UNDP Support Services to National Implementation

1. Towards developing national capacities. UNDP must not substitute for national entities in nationally implemented projects. But in some circumstances, UNDP is requested to provide support services, which must be done strictly following UNDP rules and regulations. Exit strategies should be established.

2. UNDP support services should not be confused with direct payments (POPP: Direct Payments). In both cases, payments are made from the UNDP bank account, but in direct payments, the government assumes responsibility for the contracting process, performs recruitment or procurement, and signs the contract according to its own rules and regulations. UNDP assumes this responsibility for support services, based on UNDP rules and regulations. Direct payments are included in the annual audit of projects nationally implemented by NGOs, while support services are excluded from this audit.

3. UNDP support services to national implementation have traditionally been concentrated in procurement and recruitment. In accordance with the definition of a responsible party, support services may also include carrying out activities such as organizing strategic events or conferences, and producing outputs such as research products.

4. In this modality, UNDP undertakes the procurement/commitment action as well as disbursement. It conducts the transaction from requisition to disbursement, with no cash being transferred to the implementing partner. The UNDP Resident Representative is accountable for the provision of services, including their quality and timeliness. The implementing partner has full programmatic control, however, and so full accountability for and ownership of project activities.

Examples of UNDP support services to national implementation would include, among others:

- Identification and recruitment of programme or project personnel
- Identification of training activities and assistance in carrying them out
- Procurement of goods and services

5. UNDP provides support services upon request from the implementing partner, for activities within the project document or/and annual work plan (see overview section POPP NIM Finances & NGO Implementation Finances), in accordance with its regulations, rules and procedures. The nature and scope of the services must be described in annexes to the project document or annual work plan.

6. A letter of agreement must be signed between the Resident Representative and the national government, through an authorized official (see 5.0 Inputs, below).

7. Where a project is nationally implemented by a non-governmental organization and includes a significant share of support expenses without a signed letter of agreement, the entire project amount must be audited.

8. Direct project costs can be attributed in full to a given development project, programme or service. They are recovered by UNDP by charging them directly to the budgets of the projects. Costs and related payment schedules must be described in the annex to the project document dealing with the provision of UNDP support services.

9. Expenses are recognized when goods/services are delivered/rendered and accepted by UNDP.

10. The administrative, financial and technical tasks involved in managing programmes and projects are normally integrated into the work of the national implementing partner. Where the implementing partner lacks the capacity to undertake these tasks, the parties should work out measures to build that capacity as part of the design of the programme or project.

11. A management support unit may be established to carry out tasks that cannot be handled by the implementing partner’s existing mechanisms. As a supporting structure to that of the government, however, the unit may impede the development of the government’s own capacities and provide services at a cost that the government cannot afford or sustain. For these
reasons, UNDP should use a management support unit only where support is limited in time and is accompanied by capacity-building measures in the government. The Local Project Appraisal Committee must address the cost-effectiveness of such a unit, its impact on sustainability and need for capacity building, and clarify expected results in terms of increased accountability, capacity, quality programming, delivery, etc.