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United Nations Office for
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Annual report of the Executive Director

Summary

We are proud to present the third UNOPS annual report on its strategic plan, 2018-2021. This is our fifth consecutive year using Global Reporting Initiative ('GRI') standards – the sustainability reporting method developed in collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Global Compact.

In 2020, UNOPS supported the United Nations in addressing a range of critical humanitarian emergencies, vital development initiatives, and peace and security priorities across more than 80 countries. Despite the challenges of a global pandemic, 2020 saw significant demand for UNOPS services, notably in relation to the response to Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) response and recovery activities, and to our capacity to operate even under extraordinary circumstances.

Over the course of the year, UNOPS-supported projects created 3.4 million days of paid work for local people. Of the 3.4 million, 850,000 were for women and 2.5 million for men. Our infrastructure activities included work on more than 2,300 kilometres of roads, 114 schools, 9 hospitals and 8 health clinics. Almost \$600 million worth of procurement spending went to local suppliers, lessening environmental impacts by reducing emissions and directly supporting local economies. UNOPS delivery reached over \$2.2 billion, and, with more than 12,500 people on contract working directly for UNOPS and our partners, we provided technical expertise and efficiency to the wider global development system.

As an institution, UNOPS remains committed to the United Nations reform agenda and has made progress in becoming a more equal organization, recording a sizeable shift in the levels of women's representation. UNOPS will continue to become more inclusive, equal, and diverse, and will ensure that the changes we have made continue and are sustainable. In summary, the organization continued to experience significant demand for its services and improve the way it operates. Through its strategic plan, 2018-2021, UNOPS is well placed to support the global response to the COVID-19 pandemic and increase its work in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Member States, and the people they represent.

Elements of a decision

The Executive Board may wish to: (a) recognize the contributions of UNOPS in 2020 to the operational results of governments, the United Nations, and other partners, through efficient management support services and effective specialized technical expertise, expanding the implementation capacity for sustainable development; (b) welcome the progress made in implementing the UNOPS strategic plan, 2018-2021; (c) take note of the annual report on the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit and the progress made in implementing recommendations relevant to UNOPS; (d) welcome the progress achieved with sustainable infrastructure impact investment activities in our mandated areas; and (e) take note of the contributions to COVID-19 response and recovery activities.



Contents

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Page</i>
I. Introduction	3
II. Results framework	3
III. Highlights of results	3
IV. Operational results	4
A. Efficient management support services	4
B. Effective specialized technical expertise	7
C. Expanding the pool and effect of resources	9
V. Management results	11
A. Delivery and partnerships	11
B. Process excellence	12
C. People excellence	14
D. Financial stewardship	16

Annexes

Available on the Executive Board web page



This report has been prepared in accordance with the GRI Standards: core option. The GRI content index is detailed in annex I.

I. Introduction

1. The Executive Director is pleased to inform the Executive Board of the progress made during 2020 in implementing the UNOPS strategic plan, 2018-2021. In so doing, UNOPS has helped people build better lives and has supported the progress of countries towards peace and sustainable development.

2. 2020 was a remarkable year for the world, forever to be viewed through the lens of the COVID-19 pandemic. Lives and livelihoods were lost, economies were disrupted, and the progress made under the 2030 Agenda came under threat. At UNOPS, four staff members and six colleagues working on behalf of our partners tragically lost their lives to COVID-19. Despite the devastation and unprecedented challenges, 2020 was a year of resilience, of coming together to find solutions and respond to the world's largest challenges. UNOPS was quick to adapt to the reality of COVID-19 and help partners prepare, respond and recover. In 2020, UNOPS delivery of projects around the world exceeded \$2.2 billion. Almost \$900 million in COVID-19 response and recovery activities, over \$200 million of which were delivered, were agreed with partners during the year.

3. Across the world, our common future will be defined by how we respond to climate change. In the words of the United Nations Secretary-General, we face an "environmental emergency". To prevent the worst effects of climate change, we need to "reset our relationship with nature". Measuring the sustainability of UNOPS operations is crucial, and UNOPS has now reported on this for the fifth consecutive year through GRI standards. Details of UNOPS results with associated GRI disclosures are presented in annex I.

II. Results framework

4. The UNOPS mandate was established by the General Assembly in resolution 65/176. The Executive Board approved the UNOPS strategic plan, 2018-2021, in its decision 2017/26. The Board recognized its solid foundation in Member State decisions, policy guidance and international agreements to serve people and countries, including in the most fragile situations.

5. In 2020, UNOPS reported on work around its mandated core competencies or focus areas: effective specialized technical expertise in infrastructure, procurement and project management; efficient management support services; and expansion of the pool and effect of resources, including from the private sector, for the 2030 Agenda.

6. The focus areas guided output and sustainability reporting for 1,096 projects, in which 96 per cent of infrastructure projects reported contributions to sustainability across a range of economic, environmental and social areas. Throughout this report, percentages reflecting sustainability results are weighted by delivery. Details of the results framework and reporting methodology are provided in annex II.

III. Highlights of results

7. More than 3 million days of paid work for local people were created through UNOPS projects in 2020. Of the 3.4 million days, 850,000 were for women and 2.5 million for men. Across both genders, 1.2 million days of work were created for young people, defined as individuals between the ages of 15 and 24. The majority related to infrastructure projects, including the construction or rehabilitation of 114 schools, 9 hospitals, 8 health clinics, 3 courthouses and 2,332 kilometres of roads. That compares with 83 schools, 8 hospitals, 79 health clinics, 7 courthouses and 3,526 kilometres of roads in 2019.

8. UNOPS procured \$1.3 billion worth of goods and services for its partners in 2020, compared to the \$1.1 billion reported in 2019. UNOPS is committed to strengthening national economies by supporting local suppliers. In locations of operations where UNOPS maintains a physical presence, 46 per cent of procurement budgets (compared to 51 per cent in 2019) were awarded to local suppliers, representing almost \$600 million. The decrease was influenced by a large increase in health-related procurement from international suppliers as part of the COVID-19 response.

9. As part of efforts to share UNOPS knowledge and expertise, 38,000 days of technical assistance were provided to partners (up from around 28,000 in 2019). Approximately

48 per cent of relevant projects supported by UNOPS reported one activity or more that contributed to developing national capacity, compared to 55 per cent in 2019.

10. UNOPS is committed to climate neutrality. In 2020, analysis of UNOPS operations recorded greenhouse gas emissions of 9,316 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent. By comparison, 14,128 tonnes were reported in 2019, the reduction being attributable to the pandemic. All UNOPS emissions in 2019 were offset through reductions, with Gold Standard certification developed under the United Nations Clean Development Mechanism.

11. In 2020, demand remained strong for UNOPS services in conflict and post-conflict countries, least developed countries and others in vulnerable situations. UNOPS supported progress towards achieving a number of global and local objectives, including the Sustainable Development Goals. As in previous years, there was considerable demand for support related to Goals 3, 9, 11, and 16. UNOPS provided expertise through a range of integrated services across multiple sectors and service lines. Delivery in this area is summarized in table 1, below.

Table 1. Percentage of delivery associated with UNOPS respective service lines

Service line	Percentage of total delivery 2020	Percentage of total delivery 2019
Infrastructure	14	17
Procurement	33	38
Project management	18	11
Human resources	12	12
Financial management	23	24

IV. Operational results

A. Efficient management support services

12. UNOPS is committed to enabling partners to ‘do more with less’ through efficient management support services, delivered locally or as global shared services. Services range from procurement, human resources, and financial and other shared services management, to providing dedicated secretariat services for partners under the UNOPS legal framework.

13. UNOPS management support services extend from supporting the implementation of Security Council and General Assembly resolutions to helping address humanitarian crises and peace and security priorities by providing rapid-response ability in emergency situations.

14. In cooperation with the Korea International Cooperation Agency, UNOPS procured emergency equipment and supplies for countries on three continents to support the most vulnerable populations. With over \$17 million in funding, UNOPS procured medical supplies and equipment for the governments of Cambodia, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Laos, Myanmar, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Viet Nam, as well as for the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, supporting COVID-19 response efforts in a further 12 countries in Africa.

15. The UNOPS-managed Access to Health Fund in Myanmar, funded by Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States, procured 45,000 test kits to improve testing capacity. Also in Myanmar, the UNOPS-managed Livelihoods and Food Security Fund (‘LIFT’) and the Department of Social Welfare of the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement provided \$9 million in funding for social protection payments during the COVID-19 pandemic. Mothers of children under the age of two, pregnant women and people over the age of 85 who are participating in social protection programmes piloted by LIFT received a one-off cash payment.

16. UNOPS is working with the Universal Postal Union, a specialized agency of the United Nations, to procure and distribute personal protective equipment for postal workers in least developed countries. Postal workers are critical to supply chain networks during the pandemic but can be highly exposed. The first phase included delivering gloves, sanitizer and over a million masks to national postal services in 37 countries.

Box 1. Strengthening COVID-19 response in the Western Balkans

In Albania, Kosovo, North Macedonia and Serbia, UNOPS partnered with the European Union to support government efforts to respond to the rapidly evolving health crisis in March 2020. The crisis placed medical personnel under immense pressure, creating an urgent need for space, supplies and equipment to treat the growing number of coronavirus patients. Working under these extraordinary circumstances, they simultaneously tried to keep pace with the needs of people suffering from a range of other diseases.

The sudden demand for medical supplies and other equipment exposed global inequalities in access. The emergency revealed a critical gap in medical equipment and supplies as well as the challenge of procuring sufficient essential items to keep up with demand. To ease the unexpected pressure, the European Union mobilized millions of euros in funding.

Within days of the pandemic's being declared, UNOPS began emergency procurement procedures, with deliveries starting just a few weeks later. With over €17 million in funding, UNOPS procured five million pieces of personal protective equipment, 15 advanced life-support ambulances, 155 ventilators, 1,400 pieces of respiratory equipment, 100 triage containers and over 35,000 pieces of other medical equipment.

17. In partnership with the United States Agency for International Development in Jordan, UNOPS expedited the procurement and delivery of critical radiology equipment as part of an ongoing project for the newly constructed emergency department at Al-Bashir Hospital. UNOPS also supplied information and technology equipment to support an integrated electronic health record system for use in the COVID-19 response efforts of the Ministry of Health.

18. In Haiti, with funding from a range of partners, including the World Bank, UNOPS distributed personal protective equipment. Over 50 technicians were trained on the operation, maintenance and use of essential equipment to strengthen the COVID-19 response in health centres in Port-au-Prince and across the country.

19. UNOPS serves as the principal recipient for the Regional Artemisinin-Resistance Initiative, which works towards the elimination of malaria in Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam, with financial support from the Global Fund. UNOPS supported those countries in purchasing commodities such as insecticide-treated nets, rapid diagnostic tests, and quality-assured drugs. Now in its second phase, the programme reported in 2020 that over 28 million people had been tested and over 700,000 had been treated for malaria. More than 21 million insecticide-treated bed nets had been distributed. With approved grants of over \$230 million, the initiative is being expanded with a third phase (2021-2023).

20. With \$3.9 million in funding from the World Bank, UNOPS worked with the Government of Tajikistan to purchase essential medical supplies and equipment for 10 health facilities across the country. UNOPS helped the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Population procure personal protective equipment, ventilators, and other supplies needed for treating COVID-19 patients.

21. To support COVID-19 response efforts in Cameroon, with \$1.9 million in funding from the French Development Agency, UNOPS procured medical equipment including 600 hospital beds and 100 intensive care unit beds, on behalf of the Ministry of Public Health

22. Funded by the Government of Japan and part of a broader \$29 million COVID-19 response project, UNOPS procured \$2.5 million of medical equipment and medicine to support efforts in Gaza and East Jerusalem.

Box 2. Supporting post-disaster recovery in Zimbabwe

In March 2019, Cyclone Idai hit south-east Africa, bringing strong winds and heavy rainfall and leaving a trail of destruction in its wake. In Zimbabwe, flash flooding and landslides damaged or destroyed critical infrastructure, including schools, hospitals, farmlands and homes. The cyclone caused over \$600 million in damage. More than 50,000 households were destroyed,

directly affecting 270,000 people and displacing 60,000. The cyclone cut communities off from basic services.

The Zimbabwe Idai Recovery Project, funded by a \$72 million grant from the World Bank International Development Association, was launched to help communities recover in the immediate aftermath of the disaster and to lay the foundations for long-term resilience and regional recovery. UNOPS, an implementing organization and fund manager for the grant, is responsible for the overall project. The Food and Agricultural Organization, the International Organization for Migration, the International Children's Fund (UNICEF), UNOPS, UNFPA, the World Food Programme and the World Health Organization (WHO) are working together under the project, 'delivering as one' to address immediate and medium-term recovery needs in food security, livelihoods, health, education, and water and sanitation.

During 2020, the World Bank provided an additional \$500,000 in funding, while several implementing organizations used existing funding to support Zimbabwe in its response to the pandemic. This included building the capacity of medical personnel to monitor, trace and investigate COVID-19 cases, rehabilitating an isolation ward at a local hospital, providing personal protective equipment to village health workers, and providing access to safe water for handwashing.

23. With \$2.5 million from the Government of Norway, UNOPS procured 150 respirators to strengthen medical capacity and help respond to the pandemic in Serbia, North Macedonia and Montenegro.

24. UNOPS supported the Honduran Social Security Institute in procuring \$3.4 million of surgical supplies to treat COVID-19 patients. UNOPS also helped analyse prioritized medical supplies and equipment.

25. UNOPS supported the Government of Peru in procuring 360 ventilators for its EsSalud programme to reinforce the response capacity of intensive care units treating COVID-19 patients.

26. The Iraq Internally Displaced Persons Information Centre is a country-wide, toll-free helpline providing life-saving information to internally displaced people. It serves as a centralized humanitarian resource for affected populations, reinforcing accountability mechanisms and facilitating the direct participation of affected people in humanitarian response decision-making. In 2020, in partnership with the non-governmental organization Ground Truth Solutions, call operators conducted surveys to gather community views and feedback on the COVID-19 pandemic. Surveys from the Anbar, Dahuk, Erbil, Ninewa, Salah al-Din and Sulaymaniyah Governorates were used to facilitate dialogue with response organizations in Iraq.

27. As part of shared services provided across the United Nations and on behalf of governments, UNOPS supported the procurement of \$102 million worth of goods (compared with \$82 million in 2019) through 'UN Web Buy Plus'.

28. On behalf of partner organizations, UNOPS managed the contracts of 7,498 people during 2020. Partners supported included the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UN-Habitat, UNEP, UNICEF, WHO, the International Organization for Migration, and the Global Green Growth Institute.

29. In 2020, UNOPS supported mine-action; humanitarian, stabilization and explosive management activities; capacity-building of national actors and United Nations missions; and the weapons and ammunition management work of the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) and partners in 19 countries and territories. It provided human resources management, procurement, contracting, grants management, technical and operational support, and financial and legal services. For approximately \$240 million, UNOPS helped its main partner, UNMAS, to deliver a range of results, including:

- (a) In the Central African Republic, in an effort to ensure the proper storage of weapons handled by the national police and defence forces, 23 armouries and temporary storage kits were constructed or rehabilitated. To

assist the internal security and national defence forces in improving community security, training was provided to 52 officers in weapons and ammunition management and explosive ordnance disposal.

(b) In Iraq, over 1,000,000 m² of land was cleared of explosive ordnance in 2020. Clearance operations included rendering safe 766 units of explosive ordnance, 27 improvised explosive devices, 289 victim-operated improvised explosive devices, 307 main charges for improvised explosive devices, 3 suicide belts, 53 explosive components, and 78 explosive remnants of war. Following instructions from the national authority, the Directorate of Mine Action, clearance operations resumed on 1 July, after a brief pause due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Full operational capacity was reached in October.

(c) In Libya, technical guidance and training in weapons and ammunition management was provided to members of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya. In support of national capacity development, technical assistance and specialized training was provided to Libyan authorities, including in physical stockpile management; countering the proliferation of illicit weapons and ammunition; and measures to limit the access of non-state armed groups to improvised explosive device components.

(d) In Somalia, specialized training was delivered to almost 4,500 troops of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) on subjects ranging from improvised explosive device threat awareness to search and detection. Training and mentoring were provided to AMISOM mission-enabling units, helping to increase troop confidence in the use of main supply routes and to increase consignment movements on the main supply routes from Mogadishu to all military sectors.

(e) In South Sudan, survey and clearance activities in 2020 continued to facilitate post-conflict stabilization and reconstruction while providing humanitarian assistance to affected populations. In total, 39,000 m² of cleared land facilitated the safe and voluntary return and resettlement of displaced people in an internally displaced persons' camp in Kurkal, Unity State. The clearance of roads, airstrips, food drop zones and a helicopter landing site helped to ensure freedom of movement and the provision of aid.

B. Effective specialized technical expertise

30. UNOPS is committed to helping people achieve individual, local, national and global objectives through effective technical expertise grounded in international norms and standards. It provides specialized expertise through its core service lines, applicable in a variety of contexts.

31. UNOPS applies sustainable implementation approaches by exercising due diligence and respect for international human rights principles; engaging local communities, with an emphasis on protecting the most vulnerable; facilitating access to food, water, sanitation, energy, health, education, justice, and security-related services; and mainstreaming gender equality in its activities. In 2020, 62 per cent of UNOPS infrastructure projects reported enabling equal access, 57 per cent enabled equal access for women, and 26 per cent for people with disabilities.

32. In Argentina, UNOPS supported the Government in its COVID-19 response, building 11 hospitals across four provinces using state-of-the-art technology and procuring ventilators, face masks and diagnostic kits.

33. Using a \$40 million grant from the World Bank International Development Association, UNOPS is supporting the Government of South Sudan in implementing the South Sudan Safety Net Project. The project will provide income security to nearly 430,000 people in some of the most vulnerable communities, including people with disabilities, the elderly, and pregnant or breastfeeding women. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the first phase of the project is focused on providing rapid cash transfers to vulnerable people in Juba.

34. With €53 million in funding from the European Union, UNOPS has been supporting the Intergovernmental Authority on Development in mitigating the health and socio-economic

impact of COVID-19 in eight countries. UNOPS is managing projects aimed at supporting migrants, refugees, internally displaced persons and cross-border communities in Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda. UNOPS received €17 million in funding to procure medical supplies and to help build quarantine and isolation centres in refugee camps and migration response centres.

35. As part of the Yemen Integrated Urban Services Emergency Project, UNOPS and the World Bank are providing support to the health sector in Yemen through integrated services, which are critical in the fight against COVID-19 and other diseases. This included facilitating the delivery of equipment, tools, infrastructure and 110 tonnes of personnel protective equipment for some 8,000 workers in 11 cities across the country.

Box 3. Pacific small island developing States responding to the pandemic

Geographic isolation and early border closures offered Pacific island countries initial protection from the coronavirus. However, that protection was fragile. When the virus reached these small countries, they risked rapid transmission within their borders. Their vulnerability was exacerbated by remote locations, limited resources, high transportation costs and the sporadic movement of goods. UNOPS is implementing a range of initiatives to help Pacific island governments mitigate COVID-19 outbreaks and respond to the demands of the pandemic by mobilizing quickly.

With \$33 million in World Bank funding, efforts include the procurement of essential medical supplies, personal protective equipment and laboratory equipment across the Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Palau, Papua New Guinea and Samoa. In Palau, UNOPS joined forces with the India-United Nations Development Partnership Fund, managed by the United Nations Fund for South-South Cooperation, to strengthen health care infrastructure. This includes the physical rehabilitation of community health centres and the procurement of air-purifying equipment. Efforts go beyond addressing immediate health needs: they strengthen health care across the region towards longer-term sustainable development, to help build the future for Pacific islanders.

36. Implemented by UNOPS, the ‘EU4Culture’ programme seeks to remedy the effects of the 2020 earthquake in Albania by rebuilding and rehabilitating its cultural heritage. It aims to contribute to the socio-economic recovery of Albania by improving its potential for tourism. The €40 million programme will target socio-economic development through rehabilitation of cultural artefacts; involve and support local communities with grants; adopt international and European Union standards; provide technical support to Albanian institutions; and use the ‘build back better’ approach.

37. The National Resilience Programme in Bangladesh is a partnership between the Government and UNDP, UN-Women and UNOPS – with funding from the governments of Sweden and the United Kingdom – that provides strategic support in developing national capacity to keep pace with the changing nature of disasters. In 2020, UNOPS provided technical support to co-creating an infrastructure asset management system with the local government engineering department, which strengthened both national capacity and ownership.

38. In Senegal, as part of the \$30 million World Bank-funded Saint-Louis Emergency Recovery and Resilience Project, UNOPS, in partnership with the Government, is implementing the \$2.3 million Relocation of the Displaced Populations of the Langue de Barbarie Project. More than 400 shelters built through the project will provide housing to over 1,400 people, include premises for a temporary school, and be used for offices. With the Government, UNOPS has developed designs for a permanent settlement for people displaced from the Langue de Barbarie, with building works expected to start in 2021.

39. In East Darfur, Sudan, the Sustainable Natural Resources Management Project worked to improve livelihoods and alleviate poverty in conflict-affected communities of East Darfur. Funded by the European Union, the project was implemented in two phases in partnership with UNEP and ZOA (a Netherlands-based international relief and recovery organization), together

with local partners, participating communities, customary institutions and the Government. UNOPS was the lead implementing agency for the project; UNEP helped implement policies to guide the use of natural resources; and ZOA, with local partners, worked on capacity-building to improve livelihoods and promote the use of sustainable techniques for using natural resources. The project benefited more than 9,000 households in nine localities across the East Darfur State and helped shape new legislation for natural resources management.

40. In Jordan, the Support to Social Protection programme, funded by the European Union, will support social sector reform and the development of an equitable and inclusive society by modernizing the social protection system. Under the auspices of the Jordan Ministry of Social Development, the UNOPS-implemented programme will include rehabilitating 42 social care centres to comply with international standards for human rights, disability inclusion and accessibility. The programme will develop a monitoring and evaluation-based performance management information system to expand social care services for the underprivileged, youth, women, and people with disabilities, and will support the Ministry in helping people in residential centres to return to their families and communities.

Box 4. Finding light in Yemen's darkest times

In 2020, more than 20 million people were in need of humanitarian assistance in Yemen, representing 80 per cent of the population. Over 3.5 million people have been displaced from their homes, while over 19 million lack access to basic health services. Today, with only 10 per cent of the country connected to the public electricity grid, the majority of the population is deprived of reliable access to electricity. The provision of public services such as electricity has come to a virtual standstill. Long-lasting power outages have crippled development efforts, wreaking havoc on education, water and sanitation, and health care services.

With a \$50 million grant from the World Bank International Development Association, UNOPS is working to restore electricity to 1.3 million Yemenis, including 200,000 households, 220 health facilities and 280 schools. The two organizations are working with local implementing partners to provide off-grid solar electricity solutions for schools, hospitals, streets and households. In addition to working with three local implementing partners, UNOPS is engaging with local authorities, institutions and communities to facilitate local ownership and promote sustainability. Citizens, especially women, have a voice in identifying projects. Decisions about the most pressing needs are made at the community level.

Implemented in collaboration with other United Nations organizations as part of a broader COVID-19 response in Yemen, the Contingency Emergency Response Component was added to the project in mid-2020 to fast-track access to electricity so that essential lifesaving services could continue.

C. Expanding the pool and effect of resources

41. UNOPS is committed to supporting countries in expanding the pool and effect of resources available to achieve the 2030 Agenda. In line with Executive Board decisions 2016/12, 2017/16 and 2017/26, UNOPS continued to develop its social impact investing initiative and explore opportunities for collaborative partnerships to mobilize alternative funding sources, particularly in the areas of affordable housing, renewable energy, and water and sanitation. In 2020, UNOPS supported governments in achieving efficiencies that amplified the effect of resources available for public procurement and engaged in collaborative partnerships for South-South and triangular cooperation, as well as in public-private partnerships.

42. Establishing public procurement frameworks that realize even small efficiencies can constitute a major impetus towards attaining the Sustainable Development Goals. Savings can be realized by making better use of the resources allocated to fund development objectives. Unspent funds from previously allocated budgets can be made available for reallocation by national authorities, based on their identified needs.

43. In 2020, the United Nations Secretary-General appointed former the UNOPS Deputy Executive Director as Assistant Secretary-General and Chief Executive of the Sustainable

Infrastructure Impact Investments ('S3I') initiative. The initiative, based in Helsinki, where UNOPS operates as a project developer, conducting rigorous social due diligence and ensuring that projects are suitable for investment, is a model for channelling private sector investment towards meeting critical national needs in affordable housing and renewable energy. The Government of Finland and the city of Helsinki provide support to the office.

44. In 2020, S3I committed to building more than 250,000 sustainable and affordable homes in Guinea and in Ekiti State, Nigeria, working with the respective governments. The homes will incorporate green technology and will be built using local skills and equipment, providing thousands of new employment opportunities for local people and contributing to local economic development. UNOPS has committed to helping build more than 1.3 million homes over the next decade, in Ghana, Guinea, India, Kenya, Nigeria, Pakistan, and across the Caribbean.

45. A second focus area within S3I concerns activities that bring together innovators, entrepreneurs, programmers and developers to provide the creative ideas and solutions needed to accelerate progress on the Sustainable Development Goals. The objective is to develop a progressive network of knowledge-sharing platforms by forging new partnerships and establishing a worldwide network of innovation centres, benefiting countries and people in need. Antigua and Barbuda, Japan, and Sweden currently host centres, with many others under advanced negotiation. In 2020, UNOPS signed a collaborative agreement with Sony Corporation to promote innovation and technology in support of the Goals, focusing on start-up businesses and technology companies.

46. Established in 2020, the Southeast Asia Energy Transition Partnership helps countries in the region transition from using fossil fuels to renewable sources of energy, in line with the Paris Agreement on climate change. UNOPS, which is the fund manager of the partnership and supports its secretariat, will provide financial management support to technical assistance projects aligned with ongoing programmes in the region. Members of the partnership include: Bloomberg Philanthropies; the Children's Investment Fund Foundation; Environment and Climate Change Canada; the French Development Agency; the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (Germany); the High Tide Foundation; and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (United Kingdom).

47. As part of a 2020 public-private partnership with Stanbic Bank Ghana, UNOPS procured more than 8,600 COVID-19 test kits and more than 8,500 ribonucleic acid extraction kits, among other items, which will be donated to the Ghana health service to help the country strengthen its testing and early case-detection capacity to tackle the disease.

Box 5. Improving the procurement of medicine in Mexico

Mexico, home to more than 120 million people, has experienced persistent health challenges in the delivery of public services. Reports of high prices and periodic shortages of medicines have plagued the public health system – one of the largest in the world. These challenges, brought on in part by alleged corruption and a lack of competition in drug distribution and regulations, have exacerbated health care inequalities.

To help maximize the efficiency, transparency and effectiveness of the procurement of medicines in Mexico, UNOPS partnered with the Government in a landmark \$6 billion agreement to purchase medicines and medical supplies. On behalf of Mexican health institutions throughout 26 federal states, this project will help provide health coverage for around 65 million people who are without social security.

Signed at a critical time as the country grappled with COVID-19, the four-year agreement will support national development priorities, guaranteeing access to health care for the majority of the population by 2024. The first set of medical supplies and medicines were purchased in late 2020.

48. UNOPS and the University of Oxford-led Infrastructure Transitions Research Consortium, in partnership with the Government of Saint Lucia, produced a report which used an evidence-based approach to anticipate the future infrastructure requirements of the island. The report assessed the social, economic and environmental risks posed by climate change, across

24 sectors, to help the Government prioritize adaptation measures and support infrastructure decision-making that will ensure long-term sustainable and resilient development. Recommendations were provided for meeting those needs while aligning national development priorities with international development commitments, including the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the Sustainable Development Goals.

49. Due to their small size, remote locations and vulnerability to environmental threats, small island developing States face a unique set of development and environmental challenges. In 2020, UNOPS launched a report that identified the challenges and opportunities surrounding the provision of essential infrastructure services in those States. Drawing on successful case studies, the report highlights ways in which they can harness their unique resources to overcome vulnerabilities, advance development and reap long-term benefits from infrastructure investments by applying an evidence-based approach.

50. In 2020, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the United Nations Capital Development Fund launched the “Managing Infrastructure Assets for Sustainable Development” handbook, supported by UNOPS. Prepared during the COVID-19 crisis, it provides practical knowledge to those seeking to lay the groundwork for more equitable, inclusive and sustainable development through improved infrastructure asset management.

51. In 2020, UNOPS released a report entitled “Infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women”, which examines the numerous barriers women and girls face when trying to access basic services such as education, health care, and economic opportunities. As the COVID-19 crisis has demonstrated, women and girls are more exposed to the economic, social and health effects of pandemics. Poor infrastructure can worsen the impact of crises, limiting access to critical resources such as clean water, proper health and sanitation services, and digital communications technology. Gender-responsive infrastructure design can address gender inequalities and empower women by responding to diverse needs in society, accelerating the socio-economic mobility of women, girls and other underserved or disadvantaged groups.

52. Also in 2020, UNOPS launched the report “Infrastructure for peacebuilding”. Based on comprehensive research, the report points out that when implemented with wider reforms, infrastructure investments can support long-term peace and resilience by enabling access to basic services, and have the potential to foster structural changes that reduce the risk of violence and promote sustainable development. Conversely, infrastructure can hinder peacebuilding if services are lacking or if the infrastructure is unable to protect communities. Given the lock-in effect caused by the long lifespan of infrastructure, investments that fail to account for the complex interaction between infrastructure and fragility risk contributing to prolonged instability. As recognized in Security Council resolution 1325, women have an important role to play in preventing and resolving conflict, which can be fulfilled through their equal participation in infrastructure decision-making and peacebuilding efforts.

V. Management results

A. Delivery and partnerships

53. UNOPS delivery was over \$2.2 billion in 2020, closely matching the 2019 total of \$2.3 billion. This can be attributed primarily to high government demand for UNOPS services.

54. Direct support to governments accounted for the largest category of delivery value, amounting to \$757 million, compared to \$943 million in 2019. The largest partnership with a host government during 2020 was with Argentina, followed by Guatemala, Peru, Honduras and Myanmar, respectively. Direct support to host governments decreased in 2020 to 20 per cent of delivery, whereas donor governments remained the same, at 14 per cent. The largest donor government to which UNOPS delivery could be directly attributed was that of the United States, followed by the United Kingdom, Japan, Norway and Canada, respectively.

55. In 2020, 25 per cent of UNOPS delivery was on behalf of the United Nations system, remaining stable in comparison to the 26 per cent recorded in 2019. In real terms, that delivery represented approximately \$567 million, as compared to \$592 million in 2019. The largest United Nations partner was once again the Secretariat, and the largest segment was with the

Department of Peace Operations. Delivery on behalf of UNHCR grew for the eighth consecutive year, and other strong partnerships included WHO and UNEP.

56. UNOPS partnered with international financial institutions, including the African Development Bank and the Islamic Development Bank, to deliver almost \$269 million in services. Its largest financial institution partner was the World Bank, with a total of \$228 million in 2020 – up from \$157 million the previous year.

57. UNOPS work for the European Union roughly doubled from the previous year, from \$68 million to \$133 million of delivery. Projects included a large number of COVID-19 related procurement projects, with a particular focus on Eastern Europe.

58. UNOPS maintained strong partnerships in support of vertical funds – most significantly the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, to which \$168 million of services was delivered in 2020, compared to \$144 million in 2019 – and worked as local fund agent in 13 countries.

59. UNOPS supported the management of several programmes financed by multiple donors, the largest of which are in Myanmar (the Livelihoods and Food Security Trust Fund and Myanmar Access to Health) or operate globally (the Enhanced Integrated Framework Trust Fund).

60. In 2020, the largest countries or territories of delivery were Myanmar, Argentina, Yemen, Somalia and the State of Palestine, in that order. In 2019, they were Myanmar, Peru, the State of Palestine, Guatemala, and Yemen.

61. New agreements between UNOPS and its partners reached over \$10 billion, compared to \$2 billion the previous year. This sizeable increase was accounted for primarily by a large project supporting pharmaceutical procurement in Mexico.

62. In 2020, the Executive Director continued to chair the United Nations High-level Committee on Management, helping guide efforts to become more efficient and simplify business practices, as a contribution to the wider reform agenda.

63. In 2020, UNOPS partnered with The Economist to release a research publication entitled “The future of public spending: why the way we spend is critical to the Sustainable Development Goals”. It examines the potential of public procurement in achieving the Goals, and shows how less wasteful, more efficient government spending practices can help address a critical spending gap that countries face in achieving them, as well as how social, environmental and economic sustainability objectives can be achieved through procurement. A follow-up publication examined the implications of the COVID-19 crisis and the importance of effective and sustainable public spending as countries respond, recover and rebuild.

B. Process excellence

64. Following an organization-wide exercise to gather data on aspects of sustainability relevant to UNOPS, it produced its fifth report aligned with GRI standards. The report refined a series of indicators identified to assess UNOPS sustainable implementation approaches and provided an overview of its operations worldwide.

65. In 2020, UNOPS included requirements on reporting and investigation as part of the ‘Goal Zero’ health and safety initiative, which aims for zero incidents, injuries and illnesses in the workplace. Activities were introduced to improve awareness, alongside mandatory monthly reporting of incidents and ‘near misses’, and virtual training for all personnel. More than 5,000 site inspections were carried out in 2020.

66. In January 2020, UNOPS established a sustainable procurement framework that included sustainability considerations for all formal procurement processes and certain informal processes, on a mandatory basis. The framework helps UNOPS partners reap sustainability benefits and mitigate social, environmental and economic risks that may be present in the supply chain. Since launch, 86 per cent of eligible global tenders were compliant, and 42 per cent, 35 per cent and 66 per cent were responsive, respectively, to environmental, social and economic considerations. Twenty-eight per cent were gender responsive.

67. UNOPS was assessed by the International Organization for Standardization (‘ISO’) and maintained its global ISO 9001 Quality Management certification.

68. UNOPS underwent its first assessment by the Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network, which represents a group of 19 donor countries. The review assesses the management of strategic, operational, relationship and performance aspects of UNOPS organizational effectiveness. It is expected to be publicly available in mid-2021.

69. UNOPS has developed a social and environmental management system in line with the ISO 14001 standard, which ensures the integration of social and environmental considerations into UNOPS projects and operations. This forms the basis for UNOPS compliance with document CEB/2013/HLCM/5 on the development and implementation of environmental sustainability management systems in each United Nations organization.

70. UNOPS has developed an occupational health and safety management system, in line with the ISO 45001 standard, for the prevention of workplace injuries and illnesses in all UNOPS activities. This forms the basis for UNOPS compliance with the adoption of occupational safety and health systems in all United Nations organizations (CEB/2015/HLCM/7/Rev.2), and with the Secretary General's Bulletin, Introduction of an occupational safety and health management system (ST/SGB/2018/5).

71. In 2020, as part of the UNOPS initiative to refine knowledge management practices and facilitate improved governance and risk management, 'oneUNOPS' projects went through further system enhancements including an improved, data-driven quarterly assurance upgrade. This overview of project outputs, reports, forecasted expenditure amounts, risks and issues allows project teams and boards to better measure progress.

72. In implementing the UNOPS gender mainstreaming strategy, the mandatory gender screening of every engagement was complemented in 2020 with improved analytics for oversight of gender mainstreaming plans.

73. UNOPS introduced a new treasury management system in 2020 to streamline manual processes and increase efficiency through automation and centralization of payments in our global shared services centre in Bangkok. This will allow the organization to manage risk and enhance financial planning for projects, reducing the risk of error and fraud. Eighty per cent of UNOPS payments were using the system at the time of preparing this report.

74. In 2020, the newly established Client Board convened a forum for partners to provide operational feedback in order to guide and inform future improvements in UNOPS service delivery and client satisfaction.

75. With regard to the midterm review of the UNOPS strategic plan, 2018-2021 (DP/OPS/2020/5), Executive Board decision 2020/20 underlined the continued relevance of the UNOPS strategic framework as the basis for driving the ambition to become a better-known and recognized resource for the United Nations and Member States. It also recognized that the management results achieved reconfirmed the relevance of the non-programmatic business-to-business value proposition expressed in the UNOPS contribution goals, and the ability of UNOPS to safeguard the viability of its unique demand-driven and self-financed business model for the medium and longer term.

76. By the end of 2020, the implementation rate of audit recommendations stood at 96 per cent, as in 2019, continuing to demonstrate high management responsiveness. Twelve recommendations remained open for more than 18 months at the end of 2020, five of which had been implemented and resolved at the time of writing this report. This compares with the one recommendation outstanding over 18 months at the end of 2019 (which has since been closed). Details of UNOPS audit and investigations findings in 2020 are available in a dedicated report (DP/OPS/2021/2).

77. There were 31 incidents of fraud and financial irregularities. Thirty-two employees were sanctioned in such cases. Twenty-eight vendors and 35 individuals who owned or managed vendors were sanctioned.

78. The Joint Inspection Unit recognized the progress made by UNOPS in managing and implementing its recommendations (JIU/REP/2017/5). Annex 4 provides details.

79. Reflecting its role as a consultative, impartial and service-oriented resource, the UNOPS Ethics and Compliance Office handled 970 issues from 1 January to 31 December 2020. These are detailed in a dedicated report (DP/OPS/2021/3).

C. People excellence

80. At the end of 2020, the total number of UNOPS personnel stood at 5,038, up from 4,765 in 2019. In addition to UNOPS personnel, contracts were administered on behalf of a range of partners. At the end of 2020, the number of individuals on UNOPS contracts stood at 12,536, a minor increase from 12,528 in 2019. A breakdown of personnel by contract category is shown in table 2, below.

Table 2. Number of personnel, by category, as of 31 December 2020

Contract modality	Staff	Contractors	Total
UNOPS personnel	823*	4,215	5,038
Partner personnel		7,498	7,498
Combined personnel	823	11,713	12,536

*Includes partner staff and staff in organizations where UNOPS provides hosted initiative secretariat services, who are subject to the same policies and procedures as UNOPS staff.

81. At the end of 2020, women represented 46 per cent of UNOPS personnel, an increase from 37 per cent since the beginning of the strategic plan. At the time of writing this report, UNOPS had reached the milestone of 47 per cent (and the range of gender parity). Forty-two per cent of leadership roles (ISC-11 and above) are now held by women, representing a 12 per cent increase during the same period. A breakdown of gender representation is shown in table 3, below.

82. The 1,070 members of UNOPS personnel recruited in 2020 comprised 636 women and 434 men, meaning that 59 per cent of new hires were women, compared with 57 per cent in 2019. As of 31 December 2020, the primary internal management body of UNOPS consisted of six members – two women and four men. Five were over the age of 50 and one was in the 30-50 age group.

Table 3. Gender balance among UNOPS personnel as of 31 December 2020

Gender	Staff	Local contractors	International contractors	Total
Women	329	1,460	535	2,324
Men	494	1,681	539	2,714
All UNOPS personnel	823	3,141	1,074	5,038

Table 4. Gender parity strategy goal 1

Achieve gender parity targets established by the United Nations system-wide strategy

Level	Percentage of women (31 Dec. 2020)	Total women international staff	Total international staff	Target	Target date
P1	83%	5	6	47% - 53%	End 2021
P2	45%	28	62	47% - 53%	End 2021
P3	37%	69	188	47% - 53%	End 2021
P4	41%	56	135	47% - 53%	End 2026
P5	34%	28	82	47% - 53%	End 2026
P6, D1	44%	12	27	47% - 53%	End 2026
D2	38%	6	16	47% - 53%	End 2026

Table 5. Gender parity strategy goal 2 as of 31 December 2020
Equal gender representation targets for UNOPS personnel, irrespective of level

Total percentage of women	Total number of women	Total UNOPS personnel	Target percentage of women	Target date
46%	2,324	5,038	47% - 53%	End 2020

Table 6. Gender parity strategy goal 3
Targets to increase the representation of women at senior levels among international personnel

UNOPS personnel by International Civil Service Commission level and respective grades	Percentage of women by grade, as of Dec 31, 2020	Total number international women personnel	Total number international personnel	Target	Target date
ICSC 8 (P1 + IICA-1)	61%	105	172	47% - 53%	End 2021
ICSC 9 (P2 + IICA-1)	53%	132	251	47% - 53%	End 2021
ICSC 10 (P3 + IICA-2)	45%	289	636	47% - 53%	End 2021
ICSC 11 (P4 + IICA-3)	40%	144	359	47% - 53%	End 2026
ICSC 12 (P5 + IICA-3 / IICA-4)	40%	50	126	47% - 53%	End 2026
ICSC 13 (P6 + D1 + IICA-4)	45%	13	29	47% - 53%	End 2026
ICSC 14 (D2 + IICA-4 / IICA-5)	35%	6	17	47% - 53%	End 2026

83. All full-time UNOPS personnel are entitled to parental leave, and during the course of 2020 123 women and 196 men exercised that right. Ninety-eight per cent of women and 99 per cent of men ending their leave in 2020 returned to their positions.

84. In 2020, to prioritize the well-being of personnel, initiatives were put into place to support the workforce in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Stress management, as well as group and individual counselling, were made available to all UNOPS personnel, as were online learning modules addressing such topics as maintaining work-life balance and staying healthy in a changing and challenging work context.

85. There was a 16 per cent turnover of UNOPS personnel in 2020, down from 17 per cent in 2019 and 21 per cent in 2018. A breakdown of turnover figures is provided in table 7, below.

Table 7: Turnover among UNOPS personnel, by age category and gender, in 2020

Age category	Women	Men	Total
30 and under	18%	15%	17%
30 to 50	16%	15%	15%
50 and above	14%	23%	20%
All UNOPS personnel	16%	16%	16%

86. In 2020, almost 5,200 colleagues (compared to 5,000 the previous year) benefited from learning opportunities. Ninety per cent of participants rated the relevance of the learning programmes 'very relevant' or 'relevant'. Approximately 91 per cent of the participants came from field offices and 9 per cent from headquarters; 46 per cent were female and 54 per cent male.

87. In support of the 2020 'Goal Zero' health and safety campaign, mandatory training was completed by about 90 per cent of UNOPS personnel. Specialized technical training courses for infrastructure supervisors and managers were developed for use in online learning courses.

Workers at project sites received regular awareness-raising messages about work-related hazards, as well as health and safety induction training.

D. Financial stewardship

88. UNOPS delivered more than \$2.2 billion in project services, compared to \$2.3 billion in 2019. Net revenue from project activities was \$109 million, compared to \$99.2 million in 2019. The ratio of net revenue from project activities to delivery was 4.9 per cent, compared to 4.4 per cent in 2019. Management expenses were \$83 million, compared to \$71.1 million a year earlier.

89. Miscellaneous income earned was \$3.1 million (against \$4.5 million in 2019). Interest income earned was \$24.5 million as compared to \$24.3 million in the previous year. Overall, this resulted in a net surplus of income over expenditure, after provisions, of \$34.5 million (compared to \$47.1 million in 2019). At year-end 2020, the UNOPS minimum operational reserve remained above the minimum established by its Executive Board. UNOPS is conducting a detailed study of its minimum operational reserve including the formula for its calculation. The outcome will be submitted for consideration by the Executive Board at its second regular session 2021.

90. An actuarial revaluation of UNOPS end-of-service employee liabilities indicated these were about \$14.5 million higher at the end of 2020 than at the end of 2019. This represented an actuarial loss of \$7.2 million, and further funding was allocated by UNOPS during the year.

91. A growth and innovation reserve was established in 2019. This provides seed funding to S3I activities that contribute to accelerating achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals through projects having the potential to deliver social and environmental impact alongside a financial return. The value of the reserve was set at 50 per cent of the excess operational reserves. At the end of 2020, it stood at \$121.8 million, of which UNOPS has invested \$58.8 million into S3I projects.

92. The expenses, revenue and reserve balance for 2020 are early figures calculated by UNOPS and may be subject to change. They have yet to be verified and audited by the United Nations Board of Auditors.
