



## INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION

### REPORT 2018/050

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Audit of the renovation of Africa Hall and visitors centre construction projects in the Economic Commissions for Africa

While project governance and oversight mechanisms had been largely setup, improvements were needed to streamline the raising and accounting for voluntary contributions and mitigate the impact of delays in commencing early construction works

29 May 2018  
Assignment No. AN2018/710/01

# **Audit of the renovation of Africa Hall and visitors centre construction projects in the Economic Commission for Africa**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of the renovation of Africa Hall and visitors centre construction projects in the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). The objective of the audit was to determine whether ECA had established adequate controls to manage the projects as approved by the General Assembly under resolution 70/248. The audit covered the period from April 2017 to February 2018.

The project governance and oversight mechanisms had been largely setup and ECA was in the process of formulating a strategy for soliciting voluntary contributions and incorporating an approach for addressing fraud and corruption risks in the risk management framework. However, ECA needed to streamline the raising and accounting for voluntary contributions and mitigate the impact of delays in commencing early construction works.

OIOS made four recommendations. To address issues identified in the audit, ECA needed to:

- Establish a trust fund to account for voluntary and in-kind contributions to the Africa Hall and the visitors centre;
- Develop and implement an action plan to conduct the planned resource mobilization activities reported to the General Assembly in the Secretary-General's August 2017 progress report on the renovation of the Africa Hall (A/72/374);
- Incorporate different admission options and a profit neutral model in a revised business case to allow a larger number of visitors, especially students, academicians, residents and guests, to access Africa Hall; and
- Quantify the effects of the delay in commencing the construction phase of the Africa Hall renovation project in terms of costs and project completion schedule and to incorporate the data into the Monte Carlo risk analysis.

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

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# Audit of the renovation of Africa Hall and visitors centre construction projects in the Economic Commission for Africa

## I. BACKGROUND

1. The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of the renovation of Africa Hall and visitors centre construction projects in the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA).

2. Africa Hall is the permanent headquarters of ECA. It was built in 1961 and comprises a ground floor, a mezzanine level and a conference hall. In its resolution 70/248, the General Assembly approved the overall project scope, schedule and estimated cost of \$56.9 million for the renovation of Africa Hall and the visitors centre. The breakdown of the cost is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Revised project costs schedule for 2016-2021 (in millions of United States dollars)**

Costs/Schedule	Stage	3	3 & 4	3 & 4	4	4	5	Total
	Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	
Construction fees		2,763.6	1,067.8	12,998.5	14,193.2	16,341.9	4,475.6	51,840.6
Project management		337.2	895.0	926.6	926.6	926.6	443.1	4,455.1
Physical security			37.6	150.2	150.2	150.2	112.6	600.8
	<b>Total</b>	<b>3,100.8</b>	<b>2,000.4</b>	<b>14,075.3</b>	<b>15,270.0</b>	<b>17,418.7</b>	<b>5,031.3</b>	<b>56,896.5</b>

Source: Progress report on the construction of new office facilities at ECA (A/72/374, Annex II)

3. The main objectives of the renovation project are to: (i) address the inadequacies related to building safety and functionality and to transform the Africa Hall into a rejuvenated facility that complies with the highest international standards for conference facilities; (ii) preserve and restore the historical and cultural values embedded in its architecture; (iii) include a visitors centre to make Africa Hall one of the leading tourist destinations in Addis Ababa and to highlight its significant role in modern African history.

4. The Africa Hall renovation project is planned to comprise five stages, of which stage 1 (preparation), stage 2 (design) and stage 3 (pre-construction) had been completed and the lead consultant had finalized the detailed design and tender documentation for the main works. The contract for decanting construction works was finalized in January 2018 and construction was scheduled to commence in March 2018. Calls for expressions of interest for the main building renovation work and the artwork conservation were issued in January and April 2017 respectively, and evaluation of bids was underway.

5. The Executive Secretary of ECA is designated as the Project Owner and the Director of Administration as the Project Executive. The Office of Central Support Services (OCSS) is responsible for providing oversight and support to the project. The dedicated project management and the project support team is made up of nine staff members headed by a Project Manager at the P-5 level.

6. Comments provided by ECA are incorporated in italics.

## II. AUDIT OBJECTIVE, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

7. The objective of the audit was to determine whether ECA had established adequate controls to manage the renovation of Africa Hall and the visitors centre construction projects as approved by the General Assembly under resolution 70/248.

8. This audit was included in the 2017 risk-based work plan of OIOS due to the risks of delays, wastage and cost overruns inherent in major construction and alteration projects.

9. OIOS conducted this audit in February and March 2018 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The audit covered the period from April 2017 to February 2018. Based on an activity-level risk assessment, the audit covered higher and medium risk areas in the ECA's management of the renovation of Africa Hall and the visitors centre construction projects and examined whether the Financial Regulations and Rules and established procurement policies and procedures were complied with. Specifically, the audit reviewed:

- a) ECA construction and renovation activities undertaken from April 2017 to February 2018 against the 2017 and 2018 appropriations of \$13,476,200 and \$5,700,300 respectively, including the finalization of the tender process for early decanting works, change management strategy for the main construction and the related procurement actions;
- b) The completion status of the development of architectural design of the renovation and the current construction schedule; and
- c) The implementation status of previous audit recommendations.

10. The audit methodology included: (a) interviews of key personnel, (b) reviews of relevant documentation, (c) analytical reviews of data, and (d) sample testing of invoices and change orders.

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

### **III. AUDIT RESULTS**

#### **A. Project governance and oversight mechanisms**

##### The independent Advisory Board was constituted

12. General Assembly resolution 70/248 encouraged the Secretary-General to establish an Advisory Board, with responsibility to advise the Project Owner on budget performance and schedule monitoring, scope control, risk management and heritage preservation. Members of the Board should be independent and impartial, have the required expertise and reflect a wide geographical representation.

13. ECA established an Advisory Board consisting of representatives from six United Nations Member States and three ex-officio members representing the African Union, the host country and the United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization. The membership reflected a wide geographical representation across the United Nations Member States. OIOS also noted that three of the Board Members (two voting and one ex officio) had engineering and architectural backgrounds. The terms of reference for the Board were also finalized. The Board was scheduled to meet biannually and on an as needed basis, especially in the early stages of the project. The Board met twice during the period under review i.e. in August and December 2017 and minutes of these meetings were prepared. OIOS concluded that an independent Advisory Board was constituted with requisite expertise and geographical representation to offer independent oversight and thus assurance to the project.

### ECA needed to establish a trust fund to account for voluntary and in-kind contributions

14. According to Financial Regulation 7.3, moneys accepted for purposes specified by the donor shall be treated as trust funds.

15. General Assembly resolution 70/248 requested the Secretary-General to seek voluntary contributions for the Africa Hall renovation project and report thereon to the General Assembly in future reports. At the time of audit, the host country had committed to make an in-kind contribution of an additional parcel of land for the visitors parking lot in the ECA premises. In this regard, consultations between the host country and ECA are currently ongoing. Technical details and negotiations for the land were expected to be finalized before commencement of the main construction works scheduled for the end of 2018.

16. ECA also received a voluntary contribution of \$52,000 from Mali. In addition, Switzerland made a commitment of \$100,000 in voluntary contributions for the visitors centre, against which ECA had prepared a concept note for \$65,000 as the startup funding for the centre. However, ECA had not established a trust fund to account for the voluntary and in-kind contributions. Consequently, the contribution from Mali was reflected in a reserve account in the absence of a dedicated trust fund account.

**(1) ECA should establish a trust fund to account for voluntary and in-kind contributions to the Africa Hall and visitors centre construction projects.**

*ECA accepted recommendation 1 and stated that upon the request of the Director of Administration, Headquarters had created a separate fund in Umoja to be used for “contributions” to all construction projects, including Africa Hall. Recommendation 1 remains open pending receipt of evidence of the establishment of the trust fund.*

### Planned resource mobilization activities were not undertaken during the reporting period

17. General Assembly resolution 72/262 requested the Secretary-General to continue in his efforts to conduct wide ranging outreach activities for voluntary and in-kind contributions and to report thereon in the context of future progress reports. The Assembly also reiterated the importance of developing a comprehensive and sustainable resource mobilization strategy in the resolution.

18. In line with the resolution and in response to a previous OIOS recommendation, the Partnerships and Resource Mobilization Section of ECA engaged with relevant departments at Headquarters, including the Office of Legal Affairs, on the development of a comprehensive resource mobilization strategy and its legal framework, especially in relation to the private sector. At the time of audit, discussions regarding the resource mobilization strategy were ongoing.

19. ECA reported in the Secretary-General’s August 2017 progress report on construction activities to the General Assembly (A/72/374) that it had decided to: (a) target Member States collectively in the context of regional or other groupings; (b) prepare promotional materials incorporating an appeal for voluntary support to be disseminated at major conferences and events such as the ECA annual meeting of finance ministers, the African Development Forum and on the margins of African Union Summits; and (c) hold a dedicated voluntary contributions event coinciding with the launch of the project, which was scheduled for late 2017. However, these activities had not been implemented by end of 2017 as planned. This was because an action plan had not been developed, identifying responsible focal points and/or divisions and indicating specific target dates for implementation to ensure accountability.

**(2) ECA should develop and implement an action plan to conduct the planned resource mobilization activities reported to the General Assembly in the Secretary-General's August 2017 progress report on the renovation of the Africa Hall (A/72/374).**

*ECA accepted recommendation 2. Recommendation 2 remains open pending issuance of an action plan to conduct planned resource mobilization activities and evidence of its implementation.*

#### OCSS and ECA were developing a risk management framework

20. General Assembly resolution 70/248 emphasized the importance of ensuring integrated and independent project assurance for the Africa Hall renovation project. According to the information circular ST/IC/2016/25 on the anti-fraud and anti-corruption framework of the United Nations Secretariat, the independent risk manager, the project team and OCSS are expected to carry out systematic fraud risk assessments as part of the risk management framework.

21. OCSS appointed an independent risk management firm to provide independent assurance on construction projects by identifying and assessing project uncertainties and defining optimum risk responses. The contract was signed in November 2017 and the first deliverable, a workshop to assess risks, was held in February 2018. The next deliverables will be a risk management strategy and a risk register by May 2018. The risk register will serve as basis for a Monte Carlo<sup>1</sup> simulation that would allow identified risks to be linked with the contingency provision. This is expected by the end of June 2018.

22. In addition, OCSS was in the process of implementing OIOS recommendation to incorporate an approach for addressing fraud and corruption risks in the risk management framework (Report no. 2017/050). OIOS concluded that OCSS and ECA were making progress in developing a risk management framework for the project.

#### ECA needed to update the business case for the visitors centre

23. General Assembly resolution 70/248 requested ECA to present an updated business case for the visitors centre based on clearly formulated objectives, total cost/revenue projections, benefits to the Organization and the public, and a plan for realizing such benefits.

24. ECA prepared an updated business case for the visitors centre as part of the Secretary-General's report to the General Assembly on progress update on the renovation of the Africa Hall in August 2017. Based on the refined business case, proposed admission fees were pegged at \$3 for students, senior citizens, and disabled persons; and \$10 for international tourists and adults. The estimated number of tourists were revised upwards to 20,800 with an estimated gross annual revenue of \$165,100, startup costs of \$65,000 and annual operating expenses of \$120,100. The updated business case had an operating revenue surplus of \$45,000 per annum exclusive of startup costs.

25. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) noted that the calculation of the gross revenue was based on the revenue generation models utilized at the Nairobi and Geneva visitors centres, which may not be applicable to ECA. The ACABQ further advised that the Africa Hall and the visitors centre should be made available to all interested visitors, regardless of ability to pay and recommended an admission fee that would make Africa Hall accessible to everyone especially because

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<sup>1</sup> A computerized mathematical technique that allows people to account for risk in quantitative analysis and decision making. The simulation furnishes the decision-maker with a range of possible outcomes and the probabilities they will occur for any choice of action.

the United Nations is a non-profit Organization. ECA management explained that it is considering preparing a revised business case in line with the ACABQ advice.

**(3) ECA should incorporate different admission options and a profit neutral model in a revised business case to allow a larger number of visitors, especially students, academicians, residents and guests, to access Africa Hall.**

*ECA accepted recommendation 3.* Recommendation 3 remains open pending receipt of the revised business case for the visitors centre.

## **B. Project management**

### The project team was constituted

26. In accordance with guidelines for the management of construction projects in the United Nations Secretariat, a dedicated project management team with the right competencies should be established and funded using necessary project resources.

27. The General Assembly approved eight temporary posts for the project in the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017. These included a Project Manager (P-5), a Project Architect/Engineer (P-4), three National Professional Officers, and three local level staff (Administrative Assistant, Finance Assistant and a Logistics/Shipment Assistant). A dedicated procurement officer at P-3 level was also appointed. Therefore, the project team complement comprised nine staff members who were all on board except the procurement officer who resigned in October 2017. Recruitment for a replacement is underway. This resignation did not impact project activities as the Procurement Section took over the responsibilities as a stop-gap measure.

28. Project support included the positions of a Project Coordinator at the P-4 level based at OCSS and shared with the proposed seismic mitigation retrofit and life-cycle replacement project at the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, and six security officers. The security officers took up appointments with effect from 1 September 2017. They will provide security, protection and controlled access to the construction site on a day to day basis and will be fully funded from the approved project budget. Therefore, the dedicated project team was now fully operational.

### The project specific manual was developed and will be updated as conditions change

29. General Assembly resolution 69/262 requested the Secretary-General to ensure robust internal project control mechanisms in the context of the scope, cost, schedule and quality of the Africa Hall renovation project. Subsequently, in a note to the Executive Secretary dated 17 February 2016, the Assistant Secretary-General of OCSS advised that consideration be given, prior to the commencement of construction, to develop processes for reviewing contract amendments and construction change orders so that these do not present a risk to the project schedule.

30. ECA prepared a draft detailed project specific manual that includes procedures for contract amendments, change orders, use of contingency, and quality management and control strategy. The manual was presented to the stakeholders' committee in July 2017. OCSS also endorsed its use subject to a revision on the general contract conditions section. OIOS noted that the manual is a living document, which will be updated as and when changes occur to the construction strategy during project implementation.



## C. Project implementation

### Construction change order was appropriately authorized and executed

31. The draft ECA change management framework for the renovation of Africa Hall provides that contract change orders resulting in contract amendments should be linked as much as possible to factors such as unforeseen field conditions, changes in owner requirements (but not scope changes), changes in design, errors and overruns.

32. During the audit period, only one change order was issued to the design consultant to undertake design work for a “blast resistance façade” at an additional cost of \$117,380, bringing the not-to-exceed amount of the contract for design work and contract management to \$6,117,410. The change order was reviewed and approved by the Local Committee on Contracts (LCC). The amended contract was signed by the parties on 10 July 2017. The change order met the threshold for “changes in owner requirements” (security upgrade) and therefore no recommendation is raised on this issue.

### ECA needed to quantify the effects of delay in commencing construction works

33. According to the approved project schedule, the project should currently be at stages 3 and 4 (pre-construction and construction), which involves production and issuance of tender documents; award of contracts for early decanting works, main renovation works, art works, Hi-tech conference engineering and the visitors centre; and commencement of decanting works.

34. At the time of the audit, the activity plan for early decanting works had been divided into four segments: (a) design development, (b) procurement processes, (c) decanting preparation, and (d) work execution. The tender documents for the early decanting works for the Congo and Nile buildings were finalized in February 2017, allowing for a request for proposal to be issued on 10 March 2017. The LCC approved the award recommendation on 20 July 2017 and the Headquarters Committee on Contracts (HCC) on 20 September 2017. OCSS endorsed the decision of the HCC on 24 October 2017. However, due to the protracted negotiations, the contract was only signed on 10 January 2018. The contractor was further delayed from commencing activities because it was not clear whether he had met the insurance requirements stated in the tender documents.

35. This issue was resolved in February 2018; however, early decanting and execution of works that were supposed to have commenced in October 2017 were delayed by five months. The project would need to be accelerated to maintain the project closeout as of the end of 2021 or the closeout date revised. There may also be a need to quantify the effects of the delay on the costs and project completion schedule and to incorporate the results into the Monte Carlo risk analysis.

**(4) ECA should, in collaboration with the lead consultant and the independent risk management firm, quantify the effects of the delay in commencing the construction phase of the Africa Hall renovation project in terms of costs and project completion schedule and to incorporate the data into the Monte Carlo risk analysis.**

*ECA accepted recommendation 4 and stated that the quantification of risk related to slippage of construction startup had been completed and would be submitted as part of the next Secretary-General's report to the General Assembly. Recommendation 4 remains open pending receipt of the report incorporating the quantification of the risk.*

Project expenditures as of 31 January 2018, were within the amounts budgeted and were supported

36. The overall expenditure related to the Africa Hall renovation from 1 April 2017 to 31 January 2018 was \$985,793. This included: (i) \$626,691 for project supervision and management, (ii) \$325,407 for construction costs, and (iii) \$33,695 for security personnel. The largest portion on project supervision and management was related to staff costs at \$588,379. Construction costs included \$49,087 for review of design documents and \$267,850 related to contingency of which \$117,380 was committed during the reporting period. The period's contingency cost was related to design work for a blast resistance façade, which was not included in original requirements. OIOS vouched four invoices totaling \$814,316 and noted that they were all properly authorized for work done in accordance with contract documents. The unspent balance as at 31 January 2018 from the \$13,476,200 initially budgeted for the biennium 2016-2017 was \$9,062,504. The under expenditure was partly attributed to the delay in the commencement of construction works. OIOS concluded that the amounts expended for the Africa Hall were within budget and adequately supported.

#### **IV. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

37. OIOS wishes to express its appreciation to the management and staff of ECA 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 renovation of Africa Hall and visitors centre construction projects in the Economic Commission for Africa

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical <sup>2</sup> / Important <sup>3</sup>	C/ O <sup>4</sup>	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date <sup>5</sup>
1	ECA should establish a trust fund to account for voluntary and in-kind contributions to the Africa Hall and visitors centre construction projects	Important	O	Submission of evidence that a trust fund has been established to account for voluntary contributions	30 June 2018
2	ECA should develop and implement an action plan to conduct the planned resource mobilization activities reported to the General Assembly in the Secretary-General's August 2017 progress report on the renovation of the Africa Hall (A/72/374).	Important	O	Submission of an action plan to conduct planned resource mobilization activities and evidence of its implementation.	28 February 2019
3	ECA should incorporate different admission options and a profit neutral model in a revised business case to allow a larger number of visitors, especially students, academicians, residents and guests, to access Africa Hall.	Important	O	Submission of a revised business case for the visitors centre that includes different admission options and a profit neutral model.	31 December 2018
4	ECA should, in collaboration with the lead consultant and the independent risk management firm, quantify the effects of the delay in commencing the construction phase of the Africa Hall renovation project in terms of costs and project completion schedule and to incorporate the data into the Monte Carlo risk analysis.	Important	O	Submission of the next Secretary-General's report to the General Assembly incorporating the quantification of the risk related to construction delays.	30 June 2018

<sup>2</sup> Critical recommendations address critical and/or pervasive deficiencies in governance, risk management or control processes, such that reasonable assurance cannot be provided with regard to the achievement of control and/or business objectives under review.

<sup>3</sup> Important recommendations address important (but not critical or pervasive) deficiencies in governance, risk management or control processes, such that reasonable assurance may be at risk regarding the achievement of control and/or business objectives under review.

<sup>4</sup> C = closed, O = open

<sup>5</sup> Date provided by ECA in response to recommendations.

# **APPENDIX I**

## **Management Response**

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## INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

To: Ms. Muriette Lawrence-Hume, Chief  
New York, Audit Service  
Internal Audit Divisions, OIOS

Date: 21 May 2018

Ref: SPOQD/18/05/0099 *hw*

Through:

From: Ingrid Cyimana, Director  
Strategic Planning & Operational Quality  
Division (SPOQD)



**Subject:** Draft Report on an Audit of the Renovation of Africa Hall and Visitors Centre Construction Projects Overrun in the Economic Commission for Africa. (Assignment No. AN2018/710/01)

In reference to interoffice memorandum (Ref: OIOS: 2018 – 00741) dated 8 May 2018 on the above subject, we are pleased to enclose ECA's management response where we have accepted all important recommendations.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the OIOS auditors team for their effective collaboration with the Commission.

Thank you.

cc. Mr. Carlos Haddad, Director, Division of Administration, ECA  
Ms. Eskedar Nega, Chief of Evaluation Section, ECA  
Mr. Jack Howard, Chief, Overseas Properties, Management Unit, OCSS  
Mr. Zachary Ikiara, Chief, Oversight and Coordination Support Unit, DM  
Mr. Tilchand Acharya, Chief, Field Audit Section, IAD-OIOS  
Ms. Cynthia Avena-Castillo, Professional Practices Section, Internal Audit Division

## Management Response

## Audit of the renovation of Africa Hall and visitors centre construction projects in the Economic Commission for Africa

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical! <sup>1</sup> / Important <sup>2</sup>	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
1	ECA should establish a trust fund to account for voluntary and in-kind contributions to the Africa Hall and visitors centre construction projects.	Important	Yes	Director Division of Administration (DoA)	NA	Upon request of the DoA, UNHQ team has created separate fund in UMOJA. As suggested by HQ, the fund will be used for "contributions" to all construction projects, including Africa Hall.
2	ECA should develop and implement an action plan to conduct the planned resource mobilization activities reported to the General Assembly in the Secretary-General's August 2017 progress report on the renovation of the Africa Hall (A/72/374).	Important	Yes	Chief of Staff, Office of the Executive Secretary (OES)	28 February 2019	-
3	ECA should incorporate different admission options and a profit neutral model in a revised business case to allow a larger number of visitors, especially students, academicians, residents and guests, to access Africa Hall.	Important	Yes	Chief Communication Public Information and Knowledge Management division (PIKMD)	31 December 2018	ECA accepts the recommendation to incorporate different admission options and a profit neutral model to allow a larger number of visitors to access Africa Hall. However, ECA proposes that reference to a "revised" business case be removed from the recommendation as a revised one was already approved by the GA
4	ECA should, in collaboration with the lead consultant and the independent risk management firm, quantify the effects of the delay in commencing the construction phase of the Africa Hall renovation project	Important	Yes	Director Division of Administration (DoA)	NA	The Monte Carlo simulation, including quantification of risk related to slippage of construction startup has been completed, will be

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

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

## Management Response

## Audit of the renovation of Africa Hall and visitors centre construction projects in the Economic Commission for Africa

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical/ Important?	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
	in terms of costs and project completion schedule and to incorporate the data into the Monte Carlo risk analysis.					submitted as part of next SG report to the GA.