



**Executive Board of the  
United Nations Development  
Programme, the United Nations  
Population Fund and the United  
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Item 7 of the provisional agenda

**Statement by the UNOPS Executive Director**

**Comprehensive response plan: terms of reference for the  
second interim review of the status of implementation of  
the remaining recommendations**

*Summary*

The Internal Audit and Investigations Group (IAIG) of UNOPS submits to the Executive Board the terms of reference for the second interim review of the status of the implementation of the remaining recommendations.

In August 2022, at the request of the Executive Board, UNOPS commissioned an independent third-party advisory review. The second review focused on the UNOPS mandate, governance, risk management and internal control systems, performance management and accountability.

In response to the review, UNOPS drew up a comprehensive response plan. The plan was presented to the Executive Board at its special session 2022.

At the end of 2023, KPMG was commissioned by IAIG to conduct an initial interim review of the implementation of the comprehensive response plan. KPMG reviewed each area of the plan and confirmed the actions already taken by UNOPS and identified areas for further attention

In its decision 2024/4, the Executive Board:

“Decides that the third-party review on the recommendations that have been concluded by the end of 2024 will be conducted in early 2025, with the exception of one recommendation spanning until 2027 which concerns a multi-year programme on process innovation and digitalization; and

Recalls its decision 2023/23 for UNOPS to submit the terms of reference for the external third-party review to the Executive Board for input and validation and requests that UNOPS submits these at the second regular session 2024”.

On 6 June 2024, the IAIG Director submitted the draft terms of reference to the Executive Board for information and inputs

*Elements of a decision*

The Executive Board may wish to validate the terms of reference and request IAIG to proceed with the second interim review.



## I. Background

1. In August 2022, at the request of the Executive Board, UNOPS commissioned two independent third-party advisory reviews. The first review focused on identifying the root causes and institutional vulnerabilities within UNOPS that led to the failures associated with the sustainable investments in infrastructure and innovation initiative ('S3i'). The second review focused on the UNOPS mandate, governance, risk management and internal control systems, performance management and accountability. KPMG Finland carried out the two reviews, and its two reports were finalized on 28 November 2022.
2. KPMG issued 48 recommendations to UNOPS in the second review, five of which were directed to the Executive Board and 43 to UNOPS management.
3. In response to the reviews, the recommendations, and subsequent discussions with the Executive Board, UNOPS drew up a comprehensive response plan. The plan was presented to the Executive Board at its special session 2022. The plan follows the structure of the KPMG report and the 43 recommendations provided and sets out 82 actions required to address the recommendations, focusing on strategy and policy development, organizational structure reforms, and organization-wide process improvements. Some of the actions are targeted at individual processes, while others are cross-cutting and aim to transform the ways of working at UNOPS.
4. Out of the 43 recommendations, 36 have been completed to planned scope to date, two are not operationalized, and one is led by the United Nations Office for Legal Affairs. Of the outstanding recommendations, three more will be completed in 2024 and one will continue until 2027.
5. At the end of 2023, KPMG was commissioned by the Internal Audit and Investigation Group (IAIG) to conduct an initial interim review of the implementation of the comprehensive response plan. KPMG reviewed each area of the plan and confirmed the actions already taken by UNOPS and identified areas for further attention.
6. In its decision 2024/4, the Executive Board:
  - *Decides* that the third-party review on the recommendations that have been concluded by the end of 2024 will be conducted in early 2025, with the exception of one recommendation spanning until 2027 which concerns a multi-year programme on process innovation and digitalization; and
  - *Recalls* its decision 2023/23 for UNOPS to submit the terms of reference for the external third-party review to the Executive Board for input and validation and requests that UNOPS submits these at the second regular session 2024.

## II. Scope and review process

### Scope

7. The objective of this engagement is to:
  - Assess the implementation of the remaining recommendations with the exception of the multi-year programme on process innovation and digitalization; and
  - Conduct a random check and confirm the continued implementation of the recommendations completed in the first interim review.

### Review process

8. IAIG will commission an independent service provider to conduct the second interim review, to be conducted under the coordination of the IAIG Director. The service provider will perform a desktop review of relevant updated material (including manuals, process descriptions and instructions), and will interview staff and key stakeholders involved in the development processes, as well as UNOPS management. Furthermore, UNOPS personnel from different levels and regions will be interviewed to provide a broad perspective of the changes in processes and practices. The material review and interviews are expected to provide a full picture of the implementation of the remaining recommendations.

9. All required information will be made available to the incumbent service provider. The service provider is expected to submit a list of documentation that they may need. IAIG will make this information available after consultation with the relevant units or field offices.

## III. Reporting

10. The service provider will provide clear reporting concerning actions taken on each recommendation, current status of the area, assessment of level of maturity, and the need for any follow-up actions and recommendations.

11. The United Nations Office for Legal Affairs will issue a draft report to UNOPS management for comments and will submit the unredacted final report to the Executive Board and the UNOPS Executive Director.

### Tentative timeline

12. The expected timeline for this engagement is as follows:

| Dates            | Milestones and deliverables   |
|------------------|---|
| 10 February 2025 | Planning commences  |
| 24 February 2025 | Field work commences  |
| 14 March 2025    | Field work ends   |
| 28 March 2025    | Draft report provided to UNOPS management for comment                                 |
| 11 April 2025    | UNOPS to provide management comments  |
| 25 April 2025    | IAIG submits its final report to the Executive Board and the UNOPS Executive Director |

## IV. Qualifications of the service provider

### Area of expertise

13. The service provider must exhibit a clear understanding of the requirements and must demonstrate expertise in each of the areas subject to assessment, including UNOPS governance, risk management, and controls.

### Experience

14. The service provider must have a proven track record of a minimum of 10 years of practical and operational experience working with United Nations organizations in the public sector, and must provide evidence of having successfully planned and executed engagements of similar scope and expectation.

### **Key personnel**

15. Each of the key personnel must have at least 10 years of professional experience in the related field, and experience in similar engagements.

## **V. Proposal**

16. The service provider is required to provide a detailed proposal including a breakdown of key activities and deliverables in accordance with the scope of work. The service provider shall provide at least two examples to demonstrate its ability to plan and manage similar engagements. In its proposal, the service provider should demonstrate the ways in which its experts with relevant experience will contribute to the engagement.

### **Curricula vitae of team members**

17. The service provider shall submit résumés or professional profiles, limited to three pages, of key personnel with proven knowledge and experience in management, governance, risk and control, of an organization similar in complexity to UNOPS.

## **VI. Communication between UNOPS and the service provider**

18. The service provider should have an engagement focal point through which all communications with UNOPS are channelled. The service provider should provide weekly updates on the progress of the engagement.

## **VII. Other considerations**

19. The service provider will be responsible for the entire review, which includes planning, reviewing and reporting. Quality assurance on the engagement, which is required, should emanate from the headquarters of the selected service provider.

20. The Group focal point will be responsible for facilitating the review and ensuring that the service provider has sufficient access to personnel, systems, facilities, documents, and other information necessary to enable delivery of the required elements.