



INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION

REPORT 2020/063

Audit of the operations of the Bouar Field Office in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic

**The Mission needed to ensure that the Bouar
Field Office and other field offices develop
work plans and are provided with requisite
staffing capacity and logistical support to
implement assigned tasks**

**31 December 2020
Assignment No. AP2019-637-10**

**Audit of the operations of the Bouar Field Office in the United Nations
Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission
in the Central African Republic**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of the operations of the Bouar Field Office in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA). The objective of the audit was to assess the effectiveness of the operations of the Bouar Field Office and identify lessons learned that could be applicable to the other field offices in MINUSCA. The audit covered the period from 1 January 2018 to 31 January 2020 and included a review of work planning and implementation, and security and administrative management.

The Mission needed to ensure that the Bouar Field Office and other field offices develop work plans and are provided with the requisite staffing capacity and logistical support required to implement assigned tasks.

OIOS made seven recommendations. To address issues applicable to all field offices, MINUSCA needed to:

- Provide guidance on the development of annual work plans, and ensure progress is regularly monitored through establishment of plans that include specific and measurable outputs and targets;
- Share the benefits of the Bouar Communication and Operation Centre project with other field offices which was effective in enhancing coordination among military, police, substantive and support teams;
- Designate heads of field offices the authority to approve leave and movement of substantive team members and map the approver's role in Umoja and the Field Support Suite accordingly; and
- Ensure heads of field offices have access to training records in order to track and follow up with staff on completion of mandatory training courses.

To address issues specific to the Bouar Field Office, MINUSCA needed to:

- Implement security measures to mitigate associated risk;
- Implement the directive of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to enhance the staffing capacity of the Bouar Field Office to ensure it is commensurate with the scope and scale of its responsibilities and operations; and
- Ensure that requirements in the support plan are timely provided to the Bouar Field Office.

MINUSCA accepted the recommendations and has initiated action to implement them.

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Audit of the operations of the Bouar Field Office in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic

I. BACKGROUND

1. The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of the operations of the Bouar Field Office in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA).

2. At the start of MINUSCA in 2014, it established 11 field offices to ensure integrated and coherent delivery of its mandated activities related to protection of civilians, restoration of state authority and humanitarian assistance operations. The Mission also established a Field Office Planning and Operations Coordination Team (POCT) under the Field Coordination Office in its headquarters in Bangui to provide guidance and assistance to heads of field offices. The Field Coordination Office and POCT were led by the Deputy Chief of Staff/Field Office Coordinator. The Bouar Field Office's area of responsibility covered the western part of the country including the Nana Mambere and Ombella M'poko prefectures. This area was strategically important due to the presence of two main rival armed groups representing a major threat to the implementation of the Khartoum Peace and Reconciliation Agreement (hereinafter referred to as the "Agreement").

3. The Bouar Field Office is responsible for: (a) operating the Field/Joint Operations Centre (F/JOC) and submitting daily situational reports and flash reports of emergency situations to Mission headquarters; (b) coordinating the work of Mission components for protection of civilians, restoration of state authority and humanitarian assistance activities; (c) engaging with and assisting local authorities and stakeholders for the implementation of peace agreements; and (d) implementing quick impact projects (QIPs). Additionally, the Special Representative of the Secretary General's (SRSG) directive of February 2018 instructed the Bouar Field Office and all other field offices to work with POCT to develop and implement a plan to reduce threat posed by armed groups.

4. The Bouar Field Office was headed by a P-5 who reported to the Chief of Staff through the Deputy Chief of Staff/Field Office Coordinator. The Field Office comprised F/JOC, support and security teams as well as teams representing the Mission's military, police and its nine substantive components such as political affairs, disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR), human rights and civil affairs.

5. The approved staffing of the Bouar Field Office was 63 consisting of 24 international staff, 29 national staff and 10 United Nations volunteers (UNVs). There were also 27 military staff officers, 14 police personnel and 11 individual contractors. The Bouar Field Office did not have its own operating budget which was provided by the respective components located at Mission headquarters in Bangui.

6. Comments provided by MINUSCA are incorporated in italics.

II. AUDIT OBJECTIVE, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

7. The objective of the audit was to assess the effectiveness of the operations of the Bouar Field Office and identify lessons learned that could be applicable to the other field offices in MINUSCA.

8. This audit was included in the 2020 risk-based work plan of OIOS due to operational risk of the Mission in not achieving its strategic priorities in the western sector. It was also conducted at the request of the SRSG.

9. OIOS conducted this audit from February to May 2020. The audit covered the period from 1 January 2018 to 31 January 2020. Based on an activity-level risk assessment, the audit covered higher and medium risk areas in the operations of the Bouar Field Office including work planning and implementation and security and administrative issues.

10. The audit methodology included: (a) interviews of key personnel, (b) reviews of relevant documentation, (c) analytical reviews of data, and (d) field visit to the Bouar Field Office in February 2020.

11. The audit was conducted in accordance with the International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing.

III. AUDIT RESULTS

A. Work planning and implementation

Need to develop and monitor implementation of work plans

12. To ensure effective and coherent achievement of its strategic objectives, heads of field offices, supported by POCT, the Strategic Planning Unit (SPU), and heads of substantive components, are required to develop and implement annual work plans.

13. The Bouar Field Office did not have annual work plans for 2018/19 and 2019/20. This was mainly due to insufficient guidance and direction provided by POCT and SPU in developing plans. POCT had also not communicated the importance of ensuring that tasks and responsibilities are planned, documented and their implementation monitored. The audit also noted that while substantive teams had work plans for their respective component, the required outputs in 7 of 18 work plans reviewed were not SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound) to allow adequate assessment and monitoring of achievement of performance and progress of established targets. OIOS was informed that it was a similar situation in other field offices.

14. Further, the Bouar Field Office had not developed an effective plan to implement the SRSG's directive to reduce threat posed by armed groups. While a draft plan had been prepared, it included tasks and activities only from April to July 2018 and the plan had not been shared or agreed with substantive teams and components in the Bouar Field Office and Mission headquarters. This may have been addressed if POCT (responsible for overseeing such activities) had frequently interacted with field offices and provided the necessary direction, but it had not held any meetings with field offices during the audit period. MINUSCA informed that it was planning to restart these meetings in January 2020 to improve planning and coordination across the Mission's field offices, which was also prompted by its new mandate and issuance of the new Authority, Command and Control Policy (AC2) effective 25 October 2019. However, due to Covid-19 and a shift in priorities, the meetings had not yet started, but MINUSCA advised it was committed to restart POCT meetings at the earliest time possible. Based on this, OIOS did not make a recommendation on this issue.

15. Due to absence of work plans, the Bouar Field Office and other field offices may not be able to demonstrate their contribution to the achievement of the Mission's strategic priorities in their areas of responsibility.

(1) MINUSCA should ensure that field offices: (a) are provided with guidance on development of annual work plans and that they include measurable outputs and targets, and achievement of plans are systematically monitored and reported on; and (b) have developed, in consultation with relevant substantive components, plans to implement the Mission's strategy to reduce threats posed by armed groups and progress is monitored.

MINUSCA accepted recommendation 1 and stated that SPU in coordination with the Field Coordination Office will support the elaboration of field office and section work plans. SPU will also coordinate and lead in the drafting of a revised comprehensive mission strategy to reduce the threat posed by armed groups, and continue to assess progress in overall mandate implementation through the comprehensive performance assessment system. Recommendation 1 remains open pending receipt of evidence that field offices: (a) have developed work plans that are SMART and are regularly monitored and reported on; and (b) have plans to implement the Mission's strategy to reduce threats posed by armed groups, and progress is monitored.

The Bouar Field Office's coordination mechanism needs to be considered for implementation by other field offices

16. A review of documents noted that the Bouar Field Office had experienced some coordination issues, particularly between military, police and civilian personnel. For example:

- The after-action report on the Poupou operation dated 5 April 2019 showed that the military, following instructions from Mission headquarters, forcefully removed a blockade that had been erected by an armed group. This was done without consulting the Head of Field Office who was in consultations with local representatives to build better relationships with the armed group.
- Information on alleged security incidents received by substantive teams were not always provided to F/JOC for verification prior to them being reported to Mission headquarters. The audit noted five instances where, due to the non-verification and deconflicting of information on reported security incidents, unnecessary emergency flash reports were sent by field office teams to their respective components in Bangui, and the military was deployed for unnecessary intervention.

17. To address some of the coordination issues that had arisen, in July 2019, the Bouar Field Office launched the Bouar Communication and Operation Centre (referred as BoCO) project. The BoCO project co-located representatives of F/JOC, military and police components and other teams as well as UNCT representatives to facilitate sharing and the verifying of security threats. It also served as the crisis management center for the Field Office. OIOS review found that the BoCO project was effective in improving coordination among its teams, and ensuring accurate and comprehensive situational awareness and flow of information to support the Field Office, and by extension senior Mission leadership, in its response to situations. This fully met the needs raised by the Department of Peace Operations (DPO) policy on JOC to establish an effective joint operating coordination mechanism at missions' field offices.

18. MINUSCA senior leadership had approved the BoCO project and allocated necessary resources for the project including construction materials, engineering support, and information technology and communication equipment.

19. In OIOS view, as the BoCO project has been effective in improving coordination between functions in the Bouar Field Office as well as the UNCT members and other interested parties despite still being

under implementation, consideration needs to be given to implementing such a mechanism in other field offices.

(2) MINUSCA should share the benefits of the Bouar Communication and Operation Centre project and consider implementing such a mechanisms in other field offices to enhance coordination among the military, police, substantive and support teams, as well as with the United Nations County Team.

MINUSCA accepted recommendation 2 and stated that while it is relevant in standardizing the DPO Policy Mission-wide, sharing information and best practices on the BoCO project can only be implemented if and when the project is operational. The planned schedule for finalization and sharing of information on the BoCO project is 15 September 2021. Recommendation 2 remains open pending receipt of evidence of full implementation of the project and action taken to share the benefits of the project with other field offices for them to enhance coordination among military, police and other stakeholders.

The Office was active in assisting external stakeholders in the implementation of the Khartoum Peace and Reconciliation Agreement

20. The Bouar Field Office was instrumental in supporting the local government and other stakeholders in implementing the Agreement. For example, the Office supported the establishment of several local committees and other mechanisms to strengthen local capacities to implement the peace process such as monitoring of cessation of hostilities arrangements contained in the Agreement. The Office also, together with UNCT members and the African Union, provided logistical support to improve conditions of local facilities that were required to implement the Agreement. This included a local training camp of former combatants under the Mission's DDR programme who were responsible for providing security in the transhumance corridors and mining sites in the area, a local airfield and security infrastructure.

Project selection and management of QIPs needed to be strengthened

21. The Bouar Field Office was allocated \$600,000 for QIPs for the period under review. It had properly established a Project Review Committee (PRC) with responsibility for reviewing and approving QIPs. OIOS review of 12 QIPs noted that they were aligned with the Mission's strategic priorities and did not exceed \$50,000 (the established threshold per project). However, QIPs took longer than the expected six months to complete. This was partly due to weaknesses in the PRC's review and selection process, as it did not always adequately review the capacity of implementing partners to complete projects. For example, the Bouar gendarmerie rehabilitation project was delayed by nine months, as the implementing partner initially selected had to be replaced due to its poor performance. Some problems were also noted with the Bouar Field Office's management of QIPs. However, as OIOS is currently conducting an audit of QIPs, no recommendation on this issue is being made in this report.

Proactive steps were taken in response to the Covid-19 pandemic

22. At the onset of Covid-19, the Bouar Field Office established a Covid-19 Preparedness Task Force in accordance with instructions from Mission headquarters. Measures taken included: acquisition and distribution of personal protective equipment (PPE) and hygiene supplies, ensuring social distancing, and restriction of face to face meetings.

23. The Office also provided logistical and technical support to prefectural authorities including: (i) distribution of 4,000 radios to enhance awareness; (ii) advice on the establishment of the presidential decree to release certain detainees; (iii) installation of a Covid-19 screening checkpoint at the border with

Cameroon; (iv) handing over financial contributions of the Office's staff to the local authorities; and (v) transporting by air biological samples for Covid-19 test results to Bangui. Additionally, the Office initiated three QIPs to rehabilitate isolation rooms at a prefectural hospital and distributed a large number of PPE and hygiene supplies.

24. The Office conducted training and awareness campaigns for the local population and facilitated the establishment of response committees on Covid-19 in five towns. The Office collaborated with government and prefectural authorities to educate over 1,000 participants, including local non-governmental organizations, elements of defense and security forces (537 including 19 women), community groups (236 including 43 women) and community violence reduction participants (620 including 213 women). OIOS concluded that the Office's response to the Covid-19 pandemic had been proactive and substantial.

B. Security and administrative management

Recommended security measures were not yet implemented

25. The security team in the Bouar Field Office conducted regular security assessments and made 41 recommendations to improve safety and security measures related to: perimeter protection, camps' access controls and fire prevention. As of 30 July 2020, only 14 of the recommendations had been implemented, with the remaining 27 still to be fully implemented. These included to ensure: (a) adequate safe rooms in event of a crisis; (b) fix the X-ray machine in the Movement Control passenger terminal; (c) under-vehicle lighted search mirrors were available to screen vehicles entering the Office camp; (d) office perimeter walls are properly illuminated and there are sufficient watch towers; and (e) the Bouar airfield's runway, apron, terminal and fencing are repaired.

26. OIOS appreciates that additional resources may be needed to fully implement the safety and security recommendations and noted that the Office was also working with the UNCT to address issues, for instance those related to airfield facilities. Nonetheless, Mission headquarters needs to review and provide resources to enhance safety and security measures to mitigate risk exposure to staff.

(3) MINUSCA should review and provide the resources to strengthen safety and security measures at the Bouar Field Office.

MINUSCA accepted recommendation 3 and stated that the Engineering Section is working closely with United Nations Department of Safety and Security to implement a practical and phased actionable plan. Several safety and security measures such as a safe room and security lights have been implemented. Recommendation 3 remains open pending receipt of evidence of implementation of evidence that required safety and security measures are implemented.

Need to develop an action plan to provide adequate staffing capacity to the Office

27. The Bouar Field Office's staffing capacity was not commensurate with the scope and scale of their responsibilities and the tasks they were required to implement, as follows:

- The Office did not have a Head for nine months until May 2019.
- The political affairs team consisted of only one United Nations volunteer (UNV) who did not have any experience in the subject. Prior to June 2018, the Office had three staff (P-4 and two UNVs) with relevant experience and educational background. Two of the posts were abolished following the "right sizing" exercise done by the Mission in July 2018.

- The gender team and public information team were each headed by a national staff at the G-5 level. This was not ideal, as due to their level, they were not invited to meetings where their input would normally be required, such as activities related to joint operations and security.
- There was no forklift operator, which was essential for movement control activities.

28. In December 2019, the SRSG, during the annual retreat of heads of field offices decided to: (a) increase the staffing of field offices by deploying 60 and 40 per cent staff in field offices and Bangui headquarters, (b) allocate professional staff to substantive teams in all field offices, and (c) return all staff posts to the field offices that had been loaned from them. The Mission had still to develop an action plan to implement the SRSG's decision. Staff of the Bouar Field Office stated that they had been stretched to the limit without adequate capacity especially during leave of key staff.

(4) MINUSCA should develop an action plan to implement the directive of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to ensure that the staffing capacity of the Bouar Field Office is commensurate with the scope and scale of its responsibilities and operations.

MINUSCA accepted recommendation 4 and stated that work on the action plan has already started and the Office of the Chief of Staff will update it in early 2021 to reflect Mission's election preparation activities, Covid-19 and other competing priorities that have affected its full implementation. Recommendation 4 remains open pending receipt of an action plan that ensures that the Bouar Field Offices has requisite staffing capacity in line with the SRSG's directive.

The process for approval of leave needed to be reviewed

29. The Head of the Bouar Field was the first reporting officer for heads of substantive teams, and the head of their respective component at Bangui Mission headquarters was their second reporting officer. However, although it was part of the SRSG's directive of 2019 to increase the capacity of field offices, the Mission had still not designated the Head of the Office as the approver of leave and movement of personnel of substantive team members or mapped the approver's roles in Umoja and Field Support Suite (FSS) systems accordingly. Consequently, substantive team members sometimes took leave without clearing it with the Head of the Office, resulting at times in gaps to the delivery of programme activities. The Mission informed that changes to approval roles in Umoja and FSS for all heads of field office had been delayed due to technical issues, as well as the gradual adjustments being made to return the previously loaned posts back to field offices.

(5) MINUSCA should designate the heads of field offices the authority to approve leave and movement of their substantive team members and map the approver's role in Umoja and Field Support Suite systems accordingly.

MINUSCA accepted recommendation 5 and stated that the SRSG has already given the heads of offices this authority. The Field Office Coordinator will work with the relevant sections and units to map the proper approvers in Umoja with the assistance of the Field Technology Section. Recommendation 5 remains open pending receipt of evidence that the approver's role in Umoja and FSS for leave and movement of substantive team members in the field are mapped to the heads of field offices.

Mandatory training courses were not always being completed

30. Despite repeated reminders by the Head of the Office, 47 out of 63 (75 per cent) of the Office staff had not provided documents to evidence the completion of mandatory training courses.

31. This was because Office did not have effective means to track and follow up with staff who did not undertake mandatory training courses and follow up with them to complete the courses. Also, the Integrated Mission Training Cell (IMTC) was not providing staff training records to the heads of field offices and other managers for follow-ups as IMTC did not have readily available information by individual field offices. Consequently, there was a risk that staff lack awareness of the value of the Organization including the culture of good conduct and discipline. For example, a review of relevant records showed that television sets for welfare activities were used by three staff in their accommodation rooms for more than six months without authorization.

(6) MINUSCA should provide training records to the heads of field offices to track and follow up with staff to complete all mandatory courses.

MINUSCA accepted recommendation 6 and stated that the heads of field offices will work with team leaders under their responsibility to include a new requirement in their 2021/22 e-Performance to track and follow up with staff who have not completed the mandatory training courses. The Human Resources provided an updated staffing table to IMTC and heads of field offices. Recommendation 6 remains open pending receipt of evidence that staff training records are tracked and followed up to ensure staff complete the mandatory training courses.

Need to improve logistical support to the Office operations

32. Field offices rely on the Mission Support Division for logistical support, but the audit noted that the requirements in the Office's support plan were generally not provided in a timely manner, as shown by the following examples:

- The request of October 2019 for prefabricated accommodation buildings for staff and visitors had not been fulfilled as of October 2020. As a result, some staff were still having to reside in tents.
- Various requests made during March 2019 for a fire truck and an operator to increase its firefighting capabilities, resulted in a fire truck being provided in October 2019, but the Office still did not have anyone on the ground who could operate it.
- Requests since April 2019 for tents to serve as working spaces for Community Liaison Assistants deployed to operating bases in Beloko, Bossembele, Boali, and Bozoum had not been provided. As a result, the Community Liaison Assistants were working outside without suitable shade or protection from the sun exposing them to health and safety risks.

33. The Bouar Field Office also did not have sufficient storage facilities for equipment and supplies such as batteries, spares parts, and laptops, and because of this, they were stored in sea containers without adequate shelving making it difficult to retrieve them. The sea containers did not have proper ventilation or temperature control, increasing risk of items deteriorating in storage.

34. This happened as the Mission Support Division was not systematically tracking and responding in a timely manner to the requirements of the Bouar Field Office. This was despite repeated follow-up by the Field Office and the Field Offices Coordinator and the fact that the support requirements were included in the Division's approved support plans. The lack of necessary support and adequate conditions for staff to work and reside in, not only increased health and safety risks, but it could also impact the readiness of the Bouar Field Office to carry their mandated tasks.

(7) MINUSCA should ensure that its Mission Support Division systematically track and timely provide the requirements in the approved support plan for the Bouar Field Office to adequately support its operation.

MINUSCA accepted recommendation 7 and stated that all staff in Bouar are provided with prefabricated offices/accommodation. In June 2020, the mission ordered additional prefabricated accommodation and tents. The Field Office will receive 10 single modules with toilet capsules to cater for visitors and crew who previously have been living in tents. A rubbish-hall has also been erected in the Field Office and containers will be installed and shelves ordered and assembled to take care of equipment and supplies. Recommendation 7 remains open pending receipt of evidence that the requirements in the approved support plan to the Bouar Field Office are systematically tracked and timely provided.

IV. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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

(Signed) Eleanor T. Burns
Director, Internal Audit Division
Office of Internal Oversight Services

STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Audit of the operations of the Bouar Field Office in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	C/ O ³	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date ⁴
1	MINUSCA should ensure that field offices: (a) are provided with guidance on development of annual work plans and that they include measurable outputs and targets, and achievement of plans are systematically monitored and reported on; and (b) have developed, in consultation with relevant substantive components, plans to implement the Mission's strategy to reduce threats posed by armed groups and progress is monitored.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that field offices: (a) have developed work plans that are SMART and are regularly monitored and reported on; and (b) have plans to implement the Mission's strategy to reduce threats posed by armed groups, and progress is monitored.	1 March 2021
2	MINUSCA should share the benefits of the Bouar Communication and Operation Centre project and consider implementing such a mechanisms in other field offices to enhance coordination among the military, police, substantive and support teams, as well as with the United Nations County Team.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence of full implementation of the project and action taken to share the benefits of the project with other field offices for them to enhance coordination among military, police and other stakeholders.	15 September 2021
3	MINUSCA should review and provide the resources to strengthen safety and security measures at the Bouar Field Office.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence of implementation of evidence that required safety and security measures are implemented.	30 June 2021
4	MINUSCA should develop an action plan to implement the directive of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to ensure that the staffing capacity of the Bouar Field Office is commensurate with the scope and scale of its responsibilities and operations.	Important	O	Receipt of an action plan that ensures that the Bouar Field Offices has requisite staffing capacity in line with the SRSG's directive.	30 March 2021
5	MINUSCA should designate the heads of field offices the authority to approve leave and movement	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that the approver's role in Umoja and FSS for leave and movement of	30 April 2021

¹ Critical recommendations address those risk issues that require immediate management attention. Failure to take action could have a critical or significant adverse impact on the Organization.

² Important recommendations address those risk issues that require timely management attention. Failure to take action could have a high or moderate adverse impact on the Organization.

³ Please note the value C denotes closed recommendations whereas O refers to open recommendations.

⁴ Date provided by MINUSCA in response to recommendations.

STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Audit of the operations of the Bouar Field Office in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical¹/ Important²	C/ O³	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date⁴
	of their substantive team members and map the approver's role in Umoja and Field Support Suite systems accordingly.			substantive team members in the field are mapped to the heads of field offices.	
6	MINUSCA should provide training records to the heads of field offices to track and follow up with staff to complete all mandatory courses.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that staff training records are tracked and followed up to ensure staff complete the mandatory training courses.	30 May 2021
7	MINUSCA should ensure that its Mission Support Division systematically track and timely provide the requirements in the approved support plan for the Bouar Field Office to adequately support its operation.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that the requirements in the approved support plan to the Bouar Field Office are systematically tracked and timely provided.	31 March 2021

APPENDIX I

Management Response

United Nations

United Nations Multidimensional Integrated
Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic



MINUSCA

Nations Unies

Mission Multidimensionnelle Intégrée des Nations Unies
pour la Stabilisation en République centrafricaine

INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

MEMORANDUM INTERIEUR

TO: Ms. Eleanor T. Burns, Director,
A: Internal Audit Division, OIOS

DATE: 23 December 2020

REFERENCE: MINUSCA/SRSG/235/2020

FROM: Mankeur Ndiaye
DE: Special Representative of the Secretary-General
MINUSCA

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Mankeur Ndiaye', is written over the signature line.

SUBJECT: **Draft Report an audit on the Operations of the Bouar Field Office in the United Nations**
OBJECT: **Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic**
(Assignment No. AP2019-637-10)

1. With reference to your memorandum dated 10 December 2020 (OIOS-2020-01825) on the above captioned subject, please find attached Appendix 1 with MINUSCA's comments.

Management Response

Audit of the operations of the Bouar Field Office in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
1	MINUSCA should ensure that field offices: (a) are provided with guidance on development of annual work plans and that they include measurable outputs and targets, and achievement of plans are systematically monitored and reported on; and (b) have developed, in consultation with relevant substantive components, plans to implement the Mission's strategy to reduce threats posed by armed groups and their progress is monitored.	Important	Yes	Senior Planning Officer; Field Offices Coordinator (FOC)	1/03/2021	The Strategic Planning Unit (SPU), in coordination with Field Coordination, will support the elaboration of field office and section work plans. SPU will also coordinate and lead on the drafting of a revised comprehensive mission strategy to reduce the threat posed by armed groups. Through the Comprehensive Performance Assessment System (CPAS), SPU will also continue to assess progress in overall mandate implementation.
2	MINUSCA should share the benefits of the Bouar Communication and Operation Centre project and consider implementing such a mechanism in other field offices to enhance coordination among the military, police, substantive and support teams, as well as with the United Nations County Team.	Important	Yes	Head of Office (HoO);	15/09/21	While this Recommendation is relevant to improve Mission coherence in standardizing DPOs Guidance Mission-wide, sharing information and best practices on Bouar Communication and Operation Centre (BoCO) conduction and organization can only be implemented if and when BoCO is operational. Following is the planned schedule proposed by the HoO:

¹ Critical recommendations address those risk issues that require immediate management attention. Failure to take action could have a critical or significant adverse impact on the Organization.

² Important recommendations address those risk issues that require timely management attention. Failure to take action could have a high or moderate adverse impact on the Organization.

Management Response

Audit of the operations of the Bouar Field Office in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
						<p>1. Inform Best Practices about the different aspects related to the building of BoCO;</p> <p>2. Construction timeline:</p> <p>a. Phase I: ending 15/08/20: development of concept and approvals;</p> <p>b. Phase II: 02/01/21 – 30/04/21: construction and norms development; and</p> <p>c. Phase III: 15/04/21 – 01/07/21: simulations and operation.</p> <p>3. Share information on how BoCO was constructed and operates with other FOs: 15/09/21.</p>
3	MINUSCA should review and provide resources necessary to strengthen safety and security measures at the Bouar Field Office.	Important	Yes	Sector Engineer; alternate: Electromechanical technician Deputy Chief Security Adviser	18/11/2020, ongoing activity, as and when required	<p>Engineering is working closely with United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) to implement a practical and phased actionable plan.</p> <p>Safe room: a safe haven has been established. Photo attached.</p> <p>Perimeter lighting: Completed are 25 Flood Lights around the Integrated Personnel Accommodation Camp (IPAC), 20 flood lights at the US camp, 23 flood lights around the Spanish camp, and 12 around European Union Training Mission (EUTM) camp.</p>

Management Response

Audit of the operations of the Bouar Field Office in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
						Compound lighting: 18 Solar lights within the IPAC OP Towers: IPAC 03 towers, US Camp 02 towers, Spanish Camp 02 towers and at EUTM one tower. At the Airfield and HLS: continuous maintenance and repairs are a recurrent activity. At the HLS, and for security purposes, 05 towers and 10 security lights have been installed, and ditch and berm as protection.
4	MINUSCA should develop an action plan to implement the directive of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to ensure that the staffing capacity of the Bouar Field Office is commensurate with the scope and scale of its responsibilities and operations.	Important	Yes	Chief of Staff (CoS)	30/03/2021	Work on this plan has already started and the OCoS will update it in early 2021 to reflect Mission election preparations activities, COVID-19 and other competing priorities that have affected its full implementation.
5	MINUSCA should designate heads of field offices the authority to approve leave and movement of their substantive team members and map the approver's role in Umoja and Field Support Suite accordingly.	Important	Yes	FOC	30/04/2021	The Special Representative of the Secretary General has already given the HoOs this authority; the FOC will work with the relevant Sections and Units to map the proper approvers in Umoja. Field Technology Services (FTS) is prepared to support HRO to map approver's role in UMOJA and FSS upon receipt of the list of substantive team members indicating the names of new approvers from HRO.

Management Response

Audit of the operations of the Bouar Field Office in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
6	MINUSCA should provide training records to heads of field offices for them to track and follow up with staff who have not completed the mandatory training courses.	Important	Yes	FOC Chief Human Resources	30/05/2021 18/12/2020	HoOs will work with Team Leaders under their responsibility (Sections and RAO) to include a new requirement in their 2021-2022 ePas to track and follow up with staff who have not completed the mandatory training courses. Human Resources provided an updated staffing table to Integrated Mission Training Centre (IMTC) and HoO.
7	MINUSCA should ensure that its Mission Support Division systematically track and timely provide the requirements in the approved support plan for the Bouar Field Office to adequately support its operations.	Important	Yes	Sector Engineer, Bouar	31/03/2021	All staff in Bouar are provided with prefabricated offices/accommodations. The existing tents are used randomly for visitors and air crew. In June 2020, after an assessment of all Field offices, for the requirement of additional prefabs to augment the capacities of IPACs for visitors, air crews, and for the requirement for the Community Liaison Assistants (CLAs) in terms of tents, the mission ordered additional prefabs and tents. Bouar will receive 10 single modules with toilet capsules (self-contained) to cater for visitors and air crew. Once delivered, prefabs will be installed and will be made operational, say during the next three to four months.

Management Response

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						<p>With respect to the CLAs, the initial agreed plan with Civil Affairs is to provide the CLAs with tents. The mission ordered tents in June 2020 to fulfill this requirement. Two tents were sent earlier from Bangui for Beloko & Bosssebele, but Civil Affairs opted for modified sea containers instead of tents. Two modified sea containers were provided and connected in Beloko & Bossebele (photos attached). Further discussions are underway with Civil Affairs regarding plans for Boali & Bozoum. This represents a change of the concept for the CLAs. We will continue to support them in case they also opt for the modified containers whenever the containers are made available. Regarding the storage of batteries and spare parts, a rub-hall is erected in Bouar SHQ and is being used as Transport workshop. Containers will be installed inside the rub hall, and shelves will be ordered through Supply Section and assembled. If not, wooden shelves will be planned to be installed.</p>