Operational Directive Ref. OD.EO.2017.02 Management of UNOPS Partners and Resulting Agreements

Authority:

This Operational Directive (OD) is promulgated on the basis of a delegation of authority from the Executive Director.

Purpose

The purpose of this OD is to define the high-level principles and main responsibilities for the management of UNOPS relationships with its partners and the resulting agreements.

Effective Date:

This OD shall become effective immediately.

[signature redacted]

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1. Introduction

1.1. In order to fulfill its mandate, UNOPS enters into agreements with legally-established entities both to engage in its activities as well as to deliver them. This OD provides the framework for engaging and managing relationships with entities, termed "partners," when UNOPS seeks to acquire an engagement. This OD does not cover relationships with entities that involve procurement activities.

1.2. A partner may be a funding source for a UNOPS project or activity, a recipient of UNOPS project/ activity assistance, or an entity that collaborates with UNOPS towards future or ongoing activities/ projects. UNOPS partners with the United Nations system of organizations, international and regional financial institutions, intergovernmental organizations, governments, including at the national and sub-national levels, and the private sector.

1.3. Such engagements with partners typically include:

- *Framework agreements*: when UNOPS enters into a long-term agreement in order to establish a framework for future engagements with a funding source or a client, setting out the areas of collaboration and the operational arrangements governing the future provision of services by UNOPS;
- *Engagement agreements*: when UNOPS enters into an agreement whereby a funding source or client will provide funds to UNOPS to deliver specific services including grant support to or on behalf of a client through a project or a programme;
- *Collaborative agreements*: when UNOPS enters into a long-term agreement with a partner to co-develop innovative new services or solutions, pursue a range of joint resource mobilization opportunities, share knowledge or implement joint advocacy, while sharing benefits, cost, and risk;
- *Teaming or joint proposal agreements*: when UNOPS enters into a short-term agreement with a partner to jointly draft and submit a proposal in response to a specific opportunity for an engagement by a third party, while establishing fund disbursement arrangements should the proposal be accepted; and,
- Any other form of partner agreement that may be identified and developed accordingly.

1.4. When pursuing and entering into agreements with partner(s), UNOPS shall comply with the principles set out in this OD and other relevant UNOPS legislative instruments.

2. Principles

Partner Management

2.1. Partner management is the strategic and long-term management of UNOPS relationships with its partners.

2.2. Partner management shall be done at all levels of the organization by relevant UNOPS personnel, and formalisation of partner agreements shall be done only by appropriate personnel with delegated authority.

2.3. Unless otherwise instructed by the Executive Office, partner relationship management shall be done in accordance with the following principles:

- Global management: the management of partners that may lead to agreement opportunities globally shall be done in cooperation with or under the lead of the Partnership Group, as most appropriate.
- Regional management: the management of partners that may lead to agreement opportunities in one region shall be done in cooperation with or under the lead of the Regional Office overseeing the region in question, as most appropriate.
- Local management: the management of partners which may lead to agreement opportunities at the hub or the country level shall be done in cooperation with or under the lead of the hub or country office overseeing the countries within the hub or the country in question, as most appropriate.

Resulting Agreements

2.4. UNOPS shall only enter into agreements that comply with and further the United Nations values, principles and goals.

2.5. Arrangements with a partner(s) shall only be through formal written legal agreement(s), clearly defining the respective roles, responsibilities and accountability of the parties, including UNOPS cost recovery where applicable.

2.6. UNOPS carries out engagements under a framework with the competent national authorities of the country where the activities take place – such as within arrangements established by a UN partner that is extended in coverage to UNOPS (e.g., UNDP SBAA) or by UNOPS directly (e.g., Host Country Agreement). Such arrangements normally may be in the form of a treaty instrument or exchange of letters having the same effect, or through appropriate language within an engagement document itself.

2.7. Any UNOPS proposed engagement aims to be coherent with a Country's formal development framework that it has concluded with the UN System (where the activity is development); or humanitarian framework (where the work is humanitarian in nature). UNOPS does not foresee engaging in peace and security activities absent a UN partner.

2.8. UNOPS personnel shall only be able to commit UNOPS with respect to a specific agreement with a partner(s) on the basis of a personal delegation of authority to be issued in accordance with UNOPS framework for delegation of authority.

2.9. UNOPS shall only enter into an agreement(s) with a partner(s) after having carried out appropriate due diligence regarding the partner(s) and the risks associated with each specific agreement.

2.10. UNOPS shall endeavor to reduce uncertainties related to the implementation of its agreements through adequate planning, control and other quality management processes in order to meet its legal obligations as well as the expectations of its partner(s).

2.12. UNOPS shall advance sustainable implementation practices as an integral part of the management of all relevant resulting agreements.

3. Responsibilities

3.1. The Director, Partnership and Liaison Group (PLG), the Director, Infrastructure and Project Management Group (IPMG), and the Directors of other Groups as may be instructed by the Executive Office, shall be responsible to support the management of UNOPS partners, stakeholders and the resulting agreements including by:

- Establishing Operational Instructions (OIs), standards and guidance materials to operationalize this OD;
- Developing and providing training and tools to support partner management and UNOPS partner agreements in accordance with this OD and underlying OIs;
- Overseeing and supporting the implementation of this OD and underlying OIs; and,
- Advancing continuous improvements in partner management and implementation of agreements based on lessons learned and industry best practices.