

## **B5. Manage Change**

### **Changes to the Programme**

#### ***Programme Revisions Not Requiring UNDP Executive Board Approval***

1. Monitoring and review processes provide occasions to consider challenges, new partnerships and other opportunities to make refinements to the Cooperation Framework/CPD, RPD and/or constituent projects that enhance the chances of achieving the agreed results and outcomes.
2. To ensure the programme remains relevant and effectively contributes to outcome level results, the programme board may approve some changes to the programme *without* the need to resubmit the programme document to the UNDP Executive Board. These include: (a) removal of outputs that would not adversely affect the achievement of agreed outcomes; (b) adding new outputs necessary to achieve a given agreed outcome identified after the approval of the programme document; and c) changing outcome or output indicators that measure the progress of the programme.
3. Revised country and regional programme results frameworks must be submitted to the UNDP BPPS Effectiveness Group, through the relevant Regional Bureau, for quality assurance and filing in the corporate records.
4. Any changes approved by the programme board to the programme document, results framework or evaluation plan must be recorded in a revised document and filed with the board's meeting minutes. Revisions to the results framework or evaluation plan must be updated in corporate systems, including the Evaluation Resource Centre, to facilitate monitoring, reporting and evaluation.
5. A Regional Bureau Director may withhold, withdraw or limit revision authority for country programmes if an Executive Board decision or other circumstances so require.

#### ***Revisions to Programme Duration, Including Extensions***

6. The duration of a country programme may be changed for the following reasons:
  - a. The change allows the new programme period to be synchronized with the programming cycles of other UN system agencies operating in the country;
  - b. The formulation of a new programme is likely to be delayed because of an emergency situation affecting the day-to-day operations of the government; and/or
  - c. Significant changes in national development priorities are anticipated that will affect the content of the next programme, thus requiring a delay of programme formulation.
7. The duration of regional programmes may be changed to harmonize with the duration of the Strategic Plan or for other strategic reasons determined by management.
8. The UNDP Administrator approves programmes extended for up to one year as well as changes that shorten the programme duration and informs the Executive Board. Any extension that lengthens the programme beyond one year, such as two-year extensions and second one-year extensions, are submitted to the Executive Board for approval.
9. If the duration of an extension cannot be determined because of specific national emergency circumstances, the Executive Board may authorize the Administrator to approve assistance on a project-by-project basis.

### ***Significant Revisions to the Programme Requiring Executive Board Approval***

10. An approved country programme document may be substantially amended if significant changes in the national development situation affect its content and relevance. The programme board must discuss and agree on any significant changes, which should be documented in meeting minutes or an exchange of letters and a revised programme document.
11. The Regional Bureau must be informed of all potential or envisaged changes so it can fulfil its oversight role, judge the significance of any change(s) and assess if notifying the Executive Board is required, in consultation with the headquarters programme appraisal committee secretariat.
12. Changes in a country or regional programme that would warrant notifying the Executive Board include: (a) addition of new or isolated outcomes not directly related to approved outcomes; (b) omission of agreed outcomes or outputs that will adversely impact the achievement of already approved results; or (c) the (re)allocation of resources earmarked for results that are outside the approved results matrix. Such changes should be considered and processed as amendments to the programme document and submitted to the Executive Board for post-facto approval.
13. Once formally agreed, such changes constitute a formal revision to the programme. These can be operationalized through revising corresponding project documents with clear reference in them to agreements made through due consultations with key partners, especially the government coordinating agency. Additionally, if required by local practices, the respective revised project documents reflecting the agreed changes may be signed by the government development coordination authority.
14. In crisis settings, a country programme may need to be significantly revised or suspended. This decision requires agreement of the UNDP Crisis Board. It may provisionally approve: (a) the addition of new priority outcome areas required to effectively respond to a crisis or provide rapid early recovery support; or (b) the development of a replacement 'bridging' country programme for up to 24 months. The bridging programme consists of the most recent priorities for the next 12 to 24 months together with a results and resources framework. In both cases, the Executive Board will be notified at the next practical Executive Board session for approval through the Note of the Administrator on extensions of country programmes. Bridging programmes are monitored by the crisis board in addition to Regional Bureau oversight.

### ***Suspension of a Programme***

15. A country programme may be suspended by UNDP when the situation in the country makes it impossible to achieve programme outcomes. The relevant Regional Bureau Director decides on suspension in consultation and agreement with the Associate Administrator. The Executive Board will be notified of programmes that have been suspended at the next practical session.

### ***Changes to Projects and Portfolios***

16. A project document may be revised at any time by agreement among the signatories to the document, the donor, UN pooled fund steering committee and/or vertical fund, as relevant, and following consultation with the project board. The purpose of the revision is to make substantive or financial adjustments and improvements to the project. Restrictions apply for GEF- and GCF-financed projects.

### ***Tolerance***

17. Tolerance is the permissible deviation from a plan (in terms of time and cost) without bringing the deviation to the attention of the next higher authority.
18. In this process, the project board may agree with the project manager on a tolerance for each detailed plan under the overall multi-year workplan. The agreed tolerance should be written in the project document or approved project board meeting minutes. It should normally not exceed 10 percent of the agreed budget at the activity level; however, the tolerance can exceed 10 percent if a crisis setting requires flexibility or innovation. If there is a forecast that the tolerance is to be exceeded, the project manager must refer the matter to the project board, and this may result in a revision. Within the agreed tolerances, the project manager can operate without intervention from the project board. Restrictions apply for some donor-funded projects, such as GEF- or GCF-financed projects.

### ***Substantive Revisions***

19. Substantive revisions are changes to the project design, approach, implementing partner, theory of change or results framework made in response to changes in the development context or new evidence and learning. Revisions may be made any time in response to monitoring, evaluation and review activities. When there is a substantive change in the design, the inputs and the budget will normally also need to be changed.
20. Substantive revisions must be captured in revised project documentation, including an updated risk analysis and SESP, and reviewed by key stakeholders. This includes stakeholders that were part of the initial local project appraisal committee, where feasible. Such revisions may need the approval of the donor, UN pooled fund steering committee or vertical fund, as relevant. The revised document is agreed by the project board, recorded in revised project documentation and filed with the project board's meeting minutes. Any revisions to the results framework must be updated in Quantum to facilitate monitoring, reporting and evaluation. For global and regional projects, the authority to sign revisions on behalf of UNDP may be delegated by the Bureau Director. The Regional Bureau ensures that such revisions are countersigned by the implementing partner carrying out the project.
21. The parties may decide to extend the duration covered by a project document to take account of delays in implementing certain activities and therefore in producing results. Such extensions do not entail a substantial change in the overall budget. Restrictions apply for GEF- or GCF-financed projects, and some donors.

### ***Budget Revisions***

22. The multi-year workplan is reviewed when progress reports are submitted to the project board, and revised as needed to ensure a realistic plan for the provision of inputs and the achievement of results. In Quantum, resources budgeted for but not spent in prior years should be reallocated to current or future years. There is no need to revise prior years' budgets to equal actual expenditures. As expenditures are not controlled at the activity level, it is possible to exceed an activity budget, within the tolerance level agreed by the project board. Restrictions apply for projects financed by the European Union, the GEF and the GCF.
23. Changes to a project budget affecting the outputs, completion date or total estimated project costs require a formal budget revision that is agreed by the signatories of the original project document, and may need the approval of the donor, UN pooled fund steering committee or vertical fund, if

relevant. The UNDP programme manager alone may sign the revision provided the other signatories have no objection. This procedure may be applied, for example, when the purpose of the revision is only to re-phase activities among years.

### ***Project Suspension and Cancellation***

24. A project may be cancelled if circumstances arise that jeopardize the achievement of the expected results and where a redesign will likely not bring a permanent solution.
25. The UNDP programme manager makes the final decision to suspend or cancel a project, and confirms this in writing to the parties concerned, in consultation with the government development coordination authority, the project board, and the donor, UN pooled fund steering committee or vertical fund, as relevant. In keeping with his/her accountability for the use of UNDP resources, the UNDP programme manager/Resident Representative must cancel projects that are unlikely to achieve the expected results.
  - a. **Suspension.** A project is cancelled after a period of suspension. During this period, the parties consult and try to resolve the problems by corrective measures. If the problems are resolved, the project activities may be resumed. The programme manager/Resident Representative confirms to the parties the date for resuming the activities. In an emergency situation, it is often clear that corrective measures cannot be taken. If so, UNDP proceeds directly with cancellation.<sup>1</sup>
  - b. **Cancellation.** If the problems have not been resolved in a reasonable time, the project must be cancelled. Unspent funds defined as a target resource assignment from the core that result from a cancelled project may be reprogrammed, considering the outstanding obligations of the cancelled project. Third-party contributions may be reprogrammed subject to approval by the donor (unspent funds must be returned to vertical funds such as the GEF or GCF). The implementing partner proceeds with the steps required for financial completion as described in project [closure](#). If cancellation means significant changes in the approved country programme document, an amendment may be needed.

### ***Making changes to the evaluation plan***

26. The evaluation plan is not a static document and may require adjustment as circumstances change. The evaluation plan should be reviewed annually and refined and adjusted as needed. The annual country office business planning meeting at the beginning of the year offers a good opportunity to review the evaluation plan. Changes that can be made with approval include: Extending the completion date for evaluations; Changing the scope and purpose of evaluations due to changes in the context (e.g., crisis settings); Addition of new evaluations. New projects may require new and additional evaluations that need to be included in the evaluation plan; Deletion (in exceptional circumstances).
27. Any adjustments to the plans including date changes, deletions and additions need to be clearly supported with a detailed rationale validated and approved by the regional evaluation focal point. As changes are made to the evaluation plan, it is also important to ensure that the overall goals,

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<sup>1</sup> A project suspension may be triggered by a rapid deterioration in the security situation that exposes UNDP personnel to unacceptable security risks.

scope, coverage and timing remain reflective of the programme unit's work, capture its results and are realistic for implementation.

28. **Delaying an evaluation:** If a project, programme or outcome is found to be not yet ready for evaluation and a delay in implementing the evaluation is required, adjustments can be made to the evaluation plan with a new evaluation completion date. If the evaluation is to be delayed, an adjustment should be made to the evaluation plan with justification and submitted via the ERC for review and approval by the regional evaluation focal point.
29. **Deletion of an evaluation:** Programme units should make every effort to implement all evaluations on an evaluation plan. Only in exceptional circumstances should an evaluation be deleted from an evaluation plan. If an evaluation is believed to no longer be relevant or is not expected to meet evaluability requirements, then UNDP senior and programme unit management should review and approve deletion with the M&E focal point/specialist/officer and project manager, ensuring that the programme or project board has approved the deletion. A request for deletion of an evaluation should be submitted via the ERC, along with clear and detailed justification, for review and approval by the regional evaluation focal point. All changes made to the evaluation plan will be recorded in the ERC to support and strengthen oversight of the plan's implementation.
30. Evaluations can be deleted in instances where: (a) evaluations were mistakenly added to the evaluation plan or ERC, such as duplicates; (b) the planned completion date is out of the country programme period, in which case the evaluation is deleted and added to the next evaluation plan; (c) evaluations are combined into other evaluations such as outcome, thematic or regional evaluations; (d) the funds available are too limited to make an evaluation usable or credible; and (e) the security, political or social situation is such that the evaluation cannot occur safely or meet its goals. See also the [UNDP Evaluation Guideline](#).