PORTFOLIO DOCUMENT
UNDP Maldives

Project Title: Integrated Governance Programme III (IGP III)
Project ID:
Implementing Partner: UNDP

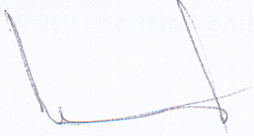| **Start Date:** 1 April 2022	**End Date:** 1 April 2027	**PAC Meeting Date:** 23 March 2022

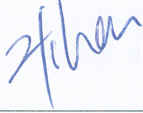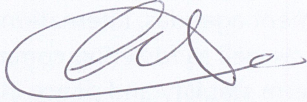| Brief Description |
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| Through the two consecutive Integrated Governance Programme cycles, UNDP has provided, to date, sustained support towards consolidating democracy in the Maldives. This includes dedicated technical support to independent institutions, efforts to reform judiciary, legal and justice sector, support towards creating an independent and empowered civil society and media, formative and sustained support to decentralisation and local governance, and support to advancing the country's efforts towards women's empowerment and gender equality. The partnership has been focused on institutional and human resources capacity development in line with the global development agendas, international standards and good practise, promotion of coordination and dialogue as well as fostering community awareness and participation with the aim of contributing to long term stability and peace in the Maldives. |
| In view of the existing challenges and opportunities, brought to light also by the COVID-19 pandemic, UNDP Maldives proposes the Integrated Governance Programme Phase III described herein, to consolidate its ongoing support to democratic governance and maintain its relevance in a rapidly evolving socio-political and economic context. |
| The underlying theory of change is that creating an enabling environment for citizens' engagement in a decentralised manner, by harnessing the power of citizen-led open democracy, digital transformation, and anticipatory governance, while enhancing independence, transparency, and accountability of the governance and justice system, will lead to democratic, sustainable, and meaningful human development for the people of Maldives. |

Contributing Outcome (UNCF and CPD):	**Total Resources Required (USD)**		**7,850,000**
UNDP OUTCOME #3 (UNSDCF OUTCOME #4): By 2026, Maldives has strengthened decentralized and accountable governance under the rule of law where people are empowered, meaningfully participate in transparent and transformative processes for public policy and fully enjoy access to justice, public services, human rights, gender equality and women's empowerment in a tolerant and peaceful society.	**Funded (USD)**	TRAC	100,000
		Donor	
		Government	
		In-kind	
RELATED UNDP STRATEGIC PLAN OUTCOME: #1 – Structural Transformations; #2 – Leaving no-one behind			
Programme Priority 3: Anticipatory and accountable governance for and by the people			
Indicative Output with Gender Marker: GEN2			
	Unfunded (USD)		7,750,000

Agreed by (signatures):

Attorney General's Office	Ministry of Gender, Family and Social Services
Ibrahim Riffath, Attorney General	Aisha Mohamed Didi, Minister
23 March 2022	23 March 2022

Local Government Authority	UNDP
Afshan Latheef, CEO	Enrico Gaveglia, Resident Representative
23 March 2022	23 March 2022

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I. DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGE

Over a decade ago, Maldives began a journey of democratisation backdropped by political turbulence, increased populism, low tolerance of expressed differences, political polarization, emerging conservatism and extremism and declining trust in governance institutions including the judiciary and the government.

However, following the election of the new administration in 2018, and the parliamentary elections of April 2019, Maldives has demonstrated a marked shift towards greater openness and participatory policy making. This governance transition has been multi-pronged, covering (i) the strengthening of integrity and anti-corruption and related oversight and accountability institutions; (ii) the reform of the legal and justice system, including transitional justice; (iii) the enhancement of local governance and decentralization. The relative political stability being enjoyed currently, though still with vast room for improvement, creates an opportunity for democratic consolidation.

There has been deliberate and conscious commitment to decentralisation and devolution of powers with an emphasis on the promotion of people's engagement and participation in development planning and public life; efforts to build effective and accountable institutions; expansion of the human rights based national protection systems to ensure human rights for all; commitments towards ending gender-based discrimination and disempowerment of women, systems , empowering the growing young population and civil society as agents of change, and the recognition of the need to enhance social cohesion by addressing growing intolerance, radicalization and social exclusion of marginalized groups. The ongoing efforts for an improved justice framework which would guarantee improved confidence and access to justice for all is critical to the transformative, inclusive socioeconomic development the country is seeking.

The National Strategic Action Plan 2019-2023, and the subsequent COVID-19 adjusted National Recovery and Resilience Plan 2021-2023 of the government has outlined progressive policies that incorporate democratic approaches for good governance, by upholding fundamental human rights and ensuring accountability of state and government institutions. With the growing political will in ensuring access to justice for all, notwithstanding the fragile nature of the political climate in the country, it is an opportune and enabling avenue to galvanize efforts on consolidating democracy and bridging the state-citizen gap in the country.

The upcoming Presidential elections in 2023, and the country's commitment to the 2030 Agenda, presents significant opportunities for broader political maturing and agile, strategic policy decisions to 'build back better' with sustainable and meaningful development.

Post-COVID-19 context

COVID-19 has exacerbated pre-pandemic inequalities and vulnerabilities in the Maldives across in socio-economic domains. Marginalised and vulnerable groups including women, youth, the elderly, migrant workers and persons with disabilities have shared the brunt of

unequal access to health care and education; have been left out of social safety nets; experienced disproportionate impact to jobs and livelihoods; and women have been exposed to greater levels of violence, as well as shouldering increasing burdens of unpaid care-work. They are also the groups at greatest risk from climate change and its impacts, such as food security and access to clean water. At the same time, social cohesion has been further strained, and violent extremism is on the rise.1

The pandemic has been not only a health and socio-economic crisis but a governance crisis as well. The pervasive weakness of disaggregated data and the capacity gaps of local governance in islands contribute to the inequality of service delivery and the failure to reach those furthest behind. The COVID-19 crisis has highlighted the need for significant support and investments on digital transformation and effective digital governance across all areas, particularly to ensure the continuity and delivery of core government functions and public services. While digitalisation promises to be a critical driver of better access to services for those outside Male, the roll-out of e-governance remains at an early stage.2

Emerging Governance Challenges

Leading up to this ProDoc development, extensive consultations were undertaken and key observations and challenges, related to governance, were mapped by national partners, namely the Local Government Authority, the Justice sector partners and the Judiciary, as well as civil society actors which also in parallel contributed to the UNDP CPD and the UN Cooperation Framework.

Key findings from these consultations denote that:

1. **The democratic culture in the Maldives is still fragile.** Notwithstanding recent advances, the political culture is still disconnected from citizens. Channels for citizens to raise their voices remain limited, and mechanisms are not yet in place that would enable citizens to feel that they have a real say in government policies. Polarisation remains high, and citizens are disconnected both from government and from one another.

2. **Decentralisation remains key to address the inequalities** in both facilitating voice and representation, and also in enduring efficient and effective access to services outside Male'.

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1 United Nations in Maldives, 'Covid-19 Socioeconomic Response and Recovery Framework' (2000) <https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-08/MDV_Socioeconomic-Response-Plan_2020.pdf>.

2 The World Bank, 'Maldives Development Update: A Digital Dawn' (2021) <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/93bdbd79b45eeb504743f4514f1095e1-0310062021/original/April-2021-Maldives-Development-Update.pdf>.

3. **Civic education and civil society development is critical** to foster the emergence of a broad and sustainable range of CSOs on different development issues, including on human rights, transparency and accountability.

4. **Access to justice for women and vulnerable groups must be accelerated.** Despite the ambitious justice and legal reform agenda of the current administration, there are still significant gaps in ensuring quality and timely access to justice for the most vulnerable and marginalised segments of the society.

5. With **pervasive gender gaps** across all elements of development, gender needs to be specifically addressed, and strongly mainstreamed across all interventions.

6. **Social cohesion needs to be central to governance reform**, through concerted efforts to prevent violent extremism, addressing increasing polarisation, misinformation, hate speech, intolerance etc. especially by means of engaging youth and women with a Do No Harm approach.

7. **Leveraging data and digitalisation as key enablers to progress**. The lack of disaggregated data remains a key systemic barrier to effective governance in the Maldives, impeding effective targeting of the groups being left behind and preventing the emergence of an evidence-based culture of dialogue on development policies; while digitalisation offers the promise of bringing e-governance services within reach of all communities in Maldives. The government has a strong commitment to progress on both data and digitalisation although the policy and institutional frameworks around this is particularly weak at the moment.

8. **The private sector needs to be engaged as an actor for development**, including through raising awareness around business and human rights, and strengthening business integrity to address corruption risks.

These themes are explored in further detail below;

a. *Access to Justice, Rule of Law and Human Rights*
In response to address long-standing concerns related to ensuring fundamental human rights, the government embarked on an ambitious Legislative Agenda for 2019-2023. Of more than 200 laws that were identified to be amended or enacted, key legislature included the Act on Presidential Commissions, Legal Professions Act, amendments to the Decentralization Act, amendments to the Gender Equality Law, Whistle Blower Protection Act, Juvenile Justice Act, Child Rights Protection Act and Second Amendment to the Prevention of Terrorism Act. Additionally, the Criminal Procedure Act, the Act repealing the Defamation Act, the Transitional Justice Act, and the Maldives Police Service Act are significant laws recently adopted.

The Judiciary, in particular, had been tainted with decades old allegations of corruption, political influence and inefficiency. The current Government's vision is to establish an

independent judiciary that is accountable, accessible to the public, upholds fundamental freedoms and serves justice in a timely manner. The first step of implementing judicial reforms constituted an assessment on the deficiencies of the judiciary and the feasibility of implementing Government's justice sector reform proposals. This assessment conducted in May 2019, with the support of UNDP Maldives under IGP II, revealed the urgent need to restore DJA's autonomy, establish an efficient case management system, implementation of rules of conduct for judges and highlighted the need for gender justice and gender parity within the judiciary. Additionally, recognizing the absence of a continuing legal education regime, which is a key factor affecting the competency of judges and quality of adjudications, the Judiciary has initiated efforts to reform and revive the Judicial Academy to ensure access to relevant and up-to-date judicial education to judges and magistrates in a regular manner, beginning with a review and a Training Needs Assessment in 2019, supported by the UNDP Maldives.

Moreover, steps have also been taken by the Judicial Services Commission towards establishing transparent and improved mechanisms for judicial appointments and performance management through the development of a Judges Performance Evaluation Policy, and investing in capacity building for the JSC Investigation Unit and efforts towards revising the current systems for judicial appointments and selection against best practise standards.

While challenges remain and are multi-fold in the area of human rights, it is encouraging to note that Maldives has strengthened its engagement with the UN, including ratifying two key human rights treaties in 2020 and actively engaging in human rights bodies' reviews such as the Universal Periodic Reviews. In 2019 alone two Special Rapporteurs[3] visited the country, while additional visits were agreed for 2020 which were delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The current Government of Maldives has embarked on an ambitious agenda to ensure compliance with its international treaty obligations and is constructively engaged with human rights treaty bodies. However, a number of reports to treaty bodies are overdue.[1] The Maldives noted in the previous UPR cycle the challenges and limitations faced as a small island developing state and in fulfilling its reporting obligations under international conventions, due to lack of expertise, human resources, among other issues.[2]

In the face of these challenges, the recent Rights Side of Life survey findings shed light on the grave need to address women's rights and gender inequality in a more systematic and effective manner. For instance, there is a worrying increase in the number of women who did not respond to the questions regarding equal rights in the family unit (87.8% non-response rate) and child custody matters (87.8% non-response rate). The findings also reveal the need for more transparent and accountable governance institutions and greater awareness of human

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[3] UN Special Rapporteurs in the field of cultural rights and on Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment visited Maldives in June and November 2019 respectively. The visit of UN Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression, expected to take place in March 2020, was postponed as a consequence of the irruption of the pandemic.

rights across the country. If not addressed in a timely manner, these could pose challenges to the achievement of SDGs and act as a barrier to fulfilment of human rights in the country.

During the UPR Review session on November 2020, Maldives' progress in protecting human rights within the past four and a half years were reviewed. The country has received 259 recommendations from 95 Member States, mainly covering the areas of governance, ratifying international human rights instruments, and urging the Government to continue the efforts in the area of gender equality and child protection, safeguarding safe migrants' rights, combatting human trafficking and addressing climate change. Subsequently, in December 2020, the President of Maldives endorsed the National Mechanism for Reporting and Follow-up (NMRF) which is mandated to ensure reporting and follow-ups to international and regional human rights mechanisms including treaty bodies, UPR and special procedures. This indicates positive and encouraging steps towards an enabling environment for promotion of human rights for all, in alignment with the Leave No One Behind (LNOB) agenda.

b. Decentralisation and Development Planning
One of the most prominent of the country's developmental challenges has been the efforts towards meaningful decentralisation and local governance despite been on the development agenda since the early 2000s. Despite being enshrined within the Constitution of 2008 and the ratification on the Decentralization Act in 2010, the subsequent lack of consistency in policy by successive governments fuelled by the lack of technical capacity, has resulted in the persistence of the prevailing centralized form of governance and unequal access to public services.

A review of the Maldives' system of decentralised Governance4 in 2018 identified the key challenges as: lack of political will to implement decentralisation, in particular, fiscal decentralisation; the politicisation of Local Government authorities; lack of capacity of local councils and the lack of clarity of mandates between central ministries, agencies and the local development authorities on local development planning, and the facilitation and provision of public services.

The current government had a core agenda of decentralisation in the ascent to power in 2018, and this is very prominently reflected in the Strategic Action Plan (SAP) 2019-2023 which was subsequently developed by the President's Office. There is a demonstrated commitment to decentralization reform, which was evident in the 2019 amendment to the Decentralisation Act which included provisions for one third representation of women on the local council and the allocation of 40% of government revenues from the atoll jurisdiction to its respective councils.

The SAP includes a vision to establish and roll-out decentralized public services, through major infrastructure development centred on the creation of regional centres, and a national transport network, guided by a Spatial Development Plan. The Local Government Authority, along with the President's Office and relevant national stakeholders such as the Ministry of National Planning, Housing and Infrastructure have strengthened their commitment to

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4 Transparency Maldives (2019). Review of the decentralisation framework in the Maldives

improving coordination towards optimization of mandates, through understanding capacity gaps and needs of the local governance system. The LGA has established flagship, digitalized local administration platforms to facilitate e-government services and to connect councils across the country across a unified network.

In understanding the need to ensure longer-term sustainable development planning, and in alignment with key global agendas such as the 2030 Agenda, the Ministry of National Planning, with UN and UNDP Maldives technical expertise, has also commissioned the drafting of the National Planning Act, in close coordination with the President's Office and the Local Development Authority.

The National Planning Act, which is also envisioned in the SAP, will pave way for the process of development planning, going forward, to be applied coherently across every administration so that development gains are distributed equitably across the country. It is a tremendous opportunity to ensure thorough integration of evidence-based approaches based on international good practises, norms and standards, which caters to the development concerns and aspirations of the people of the Maldives at national and local levels.

Due to the COVID-19-related restrictions of movement between the Male' and the islands, there has been a boost in the decentralized working of local councils. Local capacity gaps were also highlighted throughout this period, which digitalization and strengthened e-governance measures had to a large extent addressed. Disruptions to public services have also created an avenue for increased decentralization, as councils have been forced to take independent and urgent measures to provide essential services, demonstrated the importance of accessible governance through digital, efficient means, capacitating and empowering councils, and strengthening readiness and sustainability of decentralized public service provision.

c. Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
The Government prioritizes empowerment of women at all levels of the State, and recognizes that significant efforts are needed to ensure gender equality and effective protection of women5. There has been positive efforts towards accelerating implementation of the Gender Equality Law, through the review process of the Gender Equality Policy and related policy and institutional frameworks. Despite positive developments such as the appointment of the first female justices of the Maldives Supreme Court 6 and the landmark amendment to the Decentralisation Act, allocating of one third of seats to women in the local councils, women are still largely underrepresented in the Maldives' judiciary, parliament, local governing bodies, decision-making roles in public and private sector institutions, as well as in the formal economy.

The Maldives is a State Party to the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Notably, the Government endorsed withdrawal of reservations to Article 16 (1) b, e, f, g & h and full withdrawal to reservations to Article 16 (2). However, reservations are expected to remain on Article 16 (1) a, c, and d relating to inequality

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[5]Gender Equality Policy was endorsed by the President's Office in September 2019 and formulation
of a Gender Equality Action Plan is underway.
[6]In September 2019, for the first time ever, two female justices were appointed to the Supreme Court of Maldives.

in entering marriage, divorce and parental rights, where Maldivian women face discriminatory laws, policies and practices.

The Ministry of Gender, Family and Social Services, has reinforced its commitment to implement the Gender Equality Law and the subsequent Policy, to take stock of the gains made on gender equality, and accelerate the efforts to implement CEDAW and UPR recommendations. This presents opportunities to provide strategic support to the Government and civil society in this process, and ensure the country continues to achieve strides in its journey to Gender Equality and women's empowerment.

d. Transparency, Accountability and Efficiency of Public Institutions and Services
With a score of 40, Maldives is ranked 85 out of 180 countries in the 2021 Corruption Perception Index[7]. Although the upward trajectory of the CPI index from 2020 is an improvement compared to previous years, this is the fifth consecutive year in which Maldives is included among the two-thirds of countries to score below 50.

The current government, as part of its 100-day programme in 2018, had anti-corruption at the front and centre of the governance reform agenda, and this was reflected in the Government's Strategic Action Plan as well. Notable commitments include, the passage of the Whistle-blower Protection Act, establishment of the "Presidential Commission on Corruption and Asset Recovery", commitment towards tackling illicit enrichment and enforcing asset declaration, and declaring 'zero tolerance' on corruption.

Given this enabling environment with considerable changes in the regulatory framework, there is a need to invest in strengthening oversight bodies to ensure that those in need have access to resources, as well as ensuring that anti-corruption authorities and oversight institution have sufficient funds, resources, and independence to capitalize on the momentum. Civic space to hold government and public officials to account, must be fostered and enhanced by engaging with young people, civil society, and marginalized populations.

Reeling from years of gated governance and grand corruption scandals due to impunity and restricted space for dissent, the current administration has committed to making public administration more efficient, and information and services, especially those pertaining to the utilization of public finances and procurement practises, more transparent and accessible for all.

d. Civic Participation, Social Inclusion and Social Cohesion
Social exclusion and discrimination, issues of youth marginalization, unemployment and rising conservatism all hamper the ability of Maldives to capture the benefits of its demographic dividend. There is a considerable disconnect between state and society which needs to be bridged through linkages and participatory processes. A 2013 survey indicates that 50% of the population is interested in politics, and 1 in 4 Maldivians is politically active. However, 82% were found to be cynical about politics, interpreted as emotional disengagement and distrust of the political classes in society, which may indicate citizens' lower propensity to engage in

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[7] https://www.transparency.org/en/countries/maldives

public affairs8. This is further validated by more recent relevant studies as well, notably the Youth Vulnerability Assessment of 2019, commissioned by UNDP and NCTC.

Rooted in all these challenges is the overarching issue of the lack of an enabling environment for citizen engagement and citizen empowerment, with considerable gaps between the state and the citizen, especially in a decentralised manner. The civil society sector is nascent in the Maldives and organised civic engagement generally weak.

The current administration has notably committed towards increased investment in capacity building, partnership building and provision and safe spaces for civil society to thrive. Aiming to strengthen the legal framework governing civil society and associations, an overhauled Associations Bill was submitted to the Parliament in 2019. The new and improved legislation will supersede the current Associations Act which dates to 2003. Through the enactment of this legislation, Maldives hopes to enhance the governance of associations, and provide for an improved mechanism of accountability that focuses on due process with the key focus on empowering and upholding fundamental freedoms for civic space. New bills on freedom of expression and freedom of press are also being formulated with relevant policies in these areas included in the SAP. Furthermore, the Government has also begun the process of drafting a Youth Bill to promote & protect young people's rights, including expanding access to healthcare, employment, economic opportunities, education and increasing youth representation in decision making.

Marginalized groups, such as migrant workers, at-risk youth, women, persons with disabilities, low-income families and people with different gender, sexual and religious identities, continue to be socially excluded, which was evidently exacerbated during the COVID-19 crisis. Access to social protection mechanisms, equal opportunities in education, employment and housing, civic and political participation, legal protections, dignity and respect, continue to be challenging.

The Government of Maldives publicly acknowledged and demonstrated commitment to enhancing diversity, tolerance, and, addressing violent extremism, rising intolerance and deteriorating social cohesion in the country. The development and endorsement of the National Plan of Action on Countering and Preventing Violent Extremism (2020-2025), supported by UNDP, is a strong indicator of this.

II. STRATEGY

Through the two consecutive Integrated Governance Programme cycles, UNDP has provided, sustained support towards consolidating democracy in the Maldives. This includes dedicated technical support to independent institutions, efforts to reform judiciary, legal and justice sector, support towards creating an independent and empowered civil society and media, formative and sustained support to decentralisation and local governance, and support to advancing the country's efforts towards women's empowerment and gender equality. The

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8Maldivian Survey of Democracy and Political Culture 2013, Transparency Maldives

partnership has been focused on institutional and human resources capacity development in line with the global development agendas, international standards and good practise, promotion of coordination and dialogue as well as fostering community awareness and participation with the aim of contributing to long term stability and peace in the Maldives.

In 2021, an independent IGP II programme review was commissioned, in alignment with the CPD development process, to inform the priorities and strategic approaches for the IGP III.

Strategy on Programmatic Focus Areas

UNDP IGP III will take a portfolio approach, and will be the primary programme implementing the Priority 3 of the UNDP CPD, as illustrated below with the CF and SDG linkages.

CPD Priority 3 = IGP 3 = Governance Portfolio

This is deliberate to allow for the harmonization of governance reform interventions, effectively gauge development impact and results and for optimum and efficient mobilization and utilization of resources. The portfolio, cognizant of the volatile nature and risks associated with Governance programming, is also designed with in-built substantive and financial flexibility that allows it to respond to changes in context, including emerging opportunities and political bottlenecks, while still contributing to promised aggregate results.

Secondary and linked foundational and strategic frameworks for the IGP Phase III include SDG 1, SDG 5, SDG10, SDG16, SDG17 as well the People and Peace Pillars of the Agenda 2030, UNCF for the Maldives and the harmonized UNDP Maldives CPD.

Priority 3: Anticipatory and accountable governance for and by people

UNSDCF Outcome : Strengthened decentralized and accountable governance under the rule of law where people are empowered, meaningfully participate in transparent and transformative processes for public policy and fully enjoy access to justice, public services, human rights, gender equality and women's empowerment in a tolerant and peaceful society.

SAP Alignment: JAZEERA DHIRIULHUN · CARING STATE · DIGNIFIED FAMILIES · GOOD GOVERNANCE

SDGs: 1 NO POVERTY · 5 GENDER EQUALITY · 10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES · 16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS · 17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

KEY RESULTS

1. National and sub-national capacities strengthened to **effectively plan, finance and implement development policies and strategies**
3 INDICATORS

2. State has enhanced capacities to **digitalize public administration and service delivery** in an efficient and equitable manner
3 INDICATORS

3. Strengthened **human rights, rule of law and enhanced access to protection and justice**
3 INDICATORS

4. Inclusive **civic space** and **effective participation of citizens**
3 INDICATORS

*The underlying **theory of change** for the Governance Portfolio is that creating an enabling environment for citizens' engagement in a decentralised manner, especially for marginalized women, youth, migrant workers and persons with disabilities, while enhancing independence, transparency, and accountability of the governance and justice system, will lead to democratic, sustainable, and meaningful human development for the people of Maldives.*

A Theory of Change (TOC) for Governance offer of UNDP was crafted in the development of the CPD and the parallel IGP Review process. This was informed by multiple streams of consultations with various stakeholders. The TOC provides a logical and causal pathway towards formulating the UNDP Governance Portfolio to address the governance deficits in Maldives. (UNDP Maldives CPD - Theory of Change • UNDP Accelerator Labs WS2 (mural.co))

The principle *programmatic strategy* of the Governance portfolio is to bring people to the centre of governance, especially at the subnational level, to address the governance deficits detailed above. In order to do this, the portfolio will aim to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of governance institutions to be able to deliver people-centred services by transforming the current public administration and public service delivery mechanisms. It will also build the space, capacity and trust, especially for excluded and vulnerable groups to participate, to be represented and to inform policy- and decision-making. The development of effective and inclusive governance institutions and processes, consolidation of the rule of law and the evolution of an informed civil society and an independent, professional media must be continued. The portfolio will convene and facilitate multi-partner investments on digital transformation and effective digital governance across all areas, particularly to ensure the continuity and delivery of core government functions and public services. Accelerated digitalization can be supported by IGP III to create new business models and opportunities for digital leapfrogging in traditional industries and governance and close the geographical divide in a country like Maldives.

This situation calls for focused, long-term, and sustained efforts at all levels. The next national and local elections are scheduled for 2023 and 2024 and there is consensus amongst national partners that early programmatic intervention is key before the next campaign cycle begins again. This is the time for national stakeholders and international partners to come together to support much-needed national efforts to aid the country in its journey of democratic consolidation. Moreover, with the next programme cycle for the support of the UN in Maldives in the form of the UN Sustainable Development Corporation Framework 2022-2026 as well as the parallel UNDP Country Programme Document development, it is rare and opportune timing to ensure well-aligned, need-oriented, and results-based support to the government and the Maldivian community.

Cross-cutting Approaches and Core Guiding Principles

The integrated approach of the IGP has enabled UNDP to form and now sustain a strong position in supporting the national partners in addressing these highly complex and sensitive development challenges. The approach of the IGP, which is rooted deeply in national ownership and in facilitating open dialogue and sourcing need-based technical expertise in

line with national development priorities, has made UNDP a partner-of-choice in otherwise inaccessible areas of work for external international development partners.

To achieve these results, the programme will be designed and implemented in alignment with the following core guiding principles.

Maximising complementarities and synergies through an integrated approach: The portfolio will ensure close coordination with government, civil society and other development partners, with mutually reinforcing efforts, to achieve optimum impact that is also need-based and leaves no one behind. It will maximise synergies within UNDP's portfolio, some of which have been identified below (e.g. at local government level on resilience, future of work, gender equality and inclusion of PWD, and perhaps financing and other areas using the 'social innovation platform' as an integrator). Moreover, partnership with other UN agencies and development partners, in areas where they have specialist expertise (and other development partners to the extent possible), using UNDP's broader governance lead as the 'integrator', as envisioned by the CPD, for example bringing other UN partners behind a common engagement with the HRCM, a UN-system-wide approach to civil society strengthening, and a common framework for legal aid/empowerment that brings in e.g. IOM on labour rights/migrant workers.

Gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE): The portfolio recognizes the disproportionate impacts of under-development, weak governance and conflict on women, as well as their role in finding solutions to and addressing the issues of inequality and power structures. The portfolio's commitment to GEWE translates into deliberate and conscious interventions that specifically promotes GEWE, as well as measures to meaningfully mainstream gender across the portfolio as a whole.

Innovation and digital transformation : Given the high ICT coverage in the Maldives with the highest internet penetration rate in South Asia, and given the highly geographically dispersed nature of the Maldives, the programme will use existing/ or creating new digital platforms, and social media design and implement intervention, while also leveraging the potential for digital transformation to "leapfrog" service delivery, effectively and efficiently linking local communities with decision makers.

Applying lessons learned and building on results of UNDP/UN-supported projects: UNDP will incorporate lessons and consolidate past project results from its previous support in Democratic Governance as well as from phase I and phase II of IGP, evaluations and lessons learned from UN and UNDP programmes, and further sharpen its focus in terms of target institutions and priority activities. An evaluation of the previous Country Programme (CP) undertaken in 2019, acknowledged the limited space for UNDP to work in a meaningful way due to the political crisis and deteriorating human rights situation. It was therefore recommended to leave room for flexibility and focus on interventions that are likely to have cross-party support. The evaluation also recommended matching programming ambition with the limited resources to position UNDP to leverage on its comparative advantages to make contributions towards achieving national priorities more concretely. The need to focus on gender equality was highlighted, considering the severe gender gap in society.

Using conflict-sensitive approaches: UNDP support must identify and address the macro and micro-level causes of tensions in the democratic transition and reform process, both structural issues and potential "trigger" events that may escalate tensions. Accordingly, a risk log must be maintained and entry points must be identified among key institutions and actors, and existing and potential capacities for mitigation and peace actively developed.

Maintain IGP II's dual focus on the rights holders - "demand side" (increased voice and citizen participation for strengthened governance systems) as well as the duty bearers - "supply side".

Using initial and ongoing analysis with robust m&e framework in place, for informed programming: Geographical focus and target groups for UNDP support must be selected on the basis of thorough assessment of priorities, needs and existing gaps to ensure programme coherence, maximum impact and optimal results. Activities will rely on secondary data and assessments and studies proposed under this programme.

Linkages across broader UN/UNDP strategic programme and policy frameworks

| Programme frameworks	Portfolio contributions
2030 Sustainable Development Agenda	SDG 1, SDG 5, SDG10, SDG16, SDG17
UNDP's Strategic Plan	1 – Structural Transformations; 2 – Leaving no-one behind
UNDP's Gender Equality Strategy 2018 - 2022	Signature Solution 6 - Strengthen gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.
UN Sustainable Development Framework 2022-2026	STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3: Gender-responsive, rights-based and accountable governance and justice UNSDCF OUTCOME 4: By 2026, Maldives has strengthened decentralized and accountable governance under the rule of law where people are empowered, meaningfully participate in transparent and transformative processes for public policy and fully enjoy access to justice, public services, human rights, gender equality and women's empowerment in a tolerant and peaceful society.
UNDP Country Programme Document for Maldives *(in finalization)*	Programme Priority 3: Anticipatory and accountable governance for and by the people. Output 3.1. Government's capacities at the national/sub-national levels strengthened to effectively plan, finance, and implement development policies and strategies. Output 3.2. State capacities enhanced to digitalize public administration and service provision in an efficient and equitable manner Output 3.3. Strengthened rule of law, human rights and enhanced access to protection and justice Output 3.4. Inclusive civic space and effective participation of citizens, especially vulnerable groups in decision-making and in enhanced social cohesion.

III. RESULTS AND PARTNERSHIPS

1. Expected Results

Framed within the above, the Governance Portfolio proposes to achieve the below mentioned outcomes within the next 5-year programming cycle.

1. **Open, decentralised, and gender-responsive governance systems established**
2. **Equitable access to justice and human rights enabled**
3. **Empowered, cohesive and resilient communities fostered**

These results are highly interconnected, with none more significant than the other. The portfolio's integrated approach will provide targeted support to government, communities, and civil society, at national and local level, to enhance both policies and practices. This is necessary due to the complex nature of the current environment, in which the key challenges have both institutional and social components and requires simultaneous targeted initiatives to enhance the capabilities of institutions and civil society.

Gender Equality and Inclusivity (based on the principles of Leaving No-one Behind) will be a central theme, which is mainstreamed, as well as, specifically and consciously targeted under all 3 Result areas.
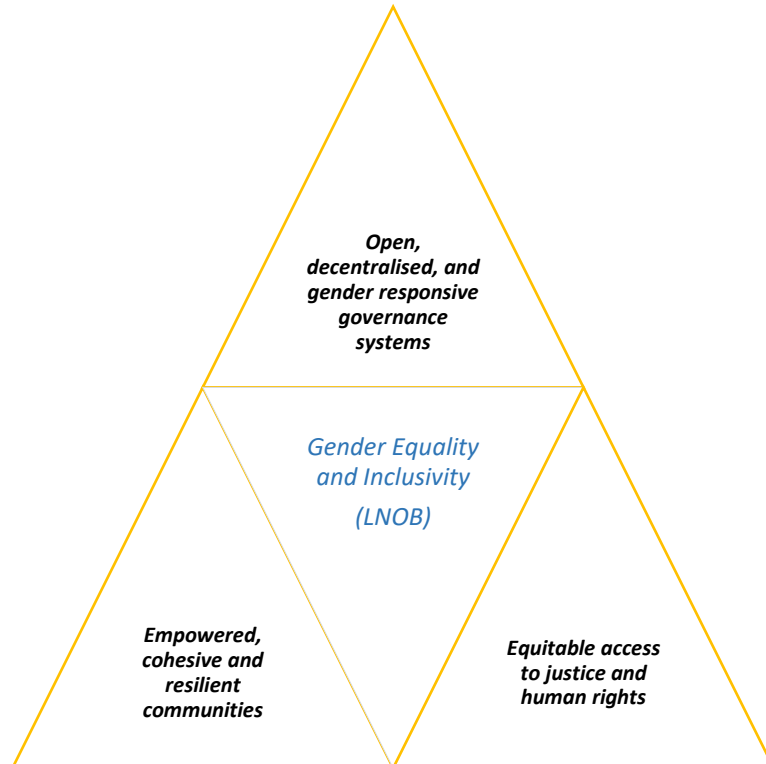
The portfolio reinforces the ability of 'duty bearers' - governance institutions – to fulfil their duties and deliver public goods and enables 'rights holders' – citizens – to better avail themselves of these 'goods' and hold governing institutions accountable.

The following section outlines strategies and focuses for each Portfolio Result, through which indicative activities will be derived for the results and resources framework (RRF).

Outcome 1: Open, decentralised, and gender-responsive governance established

This outcome focuses on facilitating meaningful decentralisation and local governance in Maldives which is transparent, accountable and participatory. In doing so, support will be provided towards addressing and improving the policies, systems and mechanisms shaping local governance , national and local development planning, open governance, public administration and public service delivery.

To achieve sustainable results towards this outcome, interventions will focus on;

1.1 **Enhancing institutional capacities and systems of governance through digital transformation and people-centred development** With the increased autonomy of local councils granted through the amendments to the Decentralization Act, efforts must be amplified to build capacities within local councils and availing tools and mechanisms for the efficient and effective roll-out of mandates, including on development planning, financing, resource utilization and management, human resource management, participatory, gender responsive planning and budgeting etc. IGP III proposes to do so, utilizing LGA's existing e-council platform, which had proven to have been integral in the continuation of services following the COVID-19 restrictions of movement between the capital, Malé, and islands. Disruptions to public services have created an avenue for the realization of the importance of effective decentralization, as councils were forced to take-up unprecedented and urgent responsibilities to provide essential services, demonstrating the importance of digitalization, e-governance and investing in skills and technical knowledge and empowerment of local councils. One of the lessons learned from other countries is that simply digitising existing services is not enough - in Vietnam only 4% of citizens were using e-services. The key is to co-create services for citizens through user journey mapping and ethnographic research to understand the support citizens need from local governments. UNDP has considerable experience to share on this area from the region and beyond, which should be maximised in the governance portfolio. Additional efforts to support digital literacy (especially among the most marginalised segments of the society) will also be implemented drawing on the experiences of other countries in the region.

In addition, UNDP's experience elsewhere in the region with establishing social innovation platforms at local level and supporting digitisation and e-services will be brought to bear, building on its proven value addition in the past in Maldives, and adopting best practise examples from other SIDS, to ensure that decentralisation brings meaningful and sustainable

benefits for people through digital transformation and community-driven systems design approaches. Elsewhere in the region, UNDP has been using systemic approaches, building social innovation platforms and helping local governments to engage in "deep listening" of people's needs and co-creating services together with people and local businesses to strengthen access to services and livelihoods.

1.2 Empowering women's leadership in local councils, governance and community building would be a key strategic focus, especially after the momentous introduction of the 33% quote for local councils. Under IGP II important gains were made in women's political empowerment including the successful introduction of a legislative quota, but it is now critically important to maintain the momentum, as was indicated in a finding of the Women's in Political Parties Assessment commissioned by IGP in 2020. International experience also shows that successful approaches to women's political empowerment need to be systematic and not only engage with the electoral framework and issues such as temporary special measures (quotas) but also address the socio-cultural barriers to women's success in holding electoral office, including stereotypes about women's leadership capacities, unequal access to campaign financing and other funding (although we were told by informants that this is not an issue in the Maldives), broader societal issues such as the unequal unpaid care-burden and lack of facilities for professionals with child-care responsibilities etc., and that there should also be engagement with political parties, media and the general public. Efforts made by the IGPII over the past 4 years, in engaging with political parties as partners, have been gradual yet fruitful and therefore, the new programme will aim to capitalize on these partnerships which due to the sensitive nature, is not an area development partners has had easy access to. UNDP interventions over the past 4 years, have initiated unprecedented dialogues within and between political parties with demonstrated progressive successes. UNDP support included the proposal and endorsement of Political Party Gender Action Plans, that parties can incorporate and adopt with leadership commitment. IGP III proposes to build up on this momentum and strengthen the internal structure of political parties especially the women's wings through technical and capacity building support so that political parties can effectively engage with women and advocate for gender equality measures within the party and at policy level. For meaningful and sustainable results, programmatic support will be enhanced towards addressing the structural and cultural barriers preventing women from contesting in elections and leadership in politics. More specifically, technical support will be provided to establish training programmes within political parties aimed at building capacity of potential female candidates on leadership, campaign, and fundraising skills. Dialogue platforms will be created within and between political parties to discuss and address structural barriers facing potential female candidates (eg: quota, financial incentives, fundraising network for females).

1.3 Enhancing transparency and accountability of governance processes

A key component of this result area is also reducing the risk of corruption by increasing transparency and accountability of governance processes. Through targeted interventions with key state institutions and engagements with civil society at various levels, IGP Phase I and II have conducted several interventions towards combating corruption. However, seeing as how corruption and inequalities continue to be a grave concern, strategic efforts are still required to strengthen oversight, transparency and accountability of institutions and processes. The

portfolio will enhance partnerships and networks between agencies mandated with oversight functions, civil society, and media through specific trainings on anti-corruption, and on developing multi-stakeholder transparency and accountability mechanisms for open governments- such as codes of conducts, score cards, information dissemination and other monitoring/oversight initiatives. Strategic entry points can be drawn from the Strategic Plan of the Anti-corruption Commission of Maldives which is currently in development, in close consultation with UNDP and development partners. IGP's previous engagements with the ACC, such as towards piloting the innovative 'Social Audit Tool' will be explored to be integrated as a national tool. Moreover, UNDP's technical expertise and the widespread Communities of Practice across the region and the globe, presents opportunities to adopt and contextualise policies and practises, such as through the empowerment of media for responsible and investigative reporting, promoting parliamentary accountability and transparency, and technical expertise on legal and regulatory frameworks that reduces risk of corruption.

Sectoral or issue-based transparency mechanisms within the public administration system that has emerged as strong needs to the foreground with the COVID-19 crisis will also be focused on. This includes components such as enhancing the transparency and accountability of public procurement systems (leveraging UNDP's expertise elsewhere in the region), building effective and efficient operational capacities which are optimized for a geographically dispersed country like the Maldives, setting up more transparent and accessible systems that capitalizes on secure digital transformative technologies, supporting integration of accountability mechanisms etc, towards holistic, transformative, public service excellence.

Under this sub-output, efforts towards parliamentary engagement and participatory law making will also be enhanced. This is a critical dimension of democratic accountability which should be strengthened. Supporting the Parliament to establish and strengthen mechanism for constituency engagement (strengthening formalised communication between MPs and their constituency) in relation to their development needs, inputting views on the work of MPs in the law making process, and the mechanisms for petitions can be considered. Given the low level of trust between the public and the parliament, such engagements could help boost the public confidence and credibility of the parliament. Strengthening youth engagement with Parliament is particularly important.   UNDP is developing digital tools to facilitate public engagement with Parliaments in Pakistan, Bhutan and Timor Leste, and given the issues of geographical remoteness in Maldives it would be valuable for IGP III to explore these. Engagement with the parliament could be very helpful in promoting participation and inclusive policymaking, issues of gender equality and women's representation, which should also be addressed at the local level.

1.4 Harmonizing local and national development planning: by engaging closely with the government bodies mandated with development planning, especially the Local Government Authority and local councils. In this regard, support will be provided on enhancing the local governance administration architecture and policies, convening dialogue between central and local development stakeholders, developing technical and leadership capacities of local councils on development planning, WDCs, CBOs and key stakeholders on creating a culture of transparent, participatory governance, that is harmonized, gender sensitive, inclusive and

resilient to political, economic, financial and natural shocks. Similarly, harmonising similar mandates of governance institutions which has implications on local development planning and local governance, will be focused on. This will enable for mandates of public institutions, especially those engaged in delivery of public services (eg: social protection, education, health, employment, and livelihoods etc) are executed without duplications contributing to efficient and equitable service delivery for the public. Similarly, roles of responsibilities of government agencies mandated with development planning, local level planning including strategic, spatial, resource mobilization and financing, economic zonal planning responsibilities, are clear and coherently exercised. In this regard, support will be provided to enhance existing platforms for sectoral coordination leading to sound coordination mechanisms on planning and governance. To ensure sustainable, long-term development planning at the national and sub-national level, UNDP seeks to support in policy advocacy towards incorporating principles of LNOB in alignment with and beyond the Agenda 2030, and ensure that National Development Plans are based on best practise principles, norms and robust institutional frameworks. A particular contribution will also be to ensure effective mechanisms for public participation both at national and local government level, with engagement of local councils and Women's Development Committees; to help socialize national and local plans to people so that they understand and become engaged in the development vision of the Maldives; to build the capacities of CSOs to engage in the process and monitor its implementation; and to ensure that the planning framework is both transparent and generates data which will itself contribute to the strengthening of evidence-based policy dialogues on core development issues across all sectors.

Outcome 2: Access to equitable justice and human rights enabled

This outcome area will focus on strengthening access to justice and protection of rule of law and human rights. Building on the findings from various assessments conducted during IGP Phase I and II, such as the Legal and Justice Sector Baseline Study, and the Rights Side of Life Surveys and working in partnership with duty bearers and rights-holders, the portfolio will take a multi-pronged approach to strengthening access to justice and protection of human rights. Considering the need for further understanding key challenges in this area, the programme will continue to support policy research to ensure legislative and institutional reform is evidence-based.

2.1 Enabling efficient access to quality legal and justice sector services, especially for women.

Strengthening administration of justice and conducting fair trials depends largely on the quality of justice sector personnel. Therefore, in partnership with the Department of Judicial Administration and the Judicial Academy, continuous judicial education will be prioritized to strengthen quality of justice delivered. Digital transformation and technological efficiency, which the IGP had pioneered with respect to the justice sector, as demonstrated especially during the COVID crisis, will be amplified. This entails utilization of online means such as video

conferencing and software systems for virtual and digital platforms to conduct online court hearings, training of court officials to use the digital platforms and ensure necessary information and service is continuously accessible to all sectors of the public and especially women and vulnerable groups, with specific interventions as required to ensure their equal access. Furthermore, establishing integrated case management and e-filing of cases across all courts, while safeguarding data privacy and security, to digitalise the justice sector services will be continued.

Access to legal aid for all, is necessary for the realization of fundamental human rights. The portfolio will support development and implementation of an effective legal aid mechanism, through support for public consultations and advocacy on establishing a legal framework for legal aid. In line with UN principles on Legal Aid, particular attention will be given to continue the partnerships with civil society organisation in the provision of pro bono legal aid for victims of sexual and gender-based violence, persons with disabilities, as well as to migrant workers on issues of forced labour, labour exploitation and labour rights. IGP III also proposes to continue its formative and successful development support to the Maldives Bar Association in IGP II, towards strengthening of the legal profession in the country. Expanded support will include internal systems strengthening, capacity building, public awareness raising and support to establishment of its different functions such as conduct and discipline, bar entrance examinations, legal aid/pro bono and continuing legal education.

2.2 Increasing judicial independence and trust

The portfolio will support the Government in making key policy choices for judicial reform which will define the architecture for these critical governance reforms going forward. The new cycle will continue to provide support to the government's vision of establishing an independent and impartial justice sector that is free from undue influence, protects human rights, and ensures justice for all in accordance with the Constitution and international obligations. Addressing the unequal gender representation in the judiciary is critical given the gender biases and discriminatory attitudes and practices which are widespread within the judiciary and the administration of justice. Breaking down the conservative, traditional and patriarchal judicial attitudes and customs is an integral and essential part of judicial reform, both to ensure gender equality and the fulfilment of women's rights as well as to improve the quality of adjudication.

One of the primary challenges faced by the justice sector is the lack of a comprehensive and consistent legislative framework where there are inconsistencies and gaps in laws[9]. The new cycle will ensure that key legislative and institutional reforms are informed by broad public consultation, which is critical for their long-term success. Moreover, relevant, and significant areas of justice such as climate governance & justice will be explored under this result area. Through this portfolio, support will be provided to key justice sector stakeholders under Legislative Reform Agenda for the Government, led by the Attorney General's Office. In this regard critical assistance will be provided to strengthen the Judicial Services Commission which is the oversight body for the judiciary which plays a crucial role in ensuring independence of the judiciary.

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[9] https://storage.googleapis.com/presidency.gov.mv/Documents/SAP2019-2023.pdf

2.3 Support towards strengthening national human rights frameworks, institutions, and advocacy

The portfolio will support the government to implement the recently established National Mechanism for Reporting and Follow Up (NMRF) to strengthen the systems for transparent implementation and monitoring of UPR and other international human rights obligations. Maldives is party to 7 of the core international human rights instruments and 2 of the optional protocols. There is a need to further strengthen national capacity for treaty reporting, as well as for coordination and implementation of treaty body recommendations. Putting in place a good system to collect and analyse data is critical for reporting to play its function of providing accurate information on the human rights situation in Maldives. In partnership with relevant state agencies, the programme will support establishing such reporting mechanisms and support capacity development initiatives to ensure sustainability. The emphasis will not only be on reporting, but just as importantly on the systems for implementing, monitoring and evaluation of human rights obligations. The programme will support the enhancement of existing mechanisms for coordination between government agencies, independent institutions, and civil society; as well as supporting the state to adopt and build on existing global platforms for monitoring such as the National Recommendations Tracking Database10 in close collaboration with OHCHR and relevant UN agencies.

2.4 Integrate human rights into businesses and private sector governance 'FairBiz'

A dimension that needs more attention is the business and human rights agenda, which has not yet taken hold in the Maldives, and which can be usefully addressed in parallel with the business integrity/anti-corruption agenda, through an approach which engages government (as regulator), the business sector and civil society (as "watchdogs"). The business sector has not yet been engaged as an actor for development, but in Maldives as elsewhere, businesses have considerable potential to contribute to sustainable development – or inhibit it – depending on the degree to which they exercise due diligence on the risks of corruption and human rights violations in their supply chains. UNDP's regional programmes on Business and Human Rights and business integrity ("FairBiz") have not yet targeted Maldives, but have considerable expertise in working with governments, the business sector and civil society (in their role as "watchdogs") to strengthen transparency, business integrity and human rights – and which can also work with environmental/climate change teams to drive businesses towards greater environmental sustainability in their operations.

In addition, working with businesses to promote gender and disability inclusion is an important intervention to strengthen integration of women, migrant workers, and persons with disability in the workplace paying attention to the need to eliminate direct and indirect discrimination in the workplace ('glass ceilings', gendered stereotypes about women's leadership capacities, lack of childcare-friendly policies, and stigmatised approaches towards PWD/ lack of reasonable accommodation to enable them to work).

2.5 Facilitate rights of persons with disabilities through improved policy frameworks and advocacy

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[10] NATIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS TRACKING DATABASE (ohchr.org)

Persons with disabilities remain one of the most left-behind groups in the Maldives, as elsewhere. Here, empowerment needs to go hand-in-hand with strengthening of the government systems for disability inclusion. The review consultants learned that the system for the registration of PWD is dysfunctional; that the Government mechanism for disability inclusion does not engage many of the critical ministries and is therefore limited in its ability to mainstream disability inclusion across government projects; and, although data is lacking, it is clear that the equal access of PWD to health, education and employment is lagging behind.

It is clear that IGP II interventions such as the inclusion of PWDs in the Miyaheli social innovation camp were highly appreciated, have considerably increased the trust of OPDs and PWDs in UNDP, and strengthened not only the capacities of PWDs in entrepreneurship but more broadly in strengthening their self-confidence and agency – and they should be continued. But these interventions and activities are not enough, and IGP III should take the support to PWDs to the policy space.

Noting the clear intention in the CPD to address the rights of persons with disabilities, and in line with Maldives' obligations under CRPD as well as guided by the UN Maldives Disability Inclusion Strategy, we recommend that IGP III takes a systematic approach including:

- ✓ Review and reform of the registration system for PWDs to better capture prevalence data across the spectrum of different disabilities and the different social protection, accessibility and support services required for each
- ✓ Supporting the government to include data disaggregated by disability in key development areas (and UNDP should do the same for relevant indicators in the CPD)
- ✓ Reforming the government architecture in line with CRPD, to ensure that disability inclusion can be effectively mainstreamed across government and strengthening the engagement and inclusion of OPDs in the policymaking, implementation and monitoring process;
- ✓ Working with OPDs, human rights NGOs (see above) and HRCM to raise awareness about the rights of PWDs among the public, and to raise awareness with the Government about its obligations under CRPD;
- ✓ Engage the private sector on disability inclusion in the workplace, as part of a broader engagement on diversity and inclusion (see under "Collective action for a responsible business sector" in proposed result area 3 below), and improving access to public sector employment, with an emphasis on non-discrimination and provision of reasonable accommodation as well as skills training for PWDs to ensure that they are able to get jobs matching their aspirations and abilities;
- ✓ In collaboration with relevant actors such as WHO, UNICEF and ILO, give targeted attention to disability inclusion in the health system (also in collaboration with UNDP's broader planned health strengthening support), education system (perhaps building on the recommendations of the HRCM's national enquiry on access of children with disabilities to education – once that is finally published) and on employment. This will be a combination of research (to identify the issues), awareness raising and capacity building, and will be conducted throughout in full partnership with OPDs;

✓ Paying particular attention to the needs of those most at risk of being left behind (including those with intellectual disabilities, and of women and girls with different disabilities).

Outcome 3: Empowered, cohesive, and resilient communities fostered

Considering the limited space for engagement between state and citizens and the deteriorating public confidence in state actors, coupled with increasing risks of radicalisation and violent extremism, this result area will seek to increase voice and participation of people, especially that of marginalised groups. Stronger linkages between government, civil society and communities - as well as inclusive policy making mechanisms will be essential to achieve these. Voices of the excluded and marginalized groups, especially women, persons with disabilities, migrant workers and those outside of Male' needs to be facilitated, through multi-approach dialogue platforms. Building on the past successes and partnerships of the IGP, UNDP will amplify efforts to engage civil society, youth and women as crucial stakeholders in the democratic process and as primary target groups of interventions.

3.1 Empower civil society and foster safe, learning spaces for civic engagement of young people and women

A vibrant civil society is an indispensable foundation for the flourishing of a free and democratic society, but with a few notable exceptions civil society in the Maldives is weak. There are minimal active human rights NGOs and while there are NGOs representing youth, women and persons with disabilities, but their capacities and sustainability appear uneven. The new governance portfolio will contribute towards civil society strengthening, with particular focus on human rights NGOs and those representing youth, women and persons with disabilities, including core catalytic funding for their programmes and capacity-building across the range of organisational competencies needed for their sustainability, in complementarity with other actors, and also ensuring that they are engaged as partners more broadly in UNDP's work. Additionally, focus will be on strengthening the legislative/ regulatory environment for creating and sustaining an enabling environment for CSOs to thrive - including through strengthening the capacity of stakeholders and the lead Ministry on working with CSOs, strengthening the legislative framework together with community dialogue/awareness on CSOs and their engagement and contributions to community and development.

Engaging with local and national level actors that would act as entry points for inclusive engagement in the public arena is crucial. UNDP programmatic interventions will be through numerous streams to ensure that an enabling environment is created for women, PWDs, migrant workers and those outside of Male', are able to participate and increase their representation at the decision-making level. Novel and innovative flagship programmes successfully sustained by IGP, such as Youth Vision[11], Short-film and Docuseries Production[12], Vaane Camp for Young Girls and Women[13], Badhahi Social Cohesion Campaign[14] will continue

11 https://www.mv.undp.org/content/maldives/en/home/library/democratic_governance/YV2020coffeetablebook.html
12 https://edition.mv/news/14099
13 https://www.mv.undp.org/content/maldives/en/home/presscenter/articles/2019/Vaane.html
14 https://www.facebook.com/BadhahiMC/posts/on-this-international-day-of-tolerance-we-are-happy-to-bring-to-you-badhahi-a-ho/108736471053971/

to be adapted and rolled out under this output. This includes partnerships with the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Community Empowerment to nationally scale-up and integrate interventions such as human rights and value-based civic education, voter education and information for young people, and encouraging critical thinking skills with a focus on digital citizenship, fostering the spirit of volunteerism and social contract. Partnerships with the Parliament and Political Parties are proposed to hold youth parliaments and practise parliaments for youth and women to encourage state bodies to listen to and facilitate youth voices in decision making. The rapid emergence and diffusion of new ICTs in the Maldives has created new avenues, particularly for young people and civil society, to voice their concerns and potentially become part of key policy and decision-making processes, thereby priming them for more active participation in social, economic, and political processes. Digital literacy and digital citizenship will therefore be a key intervention under this output.

3.2 Foster social cohesion, peace, and tolerance

The National Action Plan on Preventing Violent Extremism will be a guiding framework to inform IGP III support in this regard, while ensuring a preventive approach which is conflict-sensitive and adheres to the principles of Do No Harm at all levels of implementation. A programme focus relevant to this would be combating hate speech through targeted programmes of misinformation and disinformation, informed by data and evidence of hate speech prevalence. Social advocacy campaigns promoting values of peace and tolerance will also be continued, specifically targeted at young people. Moreover, strategic recommendations, for policy and practise, from research and relevant knowledge products such as the Youth Vulnerability Assessment, Women as Peacebuilders Study, and the Rights Side of Life Study will be implemented under the new cycle.

3.3 Promote social entrepreneurship, innovation and MSME development

Youth and women's economic empowerment is one critical stream, given the majority young demographic, and the risks to participation, social cohesion and violent extremism which can arise from a youth population without adequate voice and adequate access to livelihoods, exacerbated by COVID-19. IGP III will promote young people's economic empowerment as the symptoms points towards governance issues – to the extent that it reflects unequal access and opportunities to resources and assets. UNDP has also engaged strongly in this area in the past and this engagement should continue as part of a systematic approach to youth and women's empowerment.

Effort will be multiplied to create opportunities for entrepreneurship for young people, with more support for creating SMEs by young people/ women. For this, more mentoring and coaching as well as providing or facilitating seed funding support for business development can be provided to help young people to start-up businesses. Such training can also be provided onsite or online as demonstrated through the IGP's flagship the Miyaheli Social Innovation Camp[15], Efforts will be amplified to understand and facilitate pathways for greater participation and representation of women in the informal as well as the formal economy, which is essential for economic and social empowerment of women. This would include interventions on behavioural norm changes, supporting state agencies on policy and

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[15] https://www.mv.undp.org/content/maldives/en/home/presscenter/pressreleases/2020/Miyaheli2020Concludes.html

normative frameworks, CSOs and women's cooperatives on enhancing entrepreneurship among girls and women, exploring and diversifying inclusive livelihood pathways for girls and women, facilitating vocational training opportunities, re-skilling and upskilling to enable participation in the labor force, harnessing leadership skills and encouraging women's leadership, including at traditionally male-dominated sectors such as tourism and the corporate field.

IV. PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Management, implementation, and organizational capacity:

The portfolio, while rooted in an extensive rationale and relevant strategies, is designed to enable implementation and financial flexibility. This allows implementers to analyse the operating environment and respond to any changes, while ensuring that the broader focus and sum of all interventions would yet still contribute towards the intended aggregate results. The outputs, as advised by UNDP programming policies for portfolio approaches, will be regarded as projects under the portfolio.

A portfolio is an approach intended to reduce the transaction costs of project designing, monitoring, implementing, overseeing and reporting, as many required functions are done for the portfolio instead of separately for each project. Portfolios are also intended to improve the integration of projects that contribute to shared results, as they are managed more closely together. Resources can be mobilized for the portfolio, and allocated to any project in the portfolio, depending on need. Any reallocation across projects must be done through a formal budget revision.

The portfolio implementation will be through Direct Implementation (DIM) by UNDP, UNDP assumes overall management responsibility and accountability for portfolio implementation, in accordance with UNDP's policies and procedures. For specific outputs, UNDP will identify programme responsible partners in government, civil society, academia, etc., to carry out specific activities, who will be directly accountable to UNDP in accordance with the terms of their agreement with UNDP. To ensure accountability, UNDP will select partners in accordance with its procurement and financial rules and regulations, including using open and competitive processes and will take into account all necessary due diligence procedures.

As an integral part of the Country Programme and on-going interventions, UNDP project managers and technical specialists, in close support and advise through national institutions, will implement different service lines and/or outputs. Strategic direction and oversight for the portfolio will be provided by UNDP's Senior Management. As such, the portfolio will draw on a large UNDP global network of technical specialists and international comparative experience.

Section V of this ProDoc provides more information on the oversight mechanisms which will be in place.

Resourcing arrangements:

Donor contributions will be considered as specific contributions to the portfolio and formalized through individual cost-sharing agreements with UNDP. Unless in exceptional circumstances, financial resources will be pooled in the portfolio without earmarking, to allow for the portfolio to deliver a comprehensive response. To ensure full transparency, accountability and visibility, there will be measures put into ensure open and visible acknowledgement to donors at all available opportunity. The portfolio is designed to serve as a flagship for governance and peace building under UNDP's Country Programme. UNDP will continue to explore opportunities for expansion, both substantively and financially, to allow it to respond to a fuller scope of priorities and needs.

V. RESULTS AND M&E FRAMEWORK

UNDP will undertake monitoring and reporting on project activities in accordance with its Programme and Operations Policies and Procedures (POPP) for Project Management.

This Programme will be implemented with a strong results-focus. Before the full commencement of the Programme, a baseline study for selected indicators will be conducted to ensure the existence of baseline information. The data will be collected throughout monitoring activities and will be used for review and evaluations.

In accordance with the programming policies and procedures outlined in the UNDP User Guide, the programme will be monitored through the following:

- An Issue Log shall be activated in Atlas and updated by the Programme to facilitate tracking and resolution of potential problems or requests for change.
- Based on the initial risk analysis submitted (see Annex 1A), a risk log shall be activated in Atlas and regularly updated by reviewing the external environment that may affect the project implementation.
- Based on the above information recorded in Atlas, and quarterly Programme Progress Reports (which consolidates outcome level reporting) shall be submitted by the Programme to the Programme Board through Programme Assurance, using the standard report format of UNDP.
- A programme Lesson-learned log shall be activated and regularly updated to ensure on-going learning and adaptation within the organisation, and to facilitate the preparation of the Lessons-learned Report at the end of the project.

Annually

- Annual Review Report. An Annual Review Report shall be prepared by the Programme and shared with the Programme Board. As minimum requirement, the Annual Review Report shall consist of the Atlas standard format for the QPR covering the whole year with updated information for each above element of the QPR as well as a summary of results achieved against pre-defined annual targets at the output level.
- Annual Programme Review. Based on the above report, an annual project review shall be conducted during the fourth quarter of the year or soon after, to assess the performance of the project and appraise the Annual Work Plan (AWP) for the following year. In the last year, this review will be a final assessment. This review is driven by the Programme Board and may involve other stakeholders as required. It shall focus on the extent to which progress is being made towards outputs, and that these remain aligned to appropriate outcomes. Final narrative report including an interim

financial report will be prepared at the operational completion of the project. Final financial report will be prepared after financial closure of the project by following UNDP policy.

A monitoring schedule will be compiled which will outline the different activity or output level surveys, assessments or other methods of collecting data for tracking progress. At the end of the programme cycle, there will be an independent programme evaluation conducted in accordance the UNDP Evaluation Policy.

Applicable Outcome(s) from the UNDP Maldives Country Programme Document:
Programme Priority 3: Anticipatory and accountable governance for and by the people.
Output 3.1. Government's capacities at the national/sub-national levels strengthened to effectively plan, finance, and implement development policies and strategies. Output 3.2. State capacities enhanced to digitalize public administration and service provision in an efficient and equitable manner Output 3.3. Strengthened rule of law, human rights and enhanced access to protection and justice Output 3.4. Inclusive civic space and effective participation of citizens, especially vulnerable groups in decision-making and in enhanced social cohesion.

Project Title: Integrated Governance Programme III

EXPECTED OUTCOMES	INDICATORS (LINKED CPD OUTPUT INDICATORS)	DATA SOURCES	BASELINE		TARGETS (by frequency of data collection)		DATA COLLECTION METHODS & RISKS
			Value	Year	MIDTERM	FINAL	
Outcome 1: Open, decentralised, and gender responsive governance systems (established) **Linked CPD outputs:** Output 3.1. Government's capacities at the national/sub-national levels strengthened to effectively plan, finance, and implement development policies and strategies. Output 3.2. State capacities enhanced to digitalize public administration and service	Indicator 3.1.1: Extent of alignment of local development plans with long-term national development vision which are also gender sensitive and results-based.	LGA	Long term NDP and mechanism not in place	2020		Long term NDP in place and local development plans are fully aligned, gender responsive and results based	Annual Reports. MNHPI and LGA
	Indicator 3.2.1: Number of interventions to implement the pillars of national digital transformation;	NCIT	0	2020	2	5	Project quarterly reports and final report
	Indicator 3.2.2: Number of digital solutions for: - Delivery and monitoring of public services - Citizen engagement for monitoring - Access to and protection of information - Legal identity and civil registration	UNDP,NCIT	0	2020	2	4	Project quarterly reports and final report

| provision in an efficient and equitable manner							
Outcome 2: Equitable access to justice and human rights (enabled) **Linked CPD outputs:** Output 3.3. Strengthened rule of law, human rights and enhanced access to protection and justice	Indicator 3.3.1: Number of frameworks on rule of law, business and human rights and justice developed and/or rolled out	DJA, BCM, AGO;	0	2020	Monitoring system exists with gender disaggregated data	4	Project reporting, stakeholder interview
	Indicator 3.3.2: Number of people receiving legal aid including vulnerable groups	Project quarterly reports and final report	150	2020	2000	8,000	Project quarterly reports and final report
Outcome 3: Empowered, cohesive, and resilient communities (fostered) **Linked CPD outputs:** Output 3.4. Inclusive civic space and effective participation of citizens, especially vulnerable groups in decision-making and in enhanced social cohesion.	Indicator 3.4.1: Proportion of women contesting in local and parliamentary elections	EC	TBC	2020	40%	40%	Election cycle
	Indicator 3.4.2: Number of at-risk individuals reached through social cohesion and PVE interventions annually	UNDP	85	2020	500 (constituting 15% PWDs, 15% youth-at-risk, 50% women	Target: 500 (constituting 15% PWDs, 15% youth-at-risk, 50% women	Project reporting, training registration

IV. MULTI YEAR WORK PLAN

Project Title:	Integrated Governance Programme III
	Total 5 year budget: US$ 7,850,000

UNCF Outcome	(UNSDCF OUTCOME 4): By 2026, Maldives has strengthened decentralized and accountable governance under the rule of law where people are empowered, meaningfully participate in transparent and transformative processes for public policy and fully enjoy access to justice, public services, human rights, gender equality and women's empowerment in a tolerant and peaceful society.
Applicable Result(s) from the UNDP Maldives Country Programme Document:	CPD Programme Priority 3: Anticipatory and accountable governance for and by the people. Output 3.1. Government's capacities at the national/sub-national levels strengthened to effectively plan, finance, and implement development policies and strategies. Output 3.2. State capacities enhanced to digitalize public administration and service provision in an efficient and equitable manner Output 3.3. Strengthened rule of law, human rights and enhanced access to protection and justice Output 3.4. Inclusive civic space and effective participation of citizens, especially vulnerable groups in decision-making and in enhanced social cohesion.

Expected Outputs	Activities	Partners	Responsible Party	5 Year Indicative Budget	Budget 2022-2024
Outcome 1: Open, decentralised, and gender responsive governance systems (established) **Linked CPD outputs:** Output 3.1. Government's capacities at the national/sub-national levels strengthened to effectively plan, finance, and implement development policies and strategies. Output 3.2. State capacities enhanced to digitalize public administration and service provision in an efficient and equitable manner	1.1 Enhancing institutional capacities and systems of governance through digital transformation and people-centred development	LGA, PO, Local Councils, Ministry of National Planning, Ministry of Environment Climate Change and Technology, CSOs	UNDP	**2,025,000**	**700,000**
	1.2 Empowering women's leadership in local councils, governance and decision making	LGA, Political Parties, Ministry of Gender Family and Social Services, CSOs	UNDP		
	1.3 Enhancing transparency and accountability of governance processes	LGA, PO, Parliament, Ministry of Gender Family and Social Services, ACC, CSOs	UNDP		
	1.4 Harmonizing local and national development planning	LGA, PO, Local Councils, Ministry of National Planning, Peoples Parliament	UNDP		

Outcome 2: Equitable access to justice and human rights (enabled) **Linked CPD outputs:** Output 3.3. Strengthened rule of law, human rights and enhanced access to protection and justice	2.1 Enabling efficient access to quality legal and justice sector services, especially for women.	DJA, JSC, AGO, PGO, MPS, MOGFSS	UNDP	**2,025,000**	**810,000**
	2.2 Increasing judicial independence and trust	DJA, JSC, AGO	UNDP		
	2.3 Support towards strengthening national human rights frameworks, institutions, and advocacy	HRCM, AGO, CSOs	UNDP		
	2.4 Integrate human rights into businesses and private sector governance 'FairBiz'	DJA, AGO, HRCM, Private Sector, CSOs, ACC	UNDP		
	2.5 Facilitate rights of persons with disabilities through improved policy frameworks and advocacy	HRCM, MOGFSS, NSPA, OPDs	UNDP		
Outcome 3: Empowered, cohesive, and resilient communities (fostered) **Linked CPD outputs:** Output 3.4. Inclusive civic space and effective participation of citizens, especially vulnerable groups in decision-making and in enhanced social cohesion.	3.1 Empower civil society and foster safe, learning spaces for civic engagement of young people and women	CSOs, MOGFSS, Youth Ministry, Local Councils, Parliament	UNDP	**2,000,000**	**950,000**
	3.2 Foster social cohesion, peace, and tolerance	NCTC, Youth Ministry, CSOs, Home Ministry, Islamic Ministry	UNDP		
	3.3 Promote social entrepreneurship, innovation and MSME development	BCC, MED, MOECCT, MOGFSS, CSOs	UNDP		
Subtotal for Programme Outputs					
Monitoring (field visits, M&E reporting)			UNDP	300,000	100,000
Project management costs (Project personnel, DPC Direct Project Costs (DPC), equipment, supplies, travel, audit, communications, trainings and workshops			UNDP	1,500,000	600,000
Subtotal for Project Management Costs				**1,800,000**	**700,000**
Total Budget				**7,850,000**	**3,160,000**

V.   GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENT

The diagram below outlines the main entities involved (and their respective responsibilities) in the 'oversight/approval of key execution decisions' layer and the 'implementation' layer of the project structure.

Diagram 1 – Standard Figure of Project Organization Structure vis-à-vis oversight & approval and implementation roles
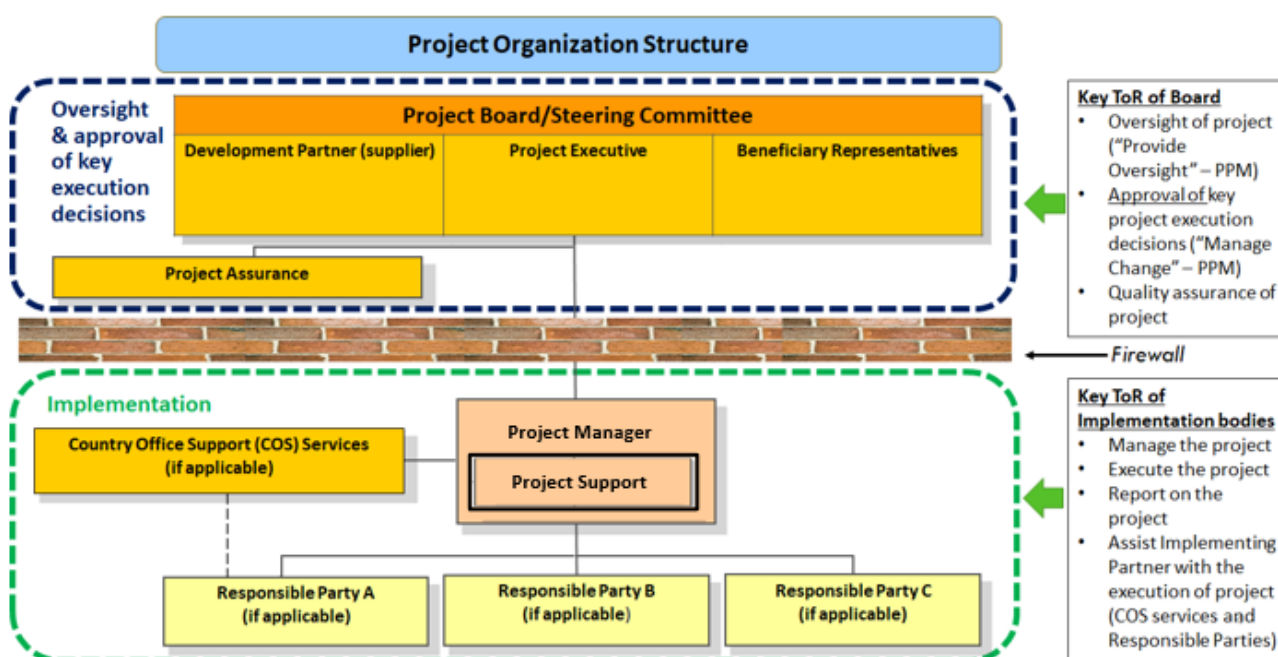
The portfolio will come under the oversight of a Project Board, which will make consensus-based decisions, and is responsible for reviewing and approving workplans and project progress, making strategic recommendations, and approving substantive and financial revisions beyond acceptable thresholds. A detailed ToR of the role and responsibilities of the Project Board is provided in Annex A.

Accordingly, As for Development Partners (ie Suppliers) mainly the key provider/s of funding and/or technical expertise to the project, whilst having the opportunity to provide substantive inputs to the decisions of the Project Board, they are also free to play an observer role and/or attend meetings optionally. In addition to the Project Board, UNDP will convene regular meetings with contributing donors to discuss strategic direction, progress and challenges.

UNDP, as the responsible body for the management of the contribution, will oversee all technical aspects of planning and implementing project activities, fostering quality assurance, managing operational activities including procurement, finance, and human resources, while ensuring that operations adhere to UNDP ethics and accountability policies, principles and standards while enabling fast implementation within the given timeline within the range where UNDP can manage.

There are two main entities/functions outside the [Project Board or Project Steering Committee] structure whose role is to report to the [Project Board or Project Steering Committee] and support board members in effectively fulfilling their roles: project assurance and project management.

The diagram below explains the primary role of these two entities in the context of their support to Board operations. A description of these two entities follows.

Diagram 3 – Standard Figure of Project Organization Structure – Board Support Entities
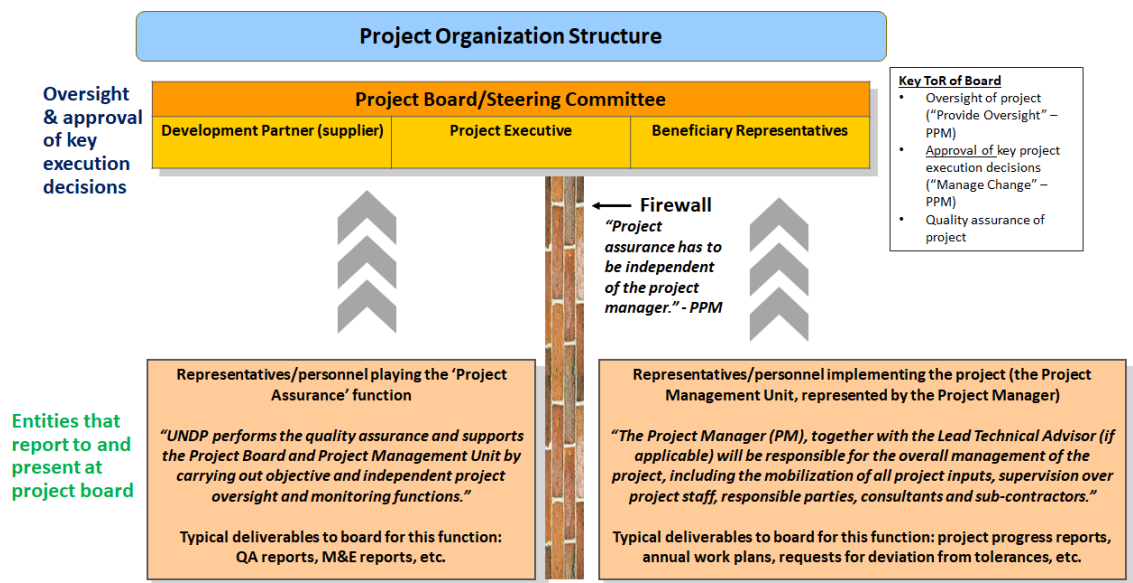
Project Assurance: Project assurance is the responsibility of each [Project Board or Project Steering Committee] member; however, UNDP has a distinct assurance role for all UNDP projects in carrying out objective and independent project oversight and monitoring functions. UNDP performs quality assurance and supports the [Project Board or Project Steering Committee] (and Project Management Unit) by carrying out objective and independent project oversight and monitoring functions, including applying UNDP's social and environmental management system to ensure the SES are applied through the project cycle. The [Project Board or Project Steering Committee] cannot delegate any of its quality assurance responsibilities to the project manager. Project assurance is totally independent of project execution.

A designated representative of UNDP playing the project assurance role is expected to attend all [Project Board or Project Steering Committee] meetings and support board processes as a non-voting representative. It should be noted that while in certain cases UNDP's project assurance role across the project may encompass activities happening at several levels (e.g. global, regional), at least one UNDP representative playing that function must, as part of their duties, specifically attend board meetings and provide board members with the required documentation required to perform their duties.

Project Support, this function is often covered by the Project Management Unit: The Project Manager (PM) (also called project coordinator) is the senior most representative of the Project

Management Unit (PMU) and is responsible for the overall management of the project on behalf of the Implementing Partner, including the mobilization of all project inputs, supervision over project staff, responsible parties, consultants and sub-contractors. The project manager typically presents key deliverables and documents to the Board for review and approval, including progress reports, annual work plans, adjustments to tolerance levels and risk logs.

A designated representative of the PMU is expected to attend all board meetings and present the required progress reports and other documentation needed to support board processes as a non-voting representative.

3 Technical Committees (TCs) are proposed per Outcome, which consists of representatives from each of the project's key implementing partners. Meetings of the TCs will be held on a quarterly basis, and on a needs basis with the goal to ensure coordination among the stakeholders during project implementation. It also serves as a platform to represent the voice of stakeholders on topics relevant to the scope of the project and to ensure the implementation of project activities in line with the agreed project plan and approach. The composition of the TC can be flexible based on annual programming, and meetings can be called upon by the Programme Manager.

Based on the above, the below Governance composition is proposed for IGP III.
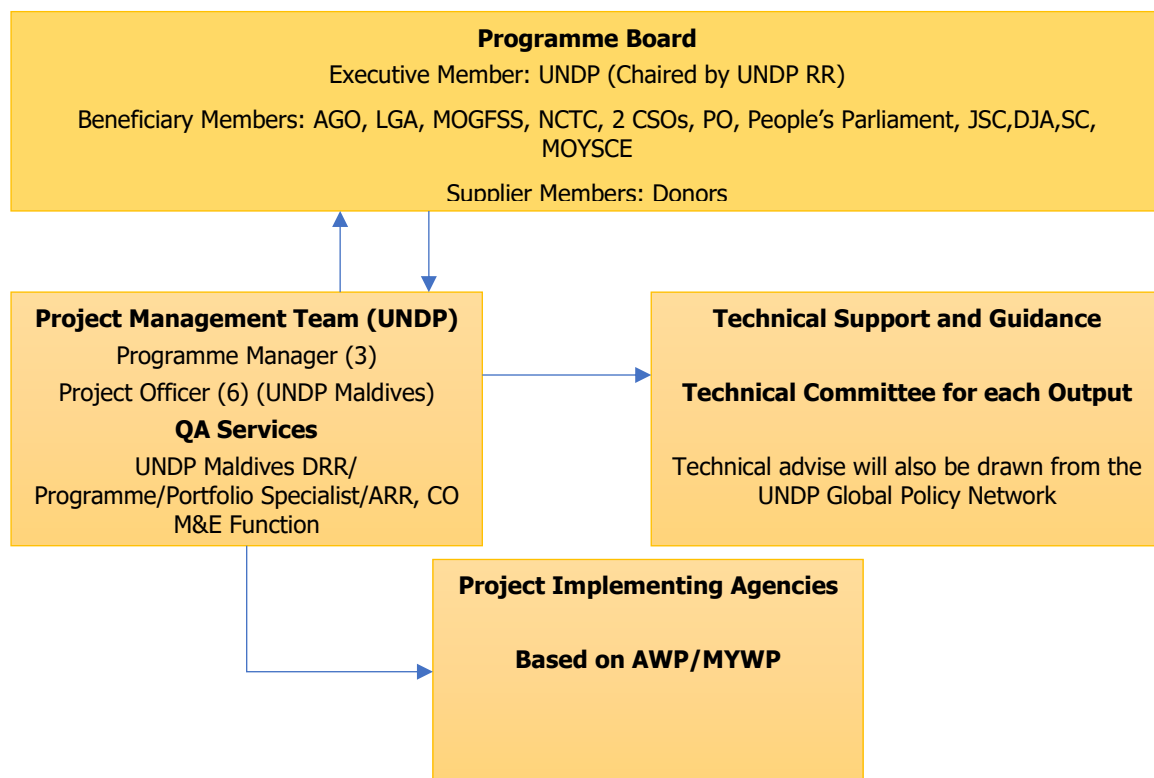

Figure 1 Illustration of the project's governance structure.

VI. LEGAL CONTEXT

This project forms part of an overall programmatic framework under which several separate associated country level activities will be implemented. When assistance and support services are provided from this Project to the associated country level activities, this document shall be the "Project Document" instrument referred to in: (i) the respective signed SBAAs for the specific countries; or (ii) in the Supplemental Provisions to the Project Document attached to the Project Document in cases where the recipient country has not signed an SBAA with UNDP, attached hereto and forming an integral part hereof. All references in the SBAA to "Executing Agency" shall be deemed to refer to "Implementing Partner."

This project will be implemented by UNDP ("Implementing Partner") in accordance with its financial regulations, rules, practices and procedures only to the extent that they do not contravene the principles of the Financial Regulations and Rules of UNDP. Where the financial governance of an Implementing Partner does not provide the required guidance to ensure best value for money, fairness, integrity, transparency, and effective international competition, the financial governance of UNDP shall apply.

VII. RISK MANAGEMENT

1. UNDP as the Implementing Partner will comply with the policies, procedures and practices of the UNSMS.

2. Risk Analysis is provided in Risk Log below.

3. UNDP as the Implementing Partner will undertake all reasonable efforts to ensure that none of the UNDP funds received pursuant to the Project Document are used to provide support to individuals or entities associated with terrorism and that the recipients of any amounts provided by UNDP hereunder do not appear on the list maintained by the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1267 (1999). The list can be accessed via http://www.un.org/sc/committees/1267/aq_sanctions_list.shtml. This provision must be included in all sub-contracts or sub-agreements entered into under this Project Document.

4. Social and environmental sustainability will be enhanced through application of the UNDP Social and Environmental Standards (http://www.undp.org/ses) and related Accountability Mechanism (http://www.undp.org/secu-srm).

5. UNDP as the Implementing Partner will: (a) conduct project and programme-related activities in a manner consistent with the UNDP Social and Environmental Standards, (b) implement any management or mitigation plan prepared for the project or programme to comply with such standards, and (c) engage in a constructive and timely manner to address any concerns and complaints raised through the Accountability Mechanism. UNDP will seek to ensure that communities and other project stakeholders are informed of and have access to the Accountability Mechanism.

6. All signatories to the Project Document shall cooperate in good faith with any exercise to evaluate any programme or project-related commitments or compliance with the UNDP Social and Environmental Standards. This includes providing access to project sites, relevant personnel, information, and documentation.

7. UNDP as the Implementing Partner will ensure that the following obligations are binding on each responsible party, subcontractor and sub-recipient:

    a. Consistent with the Article III of the SBAA, the responsibility for the safety and security of each responsible party, subcontractor and sub-recipient and its personnel and property, and of UNDP's property in such responsible party's, subcontractor's and sub-recipient's custody, rests with such responsible party, subcontractor and sub-recipient. To this end, each responsible party, subcontractor and sub-recipient shall:
        i. put in place an appropriate security plan and maintain the security plan, taking into account the security situation in the country where the project is being carried;

      ii. assume all risks and liabilities related to such responsible party's, subcontractor's and sub-recipient's security, and the full implementation of the security plan.

b. UNDP reserves the right to verify whether such a plan is in place, and to suggest modifications to the plan when necessary. Failure to maintain and implement an appropriate security plan as required hereunder shall be deemed a breach of the responsible party's, subcontractor's and sub-recipient's obligations under this Project Document.

c. Each responsible party, subcontractor and sub-recipient will take appropriate steps to prevent misuse of funds, fraud or corruption, by its officials, consultants, subcontractors and sub-recipients in implementing the project or programme or using the UNDP funds. It will ensure that its financial management, anti-corruption and anti-fraud policies are in place and enforced for all funding received from or through UNDP.

d. The requirements of the following documents, then in force at the time of signature of the Project Document, apply to each responsible party, subcontractor and sub-recipient: (a) UNDP Policy on Fraud and other Corrupt Practices and (b) UNDP Office of Audit and Investigations Investigation Guidelines. Each responsible party, subcontractor and sub-recipient agrees to the requirements of the above documents, which are an integral part of this Project Document and are available online at www.undp.org.

e. In the event that an investigation is required, UNDP will conduct investigations relating to any aspect of UNDP programmes and projects. Each responsible party, subcontractor and sub-recipient will provide its full cooperation, including making available personnel, relevant documentation, and granting access to its (and its consultants', subcontractors' and sub-recipients') premises, for such purposes at reasonable times and on reasonable conditions as may be required for the purpose of an investigation. Should there be a limitation in meeting this obligation, UNDP shall consult with it to find a solution.

f. Each responsible party, subcontractor and sub-recipient will promptly inform UNDP as the Implementing Partner in case of any incidence of inappropriate use of funds, or credible allegation of fraud or corruption with due confidentiality.

Where it becomes aware that a UNDP project or activity, in whole or in part, is the focus of investigation for alleged fraud/corruption, each responsible party, subcontractor and sub-recipient will inform the UNDP Resident Representative/Head of Office, who will promptly inform UNDP's Office of Audit and Investigations (OAI). It will provide regular updates to the head of UNDP in the country and OAI of the status of, and actions relating to, such investigation.

g. Each responsible party, subcontractor or sub-recipient agrees that, where applicable, donors to UNDP (including the Government) whose funding is the source, in whole or in part, of the funds for the activities which are the subject of the Project Document, may seek recourse to such responsible party, subcontractor or sub-recipient for the recovery of any funds determined by UNDP to have been used inappropriately, including through fraud or corruption, or otherwise paid other than in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Project Document.

Where such funds have not been refunded to UNDP, the responsible party, subcontractor or sub-recipient agrees that donors to UNDP (including the Government) whose funding is the source, in whole or in part, of the funds for the activities under this Project Document, may seek recourse to such responsible party, subcontractor or sub-recipient for the recovery of any funds determined by UNDP to have been used inappropriately, including through fraud or corruption, or otherwise paid other than in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Project Document.

Note: The term "Project Document" as used in this clause shall be deemed to include any relevant subsidiary agreement further to the Project Document, including those with responsible parties, subcontractors and sub-recipients.

h. Each contract issued by the responsible party, subcontractor or sub-recipient in connection with this Project Document shall include a provision representing that no fees, gratuities, rebates, gifts, commissions or other payments, other than those shown in the proposal, have been given, received, or promised in connection with the selection process or in contract execution, and that the recipient of funds from it shall cooperate with any and all investigations and post-payment audits.

i. Should UNDP refer to the relevant national authorities for appropriate legal action any alleged wrongdoing relating to the project or programme, the Government will ensure that the relevant national authorities shall actively investigate the same and take appropriate legal action against all individuals found to have participated in the wrongdoing, recover and return any recovered funds to UNDP.

j. Each responsible party, subcontractor and sub-recipient shall ensure that all of its obligations set forth under this section entitled "Risk Management" are passed on to its subcontractors and sub-recipients and that all the clauses under this section entitled "Risk Management Standard Clauses" are adequately reflected, *mutatis mutandis*, in all its sub-contracts or sub-agreements entered into further to this Project Document.

Annex 1: Risk Log

	Description	Level of Risk (1=Very Low, 2=Low, 3=Medium, 4=High, 5=Very High)	Mitigation Measures
1.	Political instability and policy changes in with the Presidential and Parliamentary elections on the horizon. These may have varying degrees of impact for implementing activities and achieving outputs/outcomes of the portfolio. (Political)	4	UNDP regularly monitors socio-political changes. It engages with key political, administrative, civil society and academic actors to identify potential negative impacts to policy and programme initiatives. The portfolio, as opposed to a project, is designed with in-built substantive and financial flexibility that allows it to respond to changes in the socio-political context, including emerging opportunities and political bottlenecks, while still contributing to promised aggregated results. The portfolio modality introduced through recent revisions to UNDP's Programme and Project Management guidelines (2018), facilitates resources to be allocated to any project (i.e., outcome/service line) in the portfolio, depending on the need and change in socio-political context. Any reallocation across projects must be done through a formal budget revision. The donor-partner/s will be informed and consulted. If there is no continued political and/or administrative buy-in for a particular activity/output, then UNDP will transfer funds to alternative activities/outputs, in consultation with key government, civil society and development partners. The alternative activities/outputs will nevertheless contribute to the expected outcomes of the portfolio.
2.	Change in the political and/or administrative leadership in ministries and departments, and/or a change in the mandates of ministries and departments due to the results of the 2023 election. This can potentially disrupt UNDP's portfolio management and implementation – in terms of commitment from new ministry/agency heads to pre-identified outputs/activities and/or pace of implementation. (Political)	3	Same as 1 above. In addition, UNDP will have formalized work plans with implementing partners, which should ensure institutional ownership for ongoing activities irrespective of changes in leadership.
3.	Policy formulation is increasingly politically 'spread out.' It can emanate from outside the public administration/bureaucracy, thus creating additional challenges to engaging with multiple political actors and advisers as well as institutions and mechanisms on policy advocacy and advisory services. (Strategic)	3	Engage with relevant political actors and advisers, in addition to the public administration/bureaucracy. In addition, advocate for, facilitate and support the convening of, a more synchronized, coordinated and inclusive approach to policy-making and implementation across multiple actors, institutions, mechanisms and end users, that is owned by duly mandated institutions.
4.	COVID-19 has caused severse economic setbacks in the Maldives and led to development partners reprioritizing presence/development cooperation. This may have adverse impacts on UNDP's ability to mobilize the total resources estimated for the portfolio, which will in turn result in a shortfall of resources with respect to specific outcomes, outputs and activities. (Economic)	3	UNDP Maldives has an institutionalized practice of reviewing and updating its resource mobilization pipeline and corresponding strategy on a regular basis. It is in the process of identifying alternative development finance resources. In the event that UNDP does not secure the total estimated budget requirement for the entire portfolio, then there will be a shortfall with respect to specific outcomes, outputs and activities. This will be addressed mid-way through the implementation timeline, through a revision to the portfolio document, results framework (specific outcomes/outputs/activities) and/or estimated budget, as required. This will be done in consultation with the donor-partners as well as relevant government and non-government entities. Decisions will be agreed and documented at project board/steering committee meetings.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

PROGRAMME BOARD

INTERGRATED GOVERNANCE PROGRAMME III, 2022 -2026

Introduction

All UNDP projects must be governed by a multi-stakeholder board or committee established to review performance based on established monitoring and evaluation metrics and high-level implementation issues to ensure quality delivery of results. For the purpose of this ToR and to ensure standardization, henceforth, as regards project documentation, such a body shall only be referred to by one of two names: 'Project Board' or 'Project Steering Committee.'[16] The [Project Board or Project Steering Committee] is the most senior, dedicated oversight body for a UNDP 'Development Project', which is defined in the PPM as an instrument where UNDP "Delivers outputs where UNDP has accountability for design, oversight and quality assurance of the entire project."

Integrated Governance Programme III (*herein referred as **IGP***) will consolidate ongoing and planned democratic governance projects supported by UNDP Maldives in a comprehensive framework that will generate close synergies between various activities, support deepening democracy and consolidating the country's democratic transition in the context of an evolving democracy. It aims to strengthen democratic institutions, processes and practices, promote their sustainability and improve social cohesion and human security for all people of the Maldives. Activities will enable enhanced voice and participation for more effective and inclusive governance systems. Using a human rights-based approach, the framework will provide a means to improve the capacities of key institutions and functions such as the Judiciary, Local Councils, and civil society through targeted capacity building and the provision of a platform for decision-making on development priorities. In doing so, the programme also seeks to empower women and youth, and enhance their participation in public life.

I.   **Duties and Responsibilities**

The two prominent (mandatory) roles of the [Project Board or Project Steering Committee] are as follows:

1) **High-level oversight of the project** This is the primary function of the Project Board. The Project Board reviews evidence of project performance based on monitoring, evaluation and reporting, including progress reports, monitoring missions' reports, evaluations, risk logs, quality assessments, and the combined delivery report. The

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[16] Please insert the appropriate entity name in the relevant sections in the document. Where this ToR refers to "Board" it is intended to apply to both these entities and should be changed accordingly to match the entity chosen for the specific project

Project Board or Project Steering Committee is the main body responsible for taking corrective actions as needed to ensure the project achieves the desired results. And its function includes oversight of annual and as-needed assessments of any major risks to the programme or project, and related decisions/agreements on any management actions or remedial measures to address them effectively.

The Project Board also carries the role of quality assurance of the project taking decisions informed by, among other inputs, the project quality assessment. In this role the Board is supported by the quality assurer, whose function is to assess the quality of the project against the corporate standard criteria.

2) **Approval of key project execution decisions** The Project Board has an equally important, secondary role in approving certain adjustments above provided tolerance levels, including substantive programmatic revisions (major/minor amendments), budget revisions, requests for suspension or extension and other major changes (subject to additional funding partner/donor requirements).

The Project Board is responsible for making management decisions by consensus when required, including the approval of project plans and revisions, and the project manager's tolerances. The Project Board or Project Steering Committee approves annual work plans and reviews updates to the project risk log.

Within the overall governance and management arrangements of the project, the role of the Project Board, as regards these two key functions *('High-level oversight of the project' and 'Approval of key project execution decisions')* is distinct from the roles of entities involved in the implementation of the project, namely the implementing partner (IP), responsibilities parties (if applicable), service providers and project staff.

In cases where UNDP or a national government entity are concurrently playing roles and represented in both layers of the project organization structure, the entity must seek to separate its project oversight and implementation duties and describe in the relevant project document a: 1) satisfactory internal institutional arrangement for the separation of oversight and implementation functions in different departments of said entity and; 2) clear lines of responsibility, reporting and accountability within the entity between their oversight and implementation functions.

In order to ensure UNDP's ultimate accountability, the [Project Board or Project Steering Committee] decisions should be made in accordance with [the Quality Standards for Programming](#) that shall ensure management for development results, best value money, fairness, integrity, transparency and effective national and international competition. An effective Project Board needs credible data, evidence, quality assurance and reporting to aid decision making. The Project Board also needs to be accountable to protect against conflicts of interest and fraud.

Specific responsibilities of the Project Board include the following:

Provide overall guidance and direction to the project, ensuring it remains within any specified constraints, and promote gender equality and social inclusion (LNOB) in the project implementation;

- Review project performance based on monitoring, evaluation and reporting, including standard quality assurance checks, progress reports, risk logs, spot checks/audit reports and the combined delivery report;
- Address any high-level project issues as raised by the project manager and project assurance;
- Provide guidance on emerging and/or pressing project risks and agree on possible mitigation and management actions to address specific risks (including ensuring compliance with UNDP's Social and Environmental Standards, Fraud/corruption, Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment);
- Agree or decide on project manager's tolerances as required, within the parameters set by UNDP (Manage Change in the PPM) and the donor, and provide direction and decisions for exceptional situations when the project manager's tolerances are exceeded;
- Advise on major and minor amendments to the project within the parameters set by UNDP and the donor;
- Agree or decide on a project suspension or cancellation, if required; (note that for GEF and GCF projects it is UNDP that decides to suspend or cancel and project and the [Project Board or Project Steering Committee] is informed/consulted only).
- Provide high-level direction and recommendations to the project management unit to ensure that the agreed deliverables are produced satisfactorily according to plans.
- Receive and address project level grievance, including overseeing whatever specific compliance and stakeholder response (or grievance) mechanisms have been put in place so that individuals and communities potentially affected by the project have access to effective mechanisms and procedures for raising concerns about the social and environmental performance of the project[17].
- Engage in the low value grant selection process where there is no Grant Selection Committee, as guided by the Low Value Grants – UNDP Operational Guide.

Additional responsibilities of the Project Board or Project Steering Committee can include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Ensure coordination between the various donors and government-funded projects and programmes;
- Report to relevant inter-ministerial bodies or higher-level oversight bodies;
- Ensure coordination with multiple government agencies and their participation in project activities;
- Appraise the annual project implementation report, including the quality assessment rating report;

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[17] The responsibilities of the board in this regard should follow UNDP's Social and Environmental Standards (SES) as codified in the PPM. It should be noted that while a project board can play a role in addressing or assisting with the compliance and stakeholder response (or grievance) mechanisms put in in place for a given project (as part of their quality assurance and oversight function), this will be in addition to and does not substitute for UNDP's core responsibility to ensure compliance with the SES throughout the project management cycle as part of UNDP's Programming Quality Assurance system.

- Ensure commitment of human resources to support project implementation, arbitrating any issues within the project;
- Act as an informal consultation mechanism for stakeholders;
- Approve the Project Inception Report, Mid-term Review and Terminal Evaluation reports and corresponding management responses;
- Review the final project report package during an end-of-project review meeting to discuss lessons learned and opportunities for scaling up;
- Providing guidance or reporting protocols to technical committees or sub-bodies reporting to the Board (if applicable);

II.   Composition of the Project Board

As noted in the diagram below, every [Project Board or Project Steering Committee] in a UNDP project has three categories of formal members (e.g. voting members). The role of every formal [Project Board or Project Steering Committee] member must correspond to one of these three roles and be identified accordingly in the project documentation.

Diagram 2 – Standard Figure for a Project Organization Structure
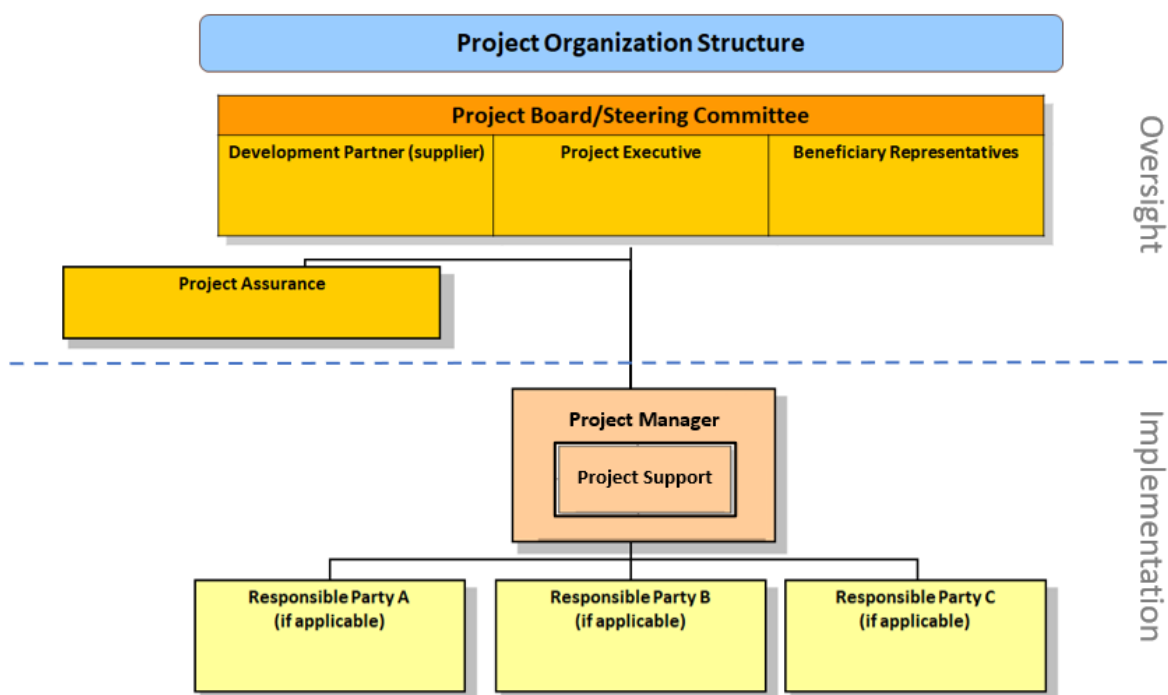
The three categories of Project Board members are the following:

1) **Project Director/Executive(s):** This is an individual(s) who represents ownership of the project and chairs (or co-chairs) the Project Board. The executive usually is the most senior national counterpart for nationally implemented projects (typically from the same entity as the Implementing Partner), and it must be UNDP for projects that are direct implementation (DIM). In exceptional cases, two individuals from different entities can co-share this role and/or co-chair the [Project Board or Project Steering Committee]. If the project executive co-chairs the [Project Board or Project Steering Committee] with a

representative of another category, it typically does so with a development partner representative. The Project Executive is: *Add title (name is optional)*

2) **Beneficiary Representative(s):** This is an individual(s) representing the interests of those groups of stakeholders who will ultimately benefit from the project. Their primary function within the Board is to ensure the realization of project results from the perspective of project beneficiaries. Often representatives from civil society, industry associations, community groups or other government entities benefiting from the project can fulfil this role. If the project has a specific geographic focus, often representatives from the government entities in the targeted area/region will play this role. There can be multiple beneficiary representatives in a [Project Board or Project Steering Committee]. The Beneficiary Representative(s) is: *Add titles (names are optional)*

3) **Development Partner(s):** Individuals representing the interests of the parties concerned that provide funding, strategic guidance and/or technical expertise to the project[18]. There can be multiple development partners representatives in a [Project Board or Project Steering Committee]. The Development Partner(s) representative(s) is: *Add titles here (names are optional)* Other funding partners can also jointly hold this role. As noted below, responsible parties cannot play this role)

Where applicable, representatives from responsible parties to the project <u>cannot</u> sit on the [Project Board or Project Steering Committee] as a formal voting member; they can (if requested) attend board meetings as observers. Since the chief responsibility of the Board is to provide high-level oversight of project implementation, to avoid any conflicts of interest, it is not appropriate for representatives of third party entities engaged by the project to provide services – whether responsible parties or contractors/service providers – to concurrently sit on the Board. Representatives of responsible parties can attend board meetings (as observers) but can have no official role in board decision-making. The same principle applies to the project manager who in attending and presenting at board meetings, does so in a non-voting capacity.

In cases where the inputs and guidance of responsible parties or other entities formally engaged in providing goods or services to the project are needed by the Board on a recurring basis, it is recommended to establish appropriate advisory or technical committees or working groups composed of those entities that can formally report to the Board, while ensuring the impartiality and integrity of board decisions happening independent of those bodies (see Section V of the ToR).

III.   Standard [Project Board or Project Steering Committee] Protocols

This Project Board will meet atleast once a year.

Project members cannot receive remuneration from project funds for their participation in the Board. However, it is allowable for board members to be reimbursed from project funds for certain reasonable, qualified expeses related to travel or lodging to attend board meetings.

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[18] With the exception of responsible parties or any firms/entities engaged by the project to provide technical expertise with project funds

All Project Board members must have rules for quorum and documentation/minuting of board decisions. All board decisions and minutes should be kept by the project management unit and UNDP.

Unless otherwise specified, Project Board decisions are made by unanimous consensus. If a consensus cannot be reached within the Board, the final decision shall rest with the UNDP representative on the Project Board or Project Steering Committee or a UNDP staff member with delegated authority as the programme manager.[19]

It is required that as per internationally recognized professional standards and principles of sound governance, conflicts of interest affecting board members in performing their duties must be formally disclosed if not avoidable. Where a board member has a specific personal conflict of interest with a given matter before the board, he/she must recuse oneself from their participation in a decision. No board member can vote or deliberate on a question in which he/she has a direct personal or pecuniary interest not common to other members of the board.

All board members should be presented with a ToR for the [Project Board or Project Steering Committee], which will include the responsibilities already outlined and indicate agreed board practices and logistics.

Standard Outputs of [Project Board or Project Steering Committee] Meetings

In its oversight function, the Project Board will (at a minimum) review and assess the following project-related evidence at each meeting:

- Assessment of project progress to date against project output indicators (as documented in the project document results framework)
- Approval/review of annual work plans
- Assessment of the relevant Monitoring & Evaluation mechanisms, including all evaluations[20]
- Review and assessment of the Project Risk Log (with updating/amendments as needed)
- Assessment of project spending, based on a review of the combined delivery report
- Review of required resources versus available funding (if applicabel) and steps taken to reduce funding gap identified at the project design stage

This will be in addition to the review and approval of any required project execution decisions.

The output of every [Project Board or Project Steering Committee] should be a written record (minutes) that captures the agenda and issues discussed and the agreed upon action items and decisions (if applicable). Each report should clearly document the members attending the meeting (as well as all participants in the meeting) and the modality used to agree on a certain action or decision (whether formal voting or no-objection or other mechanism). All records of board meetings should be documented and kept by UNDP in their quality assurance function (see next section).

IV.   Support Functions to the [Project Board or Project Steering Committee]

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[19] UNDP has this special right since the ultimate legal and fiduciary accountability for a UNDP project, irrespective of modality, rests with UNDP and UNDP must (in line with its obligations to donors and to the Executive Board) be able to ensure that no action is taken by any body in a UNDP project that contravenes UNDP rules and regulations.

[20] Including audit reports and spot checks.

There are two main entities/functions outside the Project Board structure whose role is to report to the Project Board and support board members in effectively fulfilling their roles: project assurance and project management.

The diagram below explains the primary role of these two entities in the context of their support to Board operations.

Diagram 3 – Standard Figure of Project Organization Structure – Board Support Entities
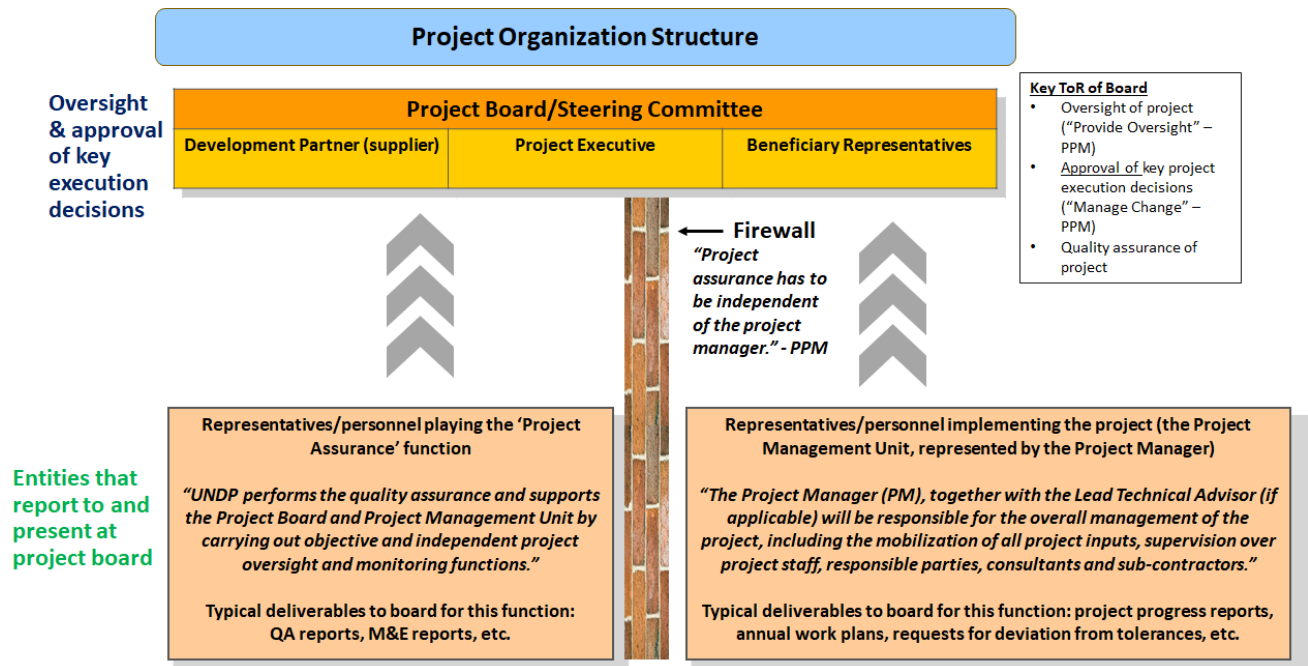
Project Assurance: Project assurance is the responsibility of each [Project Board or Project

Project Support, this function is often covered by the Project Management Unit: The Project Manager (PM) (also called project coordinator) is the senior most representative of the Project Management Unit (PMU) and is responsible for the overall management of the project on behalf of the Implementing Partner, including the mobilization of all project inputs, supervision over project staff, responsible parties, consultants and sub-contractors. The project manager typically presents key deliverables and documents to the Board for review and approval, including progress reports, annual work plans, adjustments to tolerance levels and risk logs.

A designated representative of the PMU is expected to attend all board meetings and present the required progress reports and other documentation needed to support board processes as a non-voting representative.

The primary PMU representative attending board meetings is: *Programme Manager, IGP.*

Annex A – Acknowledgement of this ToR by each designated official [Project Board or Project Steering Committee] member

Note: The form/evidence for this acknowledgement must be included as an annex or codified in other ways (e.g. note to file or minutes of a board meeting)

The formal acknowledgement of the ToR by board members can be done via various procedures, including the following options:

1) Having copies of the ToR be signed by each appointed board member at the Appraise and Approve stage (LPAC) and then having all signed copies attached as an annex to the Project Document

2) Having the final ToR be signed by each appointed board member at the first project board meeting after Project Document signing with the approvals recorded in the minutes of the meeting

In both cases, the signature or acknowledgement should include the name, title and category of board representation for the person signing