI is implemented consistently throughout the organization and that it remains fit for purpose.

6. Exceptions

6.1. Requests for exceptions to mandatory requirements shall be submitted to the Head of Portfolio Delivery Support, IPMG, for written approval. If the request for an exception is not approved, it may be escalated to the respective Regional Director for joint determination with the Director of IPMG, or other personnel as authorized by the Director of IPMG.

6.2. In the event of disagreement, such disagreement shall be referred to the Executive Office for resolution.

7. Maintaining the Project Management Manual

7.1. Amendments to the PMM requirements and recommended project management templates may be made on a regular basis to ensure the relevancy and quality of the UNOPS engagement management process and requirements. The current version of the PMM is the version available on the intranet.

7.2. Recommended templates and other supporting guidance are issued separate from the PMM by IPMG.

8. Authoritative Interpretation

8.1. The authoritative interpretation of this OI and the PMM may be made by the Director of IPMG, or other personnel as authorized by the Director of IPMG, in order to provide clarification on the applicability or interpretation of the requirements stated herein.