



## INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION

### REPORT 2015/090

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Audit of the recruitment of national staff in the United Nations Support Office for the African Union Mission in Somalia

Overall results relating to the effective management of the recruitment of national staff by the United Nations Support Office for the African Union Mission in Somalia were initially assessed as partially satisfactory. Implementation of four important recommendations remains in progress

FINAL OVERALL RATING: PARTIALLY SATISFACTORY

31 August 2015  
Assignment No. AP2014/638/03

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# AUDIT REPORT

## Audit of the recruitment of national staff by the United Nations Support Office for the African Union Mission in Somalia

### I. BACKGROUND

1. The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of the recruitment of national staff by the United Nations Support Office for the African Union Mission in Somalia (UNSOA).
2. In accordance with its mandate, OIOS provides assurance and advice on the adequacy and effectiveness of the United Nations internal control system, the primary objectives of which are to ensure (a) efficient and effective operations; (b) accurate financial and operational reporting; (c) safeguarding of assets; and (d) compliance with mandates, regulations and rules.
3. The UNSOA Human Resources Section was responsible for recruiting national staff to meet UNSOA and its clients' requirements: (a) the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia; (b) the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General to the Great Lakes Region of Africa; and (c) the Somalia-Eritrea Monitoring Group.
4. The Human Resources Section was headed by the Chief Civilian Personnel Officer at the P-4 level, who reported to the Deputy Director and Head of Strategic Management Services of UNSOA. The Section comprised: eight international staff, five national staff, two international individual contractors and five national individual contractors. Within the Section, a unit of four staff, led by a national professional officer, was responsible for the recruitment of national staff.
5. The 2013/14 authorized national staff posts for UNSOA and its clients were 288 and the related budgeted staff cost was \$7 million. From 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2014, UNSOA recruited 69 national staff including 33 for its operations and 36 for its clients.
6. Comments provided by UNSOA are incorporated in italics.

### II. OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE

7. The audit was conducted to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of UNSOA governance, risk management and control processes in providing reasonable assurance regarding the **effective management of the recruitment of national staff by UNSOA**.
8. The audit was included in the 2014 risk-based work plan of OIOS because of the risks relating to the recruitment of national staff.
9. The key control tested for the audit was recruitment and promotion policies and procedures. For the purpose of this audit, OIOS defined this key control as the one that provides reasonable assurance that recruitment and promotion policies and procedures are followed in recruiting national staff.
10. The key control was assessed for the control objectives shown in Table 1. One control objective (shown in Table 1 as "Not assessed") was not relevant to the scope defined for this audit.

11. OIOS conducted this audit from July 2014 to April 2015. The audit covered the period from 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2014.

12. OIOS conducted an activity-level risk assessment to identify and assess specific risk exposures, and to confirm the relevance of the selected key control in mitigating associated risks. Through interviews and analytical reviews, OIOS assessed the existence and adequacy of internal controls and conducted necessary tests to determine their effectiveness.

### III. AUDIT RESULTS

13. The UNSOA governance, risk management and control processes examined were initially assessed as **partially satisfactory**<sup>1</sup> in providing reasonable assurance regarding the **effective management of the recruitment of national staff by UNSOA**. OIOS made four recommendations to address the issues identified. UNSOA needed to: (a) maintain rosters of qualified candidates to expedite the recruitment process; (b) establish interview panels as part of the recruitment process and a review panel to oversee local recruitment; (c) comply with its administrative instruction on the recruitment of Somali nationals, and be consistent in the publication of vacancy announcements; and (d) implement measures to correct and avoid inconsistencies and errors in letters of appointment and functions to be performed by staff.

14. The initial overall rating was based on the assessment of key control presented in Table 1. The final overall rating is **partially satisfactory** as implementation of four important recommendations remains in progress.

**Table 1: Assessment of key control**

Business objective	Key control	Control objectives			
		Efficient and effective operations	Accurate financial and operational reporting	Safeguarding of assets	Compliance with mandates, regulations and rules
<b>Effective management of recruitment of national staff by UNSOA</b>	Recruitment and promotion policies and procedures	Partially satisfactory	Partially satisfactory	Not assessed	Partially satisfactory
<b>FINAL OVERALL RATING: PARTIALLY SATISFACTORY</b>					

#### **Recruitment and promotion policies and procedures**

There was a need for a roster of qualified candidates to facilitate prompt filling of vacancies

15. Best practices such as the Department of Management administrative instruction on staff selection system and the Departments of Peacekeeping Operations and Field Support (DPKO/DFS) standard operating procedures on staff selection system for peacekeeping operations and special political missions require UNSOA to maintain rosters of qualified candidates. The delegation of authority issued

<sup>1</sup> A rating of “**partially satisfactory**” means that important (but not critical or pervasive) deficiencies exist in governance, risk management or control processes, such that reasonable assurance may be at risk regarding the achievement of control and/or business objectives under review.

to the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General to the Great Lakes Region of Africa requires UNSOA, which was responsible for recruiting national staff for the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General to the Great Lakes Region of Africa, to follow the same principles of recruitment that apply to international staff members, including placing eligible candidates on a roster.

16. UNSOA did not maintain rosters of eligible candidates. This was because UNSOA had not established a mechanism to maintain rosters of qualified candidates, as it was not aware of this requirement. As a result, UNSOA was unable to fill vacancies in a timely manner. For example, analysis of seven recruitment cases showed that the process took an average of 165 days from issuance of vacancy announcements to the onboarding of the selected candidates.

**(1) UNSOA should implement a mechanism to maintain rosters of qualified candidates to expedite the recruitment process for positions in Kenya and Somalia.**

*UNSOA accepted recommendation 1 and stated that the creation of a roster was in progress. Recommendation 1 remains open pending receipt of evidence that UNSOA has developed a roster of qualified candidates.*

There was a need for consistency in constituting assessment panels and for a review panel to oversee the recruitment process

17. Best practice such as the Department of Management administrative instruction on staff selection system requires the establishment of a panel for each recruitment case to assess the suitability of shortlisted candidates for position-specific job openings. The DFS guidelines on the selection of locally recruited staff also require: (a) the inclusion in each panel a staff member from a non-related organizational unit, at least one female member and only individuals that had been trained in competency-based interviewing; and (b) the establishment of a seven-member review panel to oversee local recruitment of staff.

18. UNSOA did not establish assessment panels for 17 of the 30 cases reviewed and recruited four candidates based solely on their personal history profiles. For the 13 panels established, there was an absence of: (a) a member from a non-related unit in all cases; (b) a representative from the section or unit where the vacancy existed in three cases; and (c) a female member in two cases. UNSOA did not establish a seven-member review panel to oversee the local recruitment of staff.

19. The above resulted because UNSOA had not implemented procedures to ensure interview panels were systematically established and a review panel was established to oversee the recruitment process. The lack of properly established interview panels also resulted as UNSOA did not have a sufficient number of staff with training in competency-based interviewing although such training was provided by the United Nations Office in Nairobi. As a result, there was an increased risk that the UNSOA recruitment process was unfair and not transparent and that the most qualified candidates were not being selected for advertised posts.

**(2) UNSOA should implement procedures to ensure that a panel is properly established for each recruitment case to assess the suitability of shortlisted candidates and a review panel is constituted to oversee the local recruitment of staff.**

*UNSOA accepted recommendation 2 and stated that a review panel was being established, and training on competency-based interview techniques was ongoing to ensure that there was a pool of adequately trained staff to conduct interviews, with adequate gender parity at all times.*

Recommendation 2 remains open pending receipt of evidence that UNSOA is properly establishing panels to assess the suitability of shortlisted candidates, and a review panel to oversee the local recruitment process.

Need for consistency in publication of vacancies and compliance with related UNSOA administrative instruction

20. The UNSOA administrative instruction on the recruitment of Somali nationals dated 8 March 2013 requires UNSOA to advertise all Somalia-based posts in both Kenyan and Somali newspapers, and on the UNSOA radio in Mogadishu. UNSOA had a practice of posting job openings for a minimum of 30 days, which is consistent with best practices such as the Department of Management administrative instruction on staff selection system and DFS guidelines on the selection of locally recruited staff.

21. A review of 30 recruitment cases indicated that UNSOA did not issue any vacancy announcements for 9 positions, and did not allow a minimum of 30 days for 3 cases for which it issued vacancy announcements. For example, UNSOA allowed only seven days for candidates to apply in one recruitment case; and only one day in another case. There was also no evidence that 19 of the 21 vacancy announcements were advertised in Kenyan and Somali newspapers and on the UNSOA radio in Mogadishu.

22. The above was because UNSOA had not implemented procedures to ensure consistent application of its administrative instruction and good practices. As a result, UNSOA could not assure the transparency and fairness of the recruitment process, and the selection of most qualified candidates.

**(3) UNSOA should implement procedures to ensure compliance with its administrative instruction on the recruitment of Somali nationals and consistency in the publication of vacancy announcements.**

*UNSOA accepted recommendation 3 and stated that proposals for outreach activities through various fora were in progress. Recommendation 3 remains open pending receipt of evidence that UNSOA has implemented procedures to ensure consistent application of its administrative instruction on the recruitment of Somali nationals and publication of vacancy announcements.*

Need to consistently reflect actual assignments and job functions in letters of appointment

23. The United Nations staff rules require UNSOA to accurately reflect in each letter of appointment the terms and conditions of employment of the staff member. The delegations of recruitment authority issued by DFS to the UNSOA Director and Chief Civilian Personnel Officer require these officers to ensure no error in the process.

24. A review of approved posts, appointment letters and functions performed by staff indicated that UNSOA did not always reflect the actual assignments and job functions in letters of appointment as follows: (a) one staff was given a one-year fixed-term appointment as a driver in Nairobi for an assignment in Somalia; and (b) one staff, after a three-month temporary appointment as a forklift operator, was appointed as an Information Technology Technician on a one-year fixed-term contract but continued to perform the functions of a forklift operator.

25. The above inconsistencies were attributed to problems with the Nucleus system used for human resources management. However, UNSOA had not implemented measures to correct the inconsistencies and avoid similar ones in the future. As a result, UNSOA was exposed to the risk of claims by staff, for

example: to be relocated to the duty station stated in their letter of appointment, and paid the related entitlements such as relocation grants and danger pay.

**(4) UNSOA should implement measures to correct and avoid inconsistencies and errors between functional titles in letters of appointment and functions to be performed.**

*UNSOA accepted recommendation 4 and stated that stringent measures were in progress to ensure correct post titles were reflected in Nucleus, which would ensure that correct functional titles were reflected in letters of appointment generated from Nucleus. Recommendation 4 remains open pending receipt of evidence that UNSOA has implemented measures to correct and avoid the observed inconsistencies.*

#### **IV. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

25. OIOS wishes to express its appreciation to the management and staff of UNSOA for the assistance and cooperation extended to the auditors during this assignment.

(Signed) David Kanja  
Assistant Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services

## STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

## Audit of the recruitment of national staff by the United Nations Support Office for the African Union Mission in Somalia

Recom. no.	Recommendation	Critical <sup>1</sup> / Important <sup>2</sup>	C/ O <sup>3</sup>	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date <sup>4</sup>
1	UNSOA should implement a mechanism to maintain rosters of qualified candidates to expedite the recruitment process for positions in Kenya and Somalia.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that UNSOA has implemented a mechanism to maintain a roster of candidates.	30 September 2015
2	UNSOA should implement procedures to ensure that a panel is established for each recruitment case to assess the suitability of shortlisted candidates and a review panel is constituted to oversee the local recruitment of staff.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that UNSOA is properly establishing panels to assess the suitability of shortlisted candidates, and a review panel to oversee the local recruitment process.	30 September 2015
3	UNSOA should implement procedures to ensure compliance with its administrative instructions on the recruitment of Somali nationals and consistency in the publication of vacancy announcements.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that UNSOA has implemented procedures to ensure consistent application of its administrative instruction on the recruitment of Somali nationals and publication of vacancy announcements.	30 September 2015
4	UNSOA should implement measures to correct and avoid inconsistencies and errors between functional titles in letters of appointment and functions to be performed.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that UNSOA has implemented measures to correct and avoid inconsistencies and errors between functional titles in letters of appointment and functions to be performed.	30 September 2015

<sup>1</sup> Critical recommendations address critical and/or pervasive deficiencies in governance, risk management or control processes, such that reasonable assurance cannot be provided with regard to the achievement of control and/or business objectives under review.

<sup>2</sup> Important recommendations address important (but not critical or pervasive) deficiencies in governance, risk management or control processes, such that reasonable assurance may be at risk regarding the achievement of control and/or business objectives under review.

<sup>3</sup> C = closed, O = open

<sup>4</sup> Date provided by UNSOA



# **APPENDIX I**


## **Management Response**



**United Nations Support Office for AMISOM (UNSOA)**

**Interoffice Memorandum**

**To:** Ms. Eleanor T. Burns, Director  
Internal Audit Division  
Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) **Date:** 14 August 2015

**From:** Amadu Kamara, Director  **Ref:** UNSOA/0815/M.031

**Subject:** **UNSOA – Draft report on an audit of national staff recruitment in the United Nations Support Office for the African Union Mission in Somalia (Assignment No. AP/2014/638/03)**

Further to your memorandum of 31 July 2015 on the above subject, please find attached UNSOA's response to the draft report.

Best regards.

cc: Mr. Harjit Dhindsa, Deputy Director, UNSOA  
Mr. Robert Kirkwood, Head of Somalia Support, UNSOA  
Mr. Amareswara Rao, Chief, Human Resources Officer, UNSOA  
Mr. Dalapo Kuteyi, Senior Administrative Officer  
Mr. Bolton Tarleh Nyema, Chief, Peacekeeping Audit Service Internal Audit Division, OIOS  
Ms. Andrea Charles-Browne, Chief Resident Auditor, Internal Audit Division, OIOS  
Ms. Cynthia Avena-Castillo, Professional Practices Section, Internal Audit Division, OIOS

## Management Response

## Audit of the recruitment of national staff in the United Nations Support Office for the African Union Mission in Somalia

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical <sup>1</sup> / Important <sup>2</sup>	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation Date	Client comments
1	UNSOA should implement a mechanism to maintain rosters of qualified candidates to expedite the recruitment process for positions in Kenya and Somalia.	Important	YES	Head Staff Selection and Strategic Support Unit, HRS	30 September 2015	Creation of Roster in progress.
2	UNSOA should implement a mechanism and procedures to ensure that a panel is properly constituted for each recruitment case to assess the suitability of shortlisted candidates and a review panel is constituted to oversee the local recruitment of staff.	Important	YES	Head Staff Selection and Strategic Support Unit, HRS	30 September 2015	Review Panel being Established and Training of CBI ongoing to ensure that there is a pool of CBI trained staff members with adequate gender parity at all times.
3	UNSOA should implement procedures to ensure compliance with its administrative instructions on the recruitment of Somali nationals and consistency in the publication of vacancy announcements.	Important	YES	Head Staff Selection and Strategic Support Unit, HRS	30 September 2015	Proposals of outreach activities through various fora in progress
4	UNSOA should implement measures to correct and avoid inconsistencies and errors between functional titles in letters of appointment and functions to be performed.	Important	YES	Head of Client Support and HR Assistant with Organizational Management	30 September 2015	Stringent measure under progress to ensure correct post titles are reflected in Nucleus if and when posts are loaned from one entity to another. This will ensure that correct Functional titles will be reflected when on Letters of Appointments generated from Nucleus.

<sup>1</sup> Critical recommendations address critical and/or pervasive deficiencies in governance, risk management or internal control processes, such that reasonable assurance cannot be provided regarding the achievement of control and/or business objectives under review.

<sup>2</sup> Important recommendations address important deficiencies or weaknesses in governance, risk management or internal control processes, such that reasonable assurance may be at risk regarding the achievement of control and/or business objectives under review.