OIOS
Office of Internal Oversight Services

INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION

REPORT 2024/058

Audit of human resources management at the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

A consolidated human resources strategy needs to be developed with measures to strengthen reporting, monitoring and accountability on human resources matters

20 November 2024
Assignment No. AE2023-330-01

Audit of human resources management at the
Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of human resources management at the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). The objective of the audit was to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of governance, risk management and control processes in ensuring effective management of human resources at OHCHR. The audit covered the period from 1 January 2022 to 30 June 2024 and included a review of risk areas relating to: (a) human resources targets and strategies; and (b) human resources operations including recruitment of staff and consultants, processing of education grant, and administration of time and attendance.

The audit showed that OHCHR needed to develop a consolidated human resources strategy with measures to strengthen reporting, monitoring and accountability on human resources matters.

OIOS made eight recommendations. To address the issues identified in the audit, OHCHR needed to:

- Finalize the development of a comprehensive human resources strategy and an accompanying consolidated work plan that includes responsibilities of the various organizational units for each output and target; and develop a comprehensive reporting, monitoring, and accountability framework for the management of human resources to monitor the implementation of the strategy and work plan;
- Consult with the Business Transformation and Accountability Division (BTAD) to review the discrepancies between the staffing data reflected in BTAD reports and data from Umoja to avoid similar discrepancies in future;
- Revisit the rating of risks pertaining to human resources management and ensure that risk treatment plans are incorporated in the existing action plans and strategies;
- Review the delegation of authority structure and assess opportunities for further sub-delegation of human resources management authority as appropriate; and clearly document and disseminate the sub-delegation structure to relevant staff;
- Prepare a clear action plan with timelines for operationalizing the recommendations made in the review of the recruitment process under the Organizational Effectiveness 2.0 initiative;
- Sensitize certifying officers and hiring departments to ensure that terms of reference for consultants and individual contractors are adhered to and contracts are promptly amended to formalize any variations;
- Guide supervisors and time and attendance focal points to monitor the leave records of staff to identify and address: (a) any gaps in recording leave/absences; (b) cases of staff with excess leave that will be forfeited if not taken by the end of the leave cycle; and (c) cases where staff are not certifying their leave balances; and
- Guide Divisions to establish a practice of regularly monitoring human resources issues including exceptions relating to recruitment, performance management, time and attendance and mandatory learning.

OHCHR accepted the recommendations and has initiated action to implement them. Actions required to close the recommendations are indicated in Annex I.

CONTENTS

Audit of human resources management at the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

I. BACKGROUND

1. The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of human resources management at the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

2. OHCHR is mandated to promote and protect human rights that are guaranteed under international law and stipulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948. It is headed by the High Commissioner who co-ordinates human rights activities throughout the United Nations system.

3. OHCHR has its headquarters in Geneva with offices in New York and a global field presence that includes 11 regional offices/centres, 15 country offices, 12 human rights components in United Nations peace operations, and human rights advisors working with 27 United Nations Country Teams.

4. The Human Resources Management Section (HRMS) of OHCHR oversees the management of human resources activities including recruitment, post classification, post management, performance management and processing of entitlements. The Chief of HRMS (P-5) reports to the Chief of the Programme Support and Management Services.

5. OHCHR's approved budget for 2024 was $423 million, of which $145 million was to be funded by regular budget resources and the rest through extrabudgetary funds. The total number of approved posts for 2024 was 1,849 (569 regular budget posts and 1,280 extrabudgetary posts). About 51 per cent of the staff were based in OHCHR headquarters at Geneva and the rest were in field offices.

6. OHCHR used corporate platforms including Umoja, Inspira, i-Need and Office 365 as its main data processing and information management tools. In addition, OHCHR used an internally developed application (My HR) to manage flexible working arrangements, and another internal tool (eMemo) for various functions such as processing approvals for outside activities and contract extensions.

7. Comments provided by OHCHR are incorporated in italics.

II. AUDIT OBJECTIVE, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

8. The objective of the audit was to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of governance, risk management and control processes in ensuring effective management of human resources at OHCHR.

9. This audit was included in the 2024 risk-based work plan of OIOS due to high inherent risks associated with recruitment and management of human resources.

10. OIOS conducted this audit from May to August 2024. The audit covered the period from 1 January 2022 to 30 June 2024. Based on an activity-level risk assessment, the audit covered risk areas relating to: (a) human resources targets and strategies; and (b) human resources operations including recruitment of staff and consultants, processing of education grant, and administration of time and attendance.

11. The audit methodology included: (a) interviews with key personnel; (b) review of relevant documentation; (c) assessment of adequacy of systems, practices, and processes for data management; (d) analytical review of data; and (e) sample testing.

12.   Analytical review of data included review of information and data from the various systems to assess: (a) recruitment timelines; (b) achievement of performance indicators relating to recruitment, gender parity, geographical distribution, performance management and mandatory training; (c) ageing analysis of job openings; (d) trends in leave taken and forfeited by staff; and (e) education grant data by year and expense category for sampling purposes.

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

III.   AUDIT RESULTS

A.   Human resources targets and strategies

Need to finalize an Office-wide human resources strategy

14.   OHCHR had various documents which collectively provided strategic direction on human resources management. These included: (i) two Organizational Effectiveness Action Plans – one on talent management and the other on diversity and inclusion; (ii) the strategic action plan on addressing racism and promoting dignity for all; (iii) the United Nations disability inclusion strategy; (iv) the 2024 entity learning plan; and (v) the mental health and well-being action plan for 2019-2021.

15.   In addition, the High Commissioner's Compact with the Secretary-General, and the delegation of authority accountability framework developed by the Business Transformation and Accountability Division (BTAD) had key performance indicators (KPIs) and targets on recruitment, geographical representation, gender parity, performance management and mandatory learning. Also, there were some human resources-related initiatives that were being addressed in the Organizational Effectiveness 2.0 change initiative – a major structural and operational change initiative at OHCHR that was ongoing at the time of the audit.

16.   OIOS reviewed the various strategy documents and targets and noted that in totality, they covered all key aspects of human resources management. The individual strategy documents were also well-developed. The Organizational Effectiveness Action Plans included clearly defined outputs, targets and activities, as well as comprehensive assessments of the challenges and gaps on talent and diversity-related issues. The assessments were informed by the background reviews, surveys and assessments done in the Organizational Effectiveness 2.0 change initiative. The 2024 learning plan was also comprehensive and had clearly linked entity goals with learning objectives.

17.   However, the fragmentation of strategies, action plans and targets in various documents led to some shortcomings. OHCHR did not have a strategy consolidating all human resources targets in one place and to clearly articulate Office-wide initiatives and actions needed to achieve them. Since 2021, OHCHR's risk register identified the need to have a well-defined strategy that supports its strategic objectives, staff needs, mission, vision and values. OHCHR had initiated the development of a strategy, but it was still in draft, with no timeline for finalizing it.

18.   HRMS prepared a work plan that consolidated the targets and actions from the various strategy documents. The work plan outlined the units within HRMS that were responsible for the activities and outputs in the work plan, and in a few cases the units outside HRMS. However, the work plan was an internal HRMS document that was not shared with other organizational units. The work plan did not also address the actions needed to achieve the KPIs monitored under the High Commissioner's Compact and the BTAD accountability framework.

19.   Furthermore, the mental health strategy ended in 2021 but had not been formally extended or updated. OHCHR indicated that a new Well-Being Unit was endorsed by the Executive Committee in August 2024 and its work plan would be launched during the mental health month in October 2024. Similarly, the learning plan was to end in 2024 but there were no clear timelines established for finalizing a new plan. There was a risk that continuity could be lost if a new plan was not developed on time.

Need to develop a comprehensive reporting, monitoring and accountability framework

20.   In the absence of a consolidated human resources strategy and related reporting and monitoring framework, performance reporting on human resources management was fragmented with no consolidated report summarizing the overall results. Further, the monitoring and evaluation sections in the Organizational Effectiveness Action Plans were broad with no specifics on reporting and monitoring arrangements.

21.   The performance reports on the Organizational Effectiveness Action Plans focused on listing what was done without a clear variance analysis between planned and actual activities and outputs. The reports did not also clearly address the extent to which the KPIs defined in the Organizational Effectiveness Plans had been achieved. The OHCHR annual report for 2023 indicated that 25 per cent of KPIs had been fully achieved but in the absence of measurable indicators, it was not clear how this was determined. For example, all the four outputs in the Organizational Effectiveness Action Plan on talent management were to be measured through a survey of staff and one on human resources partner services but no such surveys had been done.

22.   Regarding the KPIs monitored by BTAD and in the High Commissioner's Compact, the data and reports showed that OHCHR managed to achieve gender parity targets in 2022 and 2023 but failed to meet the remaining KPIs. Some remedial actions were proposed for the KPIs not achieved but these were not systematically incorporated in work plans. Also, performance goals for senior staff did not have specific goals that aligned with the human resources targets in the High Commissioner' Compact. Reliance was placed on HRMS' efforts to send reminders to managers to meet targets, but such efforts were not effective.

23.   OHCHR had established a Workforce Planning Group headed by the Deputy High Commissioner and comprised of Directors of Divisions as well as the Chef de Cabinet. The Group met regularly to discuss updates shared by HRMS. HRMS shared statistics of the status of each KPI and others such as upcoming retirements, staff movement reports and staff in need of placement. However, the Workforce Planning Group forum was not used for taking any decisions on underperforming targets or for seeking explanations for exceptions such as significant delays in recruitment. It operated more as a forum for senior managers to be kept abreast of developments in human resources management without a clear oversight role.

> **(1)   OHCHR should: (a) finalize the development of a comprehensive human resources strategy and an accompanying consolidated work plan that includes responsibilities of the various organizational units for each output and target; and (b) develop a comprehensive reporting, monitoring and accountability framework for the management of human resources to monitor the implementation of the strategy and work plan.**
>
> *OHCHR accepted recommendation 1 and stated that HRMS will develop an organizational People Strategy to support OHCHR's ability to deliver its strategic objectives by effectively managing its personnel requirements. Essential factors include organizational effectiveness, workforce planning, diversity and inclusion, performance management, leveraging and managing talent to deliver, and optimally supporting the OHCHR workforce globally.*

Need to address discrepancies in staffing data reflected in performance management status reports

24.   OHCHR relies on BTAD for data on performance management related KPIs. The data included spreadsheets that contained names of all OHCHR staff and the status of completion of their end-of-cycle performance appraisals. OIOS' review of the data showed significant discrepancies between the BTAD spreadsheets and data from Umoja. In the 2021-2022 cycle, the BTAD spreadsheets had 190 less staff than Umoja data which meant that performance appraisal data of 190 staff may not have been accounted for. Likewise, the BTAD data had 129 less staff than Umoja data in the 2022-2023 cycle. OHCHR had not reviewed the BTAD data for accuracy and investigated the discrepancies. Therefore, the data on which the KPIs on performance management were monitored were not complete and accurate.

> **(2)   OHCHR should consult with the Business Transformation and Accountability Division (BTAD) to review the discrepancies between the staffing data reflected in BTAD reports and data from Umoja to avoid similar discrepancies in future.**
>
> *OHCHR accepted recommendation 2 and stated that this is manageable given that the transition of staff from the administrative service provider's contracts to OHCHR administered contracts has recently been postponed until early 2026.*

Need to ensure that risk treatment plans are effectively monitored

25.   OHCHR developed the first enterprise resource management risk register in 2021 and updated it in 2023. OIOS' review of the risk register showed that there was inadequate follow-up of risk treatment plans. Some of the risk mitigating measures identified in 2021 (such as the development of an Organizational Effectiveness Action Plan on diversity and the recruitment of a Diversity and Inclusion Advisor) had been implemented. However, several other important mitigating actions such as the development of a strategy and enhancement of workforce planning had not been achieved. The actions were rolled over to the 2023 register with no clear explanations as to why they had not been implemented, and there were no timelines for addressing them. The risk treatment plans had also not been incorporated in the HRMS consolidated work plan to ensure that they were monitored. Further, the risks were not covered in the annual review by the Policy Planning Monitoring and Evaluation Section because they were rated medium, and the annual review only covered risks rated high. The medium risk rating needs to be re-assessed as some of the risks are inherently high and the mitigating actions identified had not been fully implemented.

> **(3)   OHCHR should revisit the rating of risks pertaining to human resources management and ensure that risk treatment plans are incorporated in the existing action plans and strategies.**
>
> *OHCHR accepted recommendation 3 and stated that a corporate review is taking place and human resources related risks are being revisited.*

Need for a clear delegation of authority structure for human resources

26.   On 1 January 2019, the Secretary-General introduced a new framework for delegating increased authority to heads of entities as outlined in ST/SGB/2019/2. The framework is a key pillar of the Secretary-General's management reforms and aims at further decentralizing decision-making, aligning authority with responsibilities, and strengthening accountabilities. Accordingly, the Secretary-General delegated to the High Commissioner the authority for 79 actions relating to various aspects of the Staff Regulations and Rules and Financial Regulations and Rules. Of the 79 delegated actions, 53 related to human resources management. However, since 2019 the structure of delegation across OHCHR had not been clearly documented as required by BTAD guidelines. Additionally, the absence of a clearly documented sub-

delegation structure denied staff members the opportunity to be fully aware of those responsible for specific human resources management-related decisions.

> **(4)** **OHCHR should: (a) review the delegation of authority structure and assess opportunities for further sub-delegation of human resources management authority, as appropriate; and (b) clearly document and disseminate the sub-delegation structure to relevant staff.**
>
> *OHCHR accepted recommendation 4 and stated that the Programme Support and Management Services team will codify the delegation of authority structure for the Office.*

B.   Human resources operations

Need to define a clear action plan for improving recruitment timelines

27.   OIOS' review of a sample of 75 recruitment cases showed that OHCHR generally complied with the established procedures for recruitment. Approximately 50 per cent of all selections at the professional and higher levels were done through rosters which was faster and more efficient. However, the overall recruitment timelines were way below the target of "60 per cent recruitment done within 120 days" established in the High Commissioner's Compact. Removing the effect of the Secretariat-wide recruitment freeze, the percentage of recruitments done within 120 days were 37 per cent in 2022, 22 per cent in 2023 and 24 per cent in 2024 (January to April 2024). Further, 51 of the 165 job openings as of April 2024 had been open for more than one year, with 17 having been open for more than 2 years.

28.   OIOS' analysis of job openings that took longer than 300 days indicated delays in all phases of recruitment. The delays attributable to hiring managers (including shortlisting, interviewing, and evaluation of applicants) had the most impact on the recruitment timelines. Inherent factors leading to the delays were "high volume of applicants" as well as the fact that hiring managers were performing the recruitment tasks parallel to other competing priorities in their substantive work. However, there were several cases that were significantly delayed beyond one year that could not be fully explained by the inherent factors only. There were also cases of roster recruitment that took longer than 120 days which should not be the case since roster recruitments can be expedited.

29.   OHCHR was aware of the recurring recruitment delays and had included recruitment as one of the processes to be reviewed in the Organizational Effectiveness 2.0 change initiative. OIOS noted that issues and challenges associated with the recruitment process were adequately addressed in the review and appropriate recommendations made to streamline the process and improve efficiencies and timeliness. These included recommendations relating to: (i) clarifying the role and scope of hiring managers; (ii) providing administrative backstopping to hiring managers; (iii) training of hiring managers; and (iv) diversifying and regularizing roster selection.

30.   While the recommendations were to be implemented and monitored under the Organizational Effectiveness 2.0 change initiative, action plans and timelines had not been defined for implementing them. OHCHR also needs to consider the following when developing the action plans:

(a)   Most managers may not be performing recruitment activities on a regular basis to enable them to retain the knowledge gained from previous training. Therefore, it would be useful to supplement the training initiatives with briefing material on recruitment that hiring managers could refer to each time they are assigned a case.

(b)   In the cases reviewed by OIOS, 21 staff who sat in interview panels appeared not to have taken the competency-based interview training. Although the staff had certified that they had undergone the training, their names were not on the list of staff who had completed the training. Hiring managers must be reminded to ensure that panelists have completed the required training before they can serve on the panels.

(c)   OHCHR did not monitor two phases of the recruitment process: (i) the phase between a post falling vacant (or a new post being established) and the issuance of the job opening; and (ii) the phase between the selection decision and onboarding of the selected candidate. There were instances of significant delays in these two phases.

> **(5)   OHCHR should prepare a clear action plan with timelines for operationalizing the recommendations made in the review of the recruitment process under the Organizational Effectiveness 2.0 initiative.**
>
> *OHCHR accepted recommendation 5 and stated that the HRMS recruitment team will implement the following Organizational Effectiveness 2.0 recommendations: (i) clarifying the role and scope of hiring managers; (ii) providing administrative backstopping to hiring managers; (iii) training of hiring managers; and (iv) diversifying and regularizing roster selection.*

Need to ensure that payments to consultants and individual contractors are in accordance with contracts

31.   OIOS' review of 30 randomly selected consultant and individual contractor assignments showed that the recruitments were done in a competitive manner as required by ST/AI/2013/4. The fees charged were also in line with established rates and performance evaluations were documented as required.

32.   However, there were anomalies in five cases pertaining to translators. Although the terms of reference clearly stated that payments would be based on unit costs, the payment terms were unilaterally changed to lumpsum by the hiring department at the time of payment. The hiring department indicated that the changes to lumpsum were done to ease and speed the process of payment, and that they carried out a reconciliation at the end of the assignment to determine whether the payment made aligned with the number of words translated. Despite this, OIOS noted overpayments totalling $934 in three of the five cases reviewed, and underpayment of $238 in another case.

33.   Additionally, in another case, a contract for $12,000 started in October and ended in December 2023 but the contractor was paid an additional CHF 24,858 ($28,586) in January and February 2024. OHCHR stated that these payments were based on a contract extension covering January to June 2024, for CHF33,600 ($38,640). However, the activities for which the contractor was paid the additional funds had already been performed in 2023, and the extension was a mere formality to address the underpayment to the contractor. The hiring department explained that the individual contractor was given a much larger workload than initially envisaged due to an unforeseen surge of demand and supported its explanation with corresponding invoices. Since the change in workload was significant (more than double the value of the initial contract), it should have triggered an amendment of the contract with clear additional deliverables for purposes of transparency and accountability.

> **(6)   OHCHR should sensitize certifying officers and hiring departments to ensure that terms of reference for consultants and individual contractors are adhered to and contracts are promptly amended to formalize any variations.**
>
> *OHCHR accepted recommendation 6 and stated that in addition to systematic checks and greater diligence when issuing consultant and individual contractor contracts, it will initiate refresher*

Need to strengthen time and attendance monitoring

34.   OIOS' review and analysis of Umoja leave records and balances for the three leave cycles from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2024 showed that 2,924 days of annual leave were forfeited by 394 staff members. Among these, 44 staff members forfeited their leave days for three consecutive leave cycles. Of the 44, 12 staff did not take any leave in at least one of the three years and another 25 forfeited a total of 30 or more leave days in the three years. Not taking any leave in the year or forfeiting large leave balances is unusual and could be a symptom of incomplete recording of absences. Further, failure to take leave can affect staff health and well-being.

35.   Certification of leave balances in Umoja was also low with only 52 per cent and 48 per cent of OHCHR staff having certified their leave records for 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 leave cycles, respectively. Failure to certify leave records means that any gaps and inaccuracies would not be detected and addressed. OIOS also noted that 10 staff who forfeited leave in three consecutive years had taken one or more uncertified sick leave or family emergency leave. This was an indication that the staff may not have been aware of the leave they were likely to forfeit.

36.   Interviews and the results of an OIOS-administered survey showed that time and attendance focal points of the various organizational units considered that the monitoring role was HRMS' responsibility. The gaps noted above show the need for OHCHR to strengthen the arrangements for monitoring attendance and absences as required by the administrative instruction on time and attendance (ST/AI/1999/13). Since ST/AI/1999/13 was issued in 1999 and predates the implementation of Umoja in 2015, some aspects of monitoring prescribed in it need to be updated to include the use of Umoja data and to take into account the current arrangements for leave recording and certification in Umoja.

> **(7)   OHCHR should guide supervisors and time and attendance focal points to monitor the leave records of staff to identify and address: (a) any gaps in recording leave/absences; (b) cases of staff with excess leave that will be forfeited if not taken by the end of the leave cycle; and (c) cases where staff are not certifying their leave balances.**
>
> *OHCHR accepted recommendation 7 and stated that HRMS will work with staff and managers alike to reinforce their time and attendance responsibilities. In addition, the Programme Support and Management Service's team will provide support to staff for recording time and attendance in Umoja, including certification of attendance statements.*

Need to strengthen human resources management at the Division level

37.   Investing in enabling managers to manage and leaders to lead is one of the goals that was included in the Organizational Effectiveness Action Plan on talent management. The KPI for this output was "Staff receive regular feedback on performance from their line management", and the target set was 90 per cent. The performance reports listed various training and support programmes and initiatives undertaken but did not address the extent to which the indicator was achieved. Fifty-two per cent of staff did not have work plans approved on time, and 50 per cent of performance documents were not prepared in a timely manner. Mandatory training compliance rates were also low which showed that they were not incorporated in performance goals and effectively monitored.

38.   The combination of shortcomings relating to performance management and mandatory training, as well as those relating to recruitment and monitoring of attendance discussed above, indicate the need to

strengthen human resources management at the Division level. Divisions need to effectively monitor the human resources targets and action plans during the year to enhance accountability and ensure that corrective actions are undertaken in a timely manner.

> **(8)** **OHCHR should guide Divisions to establish a practice of regularly monitoring human resources issues including exceptions relating to recruitment, performance management, time and attendance and mandatory learning.**
>
> *OHCHR accepted recommendation 8 and stated that HRMS will ensure that staff new to managerial functions participate in an orientation training for managers, and a refresher training on managerial functions.*

IV.   ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

39.   OIOS wishes to express its appreciation to the management and staff of OHCHR 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 human resources management at the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical[1]/ Important[2]	C/ O[3]	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date[4]
1	OHCHR should: (a) finalize the development of a comprehensive human resources strategy and an accompanying consolidated work plan that includes responsibilities of the various organizational units for each output and target; and (b) develop a comprehensive reporting, monitoring, and accountability framework for the management of human resources to monitor the implementation of the strategy and work plan.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that OHCHR has developed: (a) a human resources strategy and an accompanying work plan that outlines the responsibilities of the various organizational units; and (b) a reporting, monitoring, and accountability framework to monitor the implementation of the strategy and work plan.	31 July 2025
2	OHCHR should consult with the Business Transformation and Accountability Division (BTAD) to review the discrepancies between the staffing data reflected in BTAD reports and data from Umoja to avoid similar discrepancies in future.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that the discrepancies between the staffing data reflected in BTAD reports and data from Umoja have been investigated and resolved.	28 February 2025
3	OHCHR should revisit the rating of risks pertaining to human resources management and ensure that risk treatment plans are incorporated in the existing action plans and strategies.	Important	O	Receipt of documentary evidence that the human resources risks have been re-assessed and risk treatment plans have been incorporated in the existing plans and strategies.	31 December 2024
4	OHCHR should: (a) review the delegation of authority structure and assess opportunities for further sub-delegation of human resources management authority as appropriate; and (b) clearly document and disseminate the sub-delegation structure to relevant staff.	Important	O	Receipt of documentary evidence that the delegation of authority structure has been reviewed, documented, and disseminated to relevant staff.	30 April 2025
5	OHCHR should prepare a clear action plan with timelines for operationalizing the recommendations	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that an action plan has been developed to operationalize the	31 March 2025

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[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 OHCHR in response to recommendations.

STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Audit of human resources management at the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

	made in the review of the recruitment process under the Organizational Effectiveness 2.0 initiative.			recommendations made in the recruitment process under the Organizational Effectiveness 2.0 Initiative.	
6	OHCHR should sensitize certifying officers and hiring departments to ensure that terms of reference for consultants and individual contractors are adhered to and contracts are promptly amended to formalize any variations.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence of action taken to sensitize certifying officers and hiring departments on the need to adhere to terms of reference for consultants and to promptly amend contracts to formalize any variations.	31 March 2025
7	OHCHR should guide supervisors and time and attendance focal points to monitor the leave records of staff to identify and address: (a) any gaps in recording leave/absences; (b) cases of staff with excess leave that will be forfeited if not taken by the end of the leave cycle; and (c) cases where staff are not certifying their leave balances.	Important	O	Receipt of details of action taken to guide supervisors and time and attendance focal points to monitor leave records of staff.	31 March 2025
8	OHCHR should guide Divisions to establish a practice of regularly monitoring human resources issues including exceptions relating to recruitment, performance management, time and attendance and mandatory learning.	Important	O	Receipt of details of action taken to guide Divisions to establish a practice of regularly monitoring human resources issues.	30 June 2025

APPENDIX I

Management Response

Management Response

Audit of human resources management at the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical[1]/ Important[2]	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
1	OHCHR should: (a) finalize the development of a comprehensive human resources strategy and an accompanying consolidated work plan that includes responsibilities of the various organizational units for each output and target; and (b) develop a comprehensive reporting, monitoring, and accountability framework for the management of human resources to monitor the implementation of the strategy and work plan.	Important	Yes	Chief of HRMS	July 2025	HRMS will develop an organizational People Strategy to support OHCHR's ability to deliver its strategic objectives by effectively managing its personnel requirements. Essential factors include organizational effectiveness, workforce planning, diversity and inclusion, performance management, leveraging and managing talent to deliver, and optimally supporting the OHCHR workforce globally.
2	OHCHR should consult with the Business Transformation and Accountability Division (BTAD) to review the discrepancies between the staffing data reflected in BTAD reports and data from Umoja to avoid similar discrepancies in future.	Important	Yes	HRMS - Talent Development & Learning Unit	February 2025	This is manageable given the transition of staff from UNDP to OHCHR administered contracts has recently been postponed until earliest, 2026. For clarity, the recommendation should explicitly reference performance management and mandatory learning status reports.
3	OHCHR should revisit the rating of risks pertaining to human resources management and ensure that risk treatment plans are incorporated in the existing action plans and strategies.	Important	Yes	Chief of HRMS	December 2024	A corporate review - led by SPECS - is taking place and human resources related risks are being revisited.

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

Management Response

Audit of human resources management at the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical[1]/ Important[2]	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
4	OHCHR should: (a) review the delegation of authority structure and assess opportunities for further sub-delegation of human resources management authority as appropriate; and (b) clearly document and disseminate the sub-delegation structure to relevant staff.	Important	Yes	PSMS - Head of Enterprise Resource Planning	April 2025	The PSMS ERP team to codify the delegation of authority structure for the Office.
5	OHCHR should prepare a clear action plan with timelines for operationalizing the recommendations made in the review of the recruitment process under the Organizational Effectiveness 2.0 initiative.	Important	Yes	HRMS - Head of Recruitment	March 2025	The HRMS recruitment team will implement the following OE 2.0 recommendations: (i) clarifying the role and scope of hiring managers; (ii) providing administrative backstopping to hiring managers; (iii) training of hiring managers; and (iv) diversifying and regularizing roster selection.
6	OHCHR should sensitize certifying officers and hiring departments to ensure that terms of reference for consultants and individual contractors are adhered to and contracts are promptly amended to formalize any variations.	Important	Yes	HRMS - Head of Partnerships and Affiliated Workforce	March 2025	In addition to systematic checks and greater diligence when issuing CIC contracts, the PAWS team will initiate refresher training to improve compliance in this area. The first such training is scheduled for November 2024.
7	OHCHR should guide supervisors and time and attendance focal points to monitor the leave records of staff to identify and address: (a) any gaps in recording leave/absences; (b) cases of staff with excess leave that will be forfeited if not taken by the end of the leave cycle; and (c) cases where staff are not certifying their leave balances.	Important	Yes	HRMS - Head of Operations PSMS - Head of Enterprise	March 2025	HRMS to work with staff and managers alike to reinforce their time and attendance responsibilities. The PSMS ERP team to also provide support to staff for recording time and attendance in UMOJA, including certification of attendance statements.

Management Response

Audit of human resources management at the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical[1]/ Important[2]	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
8	OHCHR should guide Divisions to establish a practice of regularly monitoring human resources issues including exceptions relating to recruitment, performance management, time and attendance and mandatory learning.	Important	Yes	HRMS - Talent Development & Learning Unit	June 2025	HRMS to ensure that staff new to managerial functions participate in orientation training for managers, training, and refresher training on managerial functions.