

UNITED NATIONS COUNTRY TEAM IN ETHIOPIA**Terms of Reference
Operations Management Team (OMT)**

Last update: March 2013

This Terms of Reference (ToR) outlines the purpose, mandate, membership structure and working methods of the Operations Management Team (OMT), particularly within the context of Delivering as One (DaO).

1. Purpose

Working under the overall supervision and guidance of the United Nations Country Team (UNCT), the Operations Management Team (OMT) brings together UN organizations, specialized agencies, funds and programmes in Ethiopia¹. The OMT aims to provide the UNCT with recommendations on common services and business-related issues, while identifying opportunities for collaboration and innovation to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of UN's programmatic work in Ethiopia. Specific tasks in this regard include:

- Plan for and propose new common services through operational analyses such as feasibility studies and cost-benefit analyses.
- Monitor and evaluate existing common services and identify areas where these services can be improved and costs reduced.
- In accordance with international best practices, provide UNCT with guidance on harmonization and simplification of agency rules, regulations and operations activities, while promoting openness and transparency,
- Implement planned common services and other relevant activities with a lead agency spearheading each activity and ensuring that the necessary procurement and other contractual arrangements are in place.
- Prepare a strategic Business Operations Strategy (BoS), ensure BoS responds to programmatic needs set by UNDAF, translate BoS into annual work plans for monitoring and implementation, and formulate the proposed common services budget.
- Work with the Inter-Agency Programming Team (IAPT) to identify programmatic needs in line with the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and address implementation challenges through innovative inter-agency support.

2. Membership

OMT is an inclusive forum and founded on the principles of commitment and active participation. It shall be composed of the senior operations managers and administrative officers of UN organizations, agencies, programmes and funds in Ethiopia. Each participating UN agencies is requested to designate a primary and an alternate member to ensure that their organization is represented at all times in OMT meetings.

All OMT members, primary or alternate, must hold fixed-term contracts and have work for their respective agencies at least for a year, preferably in Ethiopia. The appointment of each OMT member must be approved and endorsed by the respective Head of Agency (HoA). Attendance of other UN staff to meetings on ad-hoc basis shall be communicated in advance to the OMT Chairpersons, and may require OMT approval.

3. Governance

OMT members are expected to abide by the UN staff rules and regulations, and demonstrate a professional and committed attitude at all times. Accordingly, members are urged to maintain a "One UN" approach and respect others' contributions.

a. OMT Meetings

The OMT shall meet at least 9 times a year, preferably on monthly basis. To ensure timely reporting to the UNCT, it is recommended that the meetings are held on the third Wednesday of the month. OMT-member agencies shall take turns in hosting the OMT meetings.

¹ Hereafter, the term "UN agencies" will be used in this document to refer to the UN organizations, funds, programmes and specialized agencies.

The draft agenda for each meeting shall be circulated with relevant background documents to the OMT before the meeting. OMT members are requested to review the agenda and suggest any additional topic they would like to discuss at the meeting. Standing agenda items for all OMT meetings shall be the following: (1) Review Minutes and Action items from the prior meeting; (2) Feedback from UNCT on standing issues; and (3) Review OMT Work plan and progress to-date.

Moreover, an annual OMT Retreat shall be held at the beginning of each year to review progress and challenges and finalize the work plan and budget for the year. These work plans and budgets will be submitted to UNCT for endorsement.

To ensure easy and efficient correspondence, an OMT e-mail distribution list is maintained (omt.et@one.un.org), including all primary and alternate OMT members as well as the UN Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO). Any adjustments to this e-mail list shall only be authorized by the OMT Chairpersons and RCO. Issues requiring an urgent OMT decision and/or endorsement may also be discussed and concluded over the e-mail list.

b. OMT Chairpersons

The OMT shall nominate a Chairperson and two Co-Chairpersons for the year at each OMT Retreat. These nominations are subjected to the review and approval of the UNCT. These positions shall be held for a year on a rotational basis.

The OMT Chairpersons shall provide leadership and guidance in the fields of common services and common premises, and other relevant operations issues to ensure sufficient, high-quality, cost-effective and timely support to UN's programmatic activities.

More specifically, the OMT Chairperson shall be tasked with the following:

- Take the lead in organizing, moderating and following up on OMT meetings,
- Ensure that the OMT drafts and implements a comprehensive, results-based and measurable Business Operations Strategy (BOS) and monitoring framework, and an associated annual work plan and budget,
- Facilitate creation of new common services, and proper monitoring and strengthening of existing common business operations, and
- Attend UNCT meetings to report progress achieved, implementation challenges, decisions taken, and proposed plans and activities.

To support the OMT Chairperson in coordinating the work of the OMT, there shall be two OMT Co-Chairpersons, who will assume the following duties and responsibilities. Each of these should be clearly assigned to an OMT Co-Chairperson, and work should be divided between two Co-Chairpersons equally at the beginning of their term.

- Taking the lead in strategic planning activities including drafting and monitoring of the Business Operations Strategy (BoS), annual work plans and budgets.
- Taking the lead in reporting activities.
- Helping OMT Chairperson with coordination of OMT meetings and daily activities, including taking the lead in preparation of relevant documents, presentations and meeting minutes.

Moreover, the duty of coordinating with each OMT Working Group shall be assigned to an OMT Co-Chairperson at the beginning of their term. This will include reporting to OMT on OMT Working Group meetings and activities in collaboration with OMT Working Group Chairpersons, and overseeing the work of lead agencies to ensure the completion of the annual work plan outcomes assigned to the Working Group.

OMT Co-Chairpersons and/or other OMT members shall be appointed by the OMT based on expertise to represent OMT at UNCT working groups including Inter-Agency Programming Team (IAPT), UN Communications Group (UNCG) and Monitoring and Evaluation Technical Working Group (M&E TWG). These individuals will be responsible for attending the monthly meetings of these groups to discuss programme needs, support provided through common services, relevant OMT activities and work plans, and report back to the OMT on progress achieved, implementation challenges, decisions taken, and proposed plans and activities.

c. OMT Work Planning

At the end of each year, the OMT shall draft a detailed work plan for the upcoming year, outlining specific priority areas, proposed working groups, outcomes, outputs, activities, and lead agencies, indicators, baselines and targets for each

activity. For planning purposes, this work plan shall also be broken down into a budget and quarterly list of planned major activities. An OMT Co-Chairperson shall take the lead in coordinating this effort, together with the OMT Working Groups. After finalized by the OMT, the draft OMT work plan, budget and activity list will be submitted to UN Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO) for UNCT review, approval and consideration for funding.

OMT annual work plans must reflect and plan to achieve priorities, outcomes and outputs outlined in the results-based Business Operations Strategy (BoS). At the end of each year, progress towards the BoS shall be reviewed by the OMT. Three months before the end of each BoS cycle, an OMT Co-Chairperson shall take the lead in coordinating the effort to draft a new BoS.

d. Decision Making

Consensus is the preferred method of making decisions in the OMT. However, in the event that this cannot be achieved, the OMT Chairpersons may put an issue to vote, for which simple majority is required. During voting, even if there are more than one staff member representing an agency, each represented UN agency shall have only a single vote. Issues that cannot be resolved by the OMT shall be referred to the Resident Coordinator (RC).

e. Reporting and Documentation

Whenever it convenes, the OMT shall maintain official minutes of the meetings including discussions on key issues leading to decisions and action points. An OMT Co-Chairperson shall be responsible for ensuring that draft OMT meeting minutes are prepared and circulated for comments in a timely manner after each meeting. Based on the comments provided by the OMT, meeting minutes shall be finalized and submitted to UNCT. The UN Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO) will provide administrative and secretariat support to the OMT.

Meeting minutes shall specifically spell out decisions taken and action points assigned at each meeting, including a clear timeline and focal point (agency) for each.

RCO shall take the lead in addressing UN corporate reporting requirements, such as RC's Annual Report and donor reports, in consultation with OMT Chairpersons.

RCO shall also maintain a repository of OMT documentation for knowledge management and audit purposes. OMT Chairpersons and OMT Working Group Chairpersons shall be responsible for keeping a detailed file for each relevant activity, and providing RCO with these files for the official record. For convenience and transparency, all relevant files shall be placed on an inter-agency online knowledge management platform.

An Annual OMT Report shall be prepared at the end of the year, summarizing accomplishments, implementation challenges, activities, pending issues, lessons learned, best practices and strategic plans on common services.

f. OMT Working Groups

At the beginning of each year, the OMT shall set up Working Groups to accomplish all the activities and tasks in order to implement its work plan. Therefore, these working groups will represent the priorities set in the annual work plan.

Each working group shall be led by a Chairperson, responsible for planning and coordinating activities assigned to that priority area of the work plan, and at least a Co-Chairperson, mainly tasked with organizing meetings at least every two months within the premises of a member agency, and reporting to the OMT Co-Chairpersons in the form of monthly status reports and meeting notes.

Primary and alternate OMT members of agencies shall ensure the membership of relevant managers and technical experts of agencies such as procurement, human resources and ICT officers to OMT Working Groups, ensuring that each outcome, output and activity assigned to each working group is lead by a relevant and competent working group as well as agency. Accordingly, lead agencies shall work to coordinate and implement assigned tasks using the resources allocated by the budget.

The OMT may decide to hire technical experts as consultants to help with implementation of relevant activities. The tasks and responsibilities assigned to each consultant should be detailed in the respective Terms of Reference.

g. Resources

In order to fulfil its duties and responsibilities, the OMT shall approach UNCT through RCO for the allocation of required resources and funding. These include meeting space, equipment, consultancy services and technical expertise required. In accordance with DaO, the OMT budget shall be a part of the RC's budget, and may be covered by core funding and/or agency cost-share. Work plan activities that are only applicable to certain agencies shall be settled separately by participating agencies. As the administrative agent, UNDP will be requested through the RCO to process payments and procure consultancy services, as required.

