

Terms of Reference for the Joint Working Group of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF, UN-Women Executive Boards

1. Background

This Joint Working Group is established following the decisions adopted by the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS (Decision 2024/12, paragraph 15), UNICEF (Decision 2024/15, paragraph 15), and UN-Women (Decision 2024/3, paragraph 14) to enhance governance, oversight, and risk management across the participating Executive Boards.

2. Purpose

The purpose of the Joint Working Group is to study and report on the recommendations contained in the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) report (JIU/REP/2023/7) and to develop actionable strategies for their implementation, where appropriate and necessary, in order to facilitate improved governance and oversight within the participating Executive Boards.

3. Membership and Meetings

The adopted decisions state that the membership of the Joint Working Group will consist of up to 15 members and observers from the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF, and UN-Women, with equal representation from the five regional groups, to be confirmed by the participating boards through a silence procedure, ahead of the First Regular Session 2025.

The Joint Working Group shall be formed for an initial period of 24 months that may be extended.

The first meeting of the Joint Working Group will be called by the President of the Executive Board of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS no later than 1 March 2025. At its first meeting, the Joint Working Group will elect two co-chairs, one from a developed country and one from a developing country. The President of the Executive Board of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS will chair the first meeting up until the election of the co-chairs of the Joint Working Group. Subsequent meetings will be called by the co-chairs and take place at least once every two months. Regular updates and transparent reporting for the broader membership will be ensured after each meeting by the co-chairs or as delegated by the co-chairs.

The Secretariats of the Executive Boards will collaborate to provide information and joint support services when and as requested by the Joint Working Group to further its work.

4. Functions and Deliverables

The Joint Working Group will:

- Develop its own working methods and establish a roadmap with clear timelines and milestones, to be shared with the Executive Boards by 1 May 2025.
- Conduct a thorough review of the recommendations and relevant benchmarks contained in the JIU report (JIU/REP/2023/7).
- Be able to request further information from senior management of the entities and independent offices.
- Develop actionable strategies for the implementation of the recommendations, where appropriate and necessary.
- Provide updates on progress at every session of the Board, under the agenda item entitled “Update on the Assessment of How the Executive Board Executes its Governance and Oversight Functions” for the Executive Boards’ independent consideration or action.
- Upon conclusion of its activities, the Joint Working Group will issue a comprehensive report for the Executive Boards’ independent consideration or action.
- Should any issues arise in the Joint Working Group's proceedings, the Joint Working Group will promptly inform the Bureaux of the Executive Boards and seek guidance.