

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Executive Summary complements the BOS 2019 guidance and targets Resident Coordinators, UNCT members, and OMT Chairs to support their oversight, advocacy of BOS, in addition to meeting their obligations for BOS as set down by the UN Secretary-General.

In December 2017 the UN Secretary-General (SG) issued a proposal to reposition the United Nations Development System. For business operations the SG included a requirement for all UNCTs to comply with an improved Business Operations Strategies (BOS) by 2021.

The BOS is a results-based framework that focuses on joint business operations with the purpose of eliminating duplication, leveraging the common bargaining power of the UN and maximizing economies of scale. It is facilitated by the principle of mutual recognition and it constitutes a reliable evidence-based foundation for the establishment of common back offices.

The BOS is focused and structured around six common service lines: finance, human resource management, procurement, logistics, information and communications technology and administration including facilities management. It focuses on common services that are developed jointly or delivered by one UN entity on behalf of one or more other UN entities. It does not include or replace individual agency operations plans.

The impact of UN programmes at the country level is directly related to the effectiveness, efficiency and cost of the operations that support them. In support of UNSDCF implementation and in recognition of country diversity, BOS recommends minimum levels of cooperation in line with a country typology.

The new iteration of BOS is backed by an online platform that guides OMTs through the five steps of the BOS development: kick-off, stock take of current collaborative services, analysis of opportunities, planning and sign-off. The platform is pre-loaded with standard data sets from previously developed strategies and facilitates the cost benefit analysis for a more streamlined approach to prioritisation.

The BOS integrates a regular monitoring and annual reviewing requirement, which is also automated through the online platform. The OMT is required to monitor and report on progress made towards the annual targets as well as reviewing and updating them. Annual reporting with the conclusions drawn from the monitoring of annual targets and input from the OMT working groups is presented by the Resident Coordinator.

The success of the BOS rests on the consultative and collaborative interaction between the RC and the UNCT. The RC is accountable for advances towards UN common business operations to enable joint work and generate greater efficiencies, synergies and coherence. The UNCT provides overall oversight of the BOS process, approval and release of necessary agency and joint resources, endorsement of the final BOS and annual reporting. Two key elements are essential for a successful development and implementation of a BOS: the leadership of the RC and the active engagement by UN entities (both resident and non-resident) through assignment of relevant human resources and common services budgets managed by the OMT.

In order to support UNCTs with the BOS, a BOS Task Team supported by DCO, was established to provide guidance, support and quality assurance as well as identify, fine-tune, and share best practices within the common service lines.