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## **United Nations Population Fund**

### **UNFPA Strategic Plan, 2026-2029 (DP/FPA/2025/9)**

#### **Annex 3**

#### **Business model**

##### *Summary*

Annex 3 to the UNFPA Strategic Plan, 2026-2029 provides a high-level outline of the business model that will underpin the implementation of the Strategic Plan, with principles for how UNFPA will look to calibrate structure, presence and financing approaches to deliver results in a more complex and financially constrained global operating environment.

Drawing on this high-level outline and the related principles, an ongoing business model review is not only looking to support the operationalization of the new Strategic Plan, but also respond to structural shifts in development cooperation, the “humanitarian reset,” financing and multilateral governance. This annex and the ongoing review will inform future iterations of the business model (during the cycle of this Strategic Plan and beyond) within the context of the 80th anniversary of the United Nations and the evolving post-2030 agenda.

This will help UNFPA to address the most pressing emerging global challenges and opportunities related to its mandate and put the organization in a position to remain an effective, trusted and future-fit partner through 2029 and beyond.

## **I. Introduction**

1. The UNFPA Strategic Plan, 2026-2029 represents the third stage in a series of strategic plans within the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) era that are based on the organization's commitment to advance the universal mandate of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action. As global challenges intensify, ranging from protracted crises and inequality to climate change and political polarization, UNFPA requires a business model that is agile, resilient and future-oriented.

2. This annex provides a high-level outline of the business model that will underpin the implementation of the Strategic Plan, 2026-2029, shaped by the vision and direction of the Strategic Plan, as well as by recent evaluations, fiscal constraints and the need for UNFPA to remain impactful across diverse contexts. It is an outline that reaffirms the normative leadership of UNFPA, the organization's commitment to leaving no one behind, and the role of UNFPA as a trusted partner in delivering results across the humanitarian-development-peace continuum. Central to this role is the long-standing partnership of UNFPA with national Governments, working with them on the ground, across all operating contexts, to advance normative change and support national ownership and development progress.

## **II. Overall approach**

3. While the Strategic Plan sets out the programmatic and operational direction of UNFPA, this high-level outline of its business model focuses on the kind of organization that will be needed in order to deliver on the Strategic Plan's commitments and ambition. It has been developed as part of the strategic planning process across many months and in consultation with both external and internal stakeholders.

4. Based on the direction set out in the Strategic Plan and on the high-level outline and principles set out in this document, UNFPA has embarked, as of April 2025, on an extensive 'Business Model Review' exercise, in alignment with UN80. The review is taking forward the vision of the Strategic Plan and its annexes, unpacking the operational implications and exploring how the organization can continue to adapt to deliver in a more complex and constrained environment.

5. Guided by recent evaluations and shaped by mounting global needs and constraints, including financing volatility and intensified humanitarian need, the Business Model Review is grounded in a single, urgent priority: ensuring that UNFPA can continue to deliver effectively, efficiently and at scale for the people it serves in every context. The review represents a proactive step to adapt to a world that is changing rapidly, where needs are growing, inequalities are deepening and the expectations of partners and the United Nations system itself are shifting.

6. While supporting the implementation of the Strategic Plan, 2026-2029, the Business Model Review will also inform the long-term evolution of the organization and focus on recasting the business model as a living framework, one that will continue to adapt beyond the 2026-2029 strategic plan cycle, helping to position UNFPA for whatever challenges and opportunities emerge from the "humanitarian reset," the broader reforms and the post-2030 agenda.

## **III. Business model principles**

7. In seeking to develop a high-level outline of the kind of business model needed to deliver on the new Strategic Plan, the organization has developed a set of core principles that, when combined, provide a clear and compelling framework through which the current ongoing Business Model Review and future deliberations can be understood.

8. Developed in close consultation with internal and external partners, these principles are intended to shape both immediate operational adjustments and the longer-term evolution of the organization's delivery model, forming a conceptual foundation for a business model that remains aligned with the Strategic Plan, 2026-2029, yet is dynamic and capable to respond to evolving contexts.

9. The principles are designed to guide decision-making across all levels of the organization, from programme and operations to partnerships and policy. Taken together, they form the conceptual foundation for a future-fit business model that remains dynamic, responsive and aligned with the Strategic Plan.

10. *Agile and flexible.* UNFPA will preserve and strengthen its ability to operate with agility by adjusting its presence, structure and programming in response to shifting national contexts, financial conditions and operational risks. Flexibility will be central to maintaining relevance and continuity, particularly in humanitarian, fragile and politically sensitive environments. This principle also supports the organization's ability to pivot when opportunities arise, update country typologies, as needed, and reconfigure its workforce and systems while upholding its normative mandate and universal presence.

11. *Outward-looking.* UNFPA will deepen its engagement across the development and humanitarian ecosystem through strategic partnerships that expand its reach, credibility and capacity to deliver. Working closely with national Governments, civil society, youth- and women-led organizations, international financial institutions, United Nations entities and the private sector, the organization will act as both a convener and a catalyst. This outward orientation will be critical to sustaining results under financial pressure and ensuring alignment with broader United Nations system reforms, including those emerging from UN80.

12. *Integrated.* UNFPA will ensure that its programming is coherent across the humanitarian-development-peace continuum, with a focus on continuity of care and responses that reflect intersecting needs. Integration is essential to avoid fragmentation, improve efficiency and reinforce national ownership. By maximizing synergies across sectors and operating levels, the organization will strengthen resilience and sustainability, particularly addressing subnational disparities and the needs of those facing structural inequalities.

13. *Knowledge-based.* UNFPA will enhance its knowledge leadership, ensuring it remains grounded in data, evidence and shared learning. As country engagement becomes more differentiated, knowledge systems must be strengthened to ensure that all offices and partners can access timely, relevant and high-quality support. Investments in digital platforms, real-time data capabilities and communities of practice will help promote institutional learning and adaptive capacity, especially in complex and resource-constrained environments.

14. *Accountable.* UNFPA will reinforce accountability for performance, results and conduct as flexibility and delegated decision-making increase. The organization will foster a culture of responsibility, accountability and transparency, supported by clear expectations, strong internal controls and risk-informed decision-making. Trust-based accountability will be essential to balancing autonomy with organizational integrity and impact.

## **IV. Moving Forward**

15. The ongoing Business Model Review is taking forward the vision and ambition of the Strategic Plan, 2026-2029, together with the high-level outline and principles set out in this annex. It is examining the structures, systems and ways of working across all levels of the organization (headquarters, regional and country offices), with a view to strengthening alignment, enhancing responsiveness and ensuring institutional coherence. While operational in nature, the review is anchored in the conviction that how the organization delivers must continuously evolve to remain fit for purpose in a rapidly changing world.

16. The Business Model Review is guided by the need for a business model that allows UNFPA to be effective in all contexts, from protracted crises to challenging transitions, from fragile and humanitarian settings to upper-middle-income countries where support is more upstream and catalytic in nature. At the heart of this approach is the principle of differentiated engagement, backed by a deep commitment to universal presence, national ownership and the fulfilment of the organization's normative role. Looking ahead, UNFPA will strengthen its ability to deliver across the humanitarian-development-peace continuum, while also sustaining its relevance in stable, development settings where upstream policy influence, thought leadership, domestic resource mobilization and capacity development will be critical.

17. In doing so, UNFPA will continue to build on the six outputs of its Strategic Plan, which define the core offer of support to countries: ranging from data and policy to financing, norms, service quality and humanitarian preparedness. These outputs are delivered through context-specific approaches that reflect national priorities and realities. Moving forward, this will require greater prioritization at country level and the design of cost-effective programmatic interventions tailored to diverse settings. There will be no "one-size-fits-all"; rather, the organization's success will rest in its ability to be increasingly strategic, catalytic and adaptive to evolving needs and contexts.

18. South-South and triangular cooperation, field-oriented learning and cross-regional collaboration will be important levers for reinforcing the organization's knowledge base and amplifying results. As UNFPA moves towards continually adapting its delivery model, particular attention will be paid to protecting and deepening the organization's normative leadership at country level, where the ICPD Programme of Action intersects with broader efforts to advance rights, equity and inclusion. The Business Model Review is helping the organization to chart this course without compromising the principles that define the UNFPA mandate.

19. Finally, the Business Model Review will build on the Strategic Plan, 2026-2029 and its annexes in serving as a key vehicle for institutional alignment with broader multilateral reform efforts, including UN 2.0 and the UN80 agenda. The Strategic Plan and its annexes have set the direction; the Review is helping ensure the organization can follow through.

## **V. Looking ahead: 2030 and beyond**

20. As UNFPA looks beyond the Strategic Plan, 2026-2029, the organization remains committed to the continuous evolution of its business model. Agility, adaptability and relevance will be essential in navigating a global landscape marked by rising uncertainty, shifting financing patterns and accelerating reform across the multilateral system. Looking ahead, the business model will continue to serve as a living framework, rather than an annex reviewed every four years as part of strategic planning, adjusted in real time, as country needs evolve, risk profiles shift and programmatic demands change.

21. The ongoing business model review, together with lessons learned from implementation of the Strategic Plan, 2026-2029, will inform a sustained process of institutional adaptation. This will include efforts to further align financial and structural decisions with programmatic priorities, strengthen innovation and partnerships, and deepen integration across the organization. UNFPA will remain closely attuned to the direction of United Nations development system reform, including UN 2.0 and UN80, ensuring that it is positioned to contribute meaningfully to the post-2030 development agenda. Above all, the business model will continue to reinforce the value of UNFPA as a trusted partner and normative leader, focused on country-level impact and national ownership, grounded in equity, and committed to reaching those left furthest behind.