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Plan of Action for the Harmonization of Business Practices (HBP)  
in the United Nations System

# **Key Achievements of the HBP in 2011-2012**

**STATUS REPORT**

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# KEY ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE PLAN OF ACTION FOR THE HARMONIZATION OF BUSINESS PRACTICES (HBP) IN 2011-2012

## Introduction

1. The HBP Plan of Action Trust fund was established after the approval of the HLCM in the fall of 2008. After a first donation by New Zealand in December that year donations were received from Norway, Sweden, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom. A total of US\$ 10.25 was received. To date, a total of approximately US\$ 7.1 Million has been allocated to different projects.
2. The original project proposal had the following objectives:
  - I. **Achieve Efficiency Gains**
  - II. **Adopt International Standards and Replicate Best Practices**
  - III. **Enhance Transparency and Accountability**
  - IV. **Enhance Public Trust and Engage Stakeholders**
  - V. **Facilitate Knowledge and Resource Sharing**
  - VI. **Facilitate Effective Inter-agency Coordination**
3. The projects that are finalized, on-going or in the pipeline all fall into one or more of these categories. This report is organized along these objectives with one “flagship” project listed first under each of the objectives.
4. Below is a summary of how the HBP projects have contributed towards the objectives of the Trust Fund. Many of the projects contribute towards more than one of the objectives; however, projects will only be listed under two objectives for ease of reading.
5. The table below summarizes the financial status of the project. An estimated balance of US\$ 2.4 Million remains. However, there are also pipeline projects that will be reviewed for approval by the Steering Committee in early 2013 of approximately US\$ 1.1 Million. If approved, the remaining balance is around 15% of the original donations.

**Table 1**

<b>Project</b>	<b>Allocation</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Objectives</b>
Comparative Analysis and Review of the staff regulations and the rules, practices and procedures, particularly in field duty stations. (HR Network& WFP) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review of entitlements in the event of death and injury due to malicious acts and service incurred accidents</li> </ul>	\$386,200	Completed	<b>Knowledge Sharing;</b> <b>Best Practices</b>
Feasibility study for Common Treasury Services (IFAD and WHO) and Support to Coordination Committee and Community of Practice	\$904,150 + \$113,540	Completed	<b>Efficiency Gains;</b> <b>Knowledge and</b> <b>Resource Sharing</b>
UN system-wide financial statistics database and reporting system (CEB Secretariat)	\$794,700	On-going	<b>Transparency and</b> <b>Accountability;</b> <b>Coordination</b>
Common Standards Costing Approaches for ICT Services and Investments (UNODC)	\$565,000	Completed- Evaluation pending	<b>Efficiency Gains;</b> <b>Standards and Best</b> <b>Practice</b>
Vendor Eligibility Project (UNDP)	\$174,132	Operationally Closed	<b>Transparency and</b> <b>Accountability;</b> <b>Knowledge and</b> <b>Resource Sharing</b>
Procurement process and practices harmonization in support of field operations (UNICEF)	\$628,819	Completed- Evaluation Pending	<b>Efficiency Gains</b>
Collaborative Procurement of Vehicles (UNDP)	\$990,000	On-going	<b>Efficiency Gains</b>
UNGGM Vendor Registration Reform (UN/UNOPS)	\$ 408,740	On-going	<b>Transparency;</b> <b>Public</b> <b>Trust and Engage</b> <b>Stakeholders</b>
Support to UNCTs implementing HBP (UNSSC)	\$215,600	Completed	<b>Knowledge and</b> <b>Resource Sharing</b>
Common Services and Harmonized Business Practices (UNSSC)	\$175,480	On-going	<b>Knowledge and</b> <b>Resource Sharing</b> and <b>Efficiency Gains</b>
Harmonizing Banking Services Across the UN System (UN)	\$1,100,000	On-going	<b>Efficiency Gains;</b> <b>Resource Sharing</b>
Harmonization of vacancy advertisement and selection process at country level for General Service and National Officer positions (UNESCO)	\$270,000	On-going	<b>Knowledge and</b> <b>Resource Sharing</b>
Procurement Process and Practice Harmonization in Support of Field Operations, Phase II (UNFPA)	\$455,820	MoU under negotiation	<b>Efficiency Gains;</b> <b>Resource Sharing</b>
Total Allocated	\$7,182,181		
Project Coordination (including coordinating staff at the CEB secretariat)	\$ 750,000	Estimated until October 2013	
Total allocations	\$7,932,181		
Approximate Balance	\$2,335,366		

## I. ACHIEVE EFFICIENCY GAINS

Efficiency gains can take the form of actual monetary savings or improved processes that free up staff time to be used for other activities. Given the financial realities of the UN system, these types of projects have been identified as being of high priority. Hence, a number of projects under the trust fund fall into this category.

### I.A Feasibility Study for Putting in Place Common Treasury Services

- **Investment: \$904,150. Return on Investment to date: \$20 Million from foreign exchange realized from 2011 only, and \$1.2-2.3 Million annually expected from a project on Common Banking Services.**

6. The feasibility study, carried out by KPMG, has been completed and provided recommendations in four areas of work: banking, payments, foreign exchange and investments. The Treasury Services Working Group created under the Finance and Budget Network is following up on the recommendations that were made in the feasibility study and has taken action in all areas.
7. Another component of the project was the creation of the Treasury Services Web-site which serves as an on-line forum for information sharing and discussion on treasury related topics. This platform has been instrumental for the success of the project and has a role in each of the four areas of collaboration as a tool for information sharing, coordination and project management.

#### I.A.i FOREIGN EXCHANGE:

8. In 18 months, the Treasury Services Working Group reports US\$ 20 Million in savings on exchange transactions as a direct outcome of the HBP Project.
9. These savings are important not only for their scale, but also because they largely meet the request from member states that administrative savings from collaboration and harmonization should benefit country programmes in the country where the savings are realized.
10. In general, the UN operates in local currencies but budget allocations are given in US\$. When an exchange transaction is carried out, local currency is made available for programme implementation. Therefore, by improving exchange rates, development programmes get more local currency which leads to increased programme delivery. Hence, this is an example of where **benefits from savings are directly related to programme delivery.**

11. The benefits have been realized from improved information sharing and from a process of actively comparing exchange rates locally, using Country Offices, to internationally available rates from international banks and international offices of locally available banks. In many cases the exchange rates from the same bank can vary significantly between the local office and the international office. Organizations are continuously using the new methodology. Therefore, the **improved performance in exchange transactions is sustainable**.

#### **I.A.ii BANKING SERVICES:**

12. Following up on another recommendation from the feasibility study, an HBP project has been approved to consolidate banking services in the UN system. The project which aims at negotiating joint contracts with major banks **is expected to lead to savings of between \$1.2- 2.3 Million annually**. With an investment of \$1.2 Million in this project, this corresponds to **a full return on investment within less than a year** from completion of the project.
13. The project which is led by the UN Secretariat will negotiate common Long Term Agreements with the six global banks that handle up to 70% of the UN business. In addition, the project will also focus on large duty stations e.g. peace-keeping missions, regional hubs, Delivering as One Countries or other large duty stations at first, to negotiate local banking contracts to improve efficiency and to reduce banking fees. In the first phase, Long Term Agreements (LTAs) will be negotiated in six such duty stations with global coverage being the final aim.

#### **I.A.iii PAYMENTS:**

14. Piggy backing on a UN Secretariat contract with Citibank, a number of organizations have started to use, or are reviewing the use, of Citibank e-cards or payment cards. This significantly simplifies payments, particularly for delegates at large meetings, and saves significant staff time and ensures improved controls. Payment cards can also be used to simplify travel related transaction. However, the implementation is at its early stages and the actual savings are unclear. However, the UN Secretariat external audit confirmed that this was a best practice. It is also a good example of the system being able to use existing LTAs to negotiate benefits for all member organizations.

#### **I.A.iv INVESTMENTS:**

15. The information sharing platform established by the treasury services feasibility study has been an active tool for improving investments for the UN system. The daily exchange of information on low risk investments is deemed as an invaluable tool to ensure that organizations have a full range of information about available opportunities. This is particularly important in the current uncertain environment where opportunities for safe investments with acceptable yields are very difficult to find. The treasury services working group made up of 19 organizations all state that this has led to better financial performance. However, given the nature of financial markets and changes in exchange rates, and risks, this financial benefit cannot be

quantified. Nevertheless, there is a clear consensus that organizations are benefitting financially.

16. As a part of the work on investments following the feasibility study, a framework for investments in the UN system has been created by the Working Group on Treasury Services. This framework, while not a mandatory guideline, outlines the basic principles of investment practices in the UN system. This is an important and timely product given the uncertain global financial situation and the importance of safeguarding UN resources in such an environment.

## I.B Procurement Process and Practices Harmonization in the Field

➤ **Investment: \$628,819. Return on Investment 10-15%: of procurement expenditure in the field.**

17. This project has been completed and the project evaluation is under way. A second phase has been approved for funding.
18. The Procurement Network project on harmonized procurement in the field has developed new guidelines for joint procurement in the field and has identified and started the implementation of changes into each organization's regulatory framework to ensure that there are no obstacles to collaboration in procurement. From a survey of country offices, the network estimates that savings from 10-15% on procurement expenditures is realistic. This procurement does not change the existing policies on global procurement which is carried out by organization's headquarters and where significant collaboration following the lead agency principle is already in place (e.g. specialization for anti-retro-viral drugs or contraceptives). Nevertheless, **savings are still significant particularly given the number of countries where the UN is active.**
19. Similarly to the foreign exchange project, savings and cost reduction in local procurement will lead to more resources channelled into programmes in the countries where the procurement takes place (where the procurement is programme related). This can lead to **increased procurement volumes or additional resources to be channelled to other programmatic activities.**
20. Using a joint procurement model, the following examples illustrate the potential savings:

**Table 2**

Thailand:	31 Organizations annual savings of <b>\$ 400,000 for telecoms</b>
Philippines:	10 Organizations annual savings of <b>\$85,000 for documentation</b>
Zimbabwe:	21 Organizations annual savings of <b>\$276,000 for fuel</b>
Georgia:	8 Organizations annual savings of <b>\$17,280 for office supplies</b>

21. The first phase of the project worked with Operations Management Teams in Myanmar and India to establish common procurement teams. Reports on the activities in these countries are expected in January or February 2013. The aim is for LTAs to be established and for the expenditures to be compared to the baseline established during the missions.
22. In order to ensure that the benefits from the project are fully mainstreamed into the work of UN Country Teams and to ensure that any institutional obstacles that may remain are addressed, the HBP Steering Committee has funded a follow up phase to this project. In this phase, the Procurement Network will work closely with the UNDG to ensure that procurement teams are put in place in field duty stations. The project will run for one year.

### I.C Common Standard Costing Approaches for ICT Services and Investments

- **Investment: \$565,000. Key Benefits: Enables organizations to identify areas of over-spend and to more accurately plan ICT investments in the future.**
23. The common costing project is operationally completed with the project evaluation under-way. Final financial closure is expected in 2013.
  24. This project developed common approaches to ICT investment decision-making by creating and implementing a framework for establishing the total costs of ICT operations, which also allows for benchmarking of ICT services. By doing so, organizations were able to determine the total cost of ownership of ICT.
  25. The benefit of the project has been the **ability to measure and identify areas of over-spend that might benefit from being approached differently**. For example, outsourcing vs. in house, consultants vs. staff, different technologies, receiving service from other organizations etc. It also allows for more informed decisions about future ICT projects and their financial impact on organizations.
  26. Several organizations have already reported that the project has helped them identify areas where savings and efficiency gains could be found in the area of ICT.

### I.D Collaborative Procurement of Vehicles

- **Investment: \$990,000. Return on Investment: Reduced cost of vehicles of up to 10%**
27. This project was approved by the HBP Steering Committee in July 2012. Activities have started and will run for 18 months.
  28. The United Nations Organisations spend in excess of \$300 million per year on vehicle procurement. The project aims to review the options for **consolidating planned**



**purchasing of vehicles across organisations.** The project has three phases to enable the progressive building and adoption of a consolidated vehicle procurement framework strategy.

29. The first phase, which is on-going, consists of data gathering and of a feasibility study to identify what parts of UN procurement of vehicles lends itself to collaboration. The second phase will develop a consolidated procurement framework and the final phase will consist of implementation of the framework. The latter will include LTAs with vehicle manufacturers.
30. Informal information already suggests that vehicle manufacturers are paying close attention to the process and are preparing to bid when the requests for proposals is issued.

## **I.E Support to UNCTs Implementing Harmonization of Business Practices & Common Services and Harmonized Business Practices**

➤ **Investment: \$215,600 and \$175,480. Key Benefits: Supporting the mainstreaming of harmonization initiatives to the field level to ensure intended change towards efficiency.**

31. In 2010, the HLCM and the UNDG carried out a joint mission to Delivering as One Pilots and to “self-starters” to identify bottlenecks to collaboration in the area of business operations. The report from the mission found, among other findings, that much guidance produced by headquarters bodies was not used to its full potential.
32. In order to support the mainstreaming of tools produced by the HBP, and other initiatives by the HLCM and the UNDG, at the field level. The HBP funded two projects with the UN System Staff College that works with UN Country Teams and with Operations Managers to ensure that the tools produced are known and used.
33. By implementing the harmonization tools that have been created, **efficiency of operations in the field will be enhanced and enable savings and efficiency gains at the local level.**

## II. ADOPT INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS AND REPLICATE BEST PRACTICES

In order to increase its efficiency, the UN aims to identify best practices to replicate and to adopt international standards where these are not in place. Several projects under the trust fund respond to this need.

### II.A Common Standard Costing Approaches for ICT Services and Investments

- **Investment: \$565,000. Key Benefit: Through comprehensive analysis on ICT investments, organizations can identify best practices and learn from each other and from non-UN entities**

34. Apart from providing an opportunity for savings, the ICT costing project has provided an opportunity for UN organizations to compare their expenditures on ICT to other organizations of similar size and profile. **This enables organizations to learn from each other to plan for and to gain efficiency gains in ICT.** Furthermore, the project allows for benchmarking across non-UN institutions, both in the public and private sectors for example to determine their relative expenditures in areas like end-user support or global data communications. This enables UN organizations to optimize performance.

### II.B Comparative Analysis and Review of the Staff Regulations and Rules, Practices and Procedures, particularly in Field Duty Stations

- **Investment: \$386,200. Key Benefit: A comprehensive mapping of UN system HR practices enabling best practices replication**

35. This project has been completed and is the first analysis and review of the full set of staff regulations and rules, practices and procedures in the UN system.
36. **A comprehensive mapping of the UN system's human resource practices enables UN organizations to share information and experiences in the area of human resources.** The report has made it possible for organizations to share experiences and to build on best practices across the UN system.
37. Work programmes that have been able to draw on the report include collaboration on performance appraisal systems and work on recruitment in the field. The latter is able to use the study to design the HBP project on recruitment reform for national staff in the field to respond to concerns that have been raised through the Delivering as One Process.

### III. ENHANCE TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The HBP has funded a number of projects that seek to improve the transparency and accountability of the UN system to member states, to the public and to other stakeholders.

#### III.A UN System-wide financial statistics database and reporting system

- **Investment: \$794,700 Benefit: The creation of a one-place data depository available to all stakeholders on UN system financial flows.**

38. The financial statistics data-base will develop a comprehensive UN system-wide financial database while integrating existing databases, **eliminating data collection overlaps and meeting mandated UN system-wide financial reporting requirements.** This provides a one-place access to comprehensive, reliable financial information on the entire UN system.
39. The data-base is a big step towards eliminating data collection overlap and provides information to member states, the public and other stakeholders on the financial flows of the UN system. The data will be available interactively on the CEB website in January 2013.
40. In order for the project to be successful, common definitions of terminology related to revenue and expenditures was agreed upon. This has also allowed for the harmonization around IPSAS definitions as the UN system is implementing this new accounting standard.

#### III.B Vendor Eligibility Project

- **Investment: \$628,819 Benefit: Efficient tracking of suspect vendors and information sharing to prevent losses**

41. This project was the first HBP project to be finalized. The system is being incorporated into organizations' procurement practices.
42. The vendor eligibility project, increases transparency and oversight by tracking suspect vendors. Once fully implemented by the 17 organizations that have either put it in place or are putting it in place in 2013, this **will radically reduce the risk of suspect vendors being able to get new contracts with different UN organizations until any suspicions have been addressed.** This meets a key requirement of member states that the UN needs to improve its oversight function in procurement.
43. The project introduces a common information sharing platform that provides a UN system-wide ability to communicate decisions related to suspect vendors throughout the UN procurement community.

44. Other realized benefits include improved stakeholder confidence and an improved quality of the procurement process and due diligence by UN procurement officials in the field and at Headquarters.

### III.C Vendor Registration

- **Investment: \$ 408,740. Benefit: Simplified registration process for UN system procurement enhancing access to UN procurement for vendors from all countries and increases competition.**

45. This project has started and aims to simplify the registration process for UN procurement to reduce vendor “mortality”—vendors that drop out of the process because of heavy registration demands.
46. Repeated requests from member states, including in the 2009 Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review, on improved access to UN procurement for vendors from developing countries and for countries with economies in transition has led to a large increase in procurement from these countries in the UN. This project **will further enhance the access to UN procurement by simplifying the registration process** and reduce “vendor mortality” without reducing the procurement due diligence required of the UN system in the area of procurement.

## IV. ENHANCE PUBLIC TRUST AND ENGAGE STAKEHOLDERS

Related to the objective on transparency and accountability is the aim of HBP projects to enhance public trust in the UN system and to engage all stakeholders. Strong management is an important step to achieve this.

### IV.A UNGM Vendor Registration Reform

➤ **Investment: \$408,704. Key Benefit: Increased Access to UN Procurement Processes**

47. Simplified vendor registration responds to frequent stake-holder demands for easier access to UN procurement. **By drastically simplifying the vendor registrations process, the UN will be more accessible to new vendors.** Apart from being in line with member states' requests, it also responds to the wishes by manufacturers across the world. The project will increase competition for UN procurement contracts which will likely lead to more vendors receiving contracts, and logically, to better prices.
48. The vendor registration project uses an existing inter-agency platform, the United Nations Global Marketplace, to simplify vendor registration. The project engages the entire procurement network and benefits the entire system. The UNGM is managed by UNOPS for the UN system and. The use of the UNGM for the HBP project will improve the UNGM and ensured that no separate processes are created. Furthermore, it allows for access to information on procurement and procurement processes in the UN to all stakeholders.

### IV.B UN System-wide financial statistics database and reporting system

➤ **Investment: \$794,150. Key Benefit: Significantly simplified and increased access to UN financial statistics for all stakeholders**

49. A comprehensive depository of UN system wide financial flows, including trends, in the areas of revenues and expenditures by type, by donor, and by location provides a clear view of the finances of the UN system. **For the first time, there will be one location where this data is available and the web-interface, available on the new CEB website to be launched in January 2013, provides drill down capacity.** For users requiring particular detail, contact with individual organizations may still be required; however, most users will find the information available quite detailed.
50. The financial statistics database also provides information to UN DESA for its report on financial flows related to development. As this is the case, it reduces the reporting requirements for UN organizations and simplifies the work of UN DESA.
51. This enhancement of UN system transparency is expected to increase the trust of the UN system as well as being a useful resource for stakeholders with an interest in the UN system and its financing.

## V. FACILITATE KNOWLEDGE AND RESOURCE SHARING

The facilitation of knowledge, the sharing of it, and improved resource sharing are key components of HBP projects to ensure that overlaps are avoided and that the use of resources is efficient.

### V.A Harmonization of Vacancy Advertisements and Selection Process at Country Level for General Service and National Officer Positions

➤ **Investment: \$270,000. Key Benefit: Streamlined processes to increase cooperation and to reduce transaction cost through resource sharing**

52. This project on recruitment in the field has recently been approved by the HBP Steering Committee and work is commencing.
53. The project responds to concerns that have arisen from the Delivering as One pilots and the evaluation of the DaO. The pilot countries reported that differences in recruitment processes were not efficient and also noted that national staff, both general service and national officers, should have greater opportunities for mobility between organizations.
54. Standardized vacancy advertisement, harmonized recruitment criteria and common selection tools/mechanisms **will contribute to streamline the sourcing and hiring process of staff locally, and increase the collaboration of UN Agencies at country level,** in the area of Human Resources
55. The project aims to streamline processes and help organizations cooperate to reduce transaction costs when it comes to recruitment through the use of common instruments and standards.
56. The work will be carried out on a pilot basis in Vietnam and Uruguay but will also draw on the experiences from other Delivering as One countries that have focused on this area of work in their pilot experience.

### V.B Common Website for Treasury Services

➤ **Investment: \$113,540. Key Benefit: One-stop platform for information and knowledge sharing for all areas of treasury services**

57. The treasury services working group has based its work on the collaborative web-platform that was established by the HBP funded feasibility study. After the completion of the project, the HBP Steering Committee provided funding to provide

bridging between the close of the feasibility study on harmonization of treasury services and the implementation of the recommendations therein. The ability for the treasury services working group to continue its work using the web platform was critical for the group to move ahead.

58. After receiving the bridging funds from the HBP, the network has now taken over financing of the platform through cost sharing. The web platform has been critical for treasury professionals in cooperation and information sharing. A member of the treasury services working group recently stated that “if the aim was to get us to work together, it has really worked.” Most working group members state that the forum is invaluable for collaboration and information sharing which leads to more efficient treasury operations.

## V.C Vendor Eligibility Project

- **Investment: \$628,819 Benefit: Efficient tracking of suspect vendors and information sharing on status of reviews and sanctions where applicable**

59. In order to increase the professionalism and coherence in procurement operating modalities in the UN System, the HLCM-PN proposed the development of a policy framework of administrative processes that is common in the UN system with respect to the handling of vendors that engaged in proscribed practices (Phase 1) and a supported by a further enhancement of the UN Global Marketplace (Phase 2).
60. The project is **using the UN Global Marketplace to share information on suspect vendors. By using an already existing electronic platform, information can be shared easily and transparently.** This reduces work-load and ensures that the UN is applying best practices to track suspect vendors to ensure that the system is well protected against fraud.
61. Currently four agencies have the system in place with 13 more putting it into place in 2013. The UNGM update will be in place with the system update in 2013.

## V.D Comparative Analysis and Review of the Staff Regulations and Rules, Practices and Procedures, particularly in Field Duty Stations

- **Investment: \$386,200. Key Benefit: Comprehensive review of HR practices to enable knowledge sharing**

62. The analysis provides information on rules, regulations, practices and procedures across the system. By having a report on these topics, information is shared between organizations and it provides a solid basis for inter-agency cooperation in the area of human resources has been significantly simplified. Human Resources is an area where harmonization is important and having this data as a starting point enables the human resource network to move further in harmonization of Human Resource practices.

## **V.E Review of Entitlements in the Event of Death and Injury due to Malicious Acts and Service-Incurred Accidents**

63. A comprehensive review of entitlements in the event of death and injury was carried out under the existing project on comparing human resource practices. The report provides a basis for comparison between organizations on how they address these issues. This has led to organizations being able to clearly see where there might be gaps in coverage for some organizations. Although different operational models may not lend themselves to complete harmonization, the review has led to the availability of minimum standard of insurance coverage through organizations being able to piggy back on existing contracts.

## **V.F Support to UNCTs Implementing Harmonization of Business Practices & Common Services and Harmonized Business Practices**

- **Investment: \$215,600 and \$175,480. Key Benefits: Encourage cooperation and resource sharing in the field to increase efficiency.**
64. The collaboration with the UN system Staff College to train Operations Managers and to ensure that programme and operations are more inter-linked is an important initiative to maximize resource sharing. The Common Services approach is built on the concept of organizations carrying out business operations activities in the field jointly to maximize resource sharing.
65. The HBP project, which **is closely coordinated with the UNDG**, ensures that operations and programme staff are up to date on tools and priorities in the area of business operations to ensure a more effective and efficient UN system in the field drawing on the work and tools produced by Headquarters.



## VI. FACILITATE EFFECTIVE INTER-AGENCY COORDINATION

The CEB is the highest coordination body of the UN System. Its HLCM pillar has the responsibility to ensure and enhance coordination between members in the area of management. The HBP has been a revolutionary new approach to enhancing coordination by providing resources that enable organizations to engage in ambitious collaborative activities that could not have been carried out without funding support. Several of the HBP projects have had significant impact on enhancing coordination between organizations.

### VI.A UN System-wide Financial Statistics Database and Reporting System

- **Investment: \$794,700. Key Benefit: Increased coordination of inter-agency financial data collection, reporting and presentation**

66. The financial statistics project brings together financial data from across the system. By reporting on revenues and expenditures by type the project ensures that there is transparency in terms of finances in the UN system. Through the project, organizations provide information to the CEB secretariat which then publishes the data. **This collaboration between organizations, under the coordination of the CEB, speeds up the reporting cycle to once a year instead of once every two years** while reducing staff time needed for reporting. Furthermore, collecting system-wide financial data fits well with the coordinating role of the CEB which also collects data on human resources around the system.

### VI.B Governance Framework of the HBP

- **Key Benefit: Inter-agency ownership of harmonization projects**

67. Finally, the governance framework of the HBP has enhanced inter-agency coordination and collaboration as well as having provided ownership of the project. The HLCM has established a steering committee chaired by the Vice Chair of the HLCM. The committee consists of the chairs of the different networks and has ex-officio membership from UNDP and UNICEF. The Steering Committee reports to the HLCM and to the donors of the trust fund.
68. Through the information flow and reporting for the HBP, harmonization of business practices has received an enhanced priority in the UN system. The HPB has full support from the members of the HLCM and its oversight ensures that organizations give priority to the activities carried out with support from the trust fund.

## Conclusion

69. The HBP has now funded 14 projects in all four areas of management in the UN system as well as working together with the UN System Staff College to ensure that the results of the harmonization and simplification work is mainstreamed in the field.
70. A total of 10 organizations have taken the lead on projects and many more have participated as members of steering committees. This shows the broad ownership and support for the agenda of the HBP.
71. Furthermore, the success of many of the HBP projects has served as a catalyst for the Committee and its Networks to take on additional challenges. When possible, this is done with existing resources of member organizations. Nevertheless, the availability of HBP funds has been and continues to be critical for many initiatives to be feasible.
72. For example, activities that are not funded by the HBP but that has been fully or partially inspired or coordinated by HBP projects include the move towards collaborative procurement in areas such as freight insurance and forwarding, collaborative procurement at headquarters locations where millions have been saved in Geneva and Rome and initiatives are starting in New York and Copenhagen, the follow up to the feasibility study on harmonization of treasury services (reported on above), the review of performance appraisal systems in human resources, and the continued work to enhance business operations in the field by the UNSSC and the UNDG.

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