

New Project Design and Umoja Start-Up

Project Initiation and Planning Workflow FAQs

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[Question: I am from the region. Can you provide quick guidance on the PAG procedure, if any, for the top-up of funds / grants / cash in an existing project? We will receive soon an additional $750,000. The programme was established as a 3 year, $3 million dollar project, which has so far received 2 grants of $200,000, one in 2016 and one in 2017. The grant is established as M1/R1. So far, one donor contributed, but the intent was and is that other cities will contribute as well. We will now add 2 project documents and 3 contribution agreements. 15](#_Toc509922543)

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[Question: We have drafted the ‘umbrella’ project as a programme that is to be implemented through a number of child projects. We are currently fundraising for the programme components to figure out the exact implementation structure. So far, we have secured finance for one of these child projects (legal cooperation documents are under preparation). The umbrella programme’s estimated budget is 3.22 million USD and the ready child project’s budget is 180,000 USD - referred to in the programme document as the first phase of implementation. 17](#_Toc509922546)

[Please advise if we are to discuss both programme and project at the HQ PAG level, or if it is preferred to discuss only the big programme at HQ level and the child project in the Regional PAG. 17](#_Toc509922547)

[Question: I just had a discussion with ROAS PMO on the new required budget formats to be completed before the PAG. Based on these formats/tools (including detailed budget, dates of fund receiving and installments, etc. ), I believe we will not be able to follow the approach of approving the programme as a technical umbrella document to be used for fundraising and alignment of funds and technical contributions. Since these formats are quite complicated and require the budget and donor/s to be in place, I suggest we go to PAG project by project and thus address each child project as a separate project.  I understand that this might not be the best technical case but I believe it is the most feasible solution. I am therefore recommending we start with the ready 180,000 USD project at the R PAG level. 17](#_Toc509922548)

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[Question: I received the appointment letter as PAG member representing my region. Am I expected to attend all PAGs both HQ PAG and R-PAGs? 19](#_Toc509922554)

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[Question: So what is my role as the PAG Secretary for the PAG meetings? 20](#_Toc509922557)

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# **GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE NEW PROCESS**

# **Question: So, what is the main changes in this new process?**

**Answer:**

* There are now EXCEPTIONS (that is, fast track) for some categories of projects; such projects enter the workflow at Step 3
* Concept note is reviewed virtually, except for the exempted projects/programmes. That is:

1. **In addition to a virtual peer review, two categories of projects/programmes WILL HAVE A FACE TO FACE PEER REVIEW**:
2. Innovative projects or programmes – that is, projects or programmes on new areas of work to UN-Habitat or attempting new approaches (consult Director Programme Division where not clear)
3. Large Project/Programme – that is, based on the value of the project or programme – from USD$3,000,000 (three million)

* Branch Coordinator and Regional Directors now have responsibility to give the Go/No Go approval on projects that have been reviewed by the PAG based on individual’s delegated threshold.
* The workflow user guide refers to the PAG Secretary as PCO Project Cycle Management team. This is a new terminology agreed by Senior Management.
* Regarding membership and attendance of PAG:

1. Members of the PAG Technical review team (members and alternate members) are appointed officially in writing and include the function in their individual workplan and e-pas. Non-appointed staff members may attend PAG but in personal capacity.
2. For HQ PAG meetings, there must be one representative each (one of the officially appointed members or alternate members only) from all Branches and all regions at every HQ PAG technical review meetings. (attendance can be physical, via teleconference, bluejeans, webex or another similar links). Branches or Regions can provide written comments prior to the meeting circulated to all PAG members if unable to participate in the meeting. The HQ PAG Secretary will read the comments during the meeting and include it in the minute of the meeting. The HQ PAG Chair will confirm quorum for the meeting before calling the meeting to start. The HQ PAG Secretary will advise the Chair in advance of expected attendance number
3. For Regional PAG meetings, there must be one representative each from all Branches and all other non-hosting Regions (one of the officially appointed members or alternate members only) at every Regional PAG technical review meetings (attendance can be physical, via teleconference, bluejeans, webex or another similar links). Branches or other non-hosting Regions can provide written comments prior to the meeting circulated to all PAG members if unable to participate in the meeting. The relevant Regional PAG Secretary will read the comments during the meeting and include it in the minute of the meeting.

# **Question: Where can I get information, template about the new workflow?**

**Answer:** Information, templates, guidance, training, etc. related to the new workflow are available on the Habnet. Here is the link for ease: <https://habnet.unhabitat.org/service/project-management>

# **Question: Is there going to be a training for staff on this new workflow?**

**Answer**: Yes, but the training is not a face to face training; although we had initially planned for a face to face, it was not feasible early in the year. We have recorded the training as a video and it is available and downloadable on YouTube, please see below link:

<https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=project+design+and+umoja>

After watching the video, should you still have any question or need for clarification, please contact any of the below team:

1. Modupe Adebanjo - [modupe.adebanjo@un.org](mailto:modupe.adebanjo@un.org)
2. Liliana Contreras - [liliana.contreras@un.org](mailto:liliana.contreras@un.org)
3. Kamal Naim – [kamal.naim@un.org](mailto:kamal.naim@un.org)
4. Karan Samani – [karan.samani@un.org](mailto:karan.samani@un.org)

# **Question: What is the difference between the role of the HQ PAG Secretary and the Regional R-PAG Secretary?**

**Answer:** There is no difference between the roles of the HQ PAG Secretary and the Regional R-PAG Secretary. All PAG Secretaries perform mainly the same functions. Please see the ToR of PAG Secretary in Annex J of the ‘Project Design and Umoja Start-Up – Project Initiation and Planning Workflow’ User Guide.

Please see below extract:

Annex J – Terms of Reference of PCO Project Cycle Management Team (previously referred to as PAG Secretary) (HQ and Region)

The focus of the PCO Project Cycle Management team in support of the PAG is capacity development support to staff through development of tools, methodology, and guidelines; provision of guidance, training, coaching, and hands-holding to support the Project Manager/Designer, Authorizing Officers and other relevant staff to develop and implement quality projects/programmes with the highest potential for success.

The PCO Project Cycle Management team should have deep understanding of the UN-Habitat strategic planning cycle and processes. With clear understanding of the linkages between the strategic plan, work programme and projects/programmes, he/she supports Project Managers/Designers to ensure projects/programmes are linked and contributes to the achievement of UN-Habitat’s strategic priorities, current work programme and strategic result. The PCO Project Cycle Management team provides support to the PAG technical review team members and Authorizing Officers to facilitate the delivery of their roles and responsibilities.

The PCO Project Cycle Management team:

**Capacity Development and Support function**

* Provide guidance, coaching, information, relevant documents, link to related policies and organizational process assets, hand-holding, sample best practices and other necessary support to Project Managers/Designers, PAG technical team members, and Authorizing Officers to support them in the delivery of their various roles and responsibilities, including the development of quality project document and budget
* Identify training gaps/needs related to project management processes, from observations and experience of trend, quality of documents being submitted and interaction with staff
* Develop training schedule and content and conduct training for staff related to project management processes
* In collaboration with Management and Operations Division, conduct training on Results Based Management and particularly on development of quality log-frame and project document
* Conduct induction training for new Project Managers/Designer on PAG processes and requirements

**Meeting Participation and Facilitation**

* Participates in the peer review of projects/programmes as a reviewer
* Participates in the PAG technical review with particular focus on the ESSS assessment and the review of the quality of the log-frame
* Send notification and invitation for meetings for the face to face peer review (for the exception projects/programmes) and PAG technical review
* Consolidates comments from peer reviewers received via email; sends consolidated inputs to all reviewers (the recipients of the concept note) and the related Project Designer/Manager, and upload it in PAAS
* Facilitate the PAG technical review meeting, and write minutes of the meeting, ensuring all opinions are captured with specific section on recommendations of the PAG technical team members (dissenting opinions must be included)
* Shares draft minutes with the PAG technical team members for clearance, upload in PAAS subsequently and submit to the relevant Authorizing Officer
* Provide objective comments, inputs and information as may be requested by the Approving Officer
* Upload the ‘Go/No Go’ approval in PAAS
* Provide guidance, training, information, hand-holding as required to support the Project Designer/Manager in ensuring a quality full project document is completed in PAAS

**Reporting**

* Produce regular qualitative and quantitative bi-annual and annual report as agreed with the Director Programme Division to support his/her management decisions, related to portfolio trends, geographical spread, thematic focus, extent of integration, transition from concept note or Abridged Project Document to signed contribution agreement, providing both numbers of projects and values
* Produce regular qualitative and quantitative report as requested by the Director Programme Division for submission to the Office of Executive Director and Committee of Permanent Representative
* Produce bi-annual report for the Director Programme Division on quality and completeness of projects/programmes in PAAS; highlighting projects that do not have complete/full project document in PAAS and projects/programmes that are not being monitored appropriately through PAAS

Advice and make recommendations to the Director Programme Division on necessary changes or improvement to PAG processes and methodology based on trends, experience, expertise and best practices.

# **STEP ONE (1) – CREATE CONCEPT NOTE**

# **Question: Do I need to write a Concept Note for my project? It is a continuation of a previous project.**

**Answer:** No, your project does not require a Concept Note. Please see the list of projects and programmes exempted from Concept Note below:

ALL below categories of projects and programmes do not require Concept Note

1. UN Country Joint Programmes
2. Previously approved existing project with expanded scope (substantive or financial);
3. Child project of previously approved programme
4. Projects funded through corporate Programme Cooperation Agreement (PCA) (e.g. SIDA and Norway funded projects)
5. Projects funded from core resources for corporate objective (Programme support, programme coordination etc. For example PAAS upgrade)
6. Emergency projects (automatic exception for Humanitarian projects only, other projects to be cleared by PD, Director)
7. Low value projects (see approved threshold – Annex C)

# **Question: We understand that projects that were already reviewed as concept notes by HQ PAG last year should also be reviewed by HQ PAG this year for their final review**

**Answer:** Yes, the Project Documents of all projects and programmes that had their Concept Notes reviewed last year by the HQ PAG will be reviewed by the same HQ PAG

# **Question: When is the deadline to send Concept Note for the next PAG?**

**Answer:** Concept note is no longer reviewed by PAG., it is now done virtually be Peer Reviewers. The Project Manager/Designer will need to send Concept Note to Peer Reviewers via email and copy the PAG members and PMOs (please see Habnet for addresses, but it is also pasted below for your ease). When PAAS is ready the process for sending Concept Note will be through PAAS and the emailing will be automated, although it will still need to be initiated by the Project Manager/Designer.

However, in addition to a virtual peer review, there are two categories of projects/programmes that will require a face to face Peer Review (not a PAG), these are:

1. Innovative projects or programmes – that is, projects or programmes on new areas of work to UN-Habitat or attempting new approaches (consult Director Programme Division where not clear)
2. Large Project/Programme – that is, based on the value of the project or programme – from USD$3,000,000 (three million)

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| Urban Planning and Design Experts | [unhabitat-UPDexperts@un.org](mailto:unhabitat-UPDexperts@un.org) |
| Urban Economy Experts | [unhabitat-UEexperts@un.org](mailto:unhabitat-UEexperts@un.org) |
| Urban Basic Services Experts | [unhabitat-UBSexperts@un.org](mailto:unhabitat-UBSexperts@un.org) |
| Housing and Slum Upgrading Experts | [unhabitat-HSUexperts@un.org](mailto:unhabitat-HSUexperts@un.org) |
| Risk Reduction and Rehabilitation Experts | [unhabitat-RRRexperts@un.org](mailto:unhabitat-RRRexperts@un.org) |
| Research and Capacity Development Experts | [unhabitat-RCDexperts@un.org](mailto:unhabitat-RCDexperts@un.org) |
| Programme Management Officers | [unhabitat-pmos@un.org](mailto:unhabitat-pmos@un.org) |
| Project Advisory Group Members | [unhabitat-pagmembers@un.org](mailto:unhabitat-pagmembers@un.org) |

# **Question: We downloaded the concept note and project document templates from Habnet, but the dropdown menus where it says “pick from dropdown list” inside the document do not work. Do you have versions where they work?**

**Answer:** No, they do not work. They are put here to indicate what it will be in PAAS. The assumption was that colleagues know what they would have picked and will type in. For specific content of each drop down, please see the Habnet under project management section.

# **STEP TWO (2) – PEER REVIEW CONCEPT NOTE**

# **Question: The value of my project is within the delegation of authority of the Regional Director. The Concept Note for the project was discussed at the HQ PAG last year. How should I proceed?**

**Answer:** If the Concept was reviewed and discussed last year by HQ PAG- the full Project Document will be reviewed by HQ PAG irrespective of the value of the project.

# **Question: We would like to enquire about the concept of “umbrella” projects. We are still fundraising for the bigger project. So far we have secured funding for a pilot of USD 180 000.**

# **What would be the best way to proceed? Does the concept of “umbrella” exist in the new guidelines? We could not find it, but we found low value projects procedures.  Can this be reviewed as a whole, without fully secured funding? If so, how would we handle the smaller projects under such an “umbrella” when they get funded. And how would that work in PAAS.**

**Answer:** If you envisage that the umbrella project will be implemented through couple of projects, please consider drafting the project as a programme to allow for child project(s). The programme is then the umbrella.

Another option is to see the project as low value but that does not envisage that a project will be implemented through multiple projects. But if it is the path that you chose, subsequent projects may be seen as expansion of scope of the initial one.

The choice will determine how the project document will be phrased as it needs to be explicit. Please listen to the Introduction, step 1, 2 and 3 of the training video and review the user guide.

# **Question: I have looked at the memo from the Director PD and on Habnet on the concept note mailing list and I cannot find a specific group for sending concept note to Peer Reviewers. Is there a mailing group for Peer Reviewers?**

**Answer:** Yes, there is mailing groups for Peer Reviewers. Please note that Concept Note should be sent to three groups of people. And each of the groups have a mailing group name(s). Please see below table

1. The PAG member
2. The PMOs
3. Peer Reviewers (relevant thematic subprogramme group or groups for multi-thematic projects/programmes)

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| --- | --- |
| Urban Land, Legislation and Governance Experts | [unhabitat-ULLGexperts@un.org](mailto:unhabitat-ULLGexperts@un.org) |
| Urban Planning and Design Experts | [unhabitat-UPDexperts@un.org](mailto:unhabitat-UPDexperts@un.org) |
| Urban Economy Experts | [unhabitat-UEexperts@un.org](mailto:unhabitat-UEexperts@un.org) |
| Urban Basic Services Experts | [unhabitat-UBSexperts@un.org](mailto:unhabitat-UBSexperts@un.org) |
| Housing and Slum Upgrading Experts | [unhabitat-HSUexperts@un.org](mailto:unhabitat-HSUexperts@un.org) |
| Risk Reduction and Rehabilitation Experts | [unhabitat-RRRexperts@un.org](mailto:unhabitat-RRRexperts@un.org) |
| Research and Capacity Development Experts | [unhabitat-RCDexperts@un.org](mailto:unhabitat-RCDexperts@un.org) |
| Programme Management Officers | [unhabitat-pmos@un.org](mailto:unhabitat-pmos@un.org) |
| Project Advisory Group Members | [unhabitat-pagmembers@un.org](mailto:unhabitat-pagmembers@un.org) |

# **Question: Why do I have to send my project Concept Note to all the experts in the 7 subprogramme categories? My project is only about Urban Planning, why not just send to only the Urban Planning experts mailing group?**

**Answer:** You are required to send to all the thematic subprogrammes that are relevant to the project or programme. So, depending on the thematic areas of the project or programme to be reviewed, you are required to select one or more thematic email groups. Hence, since your project is only about Urban Planning, you are required to send the Concept Note to only the Urban Planning and Design Experts’ email group. So, to answer your question directly: No, you do not need to send your Concept Note to all the experts in the 7 subprogramme categories.

However, please note that multi-thematic projects are encouraged, and an Urban Planning project may benefit from integrating other thematic areas in order to have a holistic approach to problem solving. For example, you may think that your project is only about urban planning but a colleague in Urban Basic Services may see an opportunity in integrating some element of basic services and a colleague from Urban Economy may have had experience where a similar project benefitted by having a municipal finance component.

In view of not losing the opportunity to identify the possibility for integrated project or programme, you are required to copy the PAG members ([unhabitat-pagmembers@un.org](mailto:unhabitat-pagmembers@un.org)) in your email when sending the Concept Note to your selected expert groups for Peer Review. The PAG members representing all Regions and all Branches, are required to raise observations on possibility of an integrated project or programming (multi-thematic).

In addition to sending the Concept Note to the relevant thematic groups and the PAG members, you are required to copy the PMO email group when sending the Concept Note.

Therefore, you send Concept Note to 3 categories of peoples:

1. Relevant thematic expert group
2. PAG members
3. PMO

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Urban Land, Legislation and Governance Experts | [unhabitat-ULLGexperts@un.org](mailto:unhabitat-ULLGexperts@un.org) |
| Urban Planning and Design Experts | [unhabitat-UPDexperts@un.org](mailto:unhabitat-UPDexperts@un.org) |
| Urban Economy Experts | [unhabitat-UEexperts@un.org](mailto:unhabitat-UEexperts@un.org) |
| Urban Basic Services Experts | [unhabitat-UBSexperts@un.org](mailto:unhabitat-UBSexperts@un.org) |
| Housing and Slum Upgrading Experts | [unhabitat-HSUexperts@un.org](mailto:unhabitat-HSUexperts@un.org) |
| Risk Reduction and Rehabilitation Experts | [unhabitat-RRRexperts@un.org](mailto:unhabitat-RRRexperts@un.org) |
| Research and Capacity Development Experts | [unhabitat-RCDexperts@un.org](mailto:unhabitat-RCDexperts@un.org) |
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# **STEP THREE (3) – DEVELOP ABRIDGED PROJECT DOCUMENT**

# **Question: What is your advice on Host Country Agreements and the new procedures for approval of project? Funding from host country agreements are often soft earmarked and not signed with the donor with a full project document and log frame. We are wondering how to deal with these cases in the new procedures as we do not see any exceptions. Should we deal with this type of funding as full project in our approval process meaning concept note review (except low value) and project document review?**

**Answer:** There is need for more information regarding the HCA in order to give the appropriate answer?

1. What is the agreement funding? That is, what is the purpose of the HCA, is it: (1) for office running expenses and personnel cost or (2) is it for agreed actions/activities and agreed deliverables/outputs?
2. If (2), is there any form of review process that the HCA has been subjected to? That is, a group of stakeholders reviewing, negotiating and agreeing to the activities/actions and deliverables/outputs?
3. What is the composition of the stakeholder review team/group/committee?
4. Assuming the HCA falls within (2) as per my point ‘1’ and it has a stakeholder review process that is multi-stakeholder (that is, not only UN-Habitat ROAS colleagues), then it should be submitted as a project and should enter the process at Step 3
5. Assuming the HCA falls within (2) as per my point ‘1’ and it has a stakeholder review process that is only UN-Habitat ROAS colleagues, then it should be submitted as a project and should enter the process at Step 1 in order to obtain the value of receiving comments from other non-ROAS colleagues.
6. Assuming the HCA falls within (1) as per my point ‘1’, then this should not go through PAG process but you will need to liaise and work with MOD finance

# **Question: Who prepares the project Financial and Management Feasibility Checklist?**

**Answer**: The designated Core PMO for the related PAG (region or HQ) representing the Director MOD is responsible for carrying out a feasibility assessment (financial and management) of a project or programme after reading and understanding the related Project Document and Budget and consulting with the Project PMO and/or Project Manager/Designer as he/she deemed necessary in order to have all required information to facilitate the feasibility assessment.

The expectation is that the Core PMO is providing a support role to the Project Manager/Designer and the Project PMO to help ensure that the project or programme is covers its full whole-life cost and that UN-Habitat will not be subsidizing.

Where UN-Habitat must subsidize a project or programme, a justification will need to be provided and approval obtained first from the Director Programme Division and subsequently from the Director Management and Operations Division. Source of fund for the subsidy needs to be specified.

The Core PMO sends the completed project or programme Financial and Management Feasibility Checklist to the PAG members prior to the PAG meeting that will discuss the project or programme

# **Question: So, if a project or programme is found not financially feasible by the assessment of the Core PMO; does it mean that the project cannot proceed?**

**Answer**: The decision for a Go or No Go is with the Approving Officer. The financial feasibility assessment and the PAG technical review are very important and required inputs for the Approving Officer to make his/her decision for whom he/she is Accountable.

Where a project or programme is found not financially feasible by the assessment of the Core PMO; the Core PMO must indicate and make recommendation(s) to the Approving Officer through the Financial and Management Feasibility Checklist. And this recommendation will be included in the minute of the related PAG Technical review meeting held to discuss the project or programme.

The Approving Officer takes the responsibility to make the decision on whether the project or programme should proceed or not.

Where an Approving Officer makes a decision that is contrary to the recommendations of the PAG members as specified in the minute of the related PAG Technical review meeting; he/she will need to provide a justification for dissenting.

# **Question: What is the Accountability mechanism for the Go/No Go decision role of the Regional Directors and Branch Coordinators?**

**Answer**: Approving Officers are required to ensure that all decisions are made objectively and for the benefit of UN-Habitat corporate and are informed by the required information and are properly justified, taking into serious consideration the recommendations of the Project Advisory Group as contained in the minute of the related PAG meeting. He/She is advised to consult relevant staff, PAG Technical review team and the related Project Designer/Manager as deemed necessary. Ensure decision on ‘Go or No Go’.

The Approving Officer are Accountable for consequences of decisions made them individually

The Approving Officers are required to submit a quarterly report of all projects and programmes approved during the quarter. Copies of minutes of related PAG meetings must be attached to the report and a justification made where the decision is contrary to the recommendations of the PAG members. The attendance sheet of the meetings must also be attached.

# **STEP FOUR (4) – PAG TECHNICAL REVIEW MEETING**

# **Question: I am from the region. There is a PAG on Thursday and I noted that all members of PAG are informed of this meeting.  Shall all those copied be present and/or comment in writing? or is it only a few selected members at a given PAG. Or shall there be just one or two from a region?**

**Answer:** All PAG members can provide comments in writing regardless of whether the project or programme under review is in their region or for their branch. However, actual participation during the meeting, either physically or through teleconference or videoconference requires only one representative per region in HQ’s PAG or in another region’s R-PAGs.

For HQ-PAGs, where the project or programme did not originate from your region, your region is required to participate but this can be done through a written submission required before the date of the PAG incase virtual or physical participation is not possible. Connecting to the meeting or physical attendance is always the preferred where possible. In this case the Regional Director or his/her designated alternates who he/she will inform will participate or send in the comments.

Where a project originating from your region will be reviewed at the HQ PAG, participation of the Programme/Project Manager from your region, Project/programme PMO and the Country Head of the originating country will be important; other relevant colleagues may join in. For you specifically, your relationship with the programme or project will determine the nature of your required participation. Are you the Country Head? The Programme/Project Manager? A part of the new Programme/Project team? Or a PAG member.

Please visit the below link and listen to the briefing recorded as video; it will provide you with more information. Kindly, also share the link with other colleagues.

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLTQZbEc6Bv5_K5bqkyjsr3NL3JkqWIha0>

# **Question: I am from the region. Can you provide quick guidance on the PAG procedure, if any, for the top-up of funds / grants / cash in an existing project? We will receive soon an additional $750,000. The programme was established as a 3 year, $3 million dollar project, which has so far received 2 grants of $200,000, one in 2016 and one in 2017. The grant is established as M1/R1. So far, one donor contributed, but the intent was and is that other cities will contribute as well. We will now add 2 project documents and 3 contribution agreements.**

**Answer:** As child projects, the two projects will start the workflow at Step 3, hence, no need for Concept Note. There is no other exceptions/exemptions; the two projects will need to go through the full process, however from Step 3.

The two projects will each require Project Document (please use latest version) and also will need to go to PAG.

The value of the two projects being within the threshold of the Regional Director, the two projects should be reviewed by the R-PAG

# **Question: For child projects, should I amend the project document for the programme that is in PAAS with new sections, activities, and outputs?**

**Answer:** No, you should not edit or amend the project document of a programme to accommodate the child project.

Every child project require its own project document and will need to go through the PAG process. The only exemption is that the child project will not require a Concept Note.

The child's project document should reflect that it is a child of a programme in various section such as Project Description, Project Approach, Expected Accomplishments, Purpose and Justification, and the Theory of Change

Fundamentally, an approved project document should not be edited after final approval without going back to through the approval process again.

The Child project concept is used where a Programme will be implemented by more than one project, with all projects aimed at achieving the expected accomplishment/result as set out in the Programme's project document. The two or more projects are each the Child of the parent Programme.

However, if you prefer to see your project as an expansion of scope of the same 'Project', you will still need to create a project document for each scope change but with clear reference and link to the original project document. To make changes in this offline mode might distort historical and the audit trail of an original document. When PAAS is fully running, this type of edit or amendments should be possible with the original project document still intact and any edits or amendment saved as a different version.

# **Question: Why would a regional project or programme be reviewed at the HQ-PAG**

**Answer:** If a project or programme is above USD$2,000,000, it will need to be reviewed at the HQ-PAG because it is above the threshold of the Regional Director.

The Programme Division Director may also for strategic reasons request a specific project or programme to be reviewed by the HQ-PAG

Also, if a project’s or programmes’s Concept Note was reviewed by HQ PAG, the related project document will need to be reviewed by HQ PAG.

# **Question: We have drafted the ‘umbrella’ project as a programme that is to be implemented through a number of child projects. We are currently fundraising for the programme components to figure out the exact implementation structure. So far, we have secured finance for one of these child projects (legal cooperation documents are under preparation). The umbrella programme’s estimated budget is 3.22 million USD and the ready child project’s budget is 180,000 USD - referred to in the programme document as the first phase of implementation.**

# **Please advise if we are to discuss both programme and project at the HQ PAG level, or if it is preferred to discuss only the big programme at HQ level and the child project in the Regional PAG.**

**Answer:** The programme being over $2,000,000 will need to be reviewed by the HQ PAG. After approval, you may then present the child project at the R-PAG (the project needs to be reviewed after the approval is received for the programme)

If the programme was under $2,000,000; it would be reviewed at the R-PAG level. But please note that for programme or project concept note that was reviewed in 2017 by HQ-PAG, the project document for such programme or project will need to be reviewed by the HQ-PAG regardless of the value.

# **Question: I just had a discussion with ROAS PMO on the new required budget formats to be completed before the PAG. Based on these formats/tools (including detailed budget, dates of fund receiving and installments, etc. ), I believe we will not be able to follow the approach of approving the programme as a technical umbrella document to be used for fundraising and alignment of funds and technical contributions. Since these formats are quite complicated and require the budget and donor/s to be in place, I suggest we go to PAG project by project and thus address each child project as a separate project.  I understand that this might not be the best technical case but I believe it is the most feasible solution. I am therefore recommending we start with the ready 180,000 USD project at the R PAG level.**

**Answer:** Please review the budget requirements and try resolve the issues; this is because the new process (including the budget etc.) allows for processing and approval of programmes to be implemented through child projects; including projects and programmes being developed for resource mobilization purpose (hence, with no known donor)

# **Question: Is there a mailing group for PAG members, the names are many, it would make life much easier than having to manually find and type all email addresses?**

**Answer:** Yes, there is a mailing group for PAG members. It is [UNHabitat-pagmembers@un.org](mailto:UNHabitat-pagmembers@un.org)

It contains the names of all PAG members (HQ and Regions)

# **Question: How am I meant to run my Branch PAG for small projects**

**Answer:** Please liaise with the HQ-PAG Secretary to call an HQ PAG meeting. Since the project is small, it is deemed within your approving threshold of USD$500,000 as a Branch Coordinator, hence, you will Chair the PAG meeting session for your project.

All projects will need to be reviewed by PAG regardless of value. If you have a reason why you would want to exempt a project from PAG because of its very small value, an approval will be required from the Programme Division Director. The recommended option is to include the project as part of other projects to be reviewed at PAG but not as the only project being discussed in order to manage the value for money of the time and resources of the PAG members.

# **Question: What is the respective treatment of written versus verbal comments to the PAGs**

**Answer:** Written comments are always valued, hence, they can be submitted to PAG members prior to the related PAG meeting, in addition to being physically or virtual in attendance when verbal comments are made. All PAG members can provide written comments to projects or programmes that are related to their expert area or experience.

In the case where a Branch or Region cannot participate in a PAG physically or virtually, then, the Branch or Region must submit a written comment in advance of the related PAG meeting.

# **Question: Colleagues are wondering if all those who have received the PAG invitation need to attend the meeting or not. In my understanding, all regional PAG members are not necessarily expected to attend HQ PAGs and vice versa.**

# **For HQ PAGs, Regional Director or his/her alternate from each region at least should attend the meeting.  Is it correct?**

**Answer:** For regional participation in HQ PAG, it is only one representative per region that is required to participate in HQ PAG. However, other regional colleagues (PAG members) can participate in personal capacity if so wish.

All PAG members receive the project document to give opportunity for wider comments and knowledge sharing where possible and to keep everyone informed about what is being discussed.

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# **Question: I received the appointment letter as PAG member representing my region. Am I expected to attend all PAGs both HQ PAG and R-PAGs?**

**Answer:** You are first of all, a member of the UN-Habitat PAG. Then, you are a PAG member to represent your region.

As a member of the UN-Habitat PAG, you have the responsibility to participate and contribute your experience, expertise and knowledge to bring value added to the PAG technical review and approval process and consequently to the work of UN-Habitat. You will most likely not be an expert in all UN-Habitat’s thematic areas, hence, you will be expected to contribute to projects and programmes that are related to your expertise and experience. This participation is encouraged as much as possible and it can be either by submitting comments/inputs in writing or by joining the meeting virtually or physically.

As a PAG member representing your region, you will be designated by the Regional Director as he/she may deem required when he/she is unable to participate in the HQ PAG or other R-PAGs.

The Regional Director will need to set up an arrangement that works for the region in terms of ensuring that there is one representative at the HQ PAG and other R-PAGs. Whilst physical or virtual participation is preferred and encouraged; this representation in HQ PAG and other R-PAGs may be through only submission of written comment.

Please note that there is NO, ‘No Participation’; hence, a region must participate in all HQ PAGs and in all other R-PAGs but this may be through physical, virtual or submitted comments/inputs (prior to the meeting being held)

# **Question: I am a Branch Coordinator; how do I manage my team’s participation in all the PAGs? I and all my PAG alternates are receiving the invitations to the HQ PAG and R-PAGs**

**Answer:** You and all your alternates are first of all, a member of the UN-Habitat PAG. Then, you are a PAG member to represent your Branch.

As a member of the UN-Habitat PAG, you and your alternates have the responsibility to participate and contribute your experiences, expertise and knowledge to bring value added to the PAG technical review and approval process and consequently to the work of UN-Habitat. You will most likely not be an expert in all UN-Habitat’s thematic areas, hence, you will be expected to contribute to projects and programmes that are related to your expertise and experience. This participation is encouraged as much as possible and it can be either by submitting comments/inputs in writing or by joining the meeting virtually or physically. You and your alternates are expected to individually carry out this responsibility.

As a member of the PAG representing your Branch; as the Branch Coordinator, you are the first member of the PAG for your Branch; hence, you are expected to participate and contribute to both the HQ PAG and all R-PAGs. However, when you are unable to participate in a PAG, you will need to designate one of your alternates to participate and contribute on behalf of the Branch. You may wish to set up an arrangement that works best for your Branch in order to ensure that there is no default.

For participation in HQ PAGs, whilst physical or virtual participation is required, you may submit written comments/input before the meeting date, where it is impossible for you or any of your alternates to participate physically or virtually.

For participation in R-PAGs, whilst virtual participation is required, you may submit written comments/input before the meeting date, where it is impossible for you or any of your alternates to participate virtually.

Please note that there is NO, ‘No Participation’; hence, a Branch must participate in all HQ PAGs and in all other R-PAGs but this may be through physical, virtual or submitted comments/inputs (prior to the meeting being held).

# **Question: The PAG was held last week and I have not received the minute of the PAG meeting. The PAG members made some recommendations that I need to incorporate into the project document. Unfortunately, I did not take my own minutes. How do I get the minutes?**

**Answer**: You do not need to take your own minute of the PAG meeting. The PAG Secretary is required to take minutes and share the minutes.

1. Minute of the PAG meeting of expedited projects (see below) should be submitted to the PAG members and Approving Officer within 24 hours of the review except Emergency projects (Humanitarian only and others cleared by PD Director) that must be submitted on the same day unless meeting concluded at close of business for which next day submission is allowed
2. Minute of PAG meeting for other projects should be submitted to the PAG members and the Approving Officer within 72 hours after the PAG Technical review meeting is held
3. The signed attendance sheet should be uploaded within 72 hours of the PAG meeting.

# **Question: So what is my role as the PAG Secretary for the PAG meetings?**

**Answer**: For each PAG meeting, you are required to:

* In agreement with the relevant Chair and the Project Manager set the date and time and announce a PAG meeting
* Facilitate the PAG Technical review meetings
* Review ESSS and provide comments and recommendations
* Circulate attendance register/sheet to participants for signing
* Write minute of the PAG Technical review meeting
* Upload/Share the minute and attendance register/sheet in PAAS within the stipulated timeline

# **Question: Please clarify the roles of Regional Directors and Branch Coordinators regarding the Appointment to the Project Advisory Group (PAG) and Delegation of Authority for Project/Programme Approval to facilitate the PAG**

**Answer:**

1. Following the letter of appointment to the Project Advisory Group dated 2 February 2018 and the Delegation of Authority for Project/Programme Approval to facilitate the PAG dated 30 January 2018, that you received individually; this is to provide clarifications regarding the two documents on areas that may not have been explicit:

1. A PAG Chair is first and foremost a member of UN-Habitat PAG and is expected to participate and contribute in all PAGs (regional PAGs and HQ PAG). Recall that, contributions or participation in PAGs can be through any of: face to face, teleconference, video conference or by submission of comments/inputs via email in advance of a PAG.
2. A regional Director is the R-PAG Chair for his/her respective region only. Similarly, a Branch Coordinator is the HQ Chair for HQ-PAGs when his/her Branch’s project or programme is being reviewed at the HQ PAG.
3. Regional Directors have alternate R-PAG Chairs but Branch Coordinators do not have alternate Chairs for Branch HQ PAG (Branch Coordinators have only alternate members)
4. Within the delegated authority, it is expected that a Branch Coordinator will chair the HQ PAG of his/her respective Branch where project value is up to a maximum of USD$500,000. He/She will also make the Go/No Go decision on the projects or programmes reviewed at such PAG meeting.
5. Where a Branch Coordinator is unable to chair a PAG for his/her Branch within his/her delegation, he/she needs to inform the HQ PCO Project Cycle Management Team (HQ PAG Secretary) in advance, so that such HQ PAG meeting can be chaired by the Director PD or his/her designated alternate. The Go/No Go decision on such projects or programmes will be made by the Director Programme Division.
6. HQ PAG for projects or programmes over USD500,000 will be chaired by Director Programme Division or his/her designated alternate. The Go/No Go decision on such projects or programmes will be made by the Director Programme Division
7. Similarly, a Regional Director will chair the Regional PAG of his/her respective Region where project value is up to a maximum of USD$2,000,000
8. Where a Regional Director is unable to chair a PAG for his/her Region within his/her delegation, he/she should delegate the chair of the PAG meeting to an officially appointed alternate Chair. However, the Go/No Go decision on such projects or programmes will be made by the Regional Director because this responsibility is given through a Delegation of Authority and it cannot be sub-delegated.
9. Where a Regional Director is unable to chair a PAG for his/her Region within his/her delegation, and no officially appointed alternate Chair is available to chair the R-PAG in his/her absence; the Regional Director needs to inform the HQ PCO Project Cycle Management Team (HQ PAG Secretary) in advance, so that such R-PAG meeting can be held in HQ and chaired by the Director PD or his/her designated alternate. The Go/No Go decision on such projects or programmes will be made by the Director Programme Division.
10. PAG for Regional projects or programmes over USD$2,000,000 will be conducted at the HQ PAG and chaired by Director Programme Division or his/her designated alternate
11. If a region does not have an operational R-PAG, the Delegation of Authority (DoA) that you received titled: ‘Project/Programme Approval to facilitate Project Advisory Group (PAG) process’ dated 30 January 2018 becomes suspended and cannot be implemented by the Regional Director until the time when the R-PAG becomes operational. The reason is because the DoA was issued to facilitate the PAGs.
12. Where a region does not have an operational R-PAG, the region is still required to have appointed R-PAG members. The R-PAG members are required to participate like other regions and branches in all UN-Habitat PAGs. The participation of a region or branch in PAG is regardless of whether a region or branch has an operational PAG or not.

2. If you experience any difficulty or require clarification interpreting or enforcing any part of these assigned responsibilities, please contact me directly by email. Also, please contact any of the joint MOD/PD team for guidance, queries and clarification related to the new Project Design and Umoja Start-Up: Modupe Adebanjo, Karan Samani, Kamal Naim and Liliana Contreras.

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# **STEP FIVE (5) – GO/NO GO APPROVAL**

# **Question: Please clarify the Go/No Go step**

**Answer:** The Go/No Go is an important step. The decision to proceed or not to proceed is given by an Approving Officer. On behalf of the Executive Director and the Director Programme Division, the designated Approving Officers approve project or programme to progress into formalization, thereby authorizing the project or programme and its implementation.

The Branch Coordinators and Regional Directors have delegated authority to approve a Go/No Go within individual’s delegated thresholds. The current delegation is that, Branch Coordinators can approve Go/No Go for projects or programmes with value upto USD$500,000 and Regional Directors can approve Go/No Go for projects or programmes with value up to maximum USD$2,000,000

Even though the Regional Directors have alternate PAG Chairs at the Region, the alternates CANNOT give the Go/No Go decision; the respective Regional Director is still responsible and accountable for this decision.

By a ‘Go’ approval decision, the Approving Officer gives ‘a go ahead’ to the related Project Manager/Designer to proceed to finalize the project document, continue with discussion and/or negotiation with donor(s) and/or partner(s) and to proceed with final Agreement of Cooperation (or other relevant legal document) processes internally and with the donor(s) or partner(s)) or to continue with resource mobilization (if applicable).

By a ‘No Go’ approval decision, the Approving Officer returns the submitted project document to the Project Manager/Designer either for amendment (based on comments provided by him/her) or as an instruction to stop the project from proceeding to final stage and to stop further discussions or negotiations with donor(s) and/or partner(s).

# **Question: We had a good briefing session on the New Project Design and Umoja Start Up workflow with the region. We have one question on the Go/No Go step:**

# **What is the temporary measure when we don‘t use PAAS for the Go and No Go? Would that be done by an email from the Regional Director (up to USD 2 million)? Or anything else required until PAAS is updated?**

**Answer**: You are correct, the Go/No Go will be done by an email from the Regional Director to the Project Manager/Designer copied to the PAG members.

# **STEP SIX (6) – FINALIZE FULL PROJECT DOCUMENT**

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