



## INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION

### REPORT 2017/134

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Audit of the management of the Junior Professional Officers programme in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs

The mandate of the Junior Professional Officers programme needed to be amended to update its broad principles to reflect the evolving requirements of the programme and require periodic reporting on its substantive activities

12 December 2017

Assignment No. AN2017/540/01

# **Audit of the management of the Junior Professional Officers programme in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of the management of the Junior Professional Officers (JPO) programme in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA). The objective of the audit was to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of the management of the programme and whether it was achieving its intended purpose. The audit covered the period from 1 January 2014 to 31 August 2017 and it included higher and medium risk areas in: (a) the implementation of the JPO programme mandate; and (b) the management of the JPO programme.

The recruitment and placement of candidates for the JPO programme was largely satisfactory with adequate female representation in the programme. However, the mandate of the programme needed to be amended to update its broad principles and require periodic reporting on its substantive activities.

OIOS made six recommendations. To address issues identified in the audit, DESA needed to:

- Propose to the General Assembly to amend the broad principles of the JPO programme to reflect evolving requirements;
- Develop a policy and practice framework clarifying the roles and responsibilities of Secretariat departments and offices and major participating donors for the effectiveness and accountability of the JPO programme;
- Periodically report on the substantive activities of the JPO programme, including on identifiable key performance indicators;
- Regularly issue formal communication to all stakeholders articulating the benefits of the JPO programme and the required criteria for participation to increase its visibility and inclusiveness;
- Make formal proposals to sponsoring countries to consider increasing the sponsorship of young professionals from developing countries so that the programme can maintain its international outlook and visibility; and
- Establish a desirable age range and length of assignment and incorporate the criteria in the standard operating procedures and/or the policy and practice framework.

DESA accepted the recommendations and is in the process of implementing them.

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# **Audit of the management of the Junior Professional Officers programme in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs**

## **I. BACKGROUND**

1. The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of the management of the Junior Professional Officer (JPO) programme in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA).
2. The JPO programme in United Nations system organizations (formerly Associate Experts programme) was mandated via Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) resolution 849 (XXXII) of 4 August 1961. The resolution established the use of volunteer workers in the operational programmes of the United Nations and related agencies designed to assist in the economic and social development of less developed countries. In accordance with the resolution, the principles governing the use and assignment of JPOs include the following:
  - a) The services of volunteers shall be utilized only in connection with programmes and projects certified as eligible for assignment of volunteer personnel by the executing agencies. Volunteers shall not be placed at the Headquarters of the United Nations and its related agencies in any established posts.
  - b) The final decision for the assignment of volunteers to specific programmes and projects shall rest with the executing agency and the recipient country.
  - c) The Government providing the volunteer personnel shall be responsible for all identifiable costs such as maintenance of allowances, insurance and costs of transport to the place of assignment.
3. DESA is responsible for managing the JPO programme in the United Nations Secretariat. Among other responsibilities, the Capacity Development Office (CDO) in DESA supports and facilitates the overall coordination, administration, and management of the JPO programme, including recruiting JPOs for Secretariat entities and managing the JPO general trust fund.
4. JPOs are recruited under bilateral agreements between the United Nations and donor countries. JPOs are generally nationals of donor countries, although in limited circumstances, a Partner Country also sponsors nationals from developing countries. As of 31 August 2017, there were 204 JPOs on board at the Secretariat of which 8 were nationals of developing countries under the sponsorship of the Netherlands.
5. Within CDO, the composition of the dedicated JPO programme management and support team includes the following seven positions: (a) Chief of the Associate Expert programme; (b) Finance Officer; (c) Human Resources Programme Officer; and (c) five general service staff. The team's programme of work includes: (a) human resources management (recruitment and placement, administration of entitlements and benefits, separation from service, co-funding, extensions beyond assignment, and learning and career development); (b) finance management of the JPO general trust fund; (c) liaison with donors, recipient departments and other United Nations agencies, funds and programmes; (d) review of donor agreements and terms of reference for JPO requests; (e) leading programme reviews as directed by legislative bodies; and (f) serving as the inter-agency focal point on JPO programmes across United Nations entities and coordinating the preparation of the biennial meeting of national recruitment services.
6. The JPO programme, which started more than five decades ago, has had 32 participating sponsor countries with 29 United Nations Secretariat entities benefiting from the programme.

7. Table 1 provides the consolidated annual income and expenditure flows of the JPO general trust fund from January 2014 to August 2017.

**Table 1: Programme financial information January 2014 to August 2017 (in US Dollars)**

	2014	2015	2016	2017
Opening balance	43,674,634	40,442,524	29,718,520	35,092,264
Donor contributions	26,351,818	15,876,242	31,362,310	17,393,794
Expenditure	(29,583,625)	(26,600,245)	(25,988,566)	(19,045,520)
<b>Closing balance</b>	<b>40,442,524</b>	<b>29,718,520</b>	<b>35,092,264</b>	<b>33,340,538</b>

8. Comments provided by DESA are incorporated in italics.

## **II. AUDIT OBJECTIVE, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY**

9. The objective of the audit was to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of the management of the JPO programme in DESA and whether the programme was achieving its intended purpose.

10. This audit was included in the 2017 risk-based work plan of OIOS because of the risk that the JPO programme may not be achieving its intended purpose and consequently diminishing its contribution to the overall economic and social development mandate.

11. OIOS conducted this audit from June to August 2017. The audit covered the period from 1 January 2014 to 31 August 2017. Based on an activity-level risk assessment, the audit covered higher and medium risk areas in: (a) the implementation of the JPO programme mandate; and (b) the management of the JPO programme.

12. The audit methodology included: (a) interviews of key personnel, (b) reviews of relevant documentation, (c) analytical reviews of data, and (d) testing of a judgmental sample of JPO recruitment actions.

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

## **III. AUDIT RESULTS**

### **A. Programme mandate**

The mandate of the JPO programme needed a review to reflect changing requirements

14. According to ECOSOC resolution 849 (XXXII), volunteer workers in operational programmes of the United Nations and related agencies may be utilized to assist in the economic and social development of less developed countries. The resolution also outlined the broad principles governing the use and assignment of volunteer technical personnel in the United Nations and related agencies. The original principle emphasized that JPOs shall serve primarily in field offices rather than at Headquarters or in major offices away from Headquarters.

15. In response to the needs of the Organization, the implementation of the JPO programme evolved over time, progressively expanding the geographic and substantive areas in which volunteers were deployed. In line with this, the Office of the Human Resources Management (OHRM) issued in 1987 a memo authorizing the placement of JPOs in Headquarters locations on exceptional basis subject to its approval. The practice has continued and consequently, during the audit, OIOS noted that of the 204 JPOs on board, 55 per cent of them were in Headquarter duty stations, and 45 per cent were stationed in the field.

16. Additionally, the original mandate required that services of volunteers be utilized only in connection with programmes and projects certified as eligible for assignment of volunteer personnel by the United Nations entities requesting the recruitment of JPOs. These entities would normally be conducting programmes assisting in the economic and social development of less developed countries. However, in response to the needs of the Organization, the scope of the JPO programme has been expanded to providing volunteers to all Secretary-General's priority areas, including peace and security, human rights and humanitarian assistance.

17. In this regard, a study conducted by the Joint Inspection Unit recommended that "ECOSOC revisit its resolution 849 (XXXII) of 4 August 1961, which serves as policy basis for the JPO programme and redefine the objectives, the guiding principles of assignment and the principles of financing the programme, with the aim of updating them to reflect current realities". In December 2016, the General Assembly endorsed a recommendation from the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) for the Secretary-General to report on the use of JPOs in the Secretariat and to submit a proposal for ensuring an updated legislative basis for their deployment across the Secretariat.

18. Accordingly, DESA is currently reviewing the mandate of the JPO programme to update it. In updating the JPO programme mandate, DESA may consider the following principles that could reflect the programme's current realities:

- Supporting the Secretary-General's priority areas such as the sustainable development goals, peace and security, human rights and humanitarian assistance without restricting the locations where JPOs could serve;
- Serving as a medium to provide candidates with learning opportunities and career development in the international field;
- Utilization of candidates' experience in United Nations operations in their own countries and benefitting the Organization as a core support group; and
- Serving as a source of human resources capacity to the United Nations from the JPO contributing countries.

19. Inadequate periodic reviews of the mandate of the JPO programme could hamper its effectiveness to contribute to the United Nations priority areas.

**(1) DESA should, through the Secretary-General, propose to the General Assembly to amend the broad principles of the Junior Professional Officers programme to reflect the evolving requirements of the programme.**

*DESA accepted recommendation 1 and stated that in its resolution 71/263 of 23 December 2016, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to propose an updated legislative basis for deploying JPOs across the Secretariat for the Assembly's consideration in 2019. DESA would work with OHRM to finalize the proposal. Recommendation 1 remains open pending*

submission of a proposal to the General Assembly to amend the broad principles of the JPO programme.

DESA needed to develop a policy and practice framework for the JPO programme

20. Resolution 849 (XXXII) requested the then Executive Chairman of the Technical Assistance Board (TAB) to present a report to ECOSOC on its implementation of the JPO programme.

21. Periodic TAB reports to ECOSOC were intended to include a strategic plan incorporating a policy and practice framework for implementing the resolution. However, at the time of the audit, TAB was no longer in existence and its activities had been absorbed by CDO in DESA. DESA's role is to provide human resources management services while individual departments were expected to formulate the JPO programme objectives in accordance with their mandates and within the Secretary-General's priority areas. There were no criteria or documented processes for the identification of Secretariat entities that may benefit from the JPO programme and are eligible to submit requests to DESA. A policy and practice framework was important given that the responsibility for implementing the JPO programme was vested in DESA while requests for JPOs originated from other Secretariat departments and offices.

22. In the absence of a policy and practice framework that is consistent with the mandate, the deployment of JPOs in the Secretariat depended on individual Secretariat departments' and donors' priorities. Without clarity on the roles and responsibilities of the requesting departments and offices, the effectiveness and accountability of the JPO programme within the United Nations priority areas could be diminished.

**(2) DESA should, in consultation with Secretariat departments and offices and major participating donors, develop a policy and practice framework clarifying their roles and responsibilities for the effectiveness and accountability of the Junior Professional Officers programme.**

*DESA accepted recommendation 2 and stated that in line with the expected update of the JPO programme mandate in 2018, DESA would work on a policy and practice framework in collaboration with all stakeholders. Recommendation 2 remains open pending development of the policy and practice framework.*

There is a need to produce performance reports for the JPO programme with identifiable key performance indicators

23. In accordance with the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation (ST/SGB/2016/6), activities undertaken by the United Nations shall be subjected to an integrated management process reflected in strategic frameworks, programme budgets, reports on programme performance, and evaluation reports.

24. The JPO programme had not been evaluated, monitored and reported on as part of DESA's substantive activities or through any separate reporting mechanisms. Even though it is administered by CDO within DESA, the JPO programme itself had not been associated with any of DESA's nine sub-programmes. The JPO programme was only vaguely mentioned once in DESA's 2014-2015 and 2016-2017 programme budget fascicles, whereby it was stated that "the Office also supports the management of the United Nations Secretariat's JPO programme, administering on average 200 experts per annum," providing no details pertaining to the programme's performance activities and its expected

accomplishments. Absence of the JPO programme's linkage to any substantive activities deprives a review of the achievement of its substantive intent under the ECOSOC resolution 849 (XXXII).

25. In its 2015 final report on the Associate Experts (JPO) programme - A Statistical Overview: 2009-2013, DESA also made no emphasis on the substantive contribution of the JPO programme. DESA explained that since its role was limited to recruiting and administering the programme on behalf of Secretariat entities, it would not be feasible for the programme to be incorporated in its activities.

26. Without a reporting mechanism, there was no established requirement to measure the contribution of the JPO programme to the Secretary-General's priority areas and to his development agenda or to demonstrate that the allocated resources had been utilized according to the legislative intent and in the most effective and economic manner. The JPO programme was also not subjected to programme performance, evaluation and reporting like any other programme activities in the Secretariat.

**(3) DESA should periodically report on the substantive activities of the Junior Professional Officers programme, including on identifiable key performance indicators.**

*DESA accepted recommendation 3 and stated that it would participate in an inter-agency working group to develop key performance indicators for the JPO programmes that could be used to report to various stakeholders. The proposed indicators would be presented at the next biennial meeting of the National Recruitment Services and United Nations entities participating in the JPO programmes in 2019. Recommendation 3 remains open pending development of key performance indicators that will be included in periodic reports on the substantive activities of the JPO Programme.*

DESA needed to improve the visibility and inclusiveness of JPO programme activities

27. Resolution 849 (XXXII) requested the Secretary-General to inquire whether Member States of the United Nations and of specialized agencies were willing to offer and/or receive volunteer personnel to be used in approved programmes and projects of technical cooperation.

28. DESA did not establish a mechanism for inquiring of Member States and United Nations Secretariat organizational units whether they were willing to offer or receive volunteer personnel. It had also not issued any formal communication to stakeholders apart from information provided in the context of human resources management reports on gratis personnel. Although a website for the programme had been set up that includes information on vacancies to which participating donor countries have access, the website does not seek offers from Member States to contribute to the JPO programme. Since the inception of the programme, only 32 countries have participated in it, of which 18 are currently active.

29. As at 31 August 2017, there were approximately 335 requests for JPOs posted on the DESA website by the 29 United Nations entities that DESA recruits for. However, the majority (302 or 90 per cent) of those postings were from 13 entities, with average request of 23 per entity. The rest (33 or 10 per cent) of those requests was from 16 entities, with an average request of 2 per entity.

30. An annual communication in the form of a memorandum, or circular on the JPO programme that articulates the programme's benefits to participating entities and donors would improve visibility and inclusiveness of the JPO programme, and may increase their participation.

**(4) DESA should regularly issue formal communications to all stakeholders articulating the benefits of the Junior Professional Officers programme and the required criteria for participation to increase its visibility and inclusiveness.**

*DESA accepted recommendation 4 and stated that it would develop an annual report as a formal communication that could be distributed to various stakeholders. Recommendation 4 remains open pending receipt of the first annual report to stakeholders.*

There was a need to recruit JPOs from as wide a geographical basis as possible

31. Per the United Nations Charter, the paramount consideration in the employment of staff and in the determination of conditions of service shall be the necessity of securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity. Due regard shall be paid to the importance of recruiting the staff on as wide a geographical basis as possible.

32. Less than a quarter of JPOs on board as of 31 August 2017 (48 out of the 204) were from developing countries. There is currently only one country that is sponsoring eight JPOs from five developing countries. Prior to 2014, two other countries sponsored candidates from developing countries.

33. To promote the sponsorship of JPOs from developing countries, DESA established a special trust fund called, 'Developing Countries Candidates Trust Fund' four years ago following recommendations from biennial meetings with other stakeholders. However, the trust fund remained dormant due to lack of support from donor countries. OIOS is of the view that DESA should continue to pursue formal proposals to sponsoring countries to consider increasing the intake of young professionals from developing countries so that the programme can maintain its international outlook and visibility, and contribute to human resources development for developing countries.

**(5) DESA should make formal proposals to sponsoring countries to consider increasing the sponsorship of young professionals from developing countries so that the programme can maintain its international outlook and visibility.**

*DESA accepted recommendation 5 and stated that it had reached out to sponsoring countries on a regular basis to sponsor JPOs from developing countries. At the biennial meeting of the National Recruitment Services and the United Nations entities on the JPO programmes in April 2017, a session was specifically devoted to this issue and suggestions were presented to sponsoring countries in attendance including through direct contributions to the Developing Countries Candidates Trust Fund established in 2013. Recommendation 5 remains open pending receipt of evidence of formal proposals to sponsoring countries to increase sponsorship of young professionals from developing countries.*

## **B. Management of the JPO programme**

There is a need for a desirable age range and length of assignment to be established and standardized for all JPOs

34. As per general practice in the United Nations and related agencies, JPO candidates are young professionals of around 30 years of age with an advanced university degree and usually two years of professional experience, recruited at the junior levels of the professional staff category of the United Nations (P-1/P-2), exceptionally also at the P-3 level if the position requires it.

35. OIOS reviewed a sample of 50 out of 204 JPOs currently on board, to ascertain whether the candidates recruited complied with the requirements set for: a) age; b) number of years of working experience; and c) educational level. OIOS concluded that the eligibility requirements and conditions for

JPOs were satisfied in most cases. However, there were instances of deviations in the age limit, maximum number of years' experience and length of assignment. For example, in 9 out of the 50 applications reviewed, the candidates' age at selection date fell between 33 and 36 years. DESA explained that different donors qualify the age eligibility for young professionals differently. For instance, one donor, defined JPO candidates as young professionals who are not more than 30 years of age, (32 for graduates in medicine and surgery) with an advanced university degree and usually two years of professional experience. Another set the age limit at 35 years of age while others did not have an age limit to avoid litigation by candidates who may feel discriminated against. In addition, the minimum professional experience required generally was two years but one donor had put a cap on the number of years' experience to a maximum of four years.

36. There were also no standard criteria for the length of assignment. In general, JPO candidates are contracted for a period of two years. However, some donors support extension of JPO assignments for a third or fourth year, some of them fully funding the period, while others only allowed extension of a JPO's assignment on a cost-sharing basis, i.e. 50 per cent funded by the donor and 50 per cent funded by the hosting entity. At the time of the audit, 35 JPO contracts had been extended beyond the original appointment period on a co-funding basis. The extensions were from eight donor countries, and were spread across 14 Secretariat departments and offices. DESA explained that the extensions were generally initiated by either the hosting entity or the donor countries themselves. But, the main principle driving the extension beyond the original two-year period was that any such contract extensions were subject to yearly review considering the organizations' priorities, availability of funds, and satisfactory performance of the JPO, and that all stakeholders, (hosting entities, donors, and the JPOs), concurred with the extensions.

37. The cause of these differing interpretations was that the original resolution did not include the broad principles on the desirable age range and related criteria resulting in flexibility by the participating donors and executing entities. To ensure standardization and transparency in the eligibility of candidates to participate in the JPO programme, DESA needed to agree on modalities, in consultation with donors, to determine a desirable age range for JPOs and the baseline for extension of assignments, and incorporate the details in standard operating procedures and/or policy and practice framework.

**(6) DESA should, in consultation with donors, establish a desirable age range and length of assignment for Junior Professional Officers and incorporate the criteria in standard operating procedures and/or policy and practice framework for the programme.**

*DESA accepted recommendation 6 and stated that it would consult with donors on this issue so that it could be incorporated in the policy and practice framework referred to in recommendation 2. Recommendation 6 remains open pending issuance of the policy and practice framework for the JPO programme, including specification of the desirable age range and length of assignment of JPOs.*

#### There was adequate female representation in the JPO programme

38. In line with Goal 5 of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development Goals, the United Nations Secretariat is strengthening institutional support for gender equality and the empowerment of women.

39. DESA has consistently maintained at least 50 per cent female representation of JPOs in the programme. The trend of high female representation was visible both in the number of candidates put forward by sponsoring countries, and selections by Secretariat departments and offices. The average percentage of female participants in the programme from January 2015 to August 2017 was 65 per cent as illustrated in Table 2.

**Table 2: Gender representation in JPO programme from January 2015 to August 2017**

	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>Total</b>
Females	43	53	36	<b>132</b>
Males	30	23	19	<b>72</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>204</b>
<b>Percentage of females</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>65</b>

40. Based on the above, OIOS concluded that women were adequately represented in the programme.

## **V. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

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

*(Signed)* Eleanor T. Burns  
Director, Internal Audit Division  
Office of Internal Oversight Services

## STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

## Audit of the management of the Junior Professional Officers programme in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical <sup>1</sup> / Important <sup>2</sup>	C/ O <sup>3</sup>	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date <sup>4</sup>
1	DESA should, through the Secretary-General, propose to the General Assembly to amend the broad principles of the Junior Professional Officers programme to reflect the evolving requirements of the programme.	Important	O	Submission of a proposal to the General Assembly to amend the broad principles of the JPO programme.	30 September 2018
2	DESA should, in consultation with Secretariat departments and offices and major participating donors, develop a policy and practice framework clarifying their roles and responsibilities for the effectiveness and accountability of the Junior Professional Officers programme.	Important	O	Development of a policy and practice framework clarifying the roles and responsibilities for the management of the JPO programme.	30 September 2019
3	DESA should periodically report on the substantive activities of the Junior Professional Officers programme including on identifiable key performance indicators.	Important	O	Development of key performance indicators that will be included in periodic reports on the substantive activities of the JPO programme.	31 March 2020
4	DESA should regularly issue formal communications to all stakeholders articulating the benefits of the Junior Professional Officers programme and the required criteria for participation to increase its visibility and inclusiveness.	Important	O	Receipt of the first annual report to stakeholders.	30 September 2018
5	DESA should make formal proposals to sponsoring countries to consider increasing the sponsorship of young professionals from developing countries so that the programme can maintain its international outlook and visibility.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence of formal proposals to sponsoring countries to increase sponsorship of young professionals from developing countries.	31 March 2018

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

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

<sup>3</sup> C = closed, O = open

<sup>4</sup> Date provided by DESA in response to recommendations.

## STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

## Audit of the management of the Junior Professional Officers programme in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical <sup>1</sup> / Important <sup>2</sup>	C/ O <sup>3</sup>	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date <sup>4</sup>
6	DESA should, in consultation with donors, establish a desirable age range and length of assignment for Junior Professional Officers and incorporate the criteria in standard operating procedures and/or policy and practice framework for the programme.	Important	O	Issuance of the policy and practice framework for the JPO programme, including specification of the desirable age range and length of assignment of JPOs.	30 September 2019

# **APPENDIX I**

## **Management Response**

## Management response

## Audit of the management of the Junior Professional Officer Programme in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical <sup>1</sup> / Important <sup>2</sup>	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
1	DESA should, through the Secretary-General, propose to the General Assembly to amend the broad principles of the Junior Professional Officers Programme to reflect the evolving requirements of the Programme.	Important	Yes	Chief, CDO	3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2018	In its resolution 71/263 of 23 December 2016, the General Assembly endorsed the recommendation of ACABQ (A/71/557, para. 116) for the Secretary-General to propose an updated legislative basis for the JPOs' deployment across the Secretariat for the Assembly's consideration in 2018 under the human resources management agenda item. DESA will work with OHRM to finalize such a proposal.
2	DESA should, in consultation with Secretariat departments and offices and major participating donors, develop a policy and practice framework clarifying their roles and responsibilities for the effectiveness and accountability of the Junior Professional Officers Programme.	Important	Yes	Chief, CDO	3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2019	In line with the expected update of the JPO Programme's mandate in 2018, DESA will work on a policy and practice framework in collaboration with all different stakeholders.
3	DESA should periodically report on the substantive activities of the Junior Professional Officers Programme including on identifiable key performance indicators.	Important	Yes	Chief, CDO	1 <sup>st</sup> quarter of 2020	DESA will participate in an inter-agency working group to develop key performance indicators for the JPO Programmes that can be used to report to various stakeholders. Such proposal is expected to be presented at the next biennial meeting of the National Recruitment Services and UN

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

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

## Management response

## Audit of the management of the Junior Professional Officer programme in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical <sup>1</sup> / Important <sup>2</sup>	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
						organizations on the JPO Programmes in 2019. Upon agreement of such indicators, DESA plan to report on this in the annual reports envisioned to address recommendation #4 below.
4	DESA should regularly issue formal communications to all stakeholders articulating the benefits of the Junior Professional Officers Programme and the required criteria for participation to increase its visibility and inclusiveness.	Important	Yes	Chief, CDO	3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2018	DESA accepts this recommendation and will develop an annual report that can be distributed to the various stakeholders.
5	DESA should make formal proposals to sponsoring countries to consider increasing the sponsorship of young professionals from developing countries so that the Programme can maintain its international outlook and visibility.	Important	Yes	Chief, CDO	1 <sup>st</sup> quarter 2018	DESA has reached out to sponsoring countries on a regular basis on the sponsorship of JPOs from developing countries. At the biennial meeting of the National Recruitment Services and the UN Organizations on the JPO Programmes in April 2017, a session was specifically devoted to this issue and suggestions were presented to sponsoring countries in attendance including through direct contributions to the Developing Countries Candidates Trust Fund established in 2013. This issue will continue to be a priority for the JPO Programme.
6	DESA should, in consultation with donors, establish a desirable age range and length of assignment for Junior Professional Officers and incorporate the criteria in standard operating procedures and/or policy and practice framework for the Programme.	Important	Yes	Chief, CDO	3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter 2019	DESA will consult with donors on this issue so that it can be incorporated in the policy and practice framework referred to in recommendation 2. A proposal is expected to be presented at the next biennial meeting of the National Recruitment Services and

Management response

Audit of the management of the Junior Professional Officer programme in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical <sup>1</sup> / Important <sup>2</sup>	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
						UN organizations on the JPO Programmes in 2019.