



Background

One of the commitments under the “**Reduce duplication and management costs**” **Grand Bargain** workstream is to “*reduce duplication of managements and other costs through maximising efficiencies in procurement and logistics for commonly required goods and services*”. **UNHCR**, co-convenor of the workstream is working with **WFP** to deliver on this commitment. When the UN family spends annually USD 18 billion in procurement of goods and services, the savings it generates could amount to hundreds of millions. UNHCR and WFP are leveraging this UN reform opportunity to deliver on the BIG targets.



What is BIG?



In the context of the Secretary-General’s commitment to reforming the business practices of the United Nations, one of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals’ Results Group, the **Business Innovation Group (BIG)**, has been tasked with achieving greater effectiveness and efficiency by harmonizing back-office functions, expanding common premises and mutually recognizing policies across different UN agencies and organizations. The **High Commissioner for UNHCR** and the **Executive Director of WFP** co-chair the group.

In the fall of 2018, the **BIG** established a dedicated **inter-agency Project Team** made up of staff from UNHCR, UNICEF, UNDP and WFP to design and pilot methodologies to deliver the Secretary-General’s targets set by his December 2017 report (A/72/684). The **BIG targets and enablers** interconnect and provide the framework and performance requirements that involved partners attempt to achieve in **advancing common business operations**.



In particular, the enablers aim at providing the foundation to create a field of transparency and accountability for service providers and recipients, the building blocks for **enhanced programme delivery under the SDGs**.

Targets

Enablers

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Business Operations Strategy (BOS)	Common Back Offices (CBO)	Global Shared Service Centre (GSSC)	Common Premises	Mutual Recognition Statement	Customer Satisfaction Principles	Costing and Pricing Principles
<i>Adopt improved Business Operations Strategy by all UN country teams by 2021</i>	<i>Establish common back offices for all UN country teams by 2022</i>	<i>Explore consolidation of location-independent business operations into a network of shared service centres</i>	<i>Increase the proportion of UN common premises to 50 per cent by 2021</i>	<i>Operate with the mutual recognition of best practices regarding policies and procedures</i>	<i>Measure client satisfaction with regard to all back-office services</i>	<i>Agree pricing principles to ensure fairness and transparency in service provision</i>



1 Business Operations Strategy (BOS)

Current progress: Jointly with the Development Coordination Office (DCO) and supported by the inter-agency BOS Working Group, the BIG Project Team revised the **BOS guidelines**, focusing on functions with high efficiency gain potential and aiming at reducing time and complexity to undertake the BOS, from 27 weeks to 8-16 weeks. A new **online BOS tool**, with ability to track progress and measure impact, was piloted for one month, in seven countries: **Bhutan, Honduras, Indonesia, Papua and New Guinea, Senegal, Serbia and Sri Lanka**.

Next steps: The refined guidelines and online tool are expected to be rolled-out by 2020.



2 Common Back Offices (CBO)

Current progress: The BIG Project Team developed a **cost benefit analysis model** and commenced **consultations** with UN entities in six selected countries - **Albania, Botswana, Jordan, Laos, Senegal and Vietnam** – to understand costs by each function and activity across all entities. **Data** was collected during field visits, which took place from June to August, after which time the BIG Project team will work with UN entities to discuss the consolidated results.

Next steps: Possible ways forward to develop a CBO will be jointly identified and proposed by the end of 2019.



3 Global Shared Service Centre (GSSC)

Current progress: The BIG Project Team developed and launched in July, through the High-Level Committee on Management (HLCM) Secretariat, a “**UN Services Marketplace Survey**” to map existing service needs as well as potential service offerings between UN entities.

Next steps: Findings will be analysed to develop a UN Marketplace to help identify and support the exchange of location-independent activities.



4 Common Premises

Current progress: The Task Team on Common Premises and Facilities Service (TTCP+FS) and BIG Project Team are piloting the **common premises concept** in Kosovo. With a whole-country approach the aim of the pilot exercise, among others, is to jointly review opportunities in both the capital city and subnational offices and propose consolidation options.

Next steps: Engagement with the first pilot country, Kosovo, began in June 2019 and this is to be followed by further rollout in the Q4 2019 and continuing in 2020 and beyond.



5 Mutual Recognition Statement

Current progress: To date, 16 entities have signed the **high-level Mutual Recognition statement: the UN Secretariat, FAO, ILO, IOM, ITU, UN Women, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNOPS, UNRWA, WFP and WHO**.

Next steps: During the design of back office configurations, the agreed principles will be further operationalized, whether at country or regional and global levels.



6 Customer Satisfaction Principles

Current progress: The BIG Project Team finalized the **principles**, with a view to ensuring tracking of service indicators, transparency, accountability and satisfaction for both the service provider and client.

Next steps: Signatory process will be facilitated by the HLCM Secretariat.



7 Costing and Pricing Principles

Current progress: The BIG Project Team developed the **principles**, which are being finalized by all BIG members.

Next steps: Signatory process will be facilitated by the HLCM Secretariat.

