



**Executive Board of the  
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## **Annual report of the Executive Director**

### ***Summary***

We are proud to present the final UNOPS annual report on its strategic plan, 2018-2021. This is our sixth 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.

Throughout 2021, 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, 2021 saw significant demand for UNOPS services, notably in relation to Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) response and recovery activities, and our capacity to operate under extraordinary circumstances.

UNOPS-supported projects created 6.1 million days of paid work for local people. Of the 6.1 million days, 2.4 million were for women and 3.7 million for men. Our infrastructure activities included work on 30 schools, 10 hospitals and 62 health clinics. UNOPS procured \$3.8 billion worth of goods and services for its partners in 2021, compared to the \$1.3 billion reported in 2020. Of that, one large pharmaceutical project for the Government of Mexico accounted for \$2.2 billion. UNOPS delivery reached over \$3.4 billion, and, with almost 13,000 people on contract working directly for UNOPS and our partners, we provided technical expertise and efficiency to the wider global development system.

Committed to the United Nations reform agenda, UNOPS is becoming a more equal organization, recording a sizeable shift in the levels of women's representation, and achieving gender parity. 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 to improve the way it operates. Through its strategic plan, 2022-2025, 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 2021 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) take note of the successful implementation of the strategic plan, 2018-2021, and the solid implementation platform established on which to initiate the strategic plan, 2022-2025, to support Member States in achieving the 2030 Agenda; (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 achievement of gender parity across the UNOPS workforce; and (e) take note of the contributions to COVID-19 response and recovery activities.



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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 2021 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. The COVID-19 pandemic continued to destroy lives and livelihoods in 2021. Conflicts in Afghanistan, Ethiopia and Myanmar have jeopardized peace, security and hard-won development gains for millions of people. And while the present report was being prepared, the war in Ukraine has continued this trend of conflict and insecurity, which must be reversed for the future of humanity. This is the final report on the strategic plan, 2018-2021, and the last report of the current Executive Director, who will retire in September 2022.
3. UNOPS was quick to adapt to the reality of COVID-19, and in 2021 continued to help partners prepare, respond and recover. UNOPS delivery of projects around the world exceeded \$3.4 billion in 2021. COVID-19 response and recovery activities of almost \$700 million – over \$300 million of which were delivered – were agreed with partners during the year.
4. 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 at the 26th United Nations Climate Change Conference, “either we stop it – or it stops us”. To prevent the worst effects of climate change, we need to “choose ambition, choose solidarity, choose to safeguard our future and save humanity”. Measuring the sustainability of UNOPS operations is crucial, and UNOPS has now reported on this for the sixth consecutive year through GRI standards. Details of UNOPS results, with associated GRI disclosures, are presented in annex I.

## II. Results framework

5. 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.
6. In 2021, 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.
7. The focus areas guided output and sustainability reporting for 868 projects, among which 94 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 annexes II and III.

## III. Highlights of results

8. More than 6 million days of paid work for local people were created through UNOPS projects in 2021. Of the 6.1 million days, 2.4 million were for women and 3.7 million for men. Across both genders, 1.7 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 30 schools, 10 hospitals, 62 health clinics, 13 courthouses, 9 police stations and 312 km of roads. That compares to 114 schools, 9 hospitals, 8 health clinics, 3 courthouses, 30 police stations and 2,332 km of roads in 2020.
9. UNOPS procured \$3.8 billion worth of goods and services for its partners in 2021, which is a measure of the total value of contract commitments as opposed to goods and services delivered. This represents a 66 per cent increase when compared to the \$1.3 billion reported in 2020. Of that, one large pharmaceutical project for the Government of Mexico accounted for \$2.2 billion, 99 per cent of which spend was with suppliers registered locally. Of the remaining \$1.6 billion, the total procurement budget spend on local suppliers was 47 per cent in 2021, compared to 46 per cent in 2020.

10. As part of efforts to share UNOPS knowledge and expertise, almost 36,000 days of technical assistance were provided to partners, compared to 38,000 in 2020. Approximately 58 per cent of relevant projects supported by UNOPS reported one activity or more that contributed to developing national capacity, compared to 48 per cent in 2020.

11. UNOPS is committed to climate neutrality. In 2021, analysis of UNOPS operations recorded greenhouse gas emissions of 10,294 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent. By comparison, 9,316 tonnes were reported in 2020. All UNOPS emissions in 2020 were offset through reductions, with Gold Standard certification developed under the United Nations Clean Development Mechanism.

12. In 2021, 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 2021	Percentage of total delivery 2021 excluding PharmaMX	Percentage of total delivery 2020
Infrastructure	8	11	14
Procurement	60	42	33
Project management	12	17	18
Human resources	7	10	12
Financial management	13	18	23

## IV. Operational results

### A. Efficient management support services

13. 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.

14. 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 through its rapid-response ability in emergency situations.

15. In cooperation with the Government of Japan, UNOPS worked to strengthen national resilience to the COVID-19 pandemic in Asia, the Middle East, and the Pacific region, through the repacking of more than 11 million donated doses of the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine donated by Japan through the COVAX facility. Also with Japan, UNOPS supported COVID-19 response efforts in Ethiopia, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Nigeria, the State of Palestine, Syria, Ukraine and Yemen, with more than \$18 million of funding. UNOPS procured medical equipment, supplies and mobile health clinics, and procured and installed solar panels to provide a steady supply of renewable energy. UNOPS reconstructed primary health-care centres, and rehabilitated and equipped intensive care units, medical wards and a laboratory.

16. Through the UNOPS-managed Access to Health Fund in Myanmar, funded by Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States of America, the Government of Australia provided more than \$3.3 million to support COVID-19 response efforts, including support for emergency supplies and medical treatment.

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

impact of the pandemic on the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) region through coordinated, comprehensive actions at 45 cross-border sites in seven countries. Implementation is focused on critical cross-border areas and seeks to enhance the IGAD coordination capacity, increase access to health and water, sanitation and hygiene services, combat gender-based violence, improve community engagement, ensure borders are safe for trade, and promote digital health solutions. The programme particularly supports front-line workers and vulnerable groups, including migrants, refugees, internally displaced persons and cross-border communities. The programme is implementing key activities in Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda. UNOPS, as the programme manager, is responsible for programme and stakeholder management, fiduciary management, results management, and risk management. UNOPS oversees programme activities through partners including the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the German Agency for International Cooperation, and Trademark East Africa.

18. With funding from the World Bank and in partnership with the World Food Programme, UNOPS is supporting the COVID-19 response efforts of the Government of Honduras with logistical support in the local transportation, storage and distribution of more than 16.8 million units of personal protective equipment to be distributed across the Ministry of Health's hospital network, including 32 hospitals in 20 regions.

19. UNOPS signed an agreement to provide operational support to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Copenhagen Climate Centre, a leading international research and advisory institute on energy, climate and sustainable development for more than 30 years (previously known as the UNEP-Technical University of Denmark Partnership). The Centre supports developing and middle-income countries in their efforts to progress towards a climate-resilient, low-carbon future and to integrate climate priorities into national development planning. UNOPS will provide human resources, procurement, grants management and logistics support to the Centre as of January 2022.

20. In partnership with the Islamic Development Bank, UNOPS helped deliver COVID-19 support to Senegal and Mozambique. In Senegal, on behalf of the Ministry of Health and Social Action, UNOPS procured emergency vehicles and ambulances with \$3.4 million in funding, and in Mozambique, in partnership with the Ministry of Health and \$2.2 million in funding, UNOPS procured 50 ambulances.

21. In the Philippines, UNOPS is procuring personal protective equipment, medical equipment and supplies; installing waste treatment facilities; and providing public health training, using a \$59 million Asian Development Bank loan provided to the Government.

22. With \$33 million from the Government of Japan, UNOPS procured and transported oxygen concentrators and ventilators to support COVID-19 emergency response efforts for health services under pressure due to the pandemic, on behalf of the Government of India.

23. On behalf of the Government of Tuvalu, UNOPS procured medicines, medical machines and equipment, personal protective equipment and supplies, to strengthen COVID-19 preparedness and prevention funded by a \$1.6 million loan from the World Bank.

24. In Cameroon, with \$3.9 million in funding from The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, UNOPS procured medical equipment for COVID-19 treatment on behalf of the National AIDS Control Committee of the Ministry of Public Health.

25. In Turkmenistan, with \$2.8 million in funding from the Government of Japan, UNOPS is procuring medical equipment and supplies for hospitals and medical centres to help strengthen the healthcare system and pandemic preparedness.

26. In Georgia, UNOPS partnered with UNFPA, UNICEF and the World Health Organization (WHO) to mitigate the disruption of rural area health services caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. As part of a project led by the United Nations country team, UNOPS procured basic equipment and furniture for 200 village health-care facilities as well as equipment used for telemedicine and telecare for 50 remote areas, to support doctors in rural areas in providing quality health services, using \$1.7 million in funding from the European Union.

27. To support health facilities in the West Bank and Gaza with COVID-19 response efforts, UNOPS is procuring medical equipment and vehicles capable of maintaining the low

temperatures needed to transport COVID-19 vaccines, using \$8 million in funding from the Government of Japan.

28. In Argentina, UNOPS continued to support government efforts to respond to COVID-19. Through fast and efficient emergency procurement processes, UNOPS procured 67 modular sanitary units, hospital furniture, medical equipment, and ambulances, to support health-care providers across the country. This included eleven fully-equipped modular emergency health-care provision units, which were installed in four provinces and provided 798 inpatient therapy beds, expanding health system capacity.

29. Awaaz Afghanistan is a collective accountability and community engagement initiative that functions as a toll-free, countrywide hotline number that affected populations can dial to access information and register feedback on assistance programmes. Through this two-way communication channel, needs and priorities reported on the ground are circulated to partners to help improve the quality of programming in Afghanistan. The centre continued operating following the takeover of the country by the de facto authorities in August 2021. By December 2021, the centre had handled over 210,000 calls; over 40 per cent of callers were internally displaced persons and 20 per cent were women. Awaaz is implemented by UNOPS with financial support from the Afghanistan Humanitarian Fund, the European Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection, the World Food Programme, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

30. UNOPS, in coordination with the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and the Ministry of Health, is supporting the emergency response of the Government of North Macedonia to the COVID-19 pandemic. With \$5.2 million in funding from the World Bank, UNOPS is procuring a range of specialist medical equipment, including magnetic resonance imaging machines and computed tomography scanners.

31. As part of shared services provided across the United Nations and on behalf of governments, UNOPS supported the procurement of \$119 million worth of goods (compared to \$102 million in 2020) through 'UN Web Buy Plus'.

32. On behalf of partner organizations, UNOPS managed the contracts of 7,453 people during 2021. Partners supported included UNHCR, UN-Habitat, UNEP, UNICEF, WHO, IOM, and the Global Green Growth Institute.

33. In 2021, 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, including two new programmes, in Niger and Ethiopia, opened in response to escalating need. It provided human resources management, procurement, contracting, grants management, technical and operational support, and financial and legal services. Support to the Department of Peace Operations amounted to \$236 million. Of that, for a total of \$206 million, UNOPS helped its main partner, UNMAS, to deliver a range of results, including:

(a) In Afghanistan, emergency procurement procedures helped the programme respond to the urgent need for abandoned improvised mine clearance training services following the escalation of the humanitarian crisis, which allowed for quick scaling up of removals from schools and communities and enabled crop planting, pasturing, and housing. In November 2021, the programme supported UNHCR in conducting an assessment of planned shelter sites for internally displaced persons. A total of 239,063 square meters of land was surveyed, confirmed safe, and handed over to UNHCR.

(b) In Burkina Faso, the programme, implemented in partnership with civil society, supported the establishment of a national mine action authority to lead and manage mine action response. In collaboration with the Ministry of Security, the programme developed a 40-hour 'counter-IED' training module that was integrated into the curricula of eight training schools for security forces and delivered two two-week training-of-trainers sessions on improvised explosive device awareness, benefiting 57 Burkinabe instructors, six of whom were women.

(c) In Mali, to support national authorities, the programme provided context-specific improvised explosive device threat mitigation and disposal training to Malian

Defense and Security Forces and continued to focus on developing national training capacity. Since the military is traditionally male-dominated it was an enormous milestone to train the first female member of the Forces qualified as an improvised explosive device operator. The team continues to work with the Forces and is encouraging greater female participation.

(d) In Palestine, following the outbreak of violence in May 2021, initial investigations revealed 15 unexploded deep-buried bomb locations in need of excavation and neutralization so as to facilitate humanitarian partners in their emergency response. Several of the sites were located at United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) schools and other United Nations-operated facilities. The programme was able to deploy a female explosive ordnance disposal team consisting of an operator and a paramedic to clear 30 sites, including designated UNRWA emergency shelters, United Nations compounds, schools, and medical centres. The rapid response ensured that all but two UNRWA schools were able to reopen within seven days of the ceasefire, and the United Nations family was able to relocate international personnel and operate from its offices to continue delivering emergency and life-saving humanitarian assistance.

(e) In Sudan, through survey and clearance, the programme established critical humanitarian corridors and ensured the safety of camps and settlements to allow for the safe return of refugees and internally displaced persons and for the delivery of life-saving assistance to those communities. The programme released 2.1 million m<sup>2</sup> of land from explosive hazards and opened 136 km of road. Most of the land released was used productively, such as for farming, grazing, and accessing water points; conditions conducive to sustainable development were restored.

## **B. Effective specialized technical expertise**

34. 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.

35. 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 2021, 64 per cent of UNOPS infrastructure projects reported enabling equal access, 60 per cent enabled equal access for women, and 37 per cent for people with disabilities.

36. In Cambodia, under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator's office and the coordination of WHO, UNOPS supported hospital preparedness assessments in 15 provinces across the country – covering a total of 45 hospitals – as part of the United Nations COVID-19 Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan and in order to support health-care facilities in enhancing service delivery and dealing with infectious diseases.

37. In Jordan, with funding from the United Nations COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund, UNOPS, with UN-Habitat and the International Labour Organization, enhanced socio-economic conditions and created livelihood opportunities for vulnerable women living in Ghor Al Safi through the rehabilitation of a community centre and a safe and green public space.

38. In Niger, UNOPS supported the Millennium Challenge Account-Niger, a \$437 million programme funded by the United States Millennium Challenge Corporation. MCA-Niger is a special entity set up by the Nigerien government to manage the funds, and is supported by UNOPS, which provides technical and administrative assistance for the programme. Set to benefit 4 million people in the regions of Dosso, Maradi, Tahoua and Tillabéri, the five-year programme comprises two projects that seek to reduce poverty and promote economic growth. The Irrigation and Market Access project will rehabilitate and construct new and existing irrigation systems, increasing irrigation capacity to cover 5,000 hectares of land. To create better access to markets, over 300 km of roads will be rehabilitated, while sectoral reforms will help improve land and natural resource management, road maintenance, and the availability of affordable quality fertilizers.

39. UNOPS is helping improve access to water and sanitation facilities in Papua New Guinea to support COVID-19 preparedness and prevention. As part of a €10 million project funded by the European Union, and in partnership with UNICEF, UNOPS will assess existing water and sanitation facilities in the country to help identify service gaps, and will rehabilitate and construct facilities to improve services.

40. The Yemen Emergency Human Capital project – funded by a \$150 million grant from the World Bank and implemented by UNOPS, UNICEF and WHO – aims to increase access to basic health, nutrition, and water and sanitation services while building national and local capacities. In 2021 UNOPS started implementing a \$30 million water, sanitation and health project over two years, and will work to rehabilitate water supply, sanitation and hygiene infrastructure to provide around 850,000 people with access to safer drinking water and improved wastewater collection and treatment services. Training will be provided to local workers so as to ensure that rehabilitated infrastructure is maintained and will continue to benefit local communities in years to come.

41. In 2021, a new binational bridge uniting Costa Rica and Panama was opened to the public. Implemented by UNOPS with \$10 million in funding from the Mexican Agency for International Development Cooperation and \$7.5 million from each of the governments of Costa Rica and Panama, the bridge replaces the 100-year-old former railway bridge that was the only crossing-point between the communities of Sixaola, Costa Rica and Guabito, Panama. The bridge is important for development not only in Costa Rica and Panama, but throughout the wider region, and the construction created jobs for workers on both sides of the border. The money earned from selling materials from the old railway bridge was used to renovate the municipal market in Sixaola.

42. Ongoing violent conflict in the northern Cabo Delgado Province, Mozambique, has displaced hundreds of thousands of people and led to a humanitarian crisis. Almost a million people across the volatile region face severe hunger and recurrent disease outbreaks, including COVID-19. In 2021, to improve access to much-needed basic services and foster longer-term peace and economic development, the Government of Mozambique launched a crisis recovery project in the region through its National Sustainable Development Fund. Funded through a \$98 million grant from the World Bank International Development Association, UNOPS will provide implementation and advisory support to the project – including helping to build or rehabilitate health, education and other key public infrastructure – in collaboration with the Fund, the Agency for Integrated Development of the North, United Nations partners, local authorities, non-governmental organizations and other local stakeholders. Through the project, internally displaced persons, as well as host communities in the region, will benefit from a range of initiatives that will help foster social cohesion – including support to community-based organizations and peacebuilding committees – and, through the provision of social services, to vulnerable individuals and households. The project will provide vital income support and economic opportunities, including cash-for-work programmes for women and youth, support for fishing and agricultural activities, and entrepreneurship and business management training.

43. In partnership with the European Union and the Jordanian Ministry of Health, UNOPS has rehabilitated three public health facilities to better serve communities affected by the crisis in Syria. With over 663,000 registered Syrian refugees in Jordan, demand for its already overextended social services has increased, negatively affecting livelihoods and access to quality public services in host communities. To enable the health sector to meet the increased demand, UNOPS designed and constructed new emergency facilities at all three health facilities and rehabilitated two existing emergency departments. UNOPS delivered necessary medical equipment and provided three fully-equipped ambulances. To enhance sustainability and safety, the facilities were fitted with solar energy, wastewater treatment systems, external solar lights, and solar water heaters.

44. To broaden access to water and sanitation facilities in Papua New Guinea and to support COVID-19 preparedness and prevention, UNOPS is implementing a €10 million project funded by the European Union and in partnership with UNICEF. The water and sanitation facilities in the country will be assessed to identify service gaps, and UNOPS will rehabilitate existing facilities and construct new ones according to the needs identified.

45. In Pakistan, in partnership with the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Elementary and Secondary Education Department and funded by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office of



the United Kingdom and the Saudi Fund for Development, the Pakistan Schools Project came to a close in 2021. The project installed solar plants in 1,240 schools to improve learning conditions with a free, reliable electricity supply for classroom lights and fans in the extreme heat. Approximately 130,000 schoolchildren and 4,000 teachers across Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province benefited from the solar infrastructure.

46. In Albania, the 'EU4Culture' project, funded by the European Union, is implemented by UNOPS in a partnership with the Ministry of Culture. With a budget of €40 million, restoration activities will cover the territory affected by the November 2019 earthquake. The project will increase tourism potential and will directly contribute to the socio-economic recovery of Albania. Local entrepreneurship, artisanship and creative activity evolving around selected sites shall be supported through grants, boosting local production and social well-being. The project will revitalize 27 cultural heritage sites in eight municipalities. To date, it has completed restoration at one site, while restoration is under way in five more.

### **C. Expanding the pool and effect of resources**

47. 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 2021, 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.

48. 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.

49. In 2021, the Sustainable Infrastructure Impact Investments ('S3i') initiative, signed an agreement to invest in a solar park in Rajasthan, India, alongside the Danish Investment Fund for Developing Countries. Once in operation, the 250-megawatt solar power plant will provide clean electricity to approximately 500,000 households. With more than 60 per cent of its energy produced using fossil fuels and the growing population and rapid urbanization of India further increasing electricity demand, the Government has made renewable energy a high priority. Gender considerations have constituted one of the priority areas in supporting local beneficiaries, specifically through job creation for local women at the project site as well as community outreach initiatives on digital literacy, water and sanitation, and maternal health support.

50. UNOPS and the Government of Mexico signed an agreement in 2020 to help maximize efficiency, transparency and effectiveness in the procurement of medicines. On behalf of health institutions throughout 26 federal states, this project helps to provide health coverage for around 65 million people who lack social security. In 2021, UNOPS procured hundreds of millions of doses of medicines and pieces of medical supplies from suppliers in seven countries, diversifying the supplier base and improving value for money for the health institutions receiving the supplies.

51. In 2021, UNOPS signed an agreement with the Government of Honduras to procure much-needed medicines and medical supplies for the Honduran Social Security Institute with \$59 million in funding. UNOPS procured medicines and supplies across the network of health services centres and provided contract management and logistical support during the distribution. UNOPS will help optimize the Institute's supply chain and provide market intelligence and medicine price analysis to ensure maximum value for money. The project will help develop transparent, efficient and sustainable processes that include gender, diversity and inclusion elements. Since 2014, UNOPS and the Institute have signed eight agreements – totalling \$270 million – to help strengthen its supply chain, and supply medicine, medical equipment, haemo-dialysis services, and ambulances.

52. The 'NDC Partnership' brings together 117 developed and developing countries and 84 institutional members to create and deliver on ambitious nationally determined contributions

that help achieve the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals. Through the Partnership, governments identify their implementation priorities and the type of support needed to translate them into actionable policies and programmes. Based on those requests, the membership offers a tailored package of expertise, technical assistance and funding. In 2021, UNOPS began a new partnership with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the World Resources Institute to jointly execute with the latter a new pooled-funding mechanism called the Partnership Action Fund. The governments of Belgium, Germany and Norway are among the first to provide funding through UNOPS, with \$22 million in project agreements signed. Support from the Netherlands and the United Kingdom will amplify the Fund in the first quarter of 2022.

53. At the end of 2021, the Government of Saint Lucia held an event to launch their national infrastructure financing strategy, developed with UNOPS and the University of Oxford to secure adequate resources to meet the growing infrastructure needs of the country and advance its development. Following extensive data collection and cross-ministerial collaboration, the report outlines institutional arrangements, maps historical financing trends, and explores the financing landscape of Saint Lucia. It also evaluates the readiness of 36 national infrastructure projects for financing across several sectors, including energy, water, housing, wastewater and solid waste. This enabled the identification of potential financiers and the development of a strategic infrastructure financing plan. Central to the strategy is the Sustainable Infrastructure Financing Tool developed by UNOPS to assess a country's national infrastructure pipeline so as to identify and prioritize potential sources of financing. The tool and capabilities developed for this study, as well as capacity-building provided in the use of the tool, presents a strong foundation for the Government to establish a legacy of evidence-based infrastructure financing mobilization.

54. Infrastructure is central to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and helping countries deliver on their commitments to the Paris Agreement. In 2021, UNOPS infrastructure experts, with partners from academia and other United Nations organizations, contributed their expertise to the UNEP publication "International Good Practice Principles for Sustainable Infrastructure", which establishes 10 guiding principles to help policymakers integrate sustainability into infrastructure planning, delivery and management.

55. In 2021, UNOPS launched a report entitled "Infrastructure for climate action", co-published with UNEP and the University of Oxford ahead of the 26<sup>th</sup> United Nations Climate Change Conference. Based on comprehensive research, the report calls for radical changes in the way governments plan, design and manage infrastructure to support a low-emission and resilient future. Emphasizing the often-overlooked role infrastructure plays in combating climate change – including mitigation and adaptation efforts – the report looks at the influence of infrastructure on climate action across energy, transport, water, solid waste, digital communications and construction sectors. In a landmark finding, the research reveals that infrastructure is responsible for 79 per cent of all greenhouse gas emissions. The report also finds that infrastructure is responsible for 88 per cent of all adaptation costs. This highlights the critical role infrastructure plays in supporting national development priorities and achieving the targets of the Paris Agreement.

## **V. Management results**

### **A. Delivery and partnerships**

56. UNOPS delivery was over \$3.4 billion in 2021, a strong increase compared to the \$2.2 billion recorded in 2020. This can be attributed primarily to high government demand for UNOPS services and the sizeable delivery on behalf of the Government of Mexico.

57. Direct support to governments accounted for the largest category of delivery value, amounting to almost \$2 billion, compared to \$757 million in 2020. The largest partnership with a host government during 2021 was with Mexico, followed by Guatemala, Argentina, Ethiopia and Honduras. The largest donor government to which UNOPS delivery could be directly attributed was that of the United States, followed by Qatar, Japan, the United Kingdom and Germany, respectively.

58. In 2021, \$582 million of UNOPS delivery was on behalf of the United Nations system, an increase of \$16 million compared to \$567 million in 2020. The largest United Nations partner

continued to be the Secretariat, and the largest segment was again the Department of Peace Operations. Delivery on behalf of UNHCR grew for the ninth consecutive year; other strong partnerships included WHO and UNEP.

59. UNOPS partnerships with international financial institutions increased by 18 per cent, from \$269 million in 2020 to \$319 million in 2021, of which the Islamic Development Bank stood for the largest increase – from \$7 million to \$29 million.

60. UNOPS support to intergovernmental organizations decreased slightly, from \$139 million in 2020 to \$135 million in 2021; the majority of that volume is attributable to the European Commission.

61. UNOPS continued to maintain strong partnerships in support of vertical funds – most significantly the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria – delivering \$149 million of services in 2021, compared to \$168 million in 2020. In addition, UNOPS worked as a local fund agent in 13 countries.

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

63. In 2021, the largest countries or territories of delivery were Mexico, Myanmar, Guatemala, the State of Palestine and Argentina, in that order. In 2020, they were Myanmar, Argentina, Yemen, Somalia and the State of Palestine.

64. New agreements between UNOPS and its partners reached over \$3 billion, compared to \$10 billion the previous year. The large decrease was accounted for by a project supporting pharmaceutical procurement in Mexico, signed in 2020.

65. In 2021, the Executive Director continued to chair the United Nations High-level Committee on Management, helping guide UNOPS efforts to become more efficient and simplify business practices as a contribution to the wider reform agenda.

66. To constantly improve its services, better support its partners and fulfil its mission and vision, UNOPS conducted an online survey in 2021 to solicit feedback from partners across the globe. There was a 92 per cent increase in responses compared to the 2019 survey, with respondents sharing valuable insights that enabled UNOPS to identify areas for improvement. The survey results are helping prioritize and drive improvements in UNOPS services and cooperation with partners, as well as support the development of corporate, regional and country-level action plans for partnership enhancement. The online survey, developed by UNOPS with support from Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu Limited, was returned by 1,288 respondents.

67. In 2021, UNOPS partnered with The New York Times to host a high-level panel session at The New York Times Climate Hub, on the sidelines of the 26th United Nations Climate Change Conference in Glasgow. The session, ‘Tackling the climate crisis: what role for infrastructure?’, brought together a panel of leaders and experts from around the world to discuss ways of building equity and resilience into tomorrow’s infrastructure. The event was attended by policymakers, infrastructure and climate experts, and decision-shapers.

## **B. Process excellence**

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

69. During 2021, the UNOPS ‘Goal Zero’ drive for zero incidents, injuries and illnesses in the workplace continued, and included efforts to improve awareness of health and safety and improve the reporting of incidents and ‘near misses’. Despite the challenges of 2021, close to 8,000 health and safety inspections were conducted across projects.

70. In October 2021, the results of the assessment by the Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network, which represents a group of 19 donor countries, were made available. The review highlighted some of the comparative and collaborative advantages of

UNOPS, including its operating model, technical knowledge in service lines, risk management, competitive fee structure and cost recovery model.

71. 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/2013/3 on the development and implementation of environmental sustainability management systems in each United Nations system.

72. 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).

73. In its decision 2021/20, the Executive Board endorsed the UNOPS strategic plan, 2022-2025 and recognized the contributions UNOPS could make to expand the implementation capacity of countries, based on their respective national priorities and needs to, inter alia, achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. It recognized the three contribution goals of the plan – to support countries in developing their capacity and resource base for the sustainable development goals; help people in need through effective specialized expertise grounded in international norms and standards; and enable our partners through efficient project services, delivered locally or as global shared services.

74. The UNOPS Gender, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, 2022-2025, was developed in the course of 2021 to align with the new strategic plan and build on the successes of the Gender Parity Strategy, 2018-2021. It constitutes a new commitment to help build a more inclusive world that leaves no one behind and focuses on recruitment and outreach; mobility and retention; professional development; inclusive leadership; and standards of conduct. The new focuses will include preventing and addressing discrimination and harassment, including sexual harassment and abuse of power, to safeguard an inclusive work environment.

75. As part of new strategic plan commitments to explore the untapped potential of digitalization, the digital transformation First Steps project was launched in late 2021, with the support of information technology research and Gartner Consulting. It will allow UNOPS to harness digital capabilities and platforms to continually improve partner, employee, and beneficiary outcomes and increase organizational agility. The project will engage with leadership at various levels to understand the UNOPS business model, value proposition and core capabilities that help UNOPS succeed now and in the future. The first steps under way include a digital maturity assessment; the design of a strategy; and the creation of a roadmap and business case to drive the work throughout the strategic plan.

76. By the end of 2021, the implementation rate of internal audit recommendations stood at 97 per cent, an improvement over the already strong implementation rate of 96 per cent recorded at 31 December 2020. There were four long-outstanding internal audit recommendations issued more than 18 months before 31 December 2021 (on or before 30 June 2020). This is to be compared with twelve recommendations outstanding over 18 months at the end of 2020, eight of which have since been closed. Details of UNOPS audit and investigations findings in 2021 are available in a dedicated report (DP/OPS/2022/3).

77. There were 41 incidents of fraud and financial irregularities. Thirty-seven employees were sanctioned in such cases. Twenty-eight vendors and 32 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 IV provides details.

79. Reflecting its role as a consultative, impartial and service-oriented resource, the UNOPS Ethics and Compliance Office handled 1,082 issues from 1 January to 31 December 2021. These are detailed in a dedicated report (DP/OPS/2022/4).

## C. People excellence

80. At the end of 2021, UNOPS personnel totalled 5,362, up from 5,038 in 2020. In addition to UNOPS personnel, contracts were administered on behalf of a range of partners. At the end of 2021, the number of individuals on UNOPS contracts stood at 12,815, an increase from 12,536 in 2020. A breakdown of personnel by contract category is shown in table 2, below.

**Table 2. Number of personnel, by category, as of 31 December 2021**

Contract modality	Staff	Contractors	Total
UNOPS personnel	720*	4,642	5,362
Partner personnel		7,453	7,453
Combined personnel	720	12,095	12,815

\*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. In August 2021, UNOPS achieved gender parity for the first time in the history of the organizations. At the end of 2021, women represented 51 per cent of UNOPS personnel, an increase from 37 per cent since the beginning of the strategic plan. Forty-four per cent of leadership roles (ISC-11 and above) are now held by women, compared to 42 per cent in 2020. A breakdown of gender representation is shown in table 3, below.

82. The 1,303 members of UNOPS personnel recruited in 2021 comprised 793 women and 510 men, meaning that 61 per cent of new hires were women, compared with 59 per cent in 2020 and 57 per cent in 2019. As of 31 December 2021, the primary internal management body of UNOPS consisted of seven members – two women and five men. Five were over the age of 50 and two were in the 30-50 age group.

**Table 3. Gender balance among UNOPS personnel as of 31 December 2021**

Gender	Staff	Local contractors	International contractors	Total
Women	286	1,759	655	2,700
Men	405	1,638	590	2,633
All UNOPS personnel	691	3,397	1,245	5,333

**Table 4. Gender Parity Strategy goal to increase 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, 2021	Total number international women personnel	Total number international personnel	Target	Target date
ICSC 8 (P1 + IICA-1)	66%	117	178	47% - 53%	End 2021*
ICSC 9 (P2 + IICA-1)	57%	161	282	47% - 53%	End 2021*
ICSC 10 (P3 + IICA-2)	47%	325	686	47% - 53%	End 2021*
ICSC 11 (P4 + IICA-3)	44%	163	373	47% - 53%	End 2026
ICSC 12 (P5 + IICA-3 / IICA-4)	42%	54	128	47% - 53%	End 2026
ICSC 13 (P6 + D1 + IICA-4)	54%	20	37	47% - 53%	End 2026
ICSC 14 (D2 + IICA-4 / IICA-5)	35%	7	20	47% - 53%	End 2026

\*As UNOPS did not meet the target set in its 2018-2021 Gender Parity Strategy, the target dates for P1, P2 and P3 grades were extended to 2026.

**Table 5. Gender parity strategy goal for 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
51%	2,700	5,333	47% - 53%	End 2020

**Table 6. Gender parity strategy goal for achieving targets established by the United Nations system-wide strategy**

Level	Percentage of women (31 Dec. 2021)	Total women international staff	Total international staff	Target	Target date
P1	80%	4	5	47% - 53%	End 2021*
P2	42%	20	48	47% - 53%	End 2021*
P3	39%	63	160	47% - 53%	End 2021*
P4	45%	53	118	47% - 53%	End 2026
P5	36%	27	74	47% - 53%	End 2026
P6, D1	51%	18	35	47% - 53%	End 2026
D2	37%	7	19	47% - 53%	End 2026

\*\*As UNOPS did not meet the target set in its 2018-2021 Gender Parity Strategy, the target dates for P1, P2 and P3 grades were extended to 2026.

83. All full-time UNOPS personnel are entitled to parental leave and, during 2021, 106 women and 196 men exercised that right. Ninety-seven per cent of women and 100 per cent of men ending their leave in 2021 returned to their positions.

84. In order to take stock of and learn lessons from UNOPS experiences of working remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic, a 'Future of Work' task force was set up in 2021 to identify new solutions and future ways of working that facilitate the 'new normal' of hybrid teams so that they remain inclusive, collaborative, and effective.

85. There was a 22 per cent turnover of UNOPS personnel in 2021, up from 16 per cent in 2020 and compared to 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 2021**

Age category	Women	Men	Total
30 and under	12%	15%	13%
30 to 50	18%	24%	21%
50 and above	25%	38%	33%
All UNOPS personnel	18%	26%	22%

86. In 2021, 5,565 colleagues (compared to 5,200 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; 51 per cent were female and 49 per cent male.

87. A new partnership signed in 2021 between UNOPS and RedR Australia will harness the expertise of both organizations to strengthen crisis response efforts and bolster sustainable development initiatives towards the 2030 Agenda. Under the five-year agreement, UNOPS will work with RedR Australia to mobilize personnel in a broad range of fields complementing UNOPS technical expertise. The agreement will further enhance the capacity of UNOPS to support vulnerable communities.

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## D. Financial stewardship

88. UNOPS delivered more than \$3.4 billion in project services, compared to \$2.2 billion in 2020. Net revenue from project activities was \$139.7 million, compared to \$109 million in 2020. This generated an average fee of 4.1 per cent, compared to 4.9 per cent in 2020, continuing the overall downward trend in recent years. Management expenses were \$74.7 million, compared to \$83 million a year earlier.

89. The surplus from operations was \$63.5 million (against \$28.5 million in 2020). Net finance income amounted to \$26.8 million (as opposed to \$11 million in 2020). Overall, the net surplus for the period was \$90.4 million (compared to \$39.5 million in 2020). This contributed to total net assets/equity of \$360.4 million at the end of 2021.

90. In 2021, the Executive Board approved a change of the minimum requirement for the UNOPS operational reserve, which will be reported annually in the financial statements (decision 2021/21). The minimum requirement for the operational reserve of UNOPS was adapted to provide better protection to UNOPS as a self-financing United Nations entity, in line with the risks faced by the organization. At the end of 2021, the reserve amounted to \$138.8 million.

91. In its decision 2022/4, the Executive Board approved the establishment and initial level of the S3i reserve to be set at \$105 million, of which UNOPS has invested \$63 million into S3i projects. This is complemented by a growth and innovation reserve established in 2019, with the value set at 50 per cent of the excess operational reserve. At the end of 2021, it stood at \$58.6 million.

92. The expenses, revenue and reserve balance for 2021 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.

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