

UNDP'S INFORMATION DISCLOSURE POLICY

I. The Policy (1)

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 the public, 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. UNDP's Information Disclosure Policy (hereinafter referred to as the "Policy") is intended to ensure that information concerning UNDP programmes and operations is available to the public, except for limited information that is deemed confidential as set out in this Policy. As a custodian and steward of public funds, UNDP is directly accountable to its UNDP/UNFPA 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](#) and individual [Country Office websites](#), this Policy codifies existing principles, practices and procedures.

3. The Policy has been developed taking into account major UN intergovernmental statements and conferences, including the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development (1992), the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development (1995), the Millennium Development Goals of the UN Millennium Declaration (2000) and the Plan of Action of the World Summit on the Information Society (2003).

4. 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.

5. This Policy applies to UNDP and to those associated Funds and Programmes administered by UNDP, namely, the [United Nations Development Fund for Women \(UNIFEM\)](#), the [United Nations Capital Development Fund \(UNCDF\)](#), and [United Nations Volunteers \(UNV\)](#). This Policy is available on the [UNDP corporate website](#), as well as the websites of Country Offices and the associated Funds and Programmes.

6. 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. Public access

7. The package of information enumerated in paragraph 8 is available on UNDP websites. Country specific documentation is available from the appropriate [Regional](#) and central Bureaux and/or [Country Office websites](#). 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., 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.

8.1 Information about UNDP Country Programme Management:

- a) Standard Basic Assistance Agreements
- b) Common Country Assessments/ United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (CCA/UNDAF)
- c) Country Programme Documents or "One Plan" Documents
- d) Country Programme Action Plans and Annual Work Plans
- e) Project Documents
- f) Project Performance Reports

- g) Resident Coordinator Annual Reports
- h) Evaluation Reports

For further details of each type of information material above see Annex I.

8.2 Information about UNDP Operations:

- a) UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board
- b) UNDP Executive Office
- c) UNDP Financial information
- d) UNDP Procurement
- e) UNDP Staff

For further details of each type of information material above see Annex I.

9. The information enumerated in paragraphs 8.1 and 8.2 is available in at least one of the three working languages of UNDP (English, French and Spanish), depending on the official/working language of the Country Office publishing the information. Documents presented to the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board for formal adoption, are available in English, French and Spanish.

10. 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.

11. 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 and its various partners. The exceptions below in sub-paragraphs (a)-(g) are in line with those adopted by the UN Secretariat, many UN Member States and international organizations, 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:

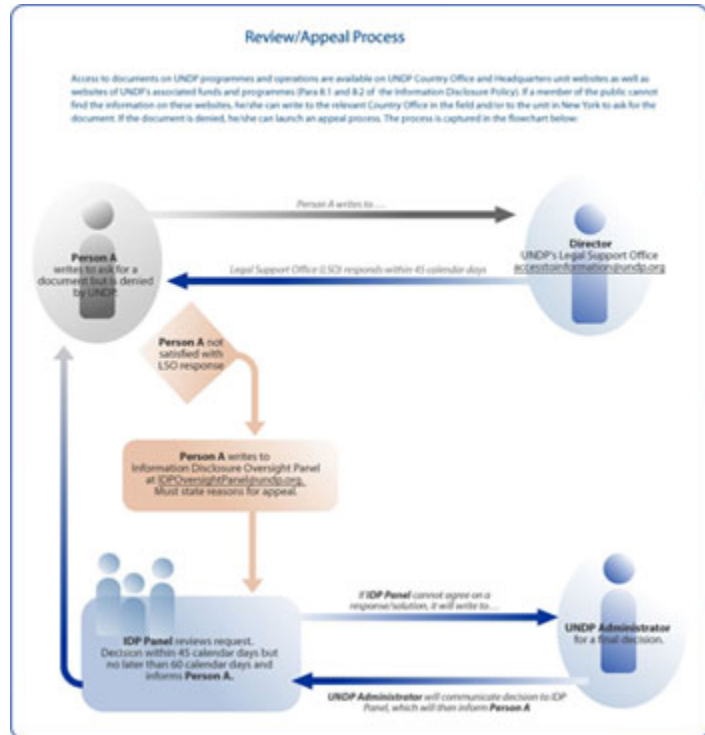
- (a) Information received from or sent to third parties, under an expectation of confidentiality.
- (b) Information whose disclosure is likely to endanger the safety or security of any individual, violate his or her rights, or invade his or her privacy;
- (c) Information whose disclosure is likely to endanger the security of Member States or prejudice the security or proper conduct of any operation or activity of UNDP;
- (d) Information covered by legal privilege or related to access to internal audit reports;
- (e) Internal inter-office or intra-office documents, including e-mails and draft documents;
- (f) Commercial information where disclosure would harm either the financial interests of UNDP or those of other parties involved;
- (g) Information which, if disclosed, in UNDP's view would seriously undermine the policy dialogue with Member States or implementing partners.

12. Abusive, excessive or vexatious requests may be denied.

III. Review/appeal process

13. If all resources enumerated under paragraph 7 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 Support Office, making a case for reconsideration. Requests should be directed to:

The Director, Legal Support Office
United Nations Development Programme
304 East 45th Street, FF-803
New York, NY 10017
USA
Email: accesstoinformation@undp.org



A flow chart of UNDP's Review/Appeal Process.

[\[click to enlarge this image\]](#)

14. Every request will be acknowledged. The requester is entitled to a response from Legal Support Office within 45 calendar days of receipt of the request.

15. In the event that the requester is not satisfied with the response from the Legal Support Office and a request for a document remains denied in whole or in part, the requester may ask for a review of this determination by the Information Disclosure Oversight Panel (hereinafter referred to as the "Panel"), providing reasons for the appeal (see section IV). Requests for appeals should be directed to:

The Secretariat, Information Disclosure Oversight Panel
United Nations Development Programme
One United Nations Plaza, DC1-1905
New York, NY 10017
USA
email: IDPOversightPanel@undp.org

16. Every request for appeals will be acknowledged. The Panel shall review the denial of requests to disclose a document or portion of a document to a member of the public, and provide a final determination generally within 45 calendar days of receipt of the appeal but never later than 60 calendar days.

17. If an agreeable solution is not forthcoming within the Panel, the Panel will make recommendations to the UNDP Administrator on the outcome that would be most consistent with the application of the Policy. The Administrator will have the authority to make the final decision, taking into consideration the recommendations of the Panel.

IV. Information Disclosure Oversight Panel

Mandate

18. The Panel's mandate is to oversee the implementation of the Information Disclosure Policy and to consider and review appeals relating to information disclosure.

Functions

19. The Panel's primary function is to review appeals submitted to it and to determine whether UNDP's Information Disclosure Policy has been properly applied. Determinations 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.

20. The Panel may also develop, as appropriate, more detailed mechanisms and procedures for the review of denied requests, review the implementation of the Policy and provide recommendations on changes which should be made, as well as re-examine the Policy annually in light of operational and other changes within UNDP.

Membership

21. The [Panel](#) consists of five members, all appointed by the UNDP Administrator in consultation with UNDP Bureaux: three UNDP professional staff members and two

individuals from non-governmental organizations, one who is a national of a UNDP programme country and one from a donor country, each appointed in his/her personal capacity. UNDP's Chief of Staff or his/her Deputy, and the Director of the Office of Audit and Investigations will serve as ex-officio members of the Panel. The Chair of the Panel will be selected from amongst, and by, the Panel members.

22. Members will serve for a term of two 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.

Criteria for selection of Panel members

23. Members will be selected 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; thorough knowledge of, and familiarity with, information disclosure and access to information policies; and proven ability to work with UNDP partners.

Meetings

24. 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.

The role of the Office of Communications

25. The Office of Communications will serve as the Secretariat to the Panel.

ANNEX I

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

8.1 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 \(SBAA\)](#).

b) Common Country Assessments/ United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (CCA/UNDAF)

The CCA/UNDAF 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 UNDAF 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 UNDAFs and CCAs are available on [UNDP Regional Bureau websites](#) and on the [United Nations Development Group website](#).

c) Country Programme Documents or "One Plan" Documents

Based on the UNDAF 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) Country Programme Action Plans and Annual Work Plans

Based on the Country Programme Document approved by the Executive Board and in collaboration with the Government, a UNDP Country Office will develop a Country Programme Action Plan, which further details the programme design, the major results expected and the strategies for achieving these results, and clarifies the arrangements for programme/project implementation and management. In addition to the Country Programme Action Plan, the Annual Work Plan sets out the Country Office's objectives and priorities for the year. The Country Programme Action Plan together with the Annual Work Plan constitutes the formal agreement between UNDP and the Government to execute the Country Programme.

e) Project Documents

Project documents, or Country Programme Action Plans, in combination with the Annual Work Plans, constitute the legal agreement between the programme country Government and UNDP to implement a project.

f) 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.

g) Resident Coordinator Annual Reports

Annual reporting of UN-system activities to the UN Secretary-General and stakeholders.

h) Evaluation Reports

Evaluations of UNDP programmes and management responses to evaluations, where they exist, are available online at the [Evaluation Resource Center's public database](#) and/or the [Evaluation Office website](#).

8.2 Information about UNDP Operations:

a) UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board

All documentation, based on the programme work of the UNDP/UNFPA 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. In addition, an archive of Governing Council documents dating back to 1966 is available on the website.

b) UNDP Executive Office

[Annual Reports of the Administrator](#) as well as statements and speeches by the Administrator and Associate Administrator are available to the public through the UNDP corporate website.

c) UNDP Financial Information

All relevant documentation on UNDP budgets for management and programme activities approved by the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board, including the financial report and audited financial statements, the annual review of the financial situation and the annual report of UNDP's Office of Audit and Investigations are [publicly accessible](#). UNDP's audited financial statements are also published and posted every biennium on the [UN General Assembly website](#). Information on funding sources is available as well in the [Annual Reports of the Administrator](#).

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](#) available online. UNDP also makes public all its [procurement solicitation notices](#) online. Awarded contracts above US\$30,000 are available online on Country Office websites, by region and kind of services/goods (type, scope and amount of the contract). Special Service Agreements and Service

Contracts above \$US30,000 may be published by way of summary for privacy and security reasons.

e) UNDP staff

Breakdown of all UNDP staff, including project staff, working globally and in each country.

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. A major revamp occurred between December 2007 and January 2008.