



INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION

REPORT 2025/104

Audit of capacity development and operational training by the Department of Operational Support

The Department contributed to enhancing the Secretariat's operational capacity and readiness through delivery of tailored learning programmes, but needed to implement stronger governance, performance evaluation, and integrated data and digital systems to maximize its enabling role

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Audit of capacity development and operational training by the Department of Operational Support

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of capacity development and operational training by the Department of Operational Support (DOS). The objective of the audit was to assess the relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency of the Capacity Development and Operational Training Service (CDOTS) in meeting the Organization's capacity development and operational training needs for the delivery of mandates. The audit covered the period from 1 January 2023 to 30 June 2025 and included: (a) governance and strategic alignment; (b) programme implementation and performance; (c) resource management and optimization; and (d) information communications technology (ICT) systems and controls.

There was strategic alignment between the Office of Human Resources within the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance (DMSPC), which is responsible for providing policy and strategic oversight for learning, and CDOTS, which delivers capacity development and operational knowledge that directly support mandate implementation. CDOTS delivered a portfolio of tailored learning programmes and was addressing resource constraints. However, the audit identified several systemic gaps affecting CDOTS' enabling role, including the absence of a coordinated Secretariat-wide governance framework, fragmented outreach and communication, limited consolidation of entity-level learning needs, incomplete standard operating procedures for the learning life cycle, gaps in performance measurement and reporting, the absence of a portfolio-level evaluation, and data integration and reliability challenges across learning management systems.

OIOS made seven recommendations. To address issues identified in the audit, DMSPC needed to establish, in partnership with DOS and relevant entities:

- Secretariat-level learning coordination board with clear terms of reference, defined membership, and formal reporting lines.
- Unified Secretariat-wide outreach and communication strategy to promote awareness and accessibility of learning opportunities.
- Secretariat-wide mechanism to collect, consolidate, and analyze entity learning needs to support integrated planning and prioritization of training programmes.

DOS needed to:

- Finalize and promulgate the standard operating procedures on the learning life cycle.
- Ensure CDOTS establishes a performance measurement framework and a standardized feedback framework to systematically assess learning effectiveness and behavioural and operational impact.
- Establish a consolidated performance reporting framework.
- Commission a portfolio evaluation for CDOTS' programmes in accordance with the Learning Evaluation Framework.

DOS and DMSPC accepted all recommendations and have yet to initiate action to implement them. Actions required to close the recommendations are indicated in Annex I.

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Audit of capacity development and operational training by the Department of Operational Support

I. BACKGROUND

1. The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of capacity development and operational training by the Department of Operational Support (DOS).

2. The Capacity Development and Operational Training Service (CDOTS) is responsible for ensuring that all Secretariat entities have the operational capacities necessary to effectively fulfill their mandates. It was established in 2019 within the Office of Support Operations (OSO) in DOS as part of the 2017 management reform.

3. CDOTS functions in a decentralized learning environment that includes the: (a) Office of Human Resources (OHR) within the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance (DMSPC); (b) Policy, Evaluation and Training Division (DPET) within the Department of Peace Operations (DPO); (c) other entities within the Secretariat; and (d) United Nations System Staff College (UNSSC).¹ While these other entities address various learning needs,² CDOTS focuses on providing capacity development³ solutions and operational training⁴ aligned with Secretariat reforms, organizational commitments and strategies.⁵

4. CDOTS is led by a Chief of Service at the D-1 level, who reports to the Assistant Secretary-General (ASG), OSO. The Chief is supported by a multidisciplinary team consisting of 57 staff members located at Headquarters. The funding for these posts derives from sources as shown in table 1.

Table 1: Summary of CDOTS budget allocations and expenditures from all funding sources: 2023 to 2025

Funding source	2023	2024	2025
Regular budget	\$6,686,520	\$6,098,086	\$4,859,000
Peacekeeping support account	5,165,584	5,142,623	5,532,582
Extrabudgetary	550,620	501,508	383,679
Programme support cost	293,200	344,800	344,900
Jointly financed initiatives	1,274,900	1,441,630	1,251,467
Total budget allotment	\$13,970,824	\$13,528,647	\$12,371,628
Total expenditure	\$13,923,022	\$13,518,970	\$11,963,755

Note: Peacekeeping support account figures are reported on a fiscal-year basis (1 July–30 June). Other funding sources are by calendar year, with 2025 expenditures as of 30 November 2025

5. During the period under review, CDOTS delivered a portfolio of 114 learning programmes and 457 language courses across its five pillars: business process improvement; operational training; data analytics; language and communications; and knowledge and information-sharing. These activities saw approximately 30,300 total enrolments in business process, operational, and data analytics courses, while

¹ UNSSC is the dedicated learning institution of and for the United Nations and its partners.

² These include substantive (mandate-specific expertise and field readiness), technical (professional disciplines such as information communications technology, supply chain, finance, and project management), and mandatory and leadership learning coordinated by OHR and the Ethics Office.

³ Capacity development refers to the systematic strengthening of Secretariat entities' institutional effectiveness, including staff competencies, business processes, enterprise-level systems, governance mechanisms, organizational performance, knowledge management, and digital enablement.

⁴ Operational training builds the skills and competencies required to apply Secretariat policies, rules, administrative procedures, and internal controls in day-to-day operations (e.g., Umoja functionality and transactions, human resources, and budget workflows).

⁵ These include but are not limited to the UN 2.0 transformative agenda, People Strategy, and multilingualism

the language and communications programme recorded nearly 44,400 enrolments supporting multilingualism and staff development. CDOTS also facilitated knowledge and information-sharing through Knowledge Gateway and initiatives such as UNTold.⁶

6. CDOTS activities are supported by the CDOTS Campus learning management system (LMS), which includes a dashboard tracking enrolments, completions, user metrics, and course performance; the language and communications programme website, dashboard, and resources aligned with the United Nations Language Framework; and other corporate systems and platforms, such as Umoja, Inspira, and SharePoint.

7. Comments provided by DOS and DMSPC are incorporated in italics.

II. AUDIT OBJECTIVE, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

8. The objective of the audit was to assess the relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency of CDOTS in meeting the Organization's capacity development and operational training needs for the delivery of mandates.

9. This audit was included in the 2025 risk-based work plan of OIOS due to the risk that the learning and capacity development programme may not adequately support operational capacities for mandate delivery across the Secretariat. Relevant considerations were factored into the audit to provide contextual insight in light of the ongoing UN80 Initiative,⁷ austerity measures and their anticipated impact on mandates, budget resources, and staffing structures.

10. OIOS conducted this audit from June to October 2025. The audit covered the period from 1 January 2023 to 30 June 2025. Whenever data was available for earlier and more recent activities, these were reviewed to reach appropriate conclusions. The audit included risks areas relating to: (a) governance and strategic alignment; (b) programme implementation and performance; (c) resource management and optimization; and (d) information communications technology (ICT) system and controls.

11. The audit methodology included: (a) interviews with key personnel; (b) review of relevant documentation; (c) assessment of the data management systems; (d) analytical review of data; (e) sample testing of seven courses selected through judgmental sampling; (f) benchmarking with a United Nations entity; and (g) obtaining independent stakeholder feedback from a sample of 12 client entities to assess the relevance and impact of training.

12. To assess the reliability of data on enrolments and completion rates for CDOTS course offerings, OIOS reviewed data in the CDOTS Campus and language programme dashboards to detect obvious errors in accuracy and completeness. Discrepancies such as inconsistent data reporting were brought to CDOTS' attention. Based on this review, OIOS identified anomalies in dashboard reliability, which are discussed in Section D of this report.

13. The audit was conducted in accordance with the Global Internal Audit Standards.

⁶ UNTold shines the spotlight on replicable support-related innovations from across the United Nations system through mini-documentaries and virtual discussions

⁷ In March 2025, the Secretary-General launched the UN80 Initiative to enhance the Secretariat's agility, coordination, and effectiveness over the next 80 years. The initiative focuses on three key areas: (a) improving efficiencies; (b) reviewing the implementation of mandates; and (c) exploring structural and programmatic realignments across the United Nations System.

III. AUDIT RESULTS

A. Governance and strategic alignment

There was strategic alignment between OHR and CDOTS' roles within the Secretariat's learning environment

14. Within the Secretariat, OHR provides policy and strategic oversight for learning, while CDOTS delivers capacity development and operational knowledge that directly support mandate implementation. This division of responsibilities helps translate policy into practice and maintain alignment with evolving organizational and reform priorities.

15. OIOS noted complementarity between CDOTS' operational role and OHR's strategic functions for staff development. Interviews and responses to the OIOS questionnaire indicated that OHR develops the Secretariat-wide learning strategy, global learning priorities, mandatory and leadership learning, and integrates learning within the People Strategy and broader talent management framework. CDOTS focuses on operational, process-oriented, and entity-specific capacity-building to support staff in exercising delegated authority and applying standardized business processes. Collaboration included co-development of the UN Secretariat Learning Strategy (2021–2025), shared governance through the Learning Community of Practice, joint development of the Learning Evaluation Framework (LEF, 2025), and contributions to consolidating the enterprise LMS.

A coordinated governance framework and enterprise learning structure were needed to enhance coherence, oversight, and accountability in a decentralized learning environment

16. In the Secretariat, training is delivered through a decentralized learning environment comprising: (a) centrally managed training on leadership and management, upgrading of substantive and technical skills, capacity development, and operational, under DMSPC and DOS; (b) language-training programmes administered by 12 entities, including DOS; and (c) entity-specific learning initiatives. Between 2020 and 2025, approximately \$17.0 million to \$20.3 million⁸ in training resources were proposed annually, excluding the training budgets of peacekeeping missions. Despite this significant investment, no Secretariat-level coordination mechanism exists to ensure coherent planning, complementarity, or systematic assessment of efficiency and impact.

17. OHR and other entities rely on informal coordination forums—including the Learning Managers Network, Learning Community of Practice, LIDERA,⁹ and Learning Focal Points Network—to exchange updates and support implementation of the Secretariat Learning Strategy. While useful, these forums lack terms of reference, dedicated resourcing, and accountability structures. Coordination thus depended on voluntary participation rather than on institutional arrangements, a gap amplified by UN80's emphasis on coherence and improved delivery.

18. Both OHR and CDOTS acknowledged the need for a formal governance arrangement to strengthen alignment and accountability. Inputs from OHR during the audit indicated that a way forward could be by establishing a Secretariat-level learning coordination board to: (a) convene OHR, CDOTS, DPET, and other relevant entities; (b) define joint priorities, decision-making protocols, and quality-assurance standards; (c) coordinate budget planning, shared investments, and vendor management; and (d) oversee implementation of the Secretariat Learning Strategy and LEF.

⁸ A/79/7, Table 27

⁹ A leadership community of 4,000+ members consisting of a forum where staff can share tips and advice with other members, as well as discuss their challenges in leadership.

(1) DMSPC should, in partnership with DOS and other relevant learning entities, establish a Secretariat-level learning coordination board with clear terms of reference, defined membership, and formal reporting arrangements to ensure coherent planning, complementarity, and systematic assessment of efficiency and impact.

DMSPC and DOS accepted recommendation 1. DMSPC stated that it would work with DOS and other relevant learning entities to establish a Secretariat-level learning coordination board to coordinate, consult, and make recommendations on issues related to better planning, alignment, coordination, and strengthening of the learning ecosystem across the Secretariat.

A unified outreach and communication strategy was needed to enhance visibility of learning opportunities

19. Effective governance of the learning function should include a unified outreach and communication strategy to ensure that staff are aware of and have equitable access to learning opportunities that further promote UN 2.0¹⁰ skills and culture transformation, among other initiatives.

20. OIOS noted that outreach and communication of learning opportunities within the Secretariat were fragmented and decentralized. OHR's webpages and broadcast channels mainly promoted LinkedIn Learning, Coursera, and UNSSC Blueline courses for which the Organization holds paid subscriptions but omitted in-house providers. On the other hand, CDOTS advertised its courses through UNSSC's catalogue, its own website, the Knowledge Gateway link to an administrative and operational learning catalogue, and through its quarterly "Level Up" updates, but not on platforms of other learning providers.

21. For example, the Secretary-General's data strategy, the UN 2.0 transformation goals, and the global learning needs assessment (LNA, 2020) identified data-related skills as a top training priority for the Secretariat. CDOTS, the Office of Information Communications Technology (OICT), and the Business Transformation and Accountability Division (BTAD) in DMSPC provided training in this area through CDOTS Campus, Unite Academy, and Inspira, respectively, on standalone sites and platforms without cross-references. This contributed to uneven utilization of the offerings as indicated below:

- a) CDOTS Campus: 13 data-visualization and analytics courses, with about 800 participants;
- b) OICT's Unite Academy: over 50 courses with 7,700+ enrolments and approximately 1,180 unique participants across 64 entities and 16 duty stations; and
- c) BTAD's Kamino series: Launched in 2023, attracting 3,900+ participants.

22. CDOTS noted that differences in scope, intent and learner audience profiles across platforms should be considered when interpreting participation levels of these offerings. CDOTS explained that its training model focuses on data enablement through instructor-led, hands-on capacity development tailored to Secretariat operational contexts and use cases, which, while effective for applied learning, may result in lower enrolment volumes than self-paced approaches. Conversely, Unite Academy primarily provides micro-learning and informational sessions aimed at awareness-level enablement, while BTAD's Kamino course offers self-paced data analytics training, which helps explain the larger volume of participants.

¹⁰ UN 2.0 - Quintet of Change Framework is the Secretary-General's transformation agenda to modernize the United Nations through five enablers (data, digital, innovation, foresight, and behavioural science) to strengthen results and accountability.

23. Nevertheless, the absence of a unified communication plan and outreach strategy to integrate core messaging around training has resulted in fragmented visibility of learning opportunities, potentially leading to underutilization of training offerings.

(2) DMSPC should, in partnership with DOS and other relevant learning entities, establish a unified Secretariat-wide outreach and communication strategy to promote awareness and accessibility of learning opportunities.

DMSPC and DOS accepted recommendation 2. DMSPC stated that it would work with DOS and other relevant learning Secretariat entities on developing a unified outreach and communication strategy for learning resources, materials, opportunities, and tools across the Secretariat.

B. Programme implementation and performance

CDOTS activities contributed to strengthening the Secretariat’s organizational capacity and readiness

24. CDOTS spearheaded enterprise-level digital learning innovations, including the CDOTS Campus Moodle LMS, Knowledge Gateway, and UNTold. Since 2021, CDOTS Campus has broadened access to operational and self-paced learning, while customized programmes have been implemented to strengthen management capability, mentoring, and field readiness. Programmes supporting the UN Language Framework (2023)—including training-of-trainers and UN Level I/II exams—reinforced multilingual competencies. Flagship events such as Level Up and SkillsFest,¹¹ as well as other staff awareness-raising endeavours, spurred monthly enrolment growth from 40 learners in 2022 to nearly 600¹² in 2025, delivered via in-person, hybrid, and online modalities. In addition to the language and communications programme, CDOTS supported Language Days that promoted upskilling and multilingualism in line with General Assembly resolutions on language parity and the Secretary-General’s vision for cultural inclusion.

25. CDOTS also expanded offerings in areas aligned with reform priorities such as environmental management, data literacy, innovation and accessibility, supporting the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy, the Strategy on New Technologies (2018), and the UN Values and Behaviours Framework¹³ (2024). Since 2020, Knowledge Gateway has generated 4.2 million page views, while UNTold has produced 23 case studies across six entities and 12 global dialogues engaging 3,400 staff and 550 town-hall participants, connecting field experiences with Headquarters and preserving institutional knowledge.

26. CDOTS collaborated with UNSSC to strengthen its effectiveness, including co-development of the CDOTS Campus on its enterprise Moodle platform and partnering on programme design. The 2023–2024 UNSSC–DOS micro-scholarship programme enabled CDOTS staff placements at UNSSC Headquarters in Italy for skills development, knowledge sharing, and exposure to system-wide good practices.

Need to improve planning and prioritization of training programmes

27. In accordance with the UN Secretariat Learning and Development Strategy, each entity conducts an LNA to identify technical and substantive skill gaps and submits an entity learning plan with cost-estimates for approval and centrally managed funding to upgrade substantive and technical skills and other

¹¹ “SkillsFest” is a new half-day, in-person interactive learning event organized by CDOTS in collaboration with relevant Secretariat entities to showcase innovative and practical approaches for staff to develop skills and share knowledge. The November 2025 SkillsFest attracted approximately 700 registrants and nearly 400 attendees and featured demonstrations of emerging learning-related technologies such as AI-enabled tools.

¹² CDOTS Campus dashboard (July 2025)

¹³ ST/SGB/2024/4

capacities. To ensure coherence and value-for-money, LNAs should also capture capacity development and operational needs, which should be centrally consolidated and analyzed to inform Secretariat-wide priorities, reduce duplication, and leverage use of in-house resources such as CDOTS. Structured client engagement (e.g., periodic surveys) is also essential for capturing emerging training needs. OIOS noted that CDOTS' planning would be enhanced by the following.

(a) Sharing of identified entity-level learning needs

28. Entities developed learning plans using an LNA toolkit developed by OHR, yet consolidated insights were rarely shared with CDOTS. In fast-evolving areas such as data and artificial intelligence, cross-cutting identification of needs could achieve significant cost-efficiencies if CDOTS were systematically engaged in Secretariat-specific course design. Provisions of administrative instruction ST/AI/2010/10 on upgrading staff substantive and technical skills already allow for centrally coordinated training when common needs arise, presenting an opportunity for CDOTS to deliver in-house learning solutions aligned with Secretariat standards. Currently, CDOTS' portfolio planning relies largely on *ad hoc* client requests, professional judgment, and historical demand rather than consolidated, data-driven insights.

29. Interviews with OHR also identified opportunities to strengthen CDOTS planning through adopting an "in-house first" consultation model before approving funds for external training, thereby reinforcing collaboration between entity-defined learning needs and DMSPC/DOS assessment processes. Systematically sharing consolidated learning needs with CDOTS would allow earlier identification of common or cross-cutting learning needs and reduce reliance on external consultants where in-house expertise exists. This would also allow CDOTS to shift from responding primarily to ad hoc requests toward more intentional, data-driven planning aligned with organization-wide priorities. CDOTS has demonstrated capability to design and deliver substantive and technical courses for client entities on various topics including on: (i) fraud- and corruption-awareness; (ii) the Comprehensive Planning and Performance Assessment System; and (iii) fuel management.

(b) Strengthening client engagement

30. CDOTS also lacked structured mechanisms for client engagement and surveys to capture feedback and emerging demand. Comparable units, such as the Human Resources Services Division (HRSD) within OSO, DOS, conduct annual surveys to inform service improvement. Establishing a similar mechanism would allow CDOTS to collect entity-specific data, integrate it into annual planning, and develop courses aligned with instructional design standards.

31. OIOS comparative analysis showed that the benchmarked entity conducts comprehensive learning needs analyses using mixed methods approach—consultations, surveys, design sessions, and competency-framework reviews—supported by analytics and user-experience research to develop its courses. The absence of a structured mechanism for collecting and analyzing learning needs limits CDOTS in proactively aligning training with Secretariat-wide priorities or demonstrating evidence-based responsiveness.

(3) DMSPC should, in partnership with DOS and other relevant learning entities, establish a Secretariat-wide mechanism to collect, consolidate, and analyze entity learning needs to support integrated planning and prioritization of training programmes.

DMSPC and DOS accepted recommendation 3. DMSPC stated that it would work with DOS and other relevant learning entities to establish a Secretariat-wide mechanism to support integrated planning and prioritization of training programmes using existing tools such as the LNA toolkit and entity learning plans.

The learning life cycle was well-defined, but standard operating procedures required finalization and promulgation

32. CDOTS maintained a well-defined learning life cycle, supported by standard operating procedures (SOPs) that, however, remained in draft pending promulgation. The draft SOPs incorporated quality-assurance checkpoints across all phases and were updated during the audit to reflect existing practices. OIOS walk-through of a sample of seven courses delivered by three CDOTS business units (Business Process and System Support Section, Operational Training Section, and Data and Analytics Training Team) confirmed that the draft SOP practices were already in use. During OIOS' visit to the United Nations Learning Centre, staff of the Language and Communications Training Unit (LCTU) demonstrated active in-person and instructor-led online classes, confirming the use of standardized formats and accessibility features, and alignment with Secretariat learning delivery standards.

33. OIOS benchmarking confirmed that CDOTS' draft SOPs incorporated several core elements of a modern learning-development framework, including defined lifecycle phases and accessibility standards. However, the benchmarked entity maintains a more mature and fully codified SOP that CDOTS could learn from to further strengthen its draft SOPs. This includes a suite of complementary tools—including a detailed quality assurance framework, quality control checklist for subject matter experts, dedicated accessibility guidelines, and a content strategy framework. Notably, the benchmarked entity's content strategy framework requires each course to begin with a documented rationale ("Why this content?"), ensuring alignment with learner needs and organizational priorities.

34. While lifecycle controls were in place, the absence of finalized and promulgated SOPs limits its institutionalization and may affect consistency as functions expand or staff rotate. Finalizing the SOPs—integrating enhancements from the above-mentioned benchmarking—would reinforce sustained quality and process clarity as CDOTS scales its learning portfolio.

(4) DOS should finalize and promulgate the standard operating procedures for the learning life cycle, drawing on relevant benchmarking where appropriate.

DOS accepted recommendation 4 and stated that CDOTS/DOS planned to reach agreement internally on the pending elements and promulgate its SOPs for the learning life cycle.

Action was being taken to strengthen data integration and reporting for the language and communications programme

35. The language and communications programme operates across multiple, non-integrated systems. CDOTS Campus hosts online, hybrid, and self-paced language courses and serves as the back-end for the Power BI language and communications programme dashboard. Inspira is used for registration and cost recovery from external learners, but lacks functionality for attendance tracking and advanced reporting, limiting programme administration and monitoring. It is not interfaced with CDOTS Campus or the dashboard, resulting in dispersed data on enrolment and attendance, with limited automation or validation between systems. Instructors often recorded attendance offline, contributing to inconsistent and delayed reporting.

36. Despite the large number of enrolments across the six official languages, programme-level outcome measurement remained limited. The dashboard tracked participation, but not completion, because LCTU could not reliably verify underlying enrolment data generated in Inspira. Variations in attendance recording practices reduced consistency, and LCTU's reliance on Inspira for demand data constrained portfolio-level analysis. OIOS observed that, as of November 2025, the dashboard had not been updated since July 2025,

reflecting a three- to four-month reporting lag. More broadly, the absence of automated reconciliation procedures between instructor records and data in CDOTS Campus or Inspira increased the risk of data discrepancies beyond the dashboard itself.

37. Recognizing these challenges, LCTU initiated the migration of registration, participation, and completion management to CDOTS Campus, with a pilot launch planned for 2026. The initiative aims to unify course tracking, learner management, and reporting across languages, course types, and course editions, strengthening data quality, consistency, and comparability. These efforts align with enterprise learning platform integration work discussed in Section D of the report.

Need to strengthen performance measurement and reporting of learning results and impact

38. Pursuant to results-based management (RBM) principles and good practices, an effective performance-measurement approach for Secretariat learning and capacity development should include: (a) a structured performance measurement framework incorporating qualitative and quantitative key performance indicators (KPIs), baselines and measurable targets, and systematic and multi-stage feedback mechanisms; and (b) consolidated annual and multi-year performance reporting. These elements would enable CDOTS to demonstrate the effectiveness and value-for-money of its learning services and to support evidence-based decision-making.

(a) Performance measurement framework

39. CDOTS maintained dashboards tracking enrolments and user activity; however, these indicators were not linked to the component-level results and performance measures in the proposed programme budget or a structured internal performance measurement framework. As a result, the metrics were insufficient to systematically assess the effectiveness of CDOTS' learning, language, and knowledge services.

40. CDOTS collected post-training feedback for some programmes, including more than 8,300 responses from 129 customized, special projects, and language-course surveys.¹⁴ However, comparable data were limited for other offerings delivered through CDOTS Campus. Feedback remained confined to immediate post-course reactions, without mechanisms to capture medium- or long-term learner experience or to identify systemic issues across programmes. Additionally, engagement with entity learning focal points and managers was inconsistent, limiting structured insights on relevance, coherence, and course effectiveness. Although user statistics (e.g., enrolments, completions, and user activity) were collected across platforms, the data were limited in scope. They were not consistently analyzed against defined performance measures to generate evidence-based inputs for programme refinement or continuous improvement. This was because CDOTS had not established a performance measurement framework to translate operational activity data into outcome evidence, together with standardized data-collection and analysis procedures across its learning portfolio and a differentiated set of KPIs and baselines to assess both CDOTS-initiated and client-requested courses.

41. OHR informed OIOS that the Secretariat's Learning and Development Strategy and People Strategy include high-level KPIs that articulate strategic priorities for learning and workforce development. OIOS noted, however, that these strategy-level KPIs are not accompanied by an RBM-aligned performance measurement mechanism with defined baselines, targets, or systematic monitoring and data-collection procedures. As such, they do not substitute for the internal performance measurement framework needed to assess CDOTS' results, learning effectiveness, or behavioural and operational impact.

¹⁴ Available data from 2019 to 2025 for customized language courses, such as multilingual correspondence writing and language for interpreters

(5) DOS should ensure the Capacity Development and Operational Training Service: (a) facilitates, in coordination with client entities, the development of a performance measurement framework with defined qualitative and quantitative key performance indicators, baselines, and measurable performance targets; and (b) establishes a standardized feedback framework to consistently collect, aggregate, and analyze participant and manager feedback across the learning portfolio, to systematically assess learning effectiveness and behavioural and operational impact.

DOS accepted recommendation 5 and stated that under the Secretariat's learning governance model, performance targets for learning programmes should be defined by the requesting client, entity, or institutional lead, as they are best positioned to define expected learning outcomes, behavioural change, and operational impact. DOS will facilitate the establishment of the indicators by client entities through documenting the commitments in the client engagement forms.

(b) Performance reporting and outcome visibility

42. CDOTS did not produce consolidated annual or biennial performance reports integrating results across its programmes, modalities, and initiatives, including Knowledge Gateway, UNTold, entity-requested capacity development projects, business process improvement support, and outreach activities. Institutional reporting was limited to the programme budget fascicle, which presented results only for the business process improvement workstream for 2024¹⁵ due to word-limit constraints. While CDOTS maintained internal dashboards with operational indicators, these were not integrated into an institutional performance reporting framework to support multi-year visibility of results.

43. As a result, CDOTS and other learning entities lacked a mechanism to synthesize and present results across programmes, as envisioned under the RBM framework, and required to support evidence-based planning and visibility of learning results over time.

(6) DOS should establish a consolidated performance reporting framework integrating annual and multi-year reports with periodic dashboards to demonstrate outputs, outcomes, and the Capacity Development and Operational Training Service's contribution to Secretariat-wide learning objectives.

DOS accepted recommendation 6 and stated that it would develop a reporting model that is adaptable, cost-efficient, and fit for purpose. However, DOS noted that the proposed reporting requirement extends beyond existing obligations under regular budget and support account performance reporting, as well as donor-specific requirements for extrabudgetary funding.

An evaluation of CDOTS' portfolio was needed to assess impact

44. The LEF guidance encourages periodic portfolio evaluations, which assess the performance of an entire set of learning, capacity development, and language and communications programmes collectively rather than individually. A portfolio evaluation examines relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and organizational impact across programmes, applying LEF principles of evaluating both implementation and outcomes to support operational improvement.

¹⁵ A/80/6 (Sect. 29B); para. 29B.28; p. 10

45. CDOTS has not conducted a comprehensive portfolio-level evaluation since its establishment in 2019, although it had undertaken several evaluation exercises on selected trainings,¹⁶ which generated improvements in specific areas, including course redesign and enhanced participation. However, these initiative-level evaluations do not provide the holistic, cross-programme analysis required under the LEF to assess the portfolio's performance and impact. CDOTS delivers a large and diverse set of offerings—including over 100 customized training sessions and more than 450 language courses annually across the six official languages—but, in the absence of a portfolio evaluation, overall performance, strategic coherence, and organizational impact have not been systematically assessed.

(7) DOS should commission a portfolio evaluation, in accordance with the Learning Evaluation Framework.

DOS accepted recommendation 7 and stated that pilot portfolio evaluation for the language and communication training programme would be initiated in 2026, subject to the availability of the requisite resources.

C. Resource management and optimization

CDOTS was taking action to address resource constraints

46. Despite continued high demand for training, austerity measures in the Secretariat significantly curtailed CDOTS' resources. For 2025, CDOTS' approved non-staff budget¹⁷ was reduced from \$3.47 million to \$1.49 million (57 per cent), alongside proposals to abolish or redeploy nine posts. Training demand nevertheless surged between August and October 2025, with enrolments rising from 5,889 to 7,356 (+25 per cent),¹⁸ indicating a widening gap between demand and delivery capacity. CDOTS noted that this trend is reinforced by usage of the newly launched UN Languages website, which grew from around 3,100 active users in April 2025 to more than 19,000 by December—a six-fold increase.¹⁹ However, reduced resources were already affecting the language and communications programme, with at least three entities indicating their intention to terminate or significantly scale back offerings in 2026.

47. CDOTS has not yet conducted a formal workload assessment or demand forecast, nor mobilized supplemental funding to mitigate the impact of austerity measures. However, it consulted with programme managers and internally within DOS on the feasibility and sequencing of its planned 2026 portfolio—including course development projects and process improvement initiatives—and used these inputs to rebalance allocations across its portfolio. CDOTS implemented daily Excel-based fund tracking and scaled down or deferred several approved projects to preserve essential services.

D. ICT systems and controls

Multiple learning platforms were being integrated to enhance efficiency

48. OIOS noted that over 20 LMS platforms were maintained across the Secretariat at a combined annual cost of approximately \$1 million, resulting in platform proliferation, inconsistent interfaces, and

¹⁶ These include impact evaluation of the HR Partner eCertification programme, Umoja LNA, introduction to “Umoja Working Smarter,” redesign review of the GO2UN Secretariat onboarding programme, assessments of managerial and leadership learning programmes, and a Secretariat-wide survey on Knowledge Gateway

¹⁷ As per guidance by the United Nations Controller's entities were required to effect a meaningful reduction of 15–20 per cent of the Secretariat's regular budget, including a 20 per cent reduction in posts.

¹⁸ CDOTS Campus dashboard (2025 data)

¹⁹ UN Languages Website – Analytics Snapshot – Year-to-Date (1 January-5 December 2025)

fragmented user experiences. Learning delivery remains dispersed across unintegrated systems, including CDOTS Campus, Inspira, DPET/DPO mission-readiness platforms, OICT Unite Academy, UNSSC Blueline, and external e-learning providers such as LinkedIn Learning and Coursera. The Joint Inspection Unit previously identified similar inefficiencies.²⁰ Staff reported uncertainty about where to start looking for courses and a lack of unified learning pathways.

49. To address duplication and fragmentation, the ICT Steering Committee approved a consolidated enterprise solution in March 2024, retaining the UNSSC Moodle LMS and OICT iLearn (PeopleSoft). The solution costs \$506,000 annually, is projected to save approximately \$500,000, and will enhance interoperability, unify access, and support shared analytics for system-wide performance measurement. As of November 2025, OHR had completed 8 of 65 milestones (12 per cent) in its project schedule to implement the enterprise learning platform integration, with 10 milestones (15 per cent) in progress, 8 (12 per cent) delayed, and the remainder not yet due. Full implementation of the enterprise solution is expected by March 2026.

ICT controls for CDOTS learning platforms and websites were well designed but data reliability controls for dashboards require strengthening

50. For the platforms reviewed, OIOS found that general ICT controls were well designed. Ownership, maintenance, and data governance were defined through memoranda of understanding and service-level agreements with service providers, supported by policies on access, backup, disaster recovery, and audit trails. No major performance or security incidents were reported in the past 18 months.

51. However, OIOS identified gaps in the reliability of dashboard data used for managerial monitoring. During testing of enrolment and completion data in the CDOTS Campus and language and communications dashboards, OIOS noted discrepancies and inconsistent reporting, and brought them to CDOTS' attention. After the audit fieldwork, CDOTS acknowledged the limitations of the current dashboards—which were introduced in 2024 and have mainly internal managerial value—and indicated that validation controls and reporting consistency will be strengthened as part of the migration to the new integrated LMS platform planned for March 2026.

IV. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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

Internal Audit Division
Office of Internal Oversight Services

²⁰ Report of the Joint Inspection Unit, “Policies and platforms in support of learning: towards more coherence, coordination and convergence” (JIU/REP/2020/2)

STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Audit of capacity development and operational training by the Department of Operational Support

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ²¹ / Important ²²	C/ O ²³	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date ²⁴
1	DMSPC should, in partnership with DOS and other relevant learning entities, establish a Secretariat-level learning coordination board with clear terms of reference, defined membership, and formal reporting arrangements to ensure coherent planning, complementarity, and systematic assessment of efficiency and impact.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence of the establishment of the Secretariat-wide learning coordination board with clear terms of reference, membership, and reporting arrangements.	31 December 2026
2	DMSPC should, in partnership with DOS and other relevant learning entities, establish a unified Secretariat-wide outreach and communication strategy to promote awareness and accessibility of learning opportunities.	Important	O	Receipt of the Secretariat-wide outreach and communications strategy to promote learning opportunities.	31 March 2027
3	DMSPC should, in partnership with DOS and other relevant learning entities, establish a Secretariat-wide mechanism to collect, consolidate, and analyze entity learning needs to support integrated planning and prioritization of training programmes.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence of an established Secretariat-wide mechanism to collect, consolidate, and analyze entity learning needs.	30 June 2027
4	DOS should finalize and promulgate the standard operating procedures for the learning life cycle, drawing on relevant benchmarking where appropriate.	Important	O	Receipt of promulgated standard operating procedures for learning life cycle.	30 September 2026

²¹ 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.

²² 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.

²³ Please note the value C denotes closed recommendations whereas O refers to open recommendations.

²⁴ Date provided by DOS and DMSPC in response to recommendations.

STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Audit of capacity development and operational training by the Department of Operational Support

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ²¹ / Important ²²	C/ O ²³	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date ²⁴
5	DOS should ensure the Capacity Development and Operational Training Service: (a) facilitates, in coordination with client entities, the development of a performance measurement framework with defined qualitative and quantitative key performance indicators, baselines, and measurable performance targets; and (b) establishes a standardized feedback framework to consistently collect, aggregate, and analyze participant and manager feedback across the learning portfolio, to systematically assess learning effectiveness and behavioural and operational impact.	Important	O	Receipt of established performance measurement framework and standardized feedback framework.	31 March 2027
6	DOS should establish a consolidated performance reporting framework integrating annual and multi-year reports with periodic dashboards to demonstrate outputs, outcomes, and the Capacity Development and Operational Training Service's contribution to Secretariat-wide learning objectives.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence of established consolidated performance reporting framework.	31 March 2027
7	DOS should commission a portfolio evaluation, in accordance with the Learning Evaluation Framework.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence of portfolio evaluation for the language and communications programme.	31 March 2027

APPENDIX I

Management Response

Management Response

Audit of capacity development and operational training by the Department of Operational Support

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
1	DMSPC should, in partnership with DOS and other relevant learning entities, establish a Secretariat-level learning coordination board with clear terms of reference, defined membership, and formal reporting arrangements to ensure coherent planning, complementarity, and systematic assessment of efficiency and impact.	Important	Yes	Chief, Strategic Talent Management Service, OHR, DMSPC and Chief, Capacity Development and Operational Training Service/DOS	31 December 2026	DMSPC accepted this recommendation and would work with DOS and other relevant learning entities to establish a Secretariat-level learning coordination board to coordinate, consult and recommend on issues related to better planning, aligning, coordinating and strengthening the learning ecosystem across the Secretariat.
2	DMSPC should, in partnership with DOS and other relevant learning entities, establish a unified Secretariat-wide outreach and communication strategy to promote awareness and accessibility of learning opportunities.	Important	Yes	Chief, Strategic Talent Management Service, OHR, DMSPC and Chief, Capacity Development and Operational Training Service/DOS	31 March 2027	DMSPC accepted this recommendation and would work with DOS and other relevant learning entities on developing a unified outreach and communication strategy for learning resources, materials, opportunities and tools across the UN Secretariat.
3	DMSPC should, in partnership with DOS and other relevant learning entities, establish a Secretariat-wide mechanism to collect, consolidate, and analyze entity learning needs	Important	Yes	Chief, Strategic Talent Management	30 June 2027	DMSPC accepted this recommendation and will work with DOS and other relevant learning entities to establish a

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 capacity development and operational training by the Department of Operational Support

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
	to support integrated planning and prioritization of training programmes.			Service, OHR, DMSPC and Chief, Capacity Development and Operational Training Service/DOS		Secretariat wide mechanism to support integrated planning and prioritization of training programmes using existing tools (LNA Toolkit, entity learning plans).
4	DOS should finalize and promulgate the standard operating procedures for the learning life cycle, drawing on relevant benchmarking where appropriate.	Important	Yes	Chief, Capacity Development and Operational Training Service/DOS	30 September 2026	CDOTS/DOS plans to agree internally on the pending elements and promulgate its SOPs for the learning life cycle without further delay.
5	DOS should ensure the Capacity Development and Operational Training Service: (a) facilitates, in coordination with client entities, the development of a performance measurement framework with defined qualitative and quantitative key performance indicators, baselines, and measurable performance targets; and (b) establishes a standardized feedback framework to consistently collect, aggregate, and analyze participant and manager feedback across the learning portfolio, to systematically assess learning effectiveness and behavioural and operational impact.	Important	Yes	Chief, Capacity Development and Operational Training Service/DOS	31 March 2027	As previously stated in our response, under the Secretariat's learning governance model, performance targets for learning programmes should be defined by the requesting client, entity, or the institutional lead, as they are best placed to define expected learning outcomes. DOS will facilitate the establishment of the indicators by client entities through documenting the commitments in the client engagement forms. DOS comments are reflected in the report.
6	DOS should establish a consolidated performance reporting framework integrating annual and multi-year reports with periodic dashboards to demonstrate outputs,	Important	Yes	Chief, Capacity Development and Operational	30 June 2027	DOS comments are reflected in the report.

Management Response

Audit of capacity development and operational training by the Department of Operational Support

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
	outcomes, and the Capacity Development and Operational Training Service's contribution to Secretariat-wide learning objectives.			Training Service/DOS		
7	DOS should commission a portfolio evaluation, in accordance with the Learning Evaluation Framework.	Important	Yes	Chief, Capacity Development and Operational Training Service/DOS	31 March 2027	Implementation of the recommendation is subject to availability of resources. The pilot portfolio evaluation – for the Language and Communication Training Programme – will be initiated in 2026, subject to the availability of requisite resources.