BUSINESS INNOVATIONS GROUP | BIG

Advancing Common Business Operations

UPDATE 2 *5 November 2018*

This email update is sent from the Business Innovations Group (BIG) Project Team lead to the member entities' designated representatives to BIG, and is intended to provide an update on the work of the BIG Project Team.

The team itself is now made up of five full-time members as well as a dedicated data management team, with additional staff still to come, and some progress is being made across all six areas of focus, as outlined below. A brief description of the work of the Project Team is attached.

Business Operations Strategy

The target set for this objective is for every country team to have a Business Operations Strategy in place by 2021. To enable the remaining country teams (some 82) to undertake this exercise, the Project Team is working with DOCO and organizational focal points to review and revise the BOS guidelines. The goal is to simplify the process and focus on the areas in which data from completed Strategies has demonstrated real efficiency gains. Further simplification will come from less focus on process and documentation and more on results. We expect to deliver new guidelines early in 2019.

Common Back Office

Discussions have commenced on how a common back office should be structured, governed and funded, and preliminary broad business models are being considered. The Project Team will keep the full BIG informed as progress is made.

Global Shared Services

The Project Team is currently documenting the various models for global service centres within the UN. This includes defining a common costing methodology and governance structure for back office functions to allow organizational costs to be meaningfully compared. We plan to provide regular updates to the full BIG and are working to finalize a date for a meeting, hopefully to take place before the end of this year.

Common Premises

The Project Team is supporting the Task Team on Common Premises with data analysis and clean-up efforts as data quality remains a challenge. The expectation is that efforts will now focus on country level data validation. Importantly, the strategic focus of efforts to achieve the Secretary-General's target of 50% common premises by 2021 cannot be solely on establishing a "UN House" in national capitals. Common premises are currently defined as when more than one UN organisation is sharing a building at the national or subnational level, as well as regional and representative centers. While not losing sight of the broader efforts, the key to meeting the target will be consolidation of smaller offices into fewer premises at all levels.

Mutual Recognition Statement

Most significantly, a Mutual Recognition Statement has been agreed amongst the four plus one group (UNDP, UNICEF, UNHCR, WFP, and UNFPA) and the International Labour Organization. The Mutual Recognition Statement represents a broad consensus on adopting common or shared services, without requiring a review of the providers' policies and procedures. This allows agencies to focus on the details of a service level agreement or other mechanism governing the service delivery.

The Mutual Recognition Statement is an important enabling tool, greatly simplifying discussions related to common and shared services. We attach the document for your consideration, and following the "opt in" principle outlined by the Secretary-General, endorsing organizations present will sign it on the margins of this week's UNSDG meeting. We encourage all other United Nations organizations to adopt the statement to maximise the impact and benefits of this initiative.

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Client Satisfaction

The Project Team is currently gathering information from various organizations on the systems in place for monitoring and reporting on client satisfaction. The expectation is that the Project Team will define at least minimum standards, based on best practice, that service providers should follow. This will include objective measures related to key performance indicators as well as subjective measures, allowing clients to provide direct and real-time feedback on the quality of the service received. This too is a key enabler of the structural and cultural shifts required to move forward, in particular, with the common back office concept.

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Business Operations Strategy	Common Back Offices	Global Shared Service Centres	Common Premises	Mutual Recognition	Client Satisfaction Principles	Costing & Pricing Principles

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