

Global Shared Services (GSS) Scaling Framework

The GSS framework, in its preliminary version, was presented to BIG in April 2024 during the HLCM/BIG joint session. The framework was updated in April 2025 to include coordination, monitoring, and reporting sections and steer by the BIG. The Framework and its engagement process (mechanism) was reviewed and endorsed in BIG 5, December 3 2025.

April 2025



Executive Summary

Launched in 2022, The Global Shared Services (GSS) a pillar of Efficiency Initiative was established as per the commitment of the Secretary General in the GA resolution [A/72/684-E/2018/7](#) to enhance location independent service efficiency, reduce costs, and improve service quality across UN system operations.

The Secretary General stated in his report that “*we will explore various options, including the possible consolidation of location-independent business operations into six to seven networks of shared service centers. The networks would be managed by the larger entities in the system to take advantage of their scale and geographical coverage and would offer services to other entities in the system*”¹.

A coalition of like-minded UN entities, including UNDP, UNICEF, WFP, UNHCR, UNOPS, FAO, WHO, and the UN Secretariat, was formed to drive the scaling of location-independent shared services, ensuring alignment with location-dependent services which is provided through Common Back Office (CBO) at the country level.

Efficiency Roadmap 2022-2024 - GSS

- 43 service ideas were identified and included in the Efficiency Roadmap (2022-2024), with 10 services prioritized by the BIG for global scaling.
- A time-bound GSS Task Team was formed to conduct demand analysis for the 43 services and develop an initial scaling framework.
- A scaling framework developed supplemented with a business proposal template was approved by BIG, guiding priority services implementation.
- The GSS steering and oversight transitioned to BIG, with DCO supporting coordination. The GSS task team was dismantled effectively on 31 December 2024.

Updated GSS Framework for Efficiency Roadmap 2025-2028

The updated GSS Framework refines coordination, and reporting mechanisms, aligning it with the 2025-2028 efficiency roadmap governance. The priority services are supplemented with new services. Key updates in the GSS framework include:

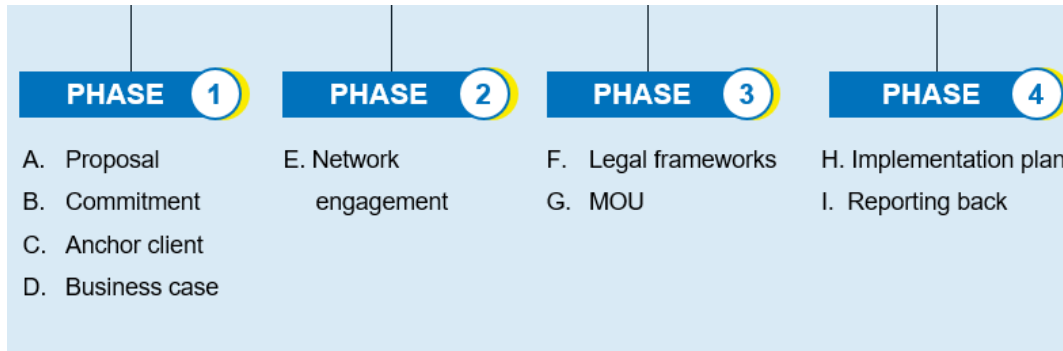
- **Enhanced governance:** *GSS oversight fully embedded within the role of BIG, ensuring senior leadership accountability at the Assistant Secretary Generals (ASGs) level.*
- **Streamlined process for service scaling:** *Structured approach from service identification to full-scale implementation.*
- **Strengthened coordination:** *Clear roles and responsibilities for Business Innovation Group (BIG), High Level Committee on Management (HLCM), Service Providers (SPs), and Development Coordination Office (DCO) to ensure accountability.*
- **Streamlined monitoring and reporting:** *A streamlined mechanism with efficiency reporting efforts backed by a DCO-hosted dashboard for transparent tracking of service subscription, usage, and efficiency gains reporting.*
- **Legal standardization:** *Development of common global MoU/agreement to support inter-agency collaboration.*

¹ Secretary General in the [GA resolution A/72/684-E/2018/7](#) - Repositioning the United Nations development system

1. Global Scaling Framework

Each new global service for scaling will have the following features:

- A. **Proposal:** Service proposal submitted to and endorsed by the BIG co-chairs
- B. **Commitment** of entity to provide services
- C. **Anchor Client:** Strong interest from at least one other UN entity.
- D. **Business Proposal** with estimated savings.
 - a. *Includes costs of service provision*
 - b. *Shows estimated savings by entity (see point A above)*
 - c. *Describes how this works across ERP system where applicable.*
- E. **Network Engagement:** Consultation/Engagement with the respective HLCM Networks (FBN, HRN, DTN, PN, Treasury Working Group) as well as to prospective clients.
- F. **Legal Framework** in place for service provision (application of mutual recognition).
 - a. *Short term – SP entity to lead discussions on legal agreement per service.*
 - b. *Medium-term – BIG to convene a UN inter-agency legal group to develop an MOU template for GSS.*
- G. **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU):** Sign agreements with a transition plan.
- H. **Implementation Plan:** Developed in consultation with each client entity depending on the transition plan agreed with the SP.
- I. **Reporting** savings on an annual basis



2. Business Proposal

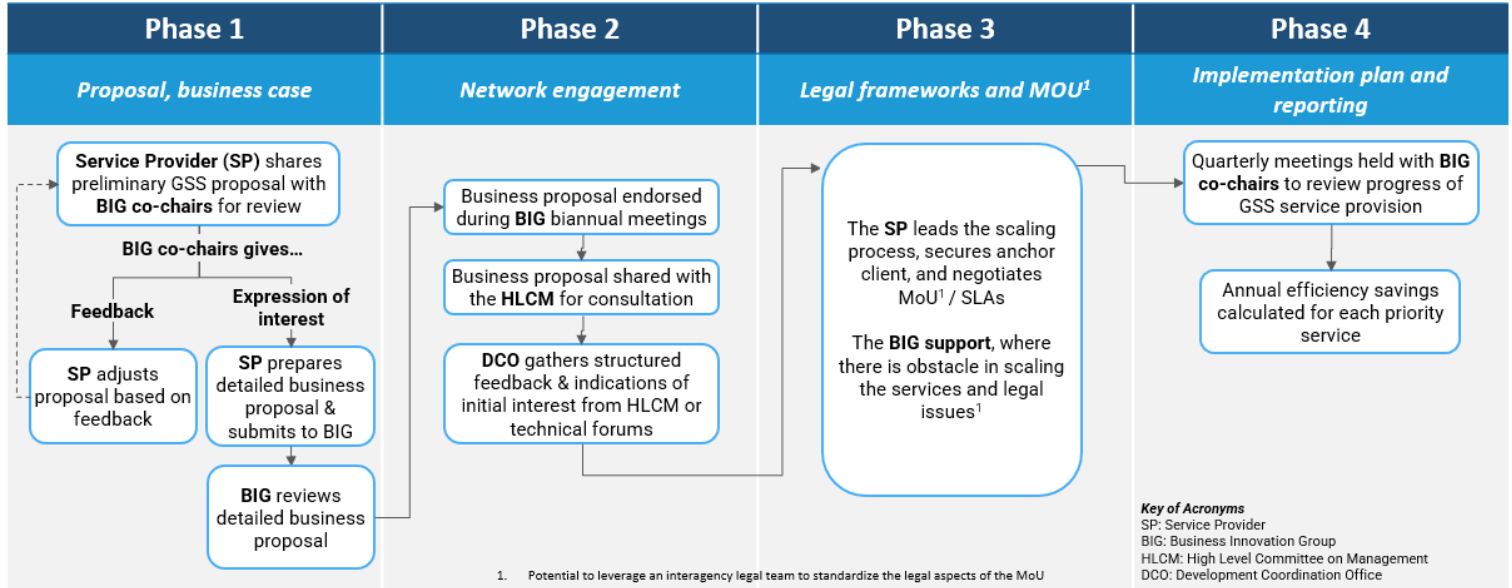
Development of a business proposal for each proposed global service is vital. The service-providing entity is responsible for developing the business proposal, using the streamlined template which includes:

- a. Details of the services to be provided
- b. Cost of the services to be provided
- c. Estimates of savings for entities who would participate (client entities)
- d. High level description of KPIs and SLAs for the services to be provided.
- e. Description of the governance mechanism for the service
- f. Reporting structures

3. GSS Coordination Mechanism

The steering of the GSS is embedded within the functions of the Business Innovation Group (BIG). It ensures that the efforts to expand and scale the Global Shared Services across the United Nations System are strategically aligned and effectively managed.

3.1 Global Shared Service proposal review and scaling process



Part A:

- All new GSS ideas are initially presented to the BIG co-chairs for comments and feedback before entities invest efforts in Phase 1.
- Before engaging with BIG, the SP shares a preliminary concept with BIG co-chairs, outlining the concept and scope of the new Global Shared Service.
- Once cleared by the BIG co-chairs, the preliminary concept is sent to the BIG four weeks in advance of any formal discussion, ensuring that the idea is tangible, clearly defined, and allows for a fact-based conversation.
- BIG may provide a first expression of interest and offer feedback to help SP shape its business proposal.

Part B:

- Subsequently, the SP develops a detailed business proposal (in agreed template) and presents it to the BIG.
- A standard presentation (PPT) template is in place to present the business proposal to BIG, ensuring streamlined discussions and evaluation of proposals.
- Entities that offer *existing and mature services (tried and tested)* may opt for a fast-track process, sharing their business proposals directly with BIG, through the BIG co-chairs. These business proposals can be expedited to Phases 3 and 4 for quicker approval, by passing the first phases aimed at concept development.

3.2 Networks engagement and consultation:

Where needed, after BIG clears a new business proposal, with the support of DCO, the SP may engage with HLCM networks or technical forums and present the business proposal for consultation. After the consultation, DCO gathers feedback from the entities in a structured manner to ascertain initial interest for the service. Review by the networks is not mandatory, but important for consultation with broader UN system endorsement.

3.3 Endorsement of Service by the BIG:

Business proposals cleared by the BIG co-chairs are presented during the BIG meetings for approval and prioritization. Cleared business proposals, supplemented with an executive summary and a standard presentation template, are prepared by the SP, and are shared with the BIG members four weeks before the scheduled BIG meeting.

3.4 Roles and responsibilities

GSS scale up framework is steered by BIG. The coordination mechanism forms two groups of stakeholders.

1. Core stakeholders

- a. Business Innovation Group (BIG)
- b. Service Provider (SP)

2. Support and consultation stakeholders

- a. Development Coordination Office (DCO)
- b. High Level Committee on Management (HLCM) and its networks

Core Stakeholders		Support and consultation Stakeholders	
Service Provider (SP)	Business Innovation Group (BIG)	Development Coordination Office (DCO)	High-Level Committee on Mgmt (HLCM)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify service and commit to service provision • Identify anchor client • Present concept to BIG • Lead development of business proposal • Lead client engagement in consulting business proposal, and benefits calculations • Draft/negotiate MoU and SLA • Draft the business proposal roll-out mechanism • Provide efficiency projections and utilization reporting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steer GSS scale up and strategize service prioritization based on demand and maturity. Ensuring alignment with UN System priorities • Review GSS new services concept and approve proposals • Provide strategic oversight, Acquire their entity sign-up for services and Lead services utilization within their entity • Review progress of GSS services on a quarterly basis with DCO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide secretariat and support to BIG and coordinate GSS activities • Convene awareness and advocacy for each service with ASGs, HLCM networks, UNCTs/OMTs, and technical stakeholders • Gather feedback from networks to aid BIG endorsement of services • Collect, analyze, and report on a quarterly basis to BIG services sign-up and utilization • Coordinate annual data collection and reporting efforts for the QCPR; reviews with BIG co-chairs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement with HLCM and its networks focuses on consultation and advocacy purposes for the services to increase potential for sign-up beyond UNSDG entities

a. Business Innovation Group (BIG)

The BIG provides strategic oversight, steers the scale-up of GSS by strategizing the prioritization of services in alignment with Efficiency Roadmap. The BIG approves business proposals. The BIG plays key role in securing their entity's sign-up for services and champions the adoption and use of the services within their entity.



b. **Service Provider (SP)**

The SP entity plays the leading role in scaling their global shared service from beginning to end. This includes identifying the service, committing to service provision, securing anchor client, presenting the service concept to the BIG, developing the business proposal, and leading client engagement and benefits calculation. Additionally, the SP drafts and negotiates the necessary Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)/Service Level Agreement (SLA) and provides efficiency projections and ongoing reporting on service use by the clients.

c. **Development Coordination Office (DCO)**

DCO supports the GSS scale-up process by providing secretariat services to BIG and coordinates implementation of the GSS workplan activities. In close collaboration with the SP, DCO convenes awareness and advocacy efforts for each service with BIG, HLCM networks, UNCTs/OMTs, and technical stakeholders. DCO also gathers feedback from technical networks to aid the BIG decision making in endorsement of the services, and helps that feedback is integrated into service proposals. On a quarterly basis, DCO collects, analyzes, and reports services sign-up and use to BIG co-chairs. DCO coordinates GSS year-end data collection and reporting for the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) to ensure alignment in reporting with other efficiency initiatives.

d. **High-Level Commitment on Management/Networks**

Engagement with HLCM and its networks focuses on consultation and advocacy purposes for the services to increase potential for sign-up beyond UNSDG entities.

4. GSS Monitoring and Reporting

A streamlined monitoring and reporting mechanism is essential to ensure transparency, track service usage, measure efficiency gains, and ensure appropriate reporting of GSS initiatives. The need for a streamlined reporting mechanism appeared in 2023, following the successful adoption of several inter-agency GSS and the realization that efficiency benefits need to be consistently tracked. The GSS reporting mechanism is aligned with the UNSDG Efficiency Reporting methods and provides a systematic approach to monitoring the adoption of global services, assessing their impact, and accountability across all UN entities. The GSS monitoring and reporting mechanism developed by BIG in December 2024 applies to both existing mature global services and newly developed global services. However, the approach differs based on the stage of service scale up, adoption, implementation maturity, and data availability.

4.1 GSS Utilization Monitoring

Monitoring GSS usage ensures that all services are tracked from the moment of business proposal endorsement by the BIG to sign-up through implementation and beyond. On a quarterly basis, BIG co-chairs with the support from DCO as the secretariat, reviews progress on the various GSS services. Quarterly report is provided by SP, which will be then conveyed to the BIG by DCO. A standard reporting template is designed to capture volume and progress for each service. The quarterly report captures emerging cross-cutting issues. BIG facilitates discussion on GSS challenges, ensuring that service scale up continues to meet entity needs and expected efficiency targets.

4.1.1. Tracking Sign-Ups and Usage

- a. SP keep up-to-date records of all signed global and country office level agreements for their global service. The SPs shared with DCO any change over in the sign-up and modality of the agreements.
- b. DCO consolidates data in a real-time monitoring and reporting dashboard, providing visibility of service adoption and trends. DCO regularly provides updates on the progress to BIG and other respective stakeholders.
- c. BIG steers the GSS stream and oversees service scale up, use, identifies adoption barriers, and ensures that service expansion and scale up aligns with the broader efficiency initiatives targets.

4.1.2. Addressing Utilization challenges

- a. SPs collaborate directly with client entities that are not fully using global services to identify and overcome operational barriers.
- b. SPs escalate, through their quarterly reporting to BIG, any systematic challenges with services adoption and use.
- c. BIG aims to resolve any tactical challenges and where needed, escalates systemic challenges to BIG, ensuring that persistent issues are addressed through higher-level coordination.

4.2. GSS Efficiency Reporting

The efficiency reporting streamlines approach for the entities to document cost savings, operational efficiencies, and service quality improvements achieved from use of Global Shared Services.

4.2.1 Streamlined Efficiency Metrics

Client entities² are required to report GSS efficiencies based on the following metrics³

- a. **Cost savings:** Reducing the level of financial resources disbursed to achieve a given outcome. This could reduce current spending and/or avert potential future price increases. This is calculated in US\$ and can be further broken down into:
 - b. **Cost reduction:** A reduction of an existing cost
 - c. **Cost avoidance:** A reduction of an expected future cost
- d. **Time savings:** Reducing the overall effort to achieve a given task. This is firstly calculated in reduced time (hours/days) and then converted into a US\$ equivalent
- e. **Effectiveness improvements:** Initiatives that result in a qualitative improvement – for example a reduced risk, or better quality of service.

4.2.2 Structure and Annual reporting

1. Client entities report efficiency benefits through the BIG Efficiency Reporting exercise initiated annually by the Efficiency Reporting Task Team.
2. SP shares data on service entities that used their services for the reporting year.⁴
3. SP in coordination with DCO, verifies reported benefits, ensuring that all client entities report efficiencies for the given year.
4. DCO in support of the Efficiency Reporting Task Team consolidates efficiency data received, ensuring consistency and accuracy.
5. Annual efficiency reports are presented to the BIG.
6. Final GSS efficiencies are reported in the Report of the Secretary General on the implementation of the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR).

² Also applies to the Service Provider entity, for usage of the service for internal entity efficiency.

³ Aligned with the UNSDG Efficiency Calculation Methodology.

⁴ A dedicated GSS platform will be developed in UNINFO to support the reporting process.



4.2.3 Annual Review and Impact Assessment

- Annual review is conducted to assess the financial and operational impact of GSS. The findings will be leveraged to refine the framework, improve service offerings, and enhance reporting. BIG is briefed in triannual meetings, ensuring that the GSSs continue to deliver tangible benefits.
