**Managing prescriptive content: UNDP working definitions**

**A. Prescriptive Content**

**1. Regulations and Rules**

***Regulations***

United Nations staff regulations are established by the General Assembly (Art. 101, para. 1, United Nations Charter) and may be supplemented or amended by the General Assembly (United Nations Staff Regulation 12.1). They apply directly to UNDP staff members (Staff Regulation 1.1(e)). UNDP financial regulations are promulgated, and amendments and exceptions may be made, by the Executive Board (UNDP Financial Regulation 1.02). Regulations require mandatory compliance.

***Rules***

United Nations staff rules are issued by the Secretary General. Such rules apply directly to UNDP staff members. UNDP financial rules are established by the Administrator (UNDP Financial Regulation 2.02). Rules require mandatory compliance.

**2. Policies**

Policies are normative and prescriptive instructions intended for general application which guide decisions to achieve a desired outcome. Policies are derived from regulations and rules and are approved by the Administrator. Policies require mandatory compliance.Policies provide the operational, long-term framework for the organization and describe "what" the organization intends to do. Policies should be clear and simple statements and should not be overly prescriptive. UNDP's policies and procedures repository is the POPP (Programme and Operations Policies and Procedures) which contains policies related to project implementation, operations, and others.

**3. Procedures**

Procedures are the concretization of policies. They serve as a blueprint for policy implementation and serve as a step-by-step instruction on "how" to implement a policy and who will implement it.

Procedures describe a systematic sequence of events needed to implement a policy and to carry out the organization’s basic functions, such as for example programme and project management, recruitment, procurement and financial management. Procedures also include clearly defined roles and responsibilities.

**4. Frameworks**

Frameworks are collections of policies and procedures related to one or several topics. They are published as a summary and may also contain guidelines and other elements intended to help the recipients to perform their tasks in accordance with the strategies of the organization.

Examples in UNDP include the Recruitment and Selection Framework, the UNDP Accountability Framework, the Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfer-Framework and others.

**5. Guidelines and guidance notes (i.e., guides)**

Guidelines and guidance notes (i.e., guides) may be issued in addition to policies or procedures. Guidelines and guidance notes (i.e., guides) include recommendations for policy implementation and/ or for following procedures. These may be based on best practices or on an ideal course of action.

A guideline a description of a recommended and expected course of action in support of a set of principles and specific to a particular area. It aims to streamline a particular process and provide advice to assist in accomplishing a given task, as well as clarification on a given topic.

**6. Visual Guides**

Visual guides provide an overview of all key roles, documents and guidance for a policy and can be used as a checklist and roadmap to help manage tasks efficiently and securely. Visual guides provide an overall understanding of the procedures of a policy and an overview of the process flow steps with links to relevant resources in the POPP for each process flow step.

**B. Other Forms of Content**

​**1. Strategies**

**a. Programmatic Strategies**

UNDP's corporate programmatic strategies articulate the organization's position on, and approach to an area of work outlined in the Strategic Plan or in a related UN-wide policy or mandate, and serve to position UNDP vis-à-vis its partners, alternative service providers and stakeholders. A programmatic strategy also defines priorities and principles to guide UNDP's work as part of a framework for implementation through policy and programme support.

The articulation of a programmatic strategy should include a synthesis of current and emerging development issues, a theory of change, a mapping of UNDP's work in the area where such work is already ongoing and the key national, regional and/or global stakeholders. It should address gender equality, capacity development, partnerships, resource availability and other cross-cutting issues relevant to development effectiveness in the area of work and articulate the necessary linkages and/ or synergies. Once formulated and adopted, a strategy can be revised or adjusted to reflect emerging issues, new opportunities or lessons learned from implementation and to continually ensure that UNDP maintains a relevant signature approach to the issues involved.

If necessary, programmatic strategies may also be broken down on a regional or even country level in order to provide a more detailed perspective. Such segment strategies need to be aligned with the overall, corporate strategies. Each strategy should be accompanied by a roll-out, socialization, implementation and monitoring plan, including guidance and tools for practitioners.

Strategies should also be accompanied by an indication of technical and financial resource availability, and an outline of a plan to build and sustain partnerships as well as mobilize additional resources for implementation.

**b. Operational Strategies**

In addition to programmatic strategies, UNDP also has a large number of operational strategies.

Operational strategies need to be aligned with UNDP's priorities, as outlined in the Strategic Plan. They serve to map out the broader approach towards the implementation of corporately identified institutional effectiveness priorities and may be revised or adjusted to reflect new opportunities and lessons learned.

**2. Position Papers**

Position papers are developed as a response to new developments in UNDP's environment that have not yet been considered in the programmatic or operational strategies. In addition, position papers can also be written in order to clarify UNDP's programmatic or operational position on issues that are not exhaustively dealt with in UNDP's strategies, but should be consistent with existing strategies. This may include issues that are of a smaller scale and thus are not or not broadly mentioned in the strategies or issues that are mainly relevant for a certain segment of UNDP's activities.

​**3. Roadmaps and Action Plans**

The terms roadmaps and action plans are often used interchangeably for a detailed plan to guide progress towards an objective. Roadmaps and action plans enable an organization to visualize options to reach objectives. They list actionable steps, interdependencies among them, alternative routes to reach the objectives as well as critical assets and potential roadblocks. Roadmaps and action plans are dynamic and can be adjusted when needed. They are often costed and timed and progress regarding their implementation is frequently tracked and assessed.