



INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION

REPORT 2023/020

Audit of the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen

**The Office needed to establish a mission
concept providing strategic direction and
input and strengthen implementation of peace
support projects**

15 June 2023

Assignment No. AP2021-692-01

Audit of the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen (OESGY). The objective of the audit was to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the measures exercised by OESGY to implement its mandate. The audit was conducted from January to December 2022 in Amman and New York. The audit covered the period from 1 January 2019 to 31 August 2022. Based on an activity-level risk assessment, the audit covered higher and medium risk areas and focused on: (a) governance and oversight mechanisms; (b) programme management; (c) integrated mission support; and (d) management culture of OESGY.

OIOS identified several areas where improvements were required in implementing OESGY's mandated tasks. Observations included the need for OESGY to document a mission concept and establish annual workplans for all its organizational units.

OIOS made seven recommendations. To address issues identified in the audit, OESGY needed to:

- Develop a mission concept to articulate the Office's objectives, guiding principles, priorities, key assumptions, and risks to strengthen strategic direction and planning;
- Strengthen implementation of peace support projects including through regularization of its relationship with United Nations Agency A and maintenance of adequate documentation to demonstrate that the projects are being effectively managed to complement the implementation of its mandated tasks;
- Finalize business continuity plans for its offices in Jordan and Yemen, complete security enhancements to its office in Jordan and participate in meetings of the Security Management Team;
- Establish annual workplans for all its organizational units to outline how mandated activities would be implemented and monitored by Mission components;
- Develop a strategic communications and public information strategy that is aligned with its mandate and periodically evaluate the impact of the strategy;
- Update its 2019-2021 gender strategy to take into account changes in the context and approach of the Mission; and
- Develop an action plan to improve compliance with the organizational policy requiring finalization of travel arrangements 16 calendar days in advance of travel.

OESGY accepted the recommendations but has yet to initiate action to implement them. Actions required to close the recommendations are included in Annex 1.

CONTENTS

I. BACKGROUND	1
II. AUDIT OBJECTIVE, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY	1-2
III. AUDIT RESULTS	2-10
A. Governance and oversight mechanisms	2-4
B. Programme management	5-7
C. Integrated mission support	7-9
D. Management culture of OSESGY	9-10
IV. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	10
ANNEX I	Status of audit recommendations
APPENDIX I	Management response

Audit of the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen

I. BACKGROUND

1. The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen (OESGY) based in Amman, Jordan.
2. Yemen has been facing a complex political military crisis since 2011. The United Nations provided support for the negotiations between the Government and the opposition, which resulted in the signing of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Initiative and its Implementation Mechanism in Riyadh on 23 November 2011. The GCC Initiative and its Implementation Mechanism and the outcomes of the comprehensive National Dialogue Conference (NDC) form the legitimate demands and aspirations of the Yemeni people, including women and youth.
3. Based on Security Council resolution 2014 (2011), the Secretary-General established OESGY in 2012 to exercise his good offices to: (a) facilitate Yemen's transition and assist in the implementation of the Agreement; (b) lead United Nations support to NDC and coordinate international assistance to the Conference; (c) provide support to other transition steps, including the constitutional review and new general elections; (d) work closely with members of the Security Council, the GCC and other international partners; and (e) support the Secretary-General's ongoing reporting obligations to the Security Council in the context of resolutions 2014 (2011) and 2051 (2012). In January 2014, Yemenis concluded the NDC, with the support from the United Nations. The outcome document of NDC established the foundations for a new federal and democratic Yemen. A Constitution Drafting Commission was created to draft a new constitution based on the NDC outcomes. Security Council resolution 2216 (2015), among others, reaffirmed its full support for, and commitment to, the efforts of the United Nations and the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on Yemen.
4. The Secretary-General appointed the current Special Envoy for Yemen on 6 August 2021. OESGY has six organizational units working under the direction of the Special Envoy: (i) Office of the Special Envoy; (ii) Political Affairs Section; (iii) Public Information Section; (iv) Security Sector Reform Section; (v) Safety and Security Section; and (vi) Office of the Chief of Mission Support. OESGY shares a single integrated mission support structure with the United Nations Mission to Support the Hodeidah Agreement (UNMHA), which was established by Security Council resolution 2452 (2019).
5. The proposed resource requirements of OESGY for the year 2022 amounted to \$17.6 million comprising: (a) salaries and common staff costs (\$11.5 million); and (b) operational costs (\$6.1 million). These resources supported the continuation of 100 positions (1 USG, 1 D-2, 1 D-1, 6 P-5, 15 P-4, 11 P-3, 10 National Officer (NO), 25 Field Service (FS), 1 General Service (Other level, GS-OL) and 29 general service (local level). OESGY is headquartered in Amman, Jordan and has offices in Aden and Sana'a in Yemen.
6. Comments provided by OESGY are incorporated in italics.

II. AUDIT OBJECTIVE, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

7. The main objective of the audit was to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the measures exercised by OESGY to implement its mandate.
8. The audit was included in the 2021 risk-based workplan of OIOS due to the importance of the Yemeni peace process.

9. The audit was conducted from January to December 2022 in Amman and New York. The audit covered the period from 1 January 2019 to 31 August 2022. Based on an activity-level risk assessment, the audit covered higher and medium risk areas and focused on: (a) governance and oversight mechanisms; (b) programme management; (c) integrated mission support; and (d) management culture of OSESGY.

10. The audit methodology included: (a) review and analysis of relevant policies, guidelines, and reports; (b) discussions and interviews with concerned OSESGY officials and staff representatives; and (c) analytical reviews, walk-throughs and tests of key processes.

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

III. AUDIT RESULTS

A. Governance and oversight mechanism

OSESGY needed to establish a mission concept providing strategic direction and input

12. The revised mission concept guidelines require peacekeeping and special political missions to develop a mission concept to implement their mandates. The mission concept includes: (a) a statement of intent and strategy on how the mission plans to implement its mandate; (b) guiding principles for mandate implementation; and (c) mission objectives, priorities, key assumptions and risks. The mission concept is, therefore, a management tool for strategic planning, communication and resource allocation.

13. OSESGY had not developed a mission concept to provide strategic direction to setting mandate implementation priorities and aligning its workplans and support processes with those priorities. OSESGY stated that it had been in contact with United Nations Headquarters for guidance and had formed a Planning Committee in September 2022 to support the process. Since its establishment, the Committee has focused on drafting the strategic plan, mission concept, risk matrix and action plans on issues related to gender, disability and inclusion, climate and sustainability, communication, and operational ability. The Committee expected to complete updating the planning documents during the first half of 2023.

14. Yemen's political situation was fluid, which made OSESGY's operating environment difficult. A mission concept was, therefore, critically important to reflect the shifting operating environment with key assumptions and risk management to implement the mandate. In the absence of a mission concept, there was a risk that OSESGY's workplans and support processes may not fully align with its long-term strategic priorities. In addition, the lack of an up-to-date mission concept made it difficult to determine whether key mission support processes and constraints had been adequately identified. OSESGY needed to consult with the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA) in this regard.

(1) OSESGY should, in consultation with DPPA, develop a mission concept to articulate the Office's objectives, guiding principles, priorities, key assumptions and risks to strengthen strategic direction and planning.

OSESGY accepted recommendation 1 and stated that it had established a Planning Committee in the last quarter of 2022, which as a consultative forum, finalized the strategic plan for the Office. The mission concept was being drafted based on the strategic plan together with other planning documents.

OSESGY engaged with relevant partners to coordinate the implementation of its mandated tasks

15. United Nations agencies working in Yemen are represented in the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) on Yemen at Headquarters, which ensures the coordination and coherence of United Nations political, humanitarian, human rights and other efforts in Yemen. The Yemen IATF, established in July 2016, serves as the main forum within the United Nations for joint assessments, planning, coordination, sharing of information, consultations and decision-making support on Yemen. OSESGY regularly participated in IATF.

16. Further, OSESGY engaged closely with Member States, the Security Council and regional organizations, including the League of Arab States, GCC, the European Union and international financial institutions. At the country level, OSESGY coordinated its efforts with the United Nations country team (UNCT) in Yemen. The Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator based in Sana'a and the Special Envoy spoke periodically. Meeting minutes from 2020 and 2021 reflected OSESGY's participation in various coordination platforms.

17. OIOS concluded that OSESGY's efforts to coordinate its activities with the various partners at the international, regional and national levels were satisfactory.

OSESGY needed to establish mechanisms for programming and reporting on peace support projects

18. In its proposed programme budgets for 2019 and 2020, OSESGY estimated extrabudgetary resources of \$1,333,600 and \$415,900, respectively to complement its efforts in Yemen through peace support projects (PSPs). In 2021, OSESGY projected that \$73,900 in extrabudgetary resources would be carried over from 2020 to support PSP activities.

19. According to OSESGY, funding for the projects is provided through memoranda of understanding between donors and United Nations Agency A, following fundraising efforts undertaken by the Office of the Special Envoy. The projects are supervised and coordinated by OSESGY, while Agency A provides for their day-to-day management. OSESGY prepares quarterly and annual narrative reports, which are combined with financial reports prepared by Agency A for submission to donors. A Project Steering Committee, co-chaired by OSESGY and Agency A and composed of donors to the project, is responsible for reviewing and approving project implementation reports. However, despite several requests, OSESGY was unable to provide copies of the quarterly and annual narrative reports as well as the Project Steering Committee meeting minutes to the audit team.

20. Furthermore, there was inadequate documentation of the arrangements between OSESGY and Agency A in managing the PSPs. OSESGY explained that the relationship was governed by the umbrella memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the Secretariat and Agency A dated 3 August 2014. The MOU requires each Secretariat entity to develop an agreed final detailed statement of requirements with Agency A that includes a description of the project to be executed under the MOU and intended deliverables and parameters that allow the Secretariat to evaluate the timeliness and quality of the implementation of project activities. However, OSESGY could not produce the statement of requirements, and instead shared with OIOS a project proposal to donors to mobilize \$20 million for PSPs for the period July 2018 to June 2022. While the proposal described the planned project management and coordination framework and respective responsibilities between OSESGY and Agency A for project management, human resources management, monitoring and reporting, and risk management, there was no signed agreement to put these into force. The resources that were generated for the project were also unclear.

<p>(2) OSESGY should establish mechanisms to strengthen its implementation of peace support projects including: (a) regularization of its relationship with United Nations Agency A in</p>

accordance with the umbrella memorandum of understanding between the Secretariat and the Agency; and (b) maintenance of adequate documentation to demonstrate that these projects are being effectively managed to complement the implementation of its mandated tasks.

OESGY accepted recommendation 2 and stated that it would approach the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance to inquire about the status of the memorandum of understanding between the Secretariat and the Agency. OESGY would then work with Agency A to develop the statement of requirements (SoR) for peace support projects and update project documents to reinforce the SoR.

OESGY needed to finalize its business continuity plans and participate in monthly security risk management meetings

21. OESGY's business continuity plans were prepared for Amman, Jordan in 2020 and for Aden and Sanaa, Yemen in 2021 but neither plan had been signed off. OESGY stated that these plans were being reviewed for finalization.

22. In February 2020, the Department of Safety and Security (DSS) established the security risk management (SRM) process for Yemen Area West. Area-specific security plans were established for Area West and Hudaydah in May 2022 and for Aden and Sana'a in 2021. While the Jordan area-specific security plan was also documented, only a draft DSS SRM was available for Jordan covering the period from December 2021 to December 2022. In addition, DSS had not cleared the OESGY office premises in Amman. As a result, security updates to the Office were ongoing.

23. OIOS requested a sample of meeting minutes for the Jordan Security Management Team (SMT) for the first week of alternate months for 2019, 2020 and 2021. The Chief Security Officer stated that the SMT meetings were not regularly convened in 2019 and provided the minutes of the May 2019 SMT meeting. For 2020, the Chief Security Officer stated that the SMT meetings were not held in February, April, May and July 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. For the months when the SMT meetings were held, the minutes did not list OESGY as a participant. OESGY stated that SMT and Area SMT meetings were also held in Sana'a and Aden respectively, in which it participated.

(3) OESGY should: (a) finalize business continuity plans for all its offices in Jordan and Yemen; (b) complete security enhancements to its office in Amman, Jordan in compliance with the DSS security standards; and (c) assign an official to participate in monthly security management team meetings in Jordan.

OESGY accepted recommendation 3(a) and 3(c) stating that the business continuity plan would be finalized by 31 July 2023 and that either the Chief of Staff or the Chief Mission Support would continue to attend the SMT meetings in Jordan with a security officer attending as an observer.

OESGY did not accept recommendation 3(b) and provided OIOS with an email from DSS dated 5 December 2022, endorsing an assessment of an ad hoc SRM that had concluded that OESGY's risk level for general threats was low. Therefore, this aspect of the recommendation is closed.

B. Programme management

Mandated tasks needed to be translated into workplans for implementation

24. Out of the six organizational units in OSESGY, only the Office of CMS had workplans for all three years in the audit period. The Gender Team and the Security Sector Reform Section had workplans for 2021, whereas the Political Affairs Section, Public Information Section and Safety and Security Section had no workplans. The workplans for the Office of CMS listed the expected outputs and objectives, planned activities, roles and indicators of achievements for each of its pillars. Similarly, the Gender Team 2021 workplan detailed its activities, which were time bound and assigned to members of the Team.

25. However, the 2021 overall workplan for OSESGY only listed its strategic priorities and objectives but did not include a breakdown of outputs to be delivered, timing and priority. It also did not assign responsibility to organizational units such as (a) the Office of the Special Envoy; (b) Political Affairs Section; and (c) Public Information Section for the delivery of outputs and activities, and applicable monitoring mechanisms. Likewise, although the Security Sector Reform Section had prepared its 2021 workplan, there were no details of outputs to be delivered, timing and priority.

26. Nevertheless, OIOS noted that OSESGY had documented a draft strategic planning table detailing the Office's priorities as well as a draft mission concept and a risk matrix. As of November 2022, these documents had been shared with OSESGY's senior leadership team, seeking their input, after which they were to form the basis of the workplans for Office of the Special Envoy and other organizational units. The draft strategic planning table with OSESGY's priorities had not yet been translated into annual workplans at the level of each organizational unit. A key purpose of the workplans is to support the Special Envoy in implementing his compact with the Secretary-General by prioritizing OSESGY's mandated activities and assigning them to relevant OSESGY organizational units for implementation. They also serve as a tool to monitor and measure organizational performance against OSESGY's programme of work.

(4) OSESGY should establish annual workplans for all its organizational units to outline how mandated activities would be implemented by Mission components and monitored.

OSESGY accepted recommendation 4 and stated that workplans would be uploaded onto Inspira for all sections.

OSESGY operates in a restrictive environment affecting the implementation of its mandate

27. To effectively perform his mandated responsibilities, it was important for the Special Envoy to visit Yemen to meet with the parties to the conflict and other stakeholders. However, such visits were dependent on the agreement of parties to the conflict with visits in areas under control of Ansar Allah subject to the agreement of both the Government of Yemen (GoY) and Ansar Allah, while visits in areas under GoY control were subject to the agreement of GoY and issuance of travel visas or permits by the relevant authorities. Since the Special Envoy assumed his responsibilities in September 2021, he had been granted authorization to visit Sana'a and Yemen twice, in April and June 2022.

28. Also, OSESGY staff were routinely subjected to limitations of movement in Yemen by the local authorities, impeding their ability to perform their mandated tasks in the country. They also routinely experienced long delays in obtaining visas or travel permits into Yemen. These challenges persisted, despite OSESGY's intensified efforts to expedite issuance of visas and travel permits for Yemen. The audit noted that the Special Envoy provided monthly oral briefings to the Security Council, which included updated information on the situation in Yemen, including access and security restrictions.

OSESGY needed to develop a strategic communications and public information strategy

29. OSESGY's Public Information Section developed a 30-day plan, which was part of the Special Envoy's in-coming briefing package in September 2021. Additionally, a 45-day communications and messaging plan was documented for use by the Special Envoy, which included a schedule of public outreach activities. Communication plans for specific visits were also documented, e.g., for Cairo, Egypt, and for special activities, such as the ongoing consultations around the Special Envoy's framework for the peace process and the proposed press briefings.

30. However, OSESGY did not establish a formal communications strategy as required by the November 2016 policy on strategic communications and public information (SCPI). OSESGY needed to prepare this strategy in consultation with relevant stakeholders, including the heads of its organizational units to effectively align it with the Mission mandate and objectives. The strategy needed to identify the audiences to be reached and communications platforms to be used. The duration of the strategy also needed to be considered, given the continuing changes to OSESGY's operating environment, as well as the monitoring and evaluation systems to be established to assess specific measures of achievement or key performance indicators.

(5) OSESGY should develop a strategic communications and public information strategy aligned with its mandate and periodically evaluate the impact of the strategy.

OSESGY accepted recommendation 5 and stated that it was developing a first draft of a strategic communication and public information strategy, taking into consideration inputs from different sections. The strategy would be finalized by 30 September 2023.

OSESGY needed to update its gender strategy

31. Security Council resolution 1325 dated 31 October 2000 on women, peace, and security (WPS) reaffirmed the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peace negotiations, peacebuilding, peacekeeping, humanitarian response and in post-conflict reconstruction. The resolution also stressed the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for maintenance and promotion of peace and security.

32. Currently, a Senior Gender Adviser at the P-5 level solely performs gender advisory responsibilities. The roles and functions of the position, financed by voluntary contributions through PSP, included: (a) strategic direction, advisory and review; (b) gender mainstreaming across the Office; (c) coordination on WPS with the United Nations, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UNCT; (d) support to OSESGY's Yemeni women's Technical Advisory Group; (e) relationships and consultations with a variety of Yemeni women's groups; and (f) grant management, reporting and donor relations. OSESGY stated that the Special Envoy was strengthening the Mission's gender work by moving the Senior Gender Adviser to the regular budget and using the PSP to recruit a team for the function.

33. OSESGY prepared a gender strategy for the period from 2019 to 2021, which listed strategic level focus areas on: (a) women's representation and meaningful participation; and (b) integration of gender perspectives in OSESGY's multi-track diplomacy and planning of a peaceful political transition in Yemen. The document additionally incorporated an activity level focus and results framework which included 'revitalize the OSESGY gender strategy' as one of the activities, with the proposal that the strategy be updated annually to consider changes in context and the approach of OSESGY.

34. However, OSESGY had not yet updated the gender strategy due to resource constraints.

(6) OSESGY should update its 2019-2021 gender strategy to take into account changes in context and the approach of the Mission.

OSESGY accepted recommendation 6 and stated that there were exchanges on an updated gender strategy during gender training in February and March 2023, and the strategy would be finalized by the incoming Senior Gender Adviser. Meanwhile, it had finalized a gender parity implementation plan in April 2023.

C. Integrated mission support

Integrated mission support structures were realigned following the rebalancing exercise

35. Upon the establishment of UNHMA in 2019, the Secretary-General proposed a single integrated mission support structure for OSESGY and UNMHA, in line with resolutions 2452 (2019) and 2481 (2019), which underlined the importance of close collaboration and coordination between all United Nations entities operating in Yemen to prevent duplication of efforts and maximize the leveraging of existing resources.

36. The OSESGY support component was expanded to provide support to both OSESGY and UNHMA, resulting in an integrated mission support of 132 posts. The advantages of this arrangement were economies of scale and immediate capacity to support UNMHA start-up.

37. A consultant was engaged in 2020/2021 to review the structure and capacity of OSESGY and UNMHA in their respective areas of operations for rebalancing the integrated support structure. The premise of the review was that the mandates and priorities of OSESGY and UNMHA were creating conflicting demands for the level of mission support time and resources expected by both missions. The consultant, therefore, focused on ensuring that the mission support structure was fit for purpose to provide human, financial, technical and material support for both missions. The exercise, at its conclusion in February 2021, made the six recommendations to further strengthen the mission support component.

38. At the time of the audit, the recommendations had been mostly addressed, except the one requiring consideration of a 50/50 CMS ‘time-share’ agreement for increasing the CMS’s presence in Sana’a, Hudaydah and Aden, which was in progress. Nevertheless, both OSESGY and UNMHA expressed satisfaction over the current level of integrated mission support. Given the progress made in strengthening the integrated mission support structure for OSESGY and UNMHA, OIOS is not making a recommendation.

Arrangements were in place for the provision of medical services in Yemen

39. OSESGY is responsible for ensuring the health and well-being of its personnel through the provision of medical care that meets internationally recognized standards. High quality health care was generally available to staff based in Amman, Jordan. There was a Level III hospital in Sana’a, Yemen, to provide emergency and life and limb-saving services. UNCT in Yemen also used this facility, while UNDP operated UNCT primary care clinics in Sana’a and Aden. There was also a National Professional Officer position included in the approved OSESGY staffing table in Aden, although this position was currently not encumbered. UNMHA had contracted one specialized helicopter, stationed in Djibouti, to conduct casualty and medical evacuations and search and rescue services in support of the staff in Hudaydah (and other Yemen locations on an ad hoc basis).

40. For its staff in Aden and Sana'a, OSESGY established a service level agreement (SLA) with UNDP, Yemen for the provision of fixed wing aero ambulance services on a cost reimbursable basis. The CMS explained that the UNMHA rotary air asset (helicopter) could not fly into Sana'a because only fixed wing air ambulances were allowed to fly into the city. For Aden, both the UNMHA air asset and the UNDP contracted air ambulance could be used. Furthermore, OSESGY was a signatory to an MOU with UNDP for the provision and use of common services, including those provided by the United Nations Clinic in Yemen. The standard operating procedure (SOP) for the United Nations Yemen Medical Section issued in January 2023 included provisions relating to medical evacuation. Additionally, an SOP for aero medical evacuations had been established for UNMHA and OSESGY and approved by the Chief Mission Support.

Implementation of the policy requiring advance purchase of travel tickets needed to be strengthened

41. The administrative instruction (ST/AI/2013/3) on official travel requires that all travel arrangements for individuals travelling on behalf of the United Nations, including advance booking and purchase of tickets, be finalized 16 calendar days in advance of commencement of official travel. To meet this requirement, the information circular on official travel (ST/IC/2019/16) further requires that travel requests be submitted at least 21 calendar days prior to the commencement of travel. Furthermore, the General Assembly, in its resolution 74/262, expressed concern at the low rate of compliance with the advance booking policy, and requested the Secretary-General to make stronger efforts to further enhance compliance.

42. During the audit period, the Kuwait Joint Support Office (KJSO), as service provider for OSESGY, processed 382 travel requests from the Mission for official and entitlement travel. The majority of the travel requests, 344, were not compliant with the advance ticketing policy. Late event planning was indicated as the main reason in 166 cases (48 per cent), exigency of service in 60 cases (17 per cent) and other reasons were cited in 118 cases (34 per cent). Delays in booking and purchasing tickets might result in increased travel costs. As explained by the management, the nature of OSESGY's mandate required travel at very short notice, and the unstable political environment in the duty stations prevented OSESGY from complying with the organizational advance purchase policy.

(7) OSESGY should develop an action plan to improve compliance with the organizational policy requiring finalization of travel arrangements 16 calendar days in advance of travel.

OSESGY accepted recommendation 7 and stated that while the bulk of non-compliant travel related to the Special Envoy's travel in the region where there were last minute meetings depending on the developing political situation, an action plan for more standard categories of official travel would be implemented.

OSESGY was updating its SLA with KJSO

43. As indicated in the Secretary-General's report A/76/6 (Sect. 3) Add.1, pending a decision by the General Assembly on the global service delivery model, KJSO remains a critical element of the support structure of the special political missions based in the Middle East and Asia. KJSO provides services to OSESGY in the areas of finance, payroll, human resources management and travel based on the 2018 SLA between KJSO and OSESGY. The SLA outlines the respective roles and responsibilities of KJSO and OSESGY, contains a service catalogue with the list of administrative services provided and identifies key performance indicators for those services.

44. OIOS interviews with OSESGY personnel and review of KJSO quarterly performance reports, which present statistics and analyses based on key performance indicators (KPI), did not identify any issues with the quality of administrative services provided by KJSO to OSESGY. However, OIOS noted that the

KPIs reported by KJSO in the quarterly performance reports did not agree with those originally agreed between KJSO and OSESGY in the SLA. For example, the target for processing education grants requests as per the SLA was four weeks, while the KPI used by KJSO in the quarterly performance reports submitted to OSESGY was six weeks. In addition, performance of some of the services with delivery targets agreed in the SLA, including processing of staff contract extensions, leave requests, national staff payroll, accounts receivable or petty cash replenishments, were not found in the KJSO quarterly reports.

45. OIOS was informed that KJSO was in the process of updating SLAs with all its clients to reflect the latest reforms and structural changes within the United Nations Secretariat, therefore, no recommendation is made in this area.

D. Management culture of OSESGY

OSESGY satisfactorily addressed staff concerns to strengthen its management culture

46. In his reform proposals, the Secretary-General emphasized the importance of establishing a sound organizational culture as a pre-requisite for effectively managing operations and resources. Organizational culture includes elements of: (i) leadership, management philosophy and operating style, and (ii) human resources practices and performance management. Senior leadership sets the tone at the top which is essential to ensure accountability in managing an organization's operations and resources. This tone serves as an indication for acceptable or unacceptable behavior of people responsible for utilizing the Organization's resources to effectively deliver its mandate.

47. OSESGY staff were required to complete the mandatory learning programmes within six months of joining the Organization as well as to timely complete e-performance evaluation reports. OIOS noted that the completion rate for all mandatory courses as of 1 March 2022 was 84 per cent. OSESGY stated that it had sent broadcast reminders to staff and was monitoring the performance dashboard on mandatory training. OSESGY's e-Performance evaluation reports showed the following completion rates: 95 per cent (2018-2019); 98 per cent (2019-2020); and 95 per cent (2020-2021). OSESGY stated that it strived to maintain a 100 per cent completion rate and was monitoring the management dashboard on e-performance.

48. OIOS interviews of OSESGY staff indicated that OSESGY's mandate was clear, and roles and responsibilities were understood. OSESGY held weekly senior management meetings attended by: the Special Envoy; the Deputy Head of Mission; Chief of Political Affairs; Head of Office (Aden); Head of Office (Sana'a), Chief of Mission Support; Chief of Staff; Chief, Safety and Security; Chief, Public Information; Chief, Security Sector Reform; Senior Gender Advisor; and the Senior Economic Advisor. A sample of 12 weekly senior management meeting minutes during the audit period noted that the participants provided updates on OSESGY mandate implementation, past and upcoming meetings with relevant stakeholders, de-escalation and security arrangements and media reports.

49. OIOS also reviewed the United Nations Secretariat Staff Engagement Survey, which was conducted from 19 November to 13 December 2019. To provide more constructive feedback, OSESGY conducted a follow-up survey from 13 to 21 May 2020, which was sent to 112 staff members and had 57 respondents or a 51 per cent response rate. Comments provided included suggestions that OSESGY should: (a) develop a strategic plan and vision; (b) improve communication flow as there was a sense that staff obtained updates mostly from public statements; (c) embrace more inclusion and dialogue between national staff and the leadership, as national staff felt there was a lack of trust between them; and (d) endeavour to maintain a healthy work/life balance and support flexible work arrangements. According to the staff comments, although misconduct was not widespread, staff felt that harassment, bullying and exclusion was prevalent. Likewise, while OSESGY's recruiting processes were fair, staff felt that recruitment of

consultants and seconded personnel could be more transparent. On a positive note, staff were encouraged by the Office's gender parity efforts, which they felt had improved.

50. To address the comments, the Mission implemented an action plan to 'improve information flow between senior leadership and staff, develop initiatives to improve national staff inclusion, improve transparency in recruitment processes and increase women's engagement with interlocutors, ensure that staff are informed of flexible working arrangements as well as have a clear understanding of the Mission's goals and direction.' Regarding harassment, bullying and exclusion, OIOS noted that OSESGY organized refresher courses on unsatisfactory conduct (2021) and on sexual exploitation and abuse in 2022.

51. OIOS concluded that OSESGY satisfactorily addressed staff concerns to strengthen its organizational culture, and therefore, did not make a recommendation.

OSESGY communicated the results of the civilian staffing review to staff

52. OSESGY conducted a civilian staffing review in February and March 2022 to analyze the effectiveness of the current staffing structure and job profiles to effectively implement its mandate. Key questions included the types of specialized expertise that were required on an ad hoc or long-term basis and whether the management structure allowed for efficient performance and results-based management to ensure a coordinated approach in supporting the work of the Special Envoy.

53. The review examined the roles and responsibilities of staff and consultants and how these contributed to achieving OSESGY's objectives. It also considered OSESGY resources covering all funding streams and assessed whether their programming met the requirements for gender mainstreaming and gender parity. The review was not intended to justify any additional regular budget resources but was aligned with the overall Headquarters guidance on human resources priorities and the 2023 budget submission for OSESGY with no changes to the number of regular budget posts.

54. The consultant submitted the final report to OSESGY on 14 March 2022, which contained 13 recommendations including the establishment of an internal communication strategy for information to circulate from all levels within the Office.

55. Several staff members interviewed during the audit raised concern that the findings and recommendations of the civilian staffing review had not been shared with them. A few staff stated that various aspects of their portfolio were being redistributed to different components. The COS stated that the preliminary results of the staffing review were shared with the Office's senior managers on 3 March 2022. This has been followed by a series of meetings on resource allocation, including the introduction of prioritization planning meetings in the fourth quarter of 2022 and the first quarter of 2023 during which staff and non-staff needs were discussed. Noting management action taken a recommendation is not being made.

IV. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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

Internal Audit Division
Office of Internal Oversight Services

STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Audit of the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General of Yemen

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	C/ O ³	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date ⁴
1	OSESGY should, in consultation with DPPA, develop a mission concept to articulate the Office's objectives, guiding principles, priorities, key assumptions and risks to strengthen strategic direction and planning.	Important	O	Submission of the mission concept endorsed by the Special Envoy.	31 July 2023
2	OSESGY should establish mechanisms to strengthen its implementation of peace support projects including: (a) regularization of its relationship with United Nations Agency A in accordance with the umbrella memorandum of understanding between the Secretariat and the Agency; and (b) maintenance of adequate documentation to demonstrate that these projects are being effectively managed to complement the implementation of its mandated tasks	Important	O	Submission of the statement of requirements agreed with Agency A for the implementation of PSPs and documentation evidencing implementation of the projects in support of OSESGY's mandated tasks.	31 August 2023
3	OSESGY, should: (a) finalize business continuity plans for its offices in Jordan and Yemen; (b) complete security enhancements to its office in Amman, Jordan in compliance with the DSS security standards; and (c) assign an official to participate in monthly security management team meetings in Jordan.	Important	O	3(a) Submission of an updated business continuity plan; 3(b) Action complete; and 3(c) Submission of documentation evidencing OSESGY's participation in monthly SMT meetings in Jordan.	31 July 2023
4	OSESGY should establish annual workplans for all its organizational units to outline how mandated	Important	O	Submission of organizational and section workplans.	31 July 2023

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 OSESGY in response to recommendations.

STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Audit of the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General of Yemen

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	C/ O ³	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date ⁴
	activities would be implemented by Mission components and monitored.				
5	OSESGY should develop a strategic communications and public information strategy aligned with its mandate and periodically evaluate the impact of the strategy.	Important	O	Submission of the strategic communications and public information strategy.	30 September 2023
6	OSESGY should update its 2019-2021 gender strategy to take into account changes in context and the approach of the Mission.	Important	O	Submission of the updated gender strategy.	30 September 2023
7	OSESGY should develop an action plan to improve compliance with the organizational policy requiring finalization of travel arrangements 16 calendar days in advance of travel.	Important	O	Submission of an action plan to ensure standard categories of official travel comply with the travel policy.	30 June 2023

APPENDIX I

Management Response

United Nations

OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL ENVOY OF
THE SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR YEMEN



الأمم المتحدة

مكتب المبعوث الخاص للأمين العام
للأمم المتحدة إلى اليمن

INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: Ms. Muriette Lawrence-Hume
Chief New York Audit Service,
IAD/OIOS

DATE: 31 May 2023
REF: OSESGY/FO/012/2023

FROM: Hans Grundberg
Special Envoy,
OSESGY

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Hans Grundberg', written over the printed name.

SUBJECT: Report/Comments on an audit of the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen (Assignment No. AP2021-692-01).

1. Please find attached the subject report including our comments.
2. My Office looks forward to following up regularly on the progress on the implementation of the audit recommendations.
3. Thank you.

cc: Mr. Michael Beary, UNMHA Head of Mission
Ms. Katherine Reyes, OSESGY Chief of Staff
Mr. Andrew Brimelow, OSESGY/UNMHA Chief of Mission Support
Mr. Markus Bouillon, DPPA Principal Political Affairs Officer
Mr. Frederic Renoux, DPPA-DPO Programme Management Officer
Mr. Jeffrey Lin, OIOS IS Assistant

AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Audit of the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General of Yemen

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical/ Important	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
1	OESGY should, in consultation with DPPA, develop a mission concept to articulate the Office's objectives, guiding principles, priorities, key assumptions and risks to strengthen strategic direction and planning.	Important	Yes	Chief of Staff	31 July 2023	OESGY established a Planning Committee in the last quarter of 2022 which, as a consultative forum, finalized the strategic plan for the Office, which is derived from the Compact of the Special Envoy and his main priorities. The Mission Concept is being drafted based on the strategic plan, together with other planning documents such as the risk matrix, updated Peace Support Project concept note, and the draft 2024 budget which has been submitted to UNHQ for review.
2	OESGY should establish mechanisms to strengthen its implementation of peace support projects including: (a) regularization of its relationship with United Nations Agency A in accordance with the umbrella memorandum of understanding between the Secretariat and the Agency; and (b) maintenance of adequate	Important	Yes	Chief of Staff	31 August 2023	Agency A is UNOPS. Input required from CoS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. OESGY will approach DMSPC/OPPFB and inquire about the status of the Memorandum of Understanding between UNOPS and the Secretariat. 2. OESGY will work with UNOPS to develop the Statement of Requirements (SOR) for the Peace Support Project for submission to DMSPC. 3. OESGY will update Project Document with UNOPS to reinforce the SOR

AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Audit of the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General of Yemen

	documentation to demonstrate that these projects are being effectively managed to complement the implementation of its mandated tasks.					
3	OESGY, should: (a) finalize business continuity plans for its offices in Jordan and Yemen; (b) complete security enhancements to its office in Amman, Jordan in compliance with the DSS security standards; and (c) assign an official to participate in monthly security management team meetings in Jordan.	Important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Yes b. No c. Yes 	Chief of Staff / Chief of Mission Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) 31 July 2023 (b) N/A (c) From April 2023 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Business Continuity Plans will be finalized by the end of May 2023 b. The Amman Office is in compliance with DSS requirements. The relevant assessment is included as an attachment in the response, therefore, this part of the recommendation is not accepted c. CoS or CMS will continue to attend the SMTs in Jordan going forward. An OESGY Security Officer will continue to attend as an observer
4	OESGY should establish annual workplans for all its organizational units to outline how mandated activities would be	Important	Yes	Chief of Staff	31 July 2023	Workplans will be uploaded onto Inspira for all sections by 15 May 2023

AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Audit of the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General of Yemen

	implemented by Mission components and monitored.					
5	OESGY should develop a strategic communications and public information strategy aligned with its mandate and periodically evaluate the impact of the strategy.	Important	Yes	Chief of Staff and Chief, Strategic Communications and Public Information	30 September 2023	SCPIO is currently developing a first draft of a strategic communications and public information strategy, taking into consideration inputs from different sections gathered during the past three months. The strategy will be circulated for input and finalized by Q3 of 2023.
6	OESGY should update its 2019-2021 gender strategy to take into account changes in context and the approach of the Mission.	Important	Yes	Chief of Staff and future Senior Gender Advisor	30 September 2023	Exchanges on an updated gender strategy were part of the gender training held on 28 February – 01 March. The strategy will be updated by the incoming Senior Gender Advisor. A gender parity implementation plan has already been finalized with the support of the OESGY working group on gender and Human Resources in April 2023.
7	OESGY should include the provision of aero medical evacuation in its service level agreement with the United Nations Development Programme and develop standard operating procedures for aero medical evacuation.	Important	No	Chief of Mission Support	31 May 2023	OESGY is a signatory to the Memorandum of Understanding with UNDP for the provision and use of common services. This MoU refers to the UN Clinics in Yemen and their services being available to all participating agencies. The Standard Operating Procedure for the UN Yemen Medical Section issued in January 2023 include procedures relating to Medical Evacuation. These documents are attached

AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Audit of the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General of Yemen

8	OESGY should develop an action plan to improve compliance with the organizational policy requiring finalization of travel arrangements 16 calendar days in advance of travel.	Important	Yes	Chief of Mission Support	30 June 2023	While acknowledging that the bulk of non-compliant travel relates to the SE’s travel in the region where last minute meetings depend on the developing political situation, an action plan for more standard categories of Official Travel will be implemented.
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