**UNDP Information Disclosure Policy**

**I. The Policy**

1. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is committed to making information about its programmes and operations available to the public. UNDP considers public access to information a key component of effective participation of all stakeholders, including ordinary people, in the human development process. UNDP recognizes that there is a positive correlation between a high level of transparency through information sharing and public participation in UNDP-supported development activities.

2. **Presumption in favor of disclosure.**UNDP’s Information Disclosure Policy (hereinafter referred to as the “Policy”) is guided by openness, with the underlying presumption that any information concerning UNDP programmes and operations enumerated in Chapter III is available to the public, in the absence of a compelling reason for confidentiality in line with the exceptions to the Policy in Chapter IV.

3. As a custodian and steward of public funds, UNDP is directly accountable to its UNDP Executive Board comprising United Nations (UN) Member States, and indirectly accountable to their parliaments, their taxpayers, and the public in donor and programme countries. Public access to comprehensive and timely information held or generated by UNDP will continue to facilitate the transparency, accountability and national ownership of UNDP programmes and operations. To the extent that much of UNDP information is already available to the public through various means, including through the [UNDP corporate website](https://www.undp.org/), individual Country Office websites, UNDP’s [Programme and Operations Policies and Procedures](https://popp.undp.org/), and [UNDP Transparency Portal](https://open.undp.org/), this Policy codifies existing principles, practices and procedures.

4. The Policy has been developed taking into account major UN intergovernmental conferences, including the United Nations Millennium Development Goals Summit (2010) and the Rio +20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (2012) and guided by international standards related to the right of access to information. It also takes into account other international fora and processes that have renewed the spirit of this Policy and UNDP commitment to transparency and accountability, including the UN Development Cooperation Forum, the High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, and the Global Partnership for Aid Effectiveness.

5. For the purposes of this Policy, information is defined as printed or electronic materials that provide knowledge about UNDP activities, including, but not limited to, programmes and operations of UNDP.

6. This Policy applies to UNDP and to those associated Funds and Programmes administered by UNDP, namely, the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) and United Nations Volunteers (UNV).  This Policy is available on the [UNDP corporate website](http://www.undp.org/), as well as the websites of Country Offices and the associated Funds and Programmes.

7. Compliance with this Policy shall be the responsibility of the respective Resident Representative in a Country Office, heads of Bureaux at Headquarters, and the Executive Coordinators of UNDP’s associated Funds and Programmes.

**II. Principles**

8. This Policy is based on the following principles:

**Principle 1: Maximize access to information**. UNDP reaffirms its commitment to transparency in all of its activities and therefore seeks to maximize access to any documents and information that it produces and to information in its possession that is not on the list of exceptions as set out in Chapter IV of this Policy.

**Principle 2: Limited exceptions**. Any exceptions to disclosure will be predicated upon the possibility, narrowly and clearly defined, that the potential harm to individuals, interests, entities or parties arising from the disclosure of information would outweigh the benefits, that UNDP is legally obliged to non-disclosure or has received information from third parties clearly marked as confidential. UNDP may, in exceptional circumstances, decide not to disclose or delay dissemination of information that would normally be accessible if it determines that the harm that might occur by doing so will outweigh the benefits of access. UNDP may also, in exceptional circumstances, make available to the public information ordinarily excluded from disclosure when it determines that the benefit would outweigh the potential harm, except where UNDP is legally obligated to confidentiality.

**Principle 3: Simple and broad access to information**. UNDP will employ all practical means to facilitate access to information, maximize access to such information, and use clear and cost-effective procedures and timelines for processing requests.

**Principle 4: Explanations of decisions and right to review**. When denying access to information on request UNDP will provide an explanation for its decision. Requesters who believe they have been denied access to information in violation of this Policy will have the right to such decision reviewed by the Information Disclosure Oversight Panel.

**III. Public Access and Request for Information**

9. UNDP seeks to maximize access to information that it produces and/or possesses and will therefore disclose any information not contained in the list of exceptions set out in Chapter IV of this Policy.

10. As a matter of principle, UNDP will share the majority of the information in its possession with stakeholders and the public at large, either proactively or upon request, subject to specified exceptions to presumed disclosure.

11. The information enumerated in paragraphs 12 and 13, as further described in Annex 1, is available on UNDP websites. Country specific documentation is available from the appropriate Regional and Central Bureaux, Country Office websites, and [UNDP Transparency Portal](https://open.undp.org/).

12. Information about UNDP Country Programme Management

(a) [Standard Basic Assistance Agreements](https://www.undp.org/accountability/transparency/information-disclosure-policy#SBAA)

(b) [Common Country Analysis / United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (CCA/UNSDCF)](https://www.undp.org/accountability/transparency/information-disclosure-policy#CCA)

(c) [UNDP Country Programme Documents and/or “One Plan” Documents](https://www.undp.org/accountability/transparency/information-disclosure-policy#CPD)

(d) [Multi Year Work Plans and/or Annual Work Plans](https://www.undp.org/accountability/transparency/information-disclosure-policy#CPAP)

(e) [General UNDP Project Information](https://www.undp.org/accountability/transparency/information-disclosure-policy#Projectinfo)

(f) [Project Documents](https://www.undp.org/accountability/transparency/information-disclosure-policy#Prodoc)

(g) [Social and Environmental Screenings, Assessments, Management Plans](https://www.undp.org/accountability/transparency/information-disclosure-policy#SESAMP)

(h) [Project Performance Reports](https://www.undp.org/accountability/transparency/information-disclosure-policy#PPR)

 (j)  [Evaluation Reports](https://www.undp.org/accountability/transparency/information-disclosure-policy#evaluationreports)

13. Information about UNDP Operations:

(a) [UNDP Executive Board](https://www.undp.org/accountability/transparency/information-disclosure-policy#Execboard)

(b) [UNDP leadership](https://www.undp.org/accountability/transparency/information-disclosure-policy#Leadership)

(c) [UNDP financial information](https://www.undp.org/accountability/transparency/information-disclosure-policy#Financialinfo)

(d) [UNDP procurement](https://www.undp.org/accountability/transparency/information-disclosure-policy#Procurement)

(e) [UNDP internal audit reports as of October 2008](https://www.undp.org/accountability/transparency/information-disclosure-policy#Audit)

(f) [Report on disciplinary measures and other actions in response to fraud, corruption and other wrongdoing](https://www.undp.org/accountability/transparency/information-disclosure-policy#Disciplinary)

14. UNDP releases information to the public on request. If the information is not available on UNDP websites, the public can contact the office of the Resident Representative in the country, the appropriate Regional or Central Bureaux at UNDP Headquarters, or other sources, e.g. UN Official Document System website, depository libraries, UN bookstores and other UN agencies, depending on the nature of the information required. The Resident Representative in a Country Office, the heads of Bureaux at Headquarters, and the Executive Coordinators of UNDP’s associated Funds and Programmes are responsible for ensuring that requests for information from the public are addressed

**IV. Exceptions**

15. This Policy recognizes that crisis, conflict or humanitarian disasters and special development situations pose particular challenges in terms of Country Office relations with Governments and other stakeholders. The fundamental principle that applies to information disclosure in these situations, or in communities with heightened levels of political, social and cultural tensions, is transparency. However, UNDP recognizes that in certain situations, sensitive information relative to the political/economic contexts will remain confidential. In these instances, there are usually other documents/frameworks relating to UNDP country programme management or operations that are available to the public, such as Security Council Resolutions mandating a UN mission or UN needs assessments.

16.**Current practice and principles of confidentiality.**While UNDP is committed to have an open and transparent disclosure system in place, there are legal, operational and practical considerations that are necessary to preserve the organization’s interests, as well as those of its staff, various partners and the public at large. The exceptions below are in line with international standards, and are limited to what is necessary to preserve essential and legitimate public or private (e.g. personal privacy) needs. Information under the following categories is deemed confidential and not available to the public:

(a) [Information whose disclosure is likely to endanger the safety or security of any individual, violates his or her rights, or invades his or her privacy;](https://www.undp.org/accountability/transparency/information-disclosure-policy#safety)

(b) [Information whose disclosure is likely to endanger the security of Member States or prejudice the security or proper conduct of any operation or activity of UNDP;](https://www.undp.org/accountability/transparency/information-disclosure-policy#safetymemberstates)

(c) [Information covered by legal privilege or related to access of individual investigation cases;](https://www.undp.org/accountability/transparency/information-disclosure-policy#Legalpriviledge)

(d) [Information on UNDP’s own internal deliberations, communications, and UNDP deliberations with Member States or other entities with which UNDP cooperates, subject always to the Harm Test and Public Interest Override in paragraph 17 below;](https://www.undp.org/accountability/transparency/information-disclosure-policy#internaldeliberations)

(e) [Commercial information where disclosure would harm either the financial interests of UNDP or those of third parties involved;](https://www.undp.org/accountability/transparency/information-disclosure-policy#commercialinformation)

(f) [Information which, if disclosed, in UNDP’s view would seriously undermine the policy dialogue with Member States or implementing partners.](https://www.undp.org/accountability/transparency/information-disclosure-policy#policydialogue)

17. **Harm test and public interest override.**In exceptional circumstances, UNDP reserves the right to disclose the information deemed confidential in paragraph 16. The Information Disclosure Oversight Panel (hereinafter referred to as the “Panel”) will consider all requests. UNDP may exercise this right if it determines that the overall benefits and public interest of such disclosure outweighs the likely harm to the interest(s) protected by the exception(s). This may include situations in which the disclosure of certain confidential information would, in UNDP’s view, be likely to avert imminent and serious harm to public health or safety, and/or imminent and significant adverse impacts on the environment. Such disclosure by UNDP would be on the most restricted basis necessary to achieve the purpose of the disclosure. If the confidential information has been provided by or relates to a Member State or third party, UNDP would make such disclosure only after informing the Member State or third party of its concerns and considering their plans to address and mitigate the potential harm involved.

**V. Request to Review/Appeal Process**

18. If all resources enumerated under paragraph 11 have been exhausted and the requester of information does not obtain the desired information, or if the information requested is denied for reasons that appear inconsistent with the spirit of this Policy, the requester may write to the Legal Office, making a case for reconsideration. Requests to review should be directed to:

Chief Legal Officer and Director, Legal Office
United Nations Development Programme
 220 East 42nd Street, Room 2066
New York, NY 10017 USA
Email: accesstoinformation@undp.org

19. Every request to review will be acknowledged. The requester seeking review is entitled to a response from the Legal Office within 30 calendar days of receipt of the request to review.   Vexatious and repetitive requests may be denied.

20. In the event that the requester is not satisfied with the response from the Legal Office to the request to review, and a request for a document remains denied in whole or in part, the requester may submit an appeal against this response from the Legal Office to the Information Disclosure Oversight Panel, providing reasons for the appeal. Requests for appeals should be directed to:

Coordinator of the Information Disclosure Oversight Panel

Effectiveness Group, Bureau for Policy and Programme Support

United Nations Development Programme
304 East 45th Street, FF-16th Floor
New York, NY 10017 USA

Email: IDPOversightPanel@undp.org

21.  Every request for Appeal will be acknowledged. The Panel shall review the denial of requests to disclose a document or portion of a document as described in the appeal to a member of the public. The Panel will have the authority to make the final decision and will make its best efforts to do so within 45 calendar days of receipt of the appeal.

22. The Panel will share its decision with the appellant, the UNDP Administrator and the relevant internal unit or office. If the Panel determines that the requested information will not be disclosed, its reasons will be provided to the appellant.

**VI. Information Disclosure Oversight Panel**

23. **Mandate**. The Panel’s mandate is to oversee the implementation of the Information Disclosure Policy and to consider and review appeals relating to information disclosure.

24.**Functions.**The Panel’s primary function is to review appeals submitted to it, and to consider whether UNDP’s Information Disclosure Policy has been properly applied. Such consideration shall be guided by the principle of seeking amicable solutions in the context of the request and the parties who may be affected by the release of the information.

25. The Panel may also review the implementation of the Policy, and recommend, as appropriate, more detailed mechanisms and procedures for the review of denied requests in light of operational and other changes within UNDP.

26.**Membership.**The Panel consists of three members who are independent to UNDP: one from a non-governmental organization; one from a foundation: and one from a UN agency other than UNDP.  The Chair of the Panel will be selected from amongst, and by, the Panel members.

27. **Criteria for selection of Panel members.**Members will be selected through a competitive selection process on the basis of the following criteria: keen understanding of UNDP policies, structures, programmes and operations at Headquarters and Country Office levels; knowledge of programmes and operations of UNDP’s associated Funds and Programmes; knowledge of, and familiarity with, information disclosure and access to information policies; and proven ability to work with development partners. All members are appointed by the UNDP Administrator.

28. Members will serve for a term of three years, which may be extended for another term at the discretion of the Administrator. Appointments will be made at the expiry of the term of a member any time during the course of the year or when a vacancy arises.

29. **Meetings.** The Panel will meet virtually or *in situ*whenever there is an Appeal for review. The Panel may also meet to consider policy matters related to information disclosure and/or other ad-hoc issues, as necessary.

30. **Role of the Effectiveness Group.**The Effectiveness Group of the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support will serve as the Coordinator to the Panel.

**Annex 1.**

**Type of information normally available to the public through UNDP websites:**

**12. Information about UNDP Country Programme Management:**

**(a) Standard Basic Assistance Agreements**

UNDP’s relationship with the Governments of programme countries is legally established and governed by the Standard Basic Assistance Agreement or predecessor agreement applicable to UNDP (SBAA). The applicable SBAA is available on UNDP Country Office websites.

**(b) Common Country Analysis / United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (CCA/UNSDCF)**
The CCA/UNSDCF sets the framework for the operational activities of the UN system in many programme countries. This is a Government-originated document prepared by representatives of the Government in consultation with the UN Country Team, which is led by the UN Resident Coordinator. A contribution to the country’s analytic work and the UNSDCFs are mandatory products, unless there is only one UN agency resident in the country, or the country is in or emerging from a crisis situation, in which case the UN contribution may be to support a post-conflict needs assessment. Completed UNSDCFs and CCAs are available on UNDP Country Office websites and on the United Nations Sustainable Development Group website.

**(c) UNDP Country Programme Documents and “One Plan” Documents**

Based on the UNSDCF approved by the Government and the UN Country Team and the UNDP Strategic Plan, dialogue with the programme country Government results in the Country Programme Documents, which is prepared by the Government in consultation with and with support from the UNDP Country Office. This document identifies key goals and opportunities for UNDP support to national programmes and priorities, as approved by the Executive Board. After its approval by the Executive Board, the final Country Programme Document will be made available online to the general public through the respective Regional Bureau websites and/or Country Office website, or through the office of the Resident Representative in programme countries. The “One Plan” is a common programming framework agreement between the Government and a number of participating UN organizations to enhance the inclusiveness and coherence of the collective programmatic response of the UN system in a given country. UNDP contributes to the “One Plan” within the scope of the Country Programme Document approved by the Executive Board for the particular country. The “One Plans” are made available to the public through the respective UNDP Country Office websites, the UN Development Group website and the participating UN organizations’ websites.

**(d)  Multi-Year and Annual Work Plans**

Based on the UNDP Country Programme Document approved by the Executive Board and in collaboration with the Government, a UNDP Country Office will develop projects to deliver on the agreed results. Projects further detail the major results expected and the strategies for achieving these results, and clarifies the arrangements for implementation and management. Work Plans, which may be multi-year or annual in duration, detail the activities and resources that will be spent to achieve these results. Work Plans are available on UNDP Country Office websites.

**(e) General UNDP Project Information**

General information on UNDP development projects worldwide, including funding and implementing organization, actual start and end dates, status of the project, recipient country and subnational geographic location, is available in [UNDP Transparency Portal](http://undp.open.org/).

**(f) Project Documents**

Project Documents, constitute the legal agreement between the programme country Government and UNDP to implement a project. Project documents are available in [UNDP Transparency Portal](http://open.undp.org/) and on UNDP Country Office websites.

**(g) Social and Environmental Screenings, Assessments and Management Plans**

This includes the completed Social and Environmental Screening Procedure and any related draft and final social and environmental assessments and management plans. Screenings and assessments conducted prior to project approval will be annexed to the Project Document. Subsequent reports and drafts will be disclosed through the UNDP Transparency Portal.

**(h)** **Project Performance Reports**

These include Annual Review Reports, Country Office Results Reports, Assessment of Development Results, Project Annual Review Reports, Project Quarterly Progress Reports and Outcome Evaluation Reports, if an outcome is evaluated.

**(i) Resident Coordinator Annual Reports**

The annual reporting of UN-system activities to the UN Secretary-General and stakeholders is available in the Country Office website.

**(j)** **Evaluation Reports**

This refers to evaluations of UNDP programmes and management responses to evaluations of the performance, outcomes or impacts of such programmes, where they exist, are available on the [Evaluation Resource Centre’s public database](http://erc.undp.org/) and/or the [Evaluation Office website](http://web.undp.org/evaluation/).

**13. Information about UNDP Operations:**

**(a) UNDP Executive Board**

All documentation, based on the programme work of the UNDP Executive Board, is available on the Executive Board website prior to each session. The documents are prepared to help the Board carry out its mandate as formulated in UN General Assembly resolution 48/162. The documents cover a wide range of issues – policy and strategic, financial, budgetary, administrative, programming and operational matters, evaluations, and organizational and procedural issues. These reports are later issued as official documents of the UN and are available through the UN’s Official Document System website. A permanent record of all deliberations and decisions of the Board is also available on the [Executive Board website.](https://www.undp.org/executive-board) In addition, an archive of Governing Council documents dating back to 1966 is available on the website.

**(b) UNDP Leadership**

Annual Reports of the Administrator as well as statements and speeches by the Administrator and Associate Administrator are available on the [UNDP corporate website](https://www.undp.org/our-leadership).

**(c) UNDP Financial Information**

Relevant documentation on UNDP budgets for management and programme activities approved by the UNDP Executive Board, including the financial report and audited financial statements, and the annual review of the financial situation are publicly accessible. UNDP’s audited financial statements are also published and posted every biennium on the UN General Assembly website, and on the [UNDP corporate website](http://audit-public-disclosure.undp.org/). Information on funding sources is available in the Annual Reports of the Administrator and in [UNDP Transparency Portal](http://open.undp.org/). Financial information at the transaction level including donor commitments, and UNDP disbursements, expenditures and incoming funds are available in [UNDP Transparency Portal.](http://open.undp.org/)

**(d) UNDP Procurement**

UNDP procurement activities are guided by policies and procedures set out in various documents, including the procurement chapter of the UNDP’s [Programme and Operations Policies and Procedures](https://www.undp.org/accountability/policies-and-procedures). UNDP also makes public all its [procurement solicitation notices](http://procurement-notices.undp.org/). Information regarding awarded contracts is available in Country Office and [UNDP corporate websites](http://procurement-notices.undp.org/view_awards.cfm).

**(e) UNDP internal audit reports as of October 2008**

The annual report of UNDP’s Office of Audit and investigations and the annual report of UNDP’s Audit Advisory Committee are part of the documents discussed during the Executive Board sessions and are publicly available on its [website](https://www.undp.org/executive-board). They are later issued as official documents of the UN and are available through the UN’s Official Document system website. UNDP internal audit reports issued by the Office of Audit and Investigations (OAI) as from 1 December 2012 are available on [UNDP corporate website.](http://audit-public-disclosure.undp.org/) Requests for access to internal audit reports between October 2008 and November 2012 should be made in writing to the UNDP Administrator at accesstoinformation@undp.org, with a copy to the Director of the Office of Audit and Investigations (OAI) at audit.disclosure@undp.org. The procedure for requesting disclosure of internal audit reports issued between October 2008 and November 2012 is available at [UNDP Corporate Website.](https://www.undp.org/accountability/audit/disclosure-internal-audit-reports)

**(f) Report on disciplinary measures and other actions taken in response to fraud, corruption and other wrongdoing**

An annual report on disciplinary measures taken in response to fraud, corruption and other wrongdoing is published on the [UNDP corporate website](https://www.undp.org/accountability/audit/investigations).

**Annex 2**

**Example of information in the exception list:**

**16. Current practices and principles of deemed confidentiality**

**(a)** **Information whose disclosure is likely to endanger the safety or security of any individual, violates his or her rights, or invades his or her privacy**

UNDP does not provide access to:

i)     Information whose disclosure would, or would likely compromise the security of UNDP staff and their families, consultants, contractors, other individuals, and UNDP assets;

ii)    Information about logistical and transport arrangements related to UNDP’s shipments of assets and documents and the shipment of staff’s and consultants’ personal effects;

iii)   Information whose disclosure would, or would likely endanger the life, or safety of any individual, or the environment.

iv)   Personal information relating to staff and consultants whose disclosure would, or would likely compromise the rights and legitimate privacy interests of the person concerned.

This includes, among others, terms of employment, performance evaluations, personal medical information, information relating to staff appointment and selection process, personal communications.

**(b) Information whose disclosure is likely to endanger the security of Member States or prejudice the security or proper conduct of any operation or activity of UNDP**

UNDP does not provide access to any information that if disclosed would or would likely prejudice an investigation or the administration of justice or violate the applicable law. This includes privileged information (e.g. legal advice and correspondence with legal advisers), and information that, if disclosed, might prejudice an investigation, legal or regulatory proceedings, subject UNDP to an undue risk in any contested matter (e.g. litigation or arbitration), subject UNDP to unauthorized access to its internal information technology systems, or aid the requester(s) or any other third party in impersonating UN personnel for fraudulent purposes.

**(c) Information covered by legal privilege or related to access individual investigation cases**

Requests for confidentiality by complainant or witnesses will be honored to the extent possible within the legitimate needs of the investigation.

**(d) Information on UNDP’s own internal deliberations, communications and UNDP deliberations with Member States or other entities with which UNDP cooperates, subject always to the Harm Test and Public Interest Override in paragraph 17 above.**

UNDP does not provide access to information whose disclosure would, or would likely frustrate the success of a policy or deliberative process; seriously prejudice the work of UNDP; undermine the integrity of UNDP’s decision-making process; or inhibit the free and frank provision of advice and exchange of views.

**(e) Commercial information where disclosure would harm either the financial interests of UNDP or those of third parties involved.**

UNDP does not provide access to financial, commercial, scientific or technical information that may, in UNDP’s sole opinion or as a result of a confidentiality restriction, if disclosed:

(i)  Cause harm to UNDP or a third party’s commercial and financial interests;

(ii)  Put a third party at a disadvantage in contractual or other negotiations;

(iii)  Prejudice a third party in commercial competition

**(f)** **Information which, if disclosed, in UNDP’s view would seriously undermine the policy dialogue with Member States or implementing partners.**

UNDP does not provide access to any documents, memoranda, or other communications which are exchanged with Member States, with other organizations and agencies, or with or between members of UNDP Executive Board, where these relate to the exchange of ideas between these groups, or to the deliberative or decision-making process of UNDP, its Member States, its Executive Board or other organizations, agencies or entities with whom it cooperates.

**Footnotes**

1. The present Policy supersedes the first official draft completed in July 1996, approved by the Executive Committee on 10 January, 1997. An independent evaluation was undertaken in June 2001 to review the Policy’s implementation and impact. Subsequently, the Policy was compared against broader UN policies and in August 2004 was further revised. Minor revisions were made in May 2007. Major revamps occurred between December 2007 and January 2008, March 2013, between December 2016 and March 2017, and July 2019. The policy was last revised in April 2020.