



Office of Internal Oversight Services

INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION

REPORT 2013/126

Audit of local procurement in the United Nations Mission in South Sudan

Overall results relating to the effective management of local procurement activities were initially assessed as partially satisfactory. Implementation of five important recommendations remains in progress

**FINAL OVERALL RATING: PARTIALLY
SATISFACTORY**

17 December 2013

Assignment No. AP2013/633/10

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AUDIT REPORT

Audit of local procurement in the United Nations Mission in South Sudan

I. BACKGROUND

1. The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of local procurement in the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS).
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 UNMISS Procurement Section was responsible for local procurement of goods and services, and was governed by the United Nations Procurement Manual. The Section was headed by a Chief Procurement Officer at the P-5 level and had 26 approved posts. UNMISS procured goods and services totaling \$290 million during the period from 1 January 2012 to 30 June 2013. The total expenditure relating to local procurement was \$96.9 million.
4. Comments provided by UNMISS are incorporated in italics.

II. OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE

5. The audit was conducted to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of UNMISS governance, risk management and control processes in providing reasonable assurance regarding the **effective management of local procurement activities in UNMISS**.
6. The audit was included in the OIOS 2013 risk-based work plan because of the operational and financial risks relating to the procurement process, and the criticality of effective procurement of required goods and services for the implementation of the UNMISS mandate.
7. The key control tested for the audit was regulatory framework. For the purpose of this audit, OIOS defined this control as the one that provides reasonable assurance that policies and procedures: (a) exist to guide procurement activities; (b) are implemented consistently; and (c) ensure the reliability and integrity of financial and operational information.
8. The key control was assessed for the control objectives shown in Table 1.
9. OIOS conducted the audit from April to July 2013. The audit covered the period from 1 January 2012 to 30 June 2013.
10. The audit team conducted an activity-level risk assessment to identify and assess specific risk exposures, and to confirm the relevance of the selected key controls in mitigating associated risks. Through interviews, analytical reviews and tests of controls, OIOS assessed the existence and adequacy of internal controls and conducted necessary tests to determine their effectiveness.

III. AUDIT RESULTS

11. The UNMISS governance, risk management and control processes examined were initially assessed as **partially satisfactory** in providing reasonable assurance regarding the **effective management of local procurement activities in UNMISS**. OIOS made eight recommendations to address the issues identified. UNMISS had taken action to improve acquisition planning and the requisition process. However, there was a need for UNMISS to: (a) properly evaluate vendors applications; (b) implement quality reviews over the solicitation process; (c) ensure that the composition of the Local Committee on Contracts complied with the Procurement Manual; (d) improve the quality of technical evaluation and scoring methodologies; and (e) improve the filing system in the Procurement Section.

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

Table 1: Assessment of key control

Business objective	Key controls	Control objectives			
		Efficient and effective operations	Accurate financial and operational reporting	Safeguarding of assets	Compliance with mandates, regulations and rules
Effective management of local procurement activities in UNMISS	Regulatory framework	Partially satisfactory	Partially satisfactory	Partially satisfactory	Partially satisfactory
FINAL OVERALL RATING: PARTIALLY SATISFACTORY					

B. Regulatory framework

The vendor registration processes needed improvement

13. As at 30 June 2013, UNMISS had 1,455 locally registered active vendors. A review of 30 of the 168 vendors registered from 1 January 2012 to 30 June 2013 indicated that the required process for registering vendors was not being complied with. For example: (a) all 30 vendors did not complete the mandatory Pre-requisite for Eligibility Disclosure Form; (b) 18 vendors did not provide their statements of financial condition; (c) 19 vendors did not submit letters of reference; and (d) seven of the 11 vendors on Special Approval for Registration of Vendors, which required minimum information of each vendor's business, had been on this temporary status for up to 13 months and no timeline had been established to re-assess their status.

14. Due to the poor registration process and inadequate details on vendors solicited, there was an unmitigated risk that contracts would be awarded to ineligible vendors or vendors that could not deliver goods and services when needed. For example, one purchase order valued at \$17,000 for the provision of training services was issued to a vendor on suspended status in the United Nations Global Marketplace database.

15. OIOS noted that effective 1 July 2013, due to the implementation of Umoja, all vendor registration was being done and monitored by Headquarters. While this should improve the registration

process, UNMISS needed to perform significant work to clean up its current vendor data, and ensure that there was adequate documentation to support the credibility of vendors already registered. This needed to be done as part of the transitional process to Umoja.

(1) UNMISS should, as part of the transitional process to Umoja, conduct a review to ensure that all registered vendors are supported by the required vendor registration documents.

UNMISS accepted recommendation 1 and stated that a team based at the United Nations Logistics Base in Brindisi had completed the vendor database cleanup and the vendor data had been uploaded into Umoja. Vendor registration would be centralized at Headquarters through the on-line portal United Nations Global Marketplace. Based on the action taken, recommendation 1 has been closed.

The solicitation process needed to improve

16. The Procurement Manual required that the identification of vendors for receipt of solicitation documents be undertaken in such a way that the fairness, integrity, and transparency of the solicitation process was safeguarded and the interest of the Organization was protected. A review of a sample of 40 procurements highlighted the following instances in which the Procurement Section did not always comply with the required solicitation process:

- Requests for Expression of Interest for two procurements, each valued at more than \$200,000, were not widely disseminated in neighboring/regional countries;
- Twenty-one procurement actions, valued at over \$40,000 each, were not locally advertised. UNMISS advised that they were not able to advertise these because of the urgency of the requirement, which OIOS noted was not always supported. The vendors solicited were selected from the local vendor database;
- Three procurement actions totaling about \$787,000 did not use generic specifications, but specified the brand name of products; and
- In four procurement actions, the successful bidder was recommended by requisitioners without concurrence of the Chief Procurement Officer and without written declaration by the requisitioner stating that there was no conflict of interest. In one case, the requisitioner worked directly with the vendor on the deliverables without involvement from the Procurement Section.

17. The Procurement Section did not implement a system to review and ensure that the solicitation process complied with the Procurement Manual. UNMISS advised that since it was in a start-up phase, they exceptionally implemented some flexibility to the procedures in the Procurement Manual. UNMISS did not have the authority to apply such measures.

(2) UNMISS should implement quality review procedures to ensure that its solicitation process complies with the Procurement Manual.

UNMISS accepted recommendation 2 and issued guidelines on the use of source selection plans which made it mandatory for all requirements to be advertised unless written justification was provided and approved by team leaders or the Chief Procurement Officer prior to the solicitation. Based on the action taken by UNMISS, recommendation 2 has been closed.

Management and treatment of vendor submissions needed improvement

18. The Procurement Manual required submissions to formal methods of solicitation to be addressed to the Tender Opening Committee. These submissions were required to be time and date stamped immediately upon receipt.

19. UNMISS established a Tender Opening Committee; however, it was not functioning as intended, as it did not record the date and time of receipt for six of the 40 procurement cases reviewed. Therefore, there was no assurance that proposals were received within the specified deadlines. UNMISS advised that they manually recorded the time and date, but this was a time consuming exercise and prone to error. UNMISS had initiated the procurement of a time recording machine to expedite the process.

(3) UNMISS should implement procedures to ensure that vendor submissions are properly recorded and date stamped upon receipt as required by the Procurement Manual.

UNMISS accepted recommendation 3 and stated that all bids were being date and time stamped when received and pages that contained financial information would be signed by the members of the Tender Opening Committee. Recommendation 3 remains open pending OIOS verification that vendor submissions are properly recorded and date stamped upon receipt.

Technical evaluation and scoring methodologies needed improvement

20. The Procurement Manual required evaluation criteria to be discrete, reliable, practical, fair and balanced. A review of 40 procurement files indicated that evaluation criteria were generally applied to all bidders in a consistent manner, except in the following cases:

- For the purchase of an identity card printer and accessories, a vendor was declared non-compliant due to an insufficient description of equipment. This vendor should have been technically cleared as the description and samples provided were consistent with the requirements prescribed in the solicitation document;
- For the purchase of hydrographic, hydrological, meteorological, or geophysical instruments, a vendor was found compliant even though the weight of the equipment, which was a requirement in the solicitation documents, was not provided. Another vendor was declared non-compliant because the weight given was less than required. The contract was not awarded to either of these vendors; and
- For the purchase of insulated wire and cable, three vendors did not meet the requirements related to brochures, technical plan and material quality assurance. However, one of the three vendors was still declared as technically compliant. The vendor was not awarded the contract.

21. The above cases resulted from the lack of adequate quality review over the technical evaluation process to ensure that criteria was properly established and scoring methodologies were applied consistently.

(4) UNMISS should improve the quality of technical evaluations by ensuring that scoring methodologies are clear, transparent and applied consistently.

UNMISS accepted recommendation 4 and stated that procurement training on specification writing and technical evaluation had been provided to staff members involved in the various stages of the

procurement cycle. Based on the action taken by UNMISS, recommendation 4 has been closed.

Important documents were not maintained in procurement case files

22. The Procurement Manual required that complete documentation of the procurement process be maintained in each procurement case file. A review of 40 procurement case files indicated the following were not on file: (a) evaluation documents presented to the Local Committee on Contracts [four cases]; (b) technical evaluation documents [three cases]; and (c) Statement of Works [three cases]. Moreover, the Procurement Section did not have a proper filing system since files were retained on desks, in drawers and other open areas, allowing unrestricted access to confidential information.

(5) UNMISS should improve the filing system in the Procurement Section by: (a) ensuring that adequate and complete documents are maintained on all phases of the procurement process; and (b) setting appropriate standards for classification of, retention of and access to procurement case files.

UNMISS accepted recommendation 5 and stated that procurement guidelines and a checklist on the maintenance of procurement case files was issued to guide staff accordingly. Recommendation 5 remains open pending OIOS verification that the filing system in the Procurement Section has improved based on the effective implementation of the guidelines.

Composition of the Local Committee on Contracts was not in accordance with the Procurement Manual

23. The Local Committee on Contracts (Committee) should be comprised of four voting members namely: the Finance Officer and the Legal Adviser as well as representatives from the General Services and Programme Management Sections. Under no circumstances should a supervisor and a subordinate, or two officers with the same functions, serve together as members at the same Committee meeting. Three voting members shall constitute a quorum. The requisitioner or end-user shall attend as non-voting subject matter experts. The Secretary of the Committee serves in a non-voting capacity.

24. During the audit period, the Committee reviewed 172 cases and 168 of them were recommended to the Director of Mission Support for approval. The Committee rejected one case due to the lack of a competitive bidding process and the Procurement Section withdrew three cases. A review of the minutes of 30 Committee meetings held between 1 January 2012 and 30 June 2013 indicated: (a) the membership of the Committee did not include a representative from the Programme Management Section; (b) there was a lack of quorum in two Committee meetings, as two administrative officers from the same Office of the Director of Mission Support served together on the Committee; (c) in 11 cases, the requisitioner, whose presence was required as a subject-matter expert, was not present at the Committee meetings; and (d) in 11 cases, the Chairperson acted as Secretary of the Committee. This resulted due to the high workload of the Committee combined with a shortage of staff with the pre-requisite training and expertise to become a Committee member, negatively impacting on the composition and functioning of the Committee.

(6) UNMISS should revise the composition of the Local Committee on Contracts and provide training to its members to ensure that its proceedings comply with the Procurement Manual.

UNMISS accepted recommendation 6 and stated that the composition of the Local Committee on Contracts would be reviewed and members would be advised to adhere to procurement guidelines. UNMISS further stated that training would be organized for newly appointed members and those

who had not yet been trained. Recommendation 6 remains open pending receipt of evidence that the composition of the Local Committee on Contracts has been revised in compliance with the Procurement Manual and adequate training has been provided to members of the Local Committee on Contracts.

Inconsistencies in dealing with income-generating contracts

25. The Procurement Manual required any proposed contract or series of related contracts, with an estimated total annual income between \$10,000 and \$40,000, to be subject to a recommendation from the Local Committee on Contracts and the approval of the Director of Mission Support.

26. OIOS' review of 11 income-generating contracts indicated that eight contractors were provided UNMISS premises free of charge, whereas the remaining three were charged rent. The contractor for cafeteria services was required to pay an annual rent of \$3,050, however, the two contractors providing travel management services were required to pay \$13,200 each per year although they occupied less space than the cafeteria. The rent for the cafeteria service was determined on a cost reimbursement basis per square meter per year, whereas for utilities the reimbursement was based on cubic meter for water and kilowatt for electric consumption. However, the two travel management service contractors were charged a flat monthly rate inclusive of utilities. There were also inconsistencies in charges imposed for utilities (water and electricity), with only four contractors subject to charges. These inconsistencies resulted as there were inadequate guidelines for estimating charges associated with income-generating contracts. Also, UNMISS had not reviewed and revised these contracts, which were initially entered into by the liquidated Mission i.e. United Nations Mission in Sudan.

27. Only the two contracts for travel management services met the threshold for review by the Local Committee on Contracts and approval by the Director of Mission Support and both contracts were reviewed and approved accordingly. This had resulted in inconsistencies in charging rent and utility cost to contractors and loss of income to the United Nations.

(7) UNMISS should develop guidelines and procedures for estimating income from income-generating contracts and ensure that they are reviewed and approved in accordance with the Procurement Manual.

UNMISS accepted recommendation 7 and stated that guidelines would be issued to procurement staff to ensure that all income-generating contracts were reviewed as per the provisions of the Procurement Manual. Recommendation 7 remains open pending receipt of: (1) a copy of guidelines and procedures for estimating income from income-generating contracts; and (2) evidence that all income generating contracts are reviewed and approved in accordance with the Procurement Manual.

Procurement staff did not complete mandatory training courses

28. It was mandatory for all UNMISS procurement staff to complete all of the courses released on the Procurement Division's on-line training campus. Only 11 (50 per cent) of the procurement staff had completed all the mandatory training courses. The Chief Procurement Officer advised that no timeline had been given to staff to complete the training and therefore, the activity had not been prioritized.

(8) UNMISS should establish a reasonable timeline for procurement staff to complete the mandatory training courses on procurement and ensure that procurement staff and other staff involved in the procurement process complete the training within the established

timeline.

UNMISS accepted recommendation 8 and stated that a directive was issued to procurement staff with strict timeline for the completion of mandatory training courses on procurement. Recommendation 8 remains open pending receipt of evidence that procurement staff and other staff members involved in the procurement process have completed mandatory training courses on the Procurement Division's on-line training campus.

IV. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

29. OIOS wishes to express its appreciation to the Management and staff of UNMISS 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 local procurement in the United Nations Mission in South Sudan

Recom. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	C/ O ³	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date ⁴
1	UNMISS should, as part of the transitional process to Umoja, conduct a review to ensure that all registered vendors are supported by the required vendor registration documents.	Important	C	Action taken.	Implemented
2	UNMISS should implement quality review procedures to ensure that its solicitation process complies with the Procurement Manual.	Important	C	Action taken.	Implemented
3	UNMISS should implement procedures to ensure that vendor submissions are properly recorded and date stamped upon receipt as required by the Procurement Manual.	Important	O	OIOS verification that vendor submissions are properly recorded and date stamped upon receipt.	31 March 2014
4	UNMISS should improve the quality of technical evaluations by ensuring that scoring methodologies are clear, transparent and applied consistently.	Important	C	Action taken.	Implemented
5	UNMISS should improve the filing system in the Procurement Section by: (a) ensuring that adequate and complete documents are maintained on all phases of the procurement process; and (b) setting appropriate standards for classification of, retention of and access to procurement case files.	Important	O	OIOS verification that the filing system in the Procurement Section has improved based on the effective implementation of the guideline on the maintenance of procurement case files.	31 March 2014

¹ Critical recommendations address significant and/or pervasive deficiencies or weaknesses 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.

² 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.

³ C = closed, O = open

⁴ Date provided by UNMISS in response to recommendations.

STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Audit of local procurement in the United Nations Mission in South Sudan

Recom. no.	Recommendation	Critical ⁵ / Important ⁶	C/ O ⁷	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date ⁸
6	UNMISS should revise the composition of the Local Committee on Contracts and provide training to its members to ensure that its proceedings comply with the Procurement Manual.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that the composition of the Local Committee on Contracts has been revised in compliance with the Procurement Manual and adequate training was provided to the members of the local committee on contracts.	30 June 2014
7	UNMISS should develop guidelines and procedures for estimating income from income-generating contracts and ensure that they are reviewed and approved in accordance with the Procurement Manual.	Important	O	Receipt of: (1) a copy of guidelines and procedures for estimating income from income-generating contracts; and (2) evidence that all income generating contracts are reviewed and approved in accordance with the Procurement Manual.	31 March 2014
8	UNMISS should establish a reasonable timeline for procurement staff to complete the mandatory training courses on procurement and ensure that procurement staff and other staff involved in the procurement process complete the training within the established timeline.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that procurement staff and other staff involved in the procurement process have completed the mandatory training courses on the Procurement Division's on-line training campus.	30 April 2014

⁵ Critical recommendations address significant and/or pervasive deficiencies or weaknesses 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.

⁶ 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.

⁷ C = closed, O = open

⁸ Date provided by UNMISS in response to recommendations.

APPENDIX I

Management Response

United Nations Mission in South Sudan



بعثة الأمم المتحدة في
جنوب السودان

UNMISS

Date: 10 December 2013

To: Ms. Eleanor T. Burns
Chief, Peacekeeping Audit Service
Internal Audit Division, OIOS

From: Ms. Hilde Johnson
SRSG, UNMISS

Subject: **Draft report on the audit of local procurement in the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (Assignment no. AP2013/633/10)**

1. Reference your memo dated 24 October 2013 on Assignment No. AP 2013/633/10 on the Audit of local procurement in UNMISS, please find attached the Mission's responses.
2. Should you have additional questions, please contact me or Patricia Fynn, Administrative Officer/ Audit Focal Point.

Best regards,

Attachments: Appendix 1

cc: Ms. Stephani Scheer, Director of Mission Support
Ms. Annemarie van den Berg, Deputy Director of Mission Support
Mr. Paul Egunsola, Chief of Staff
Mr. Ibrahim Bah, Chief Resident Auditor

Management Response

Audit of local procurement in the United Nations Mission in South Sudan

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted ? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
1.	UNMISS should, as part of the transitional process to Umoja, conduct a review to ensure that all registered vendors are supported by the required vendor registration documents.	Important	Yes	Chief Procurement Officer (CPO)	Completed	UNMISS Vendor Database cleanup has been completed by Department of Field Support (DFS) Team located at United Nations Logistics Base (UNLB) and has been uploaded into UMOJA. Vendor registration will henceforth be centralized at UNHQ through the on-line registration portal United Nations Global Marketplace (UNGM) to ensure consistency in approach and due diligence being carried out prior to accepting such registration requests. Further, the maintenance of vendor databases at Mission level

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Management Response

Audit of local procurement in the United Nations Mission in South Sudan

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted ? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
						has been scrapped hence effective 1 November 2013 UNMISS does not maintain a local vendor database. All vendors who were registered by UNMISS have been vetted and incorporated into the UN Secretariat global database. (UNHQ directive on the matter is attached Annex 1)
2.	UNMISS should implement quality review procedures to ensure that its solicitation process complies with the Procurement Manual.	Important	Yes	CPO	Completed	The practice of advertising procurement requirements in line with procedures is being reinforced. Procurement Guideline 01/2013 has been issued on the use of Source Selection Plans and a short form of the same has been developed for requirements of up to USD150, 000 hence making it mandatory for all requirements to be advertised unless written justification is provided and approved by the Unit Chief and or CPO as may be necessary prior to solicitation taking place. (Attached Procurement Guideline 01/2013 and copy

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Management Response

Audit of local procurement in the United Nations Mission in South Sudan

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted ? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
						of Short Form of Source Selection Plan.)
3.	UNMISS should implement procedures to ensure that vendor submissions are properly recorded and date stamped upon receipt as required by the Procurement Manual.	Important	Yes	CPO	31 March 2014	<p>All UNMISS bids are date and time stamped when received, pages containing financial information is signed by Tender Opening Committee (TOC) members and all bid documents are perforated prior to being dispatched from the TOC Room. The following should be noted:</p> <p>For bids received by email, the time and date the email was received by UNMISS servers as indicated on the bid print out is considered to meet the requirements of the procurement manual. Bids are received 24/7 and would create confusion if such are manually dated and stamped after print out as has been suggested.</p> <p>All bids that are hand delivered are physically date and time stamped by TOC</p>

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Audit of local procurement in the United Nations Mission in South Sudan

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted ? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
4.	UNMISS should improve the quality of technical evaluations by ensuring that scoring methodologies are clear, transparent and applied consistently.	Important	Yes	CPO	Completed	UNMISS through the Regional Procurement Office. Entebbe has provided procurement training, covering specification writing as well as technical evaluation to UNMISS staff involved in various stages of the procurement cycle. The training took place 20-21 November 2013
5	UNMISS should improve the filing system in the Procurement Section by: (a) ensuring that adequate and complete documents are maintained on all phases of the procurement process; and (b) setting appropriate standards for classification of, retention of and access to procurement case files.	Important	Yes	CPO	31 March 2014	Procurement Guideline 02/2013 with regards to case files maintenance has been issued along with a checklist to guide staff accordingly. (Copy attached)
6.	UNMISS should revise the composition of the Local Committee on Contracts and provide training to its members to ensure that its proceedings comply with the	Important	Yes	Director of Mission Support (DMS)	30 June 2014	The composition of the LCC will be reviewed and provision of the members will be advised to adhere to the procurement guideline. Moreover, the Headquarters

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Management Response

Audit of local procurement in the United Nations Mission in South Sudan

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted ? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
	Procurement Manual.					Committee for Contracts (HCC) had conducted a field assessment of UNMISS LCC and provided LCC Basic and Advanced training from 10-15 February 2013. However, training will also be organized for those who have not undergone any training and newly appointed LCC members.
7	UNMISS should develop guidelines and procedures for estimating income from income-generating contracts and ensure that they are reviewed and approved in accordance with the Procurement Manual.	Important	Yes	CPO	31 March 2014	CPO to issue guidelines to Procurement Staff to ensure that all income generating contracts are reviewed as per provisions of the Procurement Manual.
8	UNMISS should establish a reasonable timeline for procurement staff to complete the mandatory training courses on procurement and ensure that procurement staff and other staff involved in the procurement process complete the training within the established timeline.	Important	Yes	CPO	30 April 2014	A directive has been issued to all Procurement Staff with strict completion timeline based on time that they have assumed their duties in the Section. (Copy attached)