

INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION

REPORT 2016/002

Audit of contingent-owned equipment in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali

Overall results relating to effective management of contingent-owned equipment in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali were initially assessed as unsatisfactory. Implementation of one critical and four important recommendations remains in progress

FINAL OVERALL RATING: UNSATISFACTORY

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AUDIT REPORT

Audit of contingent-owned equipment in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali

I. BACKGROUND

1. The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of contingent-owned equipment (COE) in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA).

2. In accordance with its mandate, OIOS provides assurance and advice on the adequacy and effectiveness of the United Nations internal control system, the primary objectives of which are to ensure (a) efficient and effective operations; (b) accurate financial and operational reporting; (c) safeguarding of assets; and (d) compliance with mandates, regulations and rules.

3. As at 30 June 2015, MINUSMA had 49 military and formed police units from 22 troop/police contributing countries (T/PCCs). These contingents were equipped with 6,596 pieces of major equipment and 1,053 pieces of self-sustainment equipment deployed throughout Mali to perform peacekeeping tasks. T/PCCs are reimbursed for major equipment and self-sustainment equipment based on quarterly verification reports prepared by the Mission. The reimbursements to T/PCCs are limited to those items of serviceable major equipment specifically agreed to by the United Nations. The budget for COE and self-sustainment for fiscal year 2013/14 was \$76 million (\$42 million for major equipment and \$34 million for self-sustainment) and \$81 million (\$52 million for major equipment and \$29 million for self-sustainment) for fiscal year 2014/15.

4. The MINUSMA COE management structure includes: the Departments of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and Field Support (DFS), the MINUSMA COE and Memorandum of Understanding Management Review Board (CMMRB) and the COE Unit. MINUSMA is accountable to DPKO and DFS, who are responsible for ensuring the establishment of memoranda of understanding (MoU) between the United Nations and T/PCCs, and reimbursing T/PCCs for use of COE. The CMMRB is responsible for overseeing the management of the COE programme and reviewing the capabilities of contingents, their major and minor equipment holdings and their self-sustainment capabilities. The CMMRB also recommends amendments to MoUs due to changes in operational requirements. The MINUSMA COE Unit is part of the Mission's Joint Mission Support Centre and is headed by a COE officer at the P-4 level and had eight authorized posts comprising five international staff, two United Nations volunteers and one national staff.

5. MINUSMA was faced with significant operational challenges during its start-up phase due to delayed deployment of staff, as well as inadequate infrastructure in its area of operations. MINUSMA partly addressed initial staffing shortfalls by recruiting staff on temporary assignments; however the short duration of these appointments, the consistent high vacancy rates and lack of continuity in management functions impacted the Mission' ability to systematically dedicate sufficient resources to COE activities. The Mission was also confronted with security challenges in northern Mali, affecting the COE inspection process.

6. Comments provided by MINUSMA are incorporated in italics.

II. OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE

7. The audit was conducted to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of MINUSMA governance, risk management and control processes in providing reasonable assurance regarding the **effective management of COE in MINUSMA**.

8. The audit was included in the 2015 risk-based work plan of OIOS because of financial and operational risks related to the management of COE.

9. The key control tested for the audit was regulatory framework. For the purpose of this audit, OIOS defined this key control as the one that provides reasonable assurance that policies and procedures: (a) exist to guide the management of COE in MINUSMA; (b) are implemented consistently; and (c) ensure the reliability and integrity of financial and operational information.

10. The key control was assessed for the control objectives shown in Table 1.

11. OIOS conducted the audit from April to July 2015. The audit covered the period from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2015. OIOS reviewed: (a) CMMRB oversight activities; (b) COE inspection procedures; (c) the reporting system; (d) COE repatriation inspection reports; and (e) ammunition expended by contingents. The audit team physically observed seven operational readiness inspections carried out by the COE Unit.

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

III. AUDIT RESULTS

13. The MINUSMA governance, risk management and control processes examined were initially assessed as **unsatisfactory**¹ in providing reasonable assurance regarding the **effective management of COE in MINUSMA**. OIOS made seven recommendations to address the issues identified. MINUSMA established a CMMRB and carried out the required inspections of COE including arrival inspections, quarterly inspections and operational readiness inspections. However, MINUSMA needed to: (a) establish a working group to assist the CMMRB and a mechanism to monitor the implementation of CMMRB recommendations; (b) conduct arrival inspections in a timely manner; (c) ensure operational readiness inspection teams included technical experts; (d) provide additional guidance to contingents on the requirement to submit COE monthly serviceability reports and establish a mechanism to monitor contingents' compliance; (e) ensure verification reports are completed in a timely manner; (f) ensure that inspection of hazardous materials and their disposal are part of repatriation inspections; and (g) establish procedures for the verification and control of weapons, ammunition and explosives, and for monitoring of their use by contingents.

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

¹ A rating of **"unsatisfactory"** means that one or more critical and/or pervasive important deficiencies exist in governance, risk management or control processes, such that reasonable assurance cannot be provided with regard to the achievement of control and/or business objectives under review.

Table 1: Assessment of key control

		Control objectives						
Business objective	Key control	Efficient and effective operations	Accurate financial and operational reporting	Safeguarding of assets	Compliance with mandates, regulations and rules			
Effective management of COE in MINUSMA	Regulatory framework	Partially satisfactory	Partially satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory			
FINAL OVERALL RATING: UNSATISFACTORY								

Regulatory framework

The Mission needed to establish the required COE working group

15. The COE Manual requires the Mission to establish a CMMRB to review the contingents' operational and self-sustainment capabilities and make recommendations to DPKO/DFS on corrective actions that may be required. The CMMRB terms of reference require the Board to meet at least every six months and to establish a working group, which should meet monthly. The working group is responsible for conducting a comprehensive review of COE and reporting the results to the CMMRB.

16. MINUSMA established its CMMRB on 17 September 2014, which held one meeting during the audit period. However, due to other operational priorities at the startup of the Mission, MINUSMA did not establish a CMMRB working group to assist the Board in reviewing and addressing COE and MoU issues on a monthly basis. Although the Mission identified and escalated some contingents' issues to DPKO/DFS, which resulted in the repatriation of one contingent, the absence of a working group prevented the Mission from conducting systematic monitoring, analysis and mitigation of COE issues. As a result, shortfalls and low serviceability rates in contingents' major equipment and low self-sustainment capability continued to occur, which could decrease military and police operations and under-utilize the troops and police deployed.

(1) MINUSMA should establish a working group to assist the Contingent-Owned Equipment and Memorandum of Understanding Management Review Board in reviewing and addressing contingent-owned equipment related issues.

MINUSMA accepted recommendation 1 and stated that the Mission established a working group in December 2015, which would assist CMMRB in examining and analyzing COE issues. Based on the action taken by MINUSMA, recommendation 1 has been closed.

Arrival inspections needed to be carried out promptly

17. The COE Manual and MINUSMA COE standard operating procedures require the Mission to conduct arrival inspections to ensure that the categories, groups and number of major equipment delivered correspond with the MoU and that equipment is in serviceable condition. The arrival inspection should start immediately on arrival of the COE to contingents' locations and completed within one month.

18. The arrival inspections were not consistently conducted within the required timeframe. For instance, 13 of the 46 arrival inspections reviewed were conducted on average of 54 days after the arrival of the COE to contingents' locations. These delays were due to: (a) the prevailing security situation in northern Mali which delayed the inspection of COE; and (b) the inadequate scheduling and monitoring of COE arrival inspections by the COE Unit.

19. Delays in conducting arrival inspections postponed the reimbursement of major equipment to T/PCCs and prevented the Mission from identifying and addressing COE discrepancies in a timely manner.

(2) MINUSMA should establish a procedure to ensure that the arrival inspections of contingent-owned equipment are adequately scheduled and monitored.

MINUSMA accepted recommendation 2 and stated that the Joint Mission Support Centre was closely monitoring the arrival of COE and had established an arrival inspection monitoring which was ensuring that arrival inspections were conducted within 30 days of arrival of COE at the final destination. Based on the action taken by MINUSMA, recommendation 2 has been closed.

The Mission needed to consistently comply with the operational readiness inspection guidelines

20. The COE Manual requires the Mission to conduct operational readiness inspections at least once every six months after the contingent's deployment in the Mission area. The operational readiness inspection is a comprehensive inspection to ensure the serviceability and condition of all major equipment and the contingents' self-sustainment capability is sufficient and satisfactory. The inspection team should include relevant experts from MINUSMA technical sections.

21. MINUSMA conducted all operational readiness inspections. However, the COE Unit's inspections did not consistently comply with COE verification policies and procedures. Physical observation of seven operational readiness inspections conducted in May and June 2015 indicated that, with the exception of the Medical Section, the COE Unit did not draw on the expertise of MINUSMA technical sections to assist in conducting inspections. As a result, the inspection team did not have the required capacity and expertise to confirm the condition and serviceability of COE; assess the contingents' self-sustainment capability; and confirm that contingents had adequate spare parts, tools, workshops and suitable and sufficient ammunitions. For example, the inspection teams did not adequately verify the serviceability status of vehicles, generators, armaments and weapons in armed/combat vehicles, mine detection equipment, water treatment plants and the contingent riot control personal equipment.

22. Inspection teams also did not apply consistent procedures in conducting inspections, as the COE Unit had not provided adequate guidelines or standard checklists. For example, the inspection teams were not consistently verifying the calibration of armaments, availability of ancillary equipment and the functioning of vehicle lights.

23. Additionally, inspection teams were given tight timelines to complete inspections. On average, one inspector was required to complete an inspection of 50 major pieces of equipment within one hour, meaning that the inspections were not being comprehensively done. For example: (a) as part of the verification for a water treatment plant, the inspection team did not pre-request samples of treated water in a sterilized bottle to test the water prior to inspection; (b) a naval vessel that was disassembled was classified as serviceable; and (c) 23 trailers, a thermal imaging system and 5 armaments were not inspected during OIOS observation of an operational readiness inspection though they were reported as verified and serviceable in the final inspection worksheets.

24. The above resulted mainly due to resource constraints and challenges faced during the start-up phase of the Mission, which did not allow MINUSMA to always obtain the necessary technical resources to conduct inspections and to develop guidelines and instructions to guide inspectors in their work. As a result, there was a risk that the Mission was reimbursing for equipment that was not serviceable and that COE shortfalls were not being addressed promptly.

(3) MINUSMA should allocate staff from technical sections to assist the Contingent-Owned Equipment (COE) Unit in conducting operational readiness inspections implement ; and (b) adequately preparing for COE inspections and conduct the required inspection of COE, including establishing inspection checklists.

MINUSMA accepted recommendation 3 and stated that the 2016 quarter one inspection programme was sent to technical sections chiefs, and force and police components of the Mission for their involvement in operational readiness inspections. The COE Unit would continue to hold quarterly coordination meetings with relevant technical sections to provide guidance and assign responsibilities within inspection teams and to review provisions of MoUs. Recommendation 3 remains open pending receipt of evidence that the COE Unit complies with the operational readiness inspection guidelines.

Contingents were not consistently submitting monthly serviceability reports

25. The MINUSMA COE standard operating procedures require contingents to submit to the COE Unit monthly serviceability reports for use in the continuous monitoring of the status of COE.

26. Contingents did not consistently submit the required monthly serviceability reports. As at June 2015, only 121 of the required 821 reports were submitted. This resulted as the COE Unit did not adequately guide contingents on the reporting procedures and requirements and had not implemented a monitoring mechanism to follow up on reports not received. The absence of monthly serviceability reports prevented the COE Unit from gathering relevant information on the serviceability of COE and adequately preparing for the inspection visits.

(4) MINUSMA should provide additional guidance to contingents on United Nations contingent-owned equipment monthly serviceability reporting requirements; and (b) establish a mechanism for monitoring contingents' compliance with the requirements.

MINUSMA accepted recommendation 4 and stated that it established a tracking sheet to monitor the submission of monthly serviceability reports and would remind the contingent commanders of their responsibilities to comply with the timely submission of monthly serviceability reports. Recommendation 4 remains open pending receipt of evidence that contingents consistently submit the monthly serviceability reports to the COE Unit

Electronic approval function of the COE system needed to be activated

27. DPKO/DFS Guidelines for Field Verification and Control of COE and Management of MoU require MINUSMA to submit verification reports of all quarterly inspections to DPKO/DFS within 45 days after each quarter except for the quarterly inspections ending 30 September, which should be submitted within 30 days.

28. The COE Unit prepared verification reports of all inspections conducted. However, these verification reports were not promptly completed and submitted to DPKO/DFS. A review of 87 verification reports of 300 quarterly inspections conducted by the COE Unit as at June 2015 indicated that

42 reports were delayed on average by 25 days. This resulted as: (a) DFS had not yet activated the electronic approval function of the COE system (eCOE); therefore, the COE Unit had to circulate hard copies of the inspection reports for approval by chiefs of sections involved in managing COE; and (b) the COE Unit had not established an adequate system to monitor and follow up on the approval of the verification reports by the approving officers.

(5) MINUSMA should liaise with DFS to activate the approval function of the contingentowned equipment system and establish a mechanism to monitor and follow up the approval of verification reports by approving officers.

MINUSMA accepted recommendation 5 and stated that it would liaise with DFS to activate the *electronic approval function of eCOE*. Recommendation 5 remains open pending receipt of evidence that the eCOE approval function has been activated.

Procedures for hazardous waste disposal during repatriation of COE needed to be further developed

29. The DPKO/DFS Guidelines for Field Verification and Control of COE and Management of MoUs require the Mission to conduct a repatriation inspection within 30 days prior to the contingents' repatriation. Representatives of technical sections and the Environment Unit should form part of the repatriation inspection team to ensure compliance with hazardous waste disposal and environmental standards, and that United Nations-owned equipment are properly accounted for.

30. Three contingents were repatriated during the audit period. MINUSMA implemented proper procedures to ensure that only equipment belonging to the contingents was repatriated and that the inspection took place within 30 days prior to the repatriation date. However, the inspection team did not include representatives from the Environment Unit to ensure that procedures relating to hazardous waste disposal were performed and complied with. This resulted as MINUSMA had not developed standard operating procedures to guide responsible staff on the procedures for the disposal of hazardous materials as part of repatriation inspections. As a result, there were increased safety and environmental risks related to inappropriate disposal of hazardoue waste.

(6) MINUSMA should include specific procedures for the disposal of hazardous materials as part of repatriation inspections.

MINUSMA accepted recommendation 6 and stated that it would develop a hazardous waste disposal contract, which would include formed police and military units' requirements for disposal of hazardous materials. Recommendation 6 remains open pending receipt of a copy of the procedures for the disposal of contingents' hazardous materials.

Ammunitions expended by the contingents needed to be reported to the Mission

31. The COE Manual states that T/PCCs may be reimbursed for ammunition expended on operations or during specifically authorized operational exercises as directed by the Force or Police Commander. The contingents are required to submit to the Force Commander and the COE Unit an Operational Ammunition Expenditure Certificate after the use of ammunition.

32. Since the inception of the Mission in July 2013, contingents had not submitted any Operational Ammunition Expenditure Certificates to the Force Commander for approval and the COE Unit for initiating the reimbursement process. Visits to seven contingents who confirmed frequent use of ammunition, indicated that only two of the seven contingents had provided records of the ammunition used, which totaled 846,377 items of ammunitions and explosives.

33. The contingents did not report ammunition expended because: (a) the COE Unit did not provide the contingents with specific guidelines for the verification and control of weapons, ammunitions and explosives; and (b) the COE Unit and MINUSMA Police and Force Headquarters did not establish adequate mechanism to monitor and follow up the use of ammunition. As a result, there was an increased risk of unauthorized use of ammunitions by contingents and incorrect reimbursement of ammunition expended on operations.

(7) MINUMA should: (a) provide contingents with specific procedures for the verification and control of weapons, ammunitions and explosives; and (b) establish a mechanism to monitor the ammunitions expended by contingents.

MINUSMA accepted recommendation 7 and stated that it would establish standard operating procedures and a policy directive for the verification and control of weapons, ammunition and explosives. Recommendation 7 remains open pending receipt of a copy of the standard operating procedures and evidence that a mechanism for monitoring the ammunitions expended by contingents has been implemented.

IV. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

34. OIOS wishes to express its appreciation to the Management and staff of MINUSMA 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

Recom. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	C/ O ³	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date ⁴
1	MINUSMA should establish a working group to assist the Contingent-Owned Equipment and Memorandum of Understanding Management Review Board in reviewing and addressing contingent-owned equipment related issues.	Critical	С	Action taken	Implemented
2	MINUSMA should establish a procedure to ensure that the arrival inspections of contingent-owned equipment are adequately scheduled and monitored.	Important	C	Action taken	Implemented
3	MINUSMA should implement a plan to ensure that the Contingent-Owned Equipment Unit: (a) draws on resources from technical sections to assist in conducting operational readiness inspections and/or establishing check lists for the inspection of the Contingent-Owned Equipment; and (b) adequately prepares and conducts the required inspection of contingent-owned equipment.	Critical	0	Receipt of evidence that the COE Unit complies with the operational readiness inspection guidelines	January 2016
4	MINUSMA should provide additional guidance to contingents on United Nations contingent-owned equipment monthly serviceability reporting requirements; and (b) establish a mechanism for monitoring contingents' compliance with the requirements.	Important	0	Receipt of evidence that contingents consistently submit the monthly serviceability reports to the COE Unit	December 2015
5	MINUSMA should liaise with DFS to activate the approval function of the contingent-owned equipment system and establish a mechanism to monitor and follow up the approval of the	Important	0	Receipt of evidence that the eCOE approval function has been activated.	31 January 2016

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

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

 $^{^{3}}$ C = closed, O = open

⁴ Date provided by MINUSMA in response to recommendations.

STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Recom. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	C/ O ³	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date ⁴
	verification reports by approving officers.				
6	MINUSMA should include specific procedures for disposal of hazardous materials as part of the repatriation inspections.		0	Receipt of evidence that specific procedures for the disposal of contingents' hazardous materials have been implemented.	April 2016
7	MINUSMA should: (a) provide contingents with specific procedures for the verification and control of weapons, ammunitions and explosives; and (b) establish a mechanism to monitor the ammunitions expended by contingents.	Important	0	Establishment and implementation of standard operating procedures on the use of ammunitions and a mechanism for monitoring the ammunitions expended by contingents.	31 January 2016

APPENDIX I

Management Response

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical¹/ Important² Critical	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
	working group to assist the contingent-owned equipment and memorandum of understanding management review board in investigating and addressing contingent-owned equipment related issues.			Unit		established a COE MOU Management Review Board (CMMRB) Working Group (MINUSMA Circular No. 16/2015). The Working Group will convene regularly to examine and analyze COE and MOU issues and
						formulate recommendations for consideration and decision by CMMRB. CMMRB will further analyze and review recommendations submitted by the Working Group and take corrective actions. The Secretariat of the CMMRB (COE Unit) will follow up on implementation of the CMMRB recommendations with respective contingents and Mission Support Division (MSD) sections.
2	MINUSMA should establish a procedure for adequate scheduling	Important	Yes	Chief COE Unit	November 2015	Through Joint Mission Support Center meetings on Reception

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

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

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
	and monitoring of arrival inspections of contingent-owned equipment.					Staging, Onward-Movement and Integration (RSOI), MINUSMA continues to closely monitor the arrival of contingent-owned equipment.
						The "Arrival Inspection Monitoring Sheet" is already being implemented, and inputs received from RSOI meetings have been included. Arrival inspections will be conducted within 30 days of arrival of COE at final destination.
3	MINUSMA should implement a plan to ensure that the Contingent-Owned Equipment (COE) Unit: (a) draws on resources from technical sections to assist in conducting operational readiness inspections; and (b) adequately prepares and conducts the required inspection of COE, including establishing inspection checklists.	Critical	Yes	Chief COE Unit & Chief U3	January 2016	The Inspection program for Q1/2016 is sent to MSD Technical Section Chiefs and Force HQ/Police HQ components that will be involved in both Periodic and Operational Readiness Inspection (ORI). The COE Unit will continue holding coordination meetings on a quarterly basis with all representatives of the different MSD Technical Sections in order
						to discuss the ORI guidelines, review the provisions of the

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
						MOU, discuss inspection activities and procedures, distribute and clarify in detail tasks and responsibilities within the Inspection Team, and other administrative arrangements/requirements.
4	MINUSMA should: (a) guide contingents on the United Nations requirement for contingent-owned equipment monthly serviceability reports; and (b) establish a mechanism for monitoring contingents' compliance with such requirement.	Important	Yes	Chief COE Unit and Chief U4	December 2015	A tracking sheet has been put in place to monitor closely the submission of monthly serviceability reports. Additionally, a follow-up memo will be sent to the Force Commander and Police Commissioner to remind all Unit Commanders of Contingents deployed mission-wide of their responsibilities to comply strictly with the timely submission of monthly serviceability reports.
5	MINUSMA should liaise with DFS to activate the approval function of the contingent-owned equipment system and establish a mechanism to monitor and follow up the approval of the verification reports by the approving officers.	Important	Yes	Chief COE Unit and Chief CITS	31 January 2016	By 31 January 2016 a facsimile will be sent to UNHQ requesting the immediate activation of electronic signatures on verification reports.

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
6	MINUSMA should include specific procedures for the disposal of hazardous materials as part of repatriation inspections.	Important	Yes	Chief COE Unit and Chief PMS / PDU	April 2016	Management expects that by 30 April 2016 a contract for the provision of hazardous waste disposal services to MINUSMA, including formed police and military units, will be approved and operational.
7	MINUMA should: (a) provide contingents with specific procedures for the verification and control of weapons, ammunitions and explosives; and (b) establish a mechanism to monitor the ammunitions expended by contingents.	Important	Yes	Chief COE Unit and Chief U4	31 January 2016	By 31 January 2016, a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) and a Policy Directive for the verification and control of weapons, ammunition and explosives will be submitted for signature of the Director of Mission Support and further approval by the SRSG.