**Office of Internal Oversight Services**

**Terms of Reference**

**External Quality Assessment of the**

**OIOS Inspection and Evaluation function**

**United Nations Secretariat**

**June 2023**

1. **Background**
2. OIOS was established pursuant to United Nations General Assembly [resolution 48/218](http://undocs.org/a/res/48/218b) of 29 July 1994. The purpose of the Office is to assist the Secretary-General in fulfilling his internal oversight responsibilities through the exercise of internal audit, inspection and evaluation, and investigations.
3. In accordance with resolutions [69/253](http://undocs.org/a/res/69/253), [72/18](http://undocs.org/a/res/72/18) and [54/244](http://undocs.org/a/res/54/244), the Office exercises operational independence under the authority of the Secretary-General in the conduct of its duties and has the authority to initiate, carry out and report on any action which it considers necessary to fulfil its responsibilities.
4. With a view to providing as comprehensive an approach as possible and to minimizing duplication of efforts, the Office coordinates its activities with the United Nations Board of Auditors and the United Nations Joint Inspection Unit. It maintains a close working relationship with other oversight services – evaluation, inspection, audit and investigation - in the United Nations system.
5. The OIOS Inspection and Evaluation Division (IED) is responsible for performing the Offices’ inspection and evaluation functions, the objective of which is to strengthen relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and impact in the implementation of programmes and legislative mandates of the Organization and improve decision-making, accountability and learning.:
6. IED provides inspection and evaluation oversight services to the United Nations Secretariat at New York Headquarters, Offices Away from Headquarters and peacekeeping missions, the global Resident Coordinator system, as well as, on request of the Security Council, the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (IRMCT). IED has 30 staff located at its New York office, and 7 staff located in Entebbe. Each year, IED issues between 12 to 18 reports to management and to inter-governmental bodies and organs of the United Nations (such as the Committee for Programme and Coordination, and the Administrative and Budgetary Committee of the General Assembly, and the Security Council).
7. The recent OIOS Annual Reports ([Parts I](http://undocs.org/a/77/278(partI)) and [II](http://undocs.org/a/77/278(partii))) and [OIOS programme budget for 2023](http://undocs.org/a/77/6(Sect.30)) provide further information about OIOS and its inspection and evaluation functions.
8. Best practice and norms and standards for evaluation in the United Nations system require that the evaluation function be subject to periodic independent assessments or peer review to provide assurance to stakeholders that the function is working in the manner expected, and in accordance with the relevant regulatory framework, norms, standards and benchmarks. OIOS aims to conform, to the extent possible, with the norms and standards for evaluation in the United Nations system issued by the UN Evaluation Group (UNEG). The last external assessment of the OIOS inspection and evaluation function took place in 2012.
9. **Objective**
10. The objective of the external quality assessment is to provide an independent review of whether the OIOS inspection and evaluation function is working in the manner expected, efficiently and effectively, and in accordance with the OIOS mandate, United Nations regulatory framework and applicable professional norms and standards.
11. **Scope and Methodology of Assessment**
12. The scope of the external quality assessment is to:
13. Assess OIOS compliance with the norms and standards for evaluation in the United Nations system issued by UNEG;
14. Evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness with which IED carries out its functions as set out in, among others, General Assembly resolutions [48/218 B](http://undocs.org/a/res/48/218B), [54/244](http://undocs.org/a/res/54/244), [59/272](http://undocs.org/a/res/59/272), 69/253, and 74/257, and Secretary-General's Bulletins ST/SGB/273; and ST/SGB/2018/3;
15. Identify opportunities to enhance management of IED resources and work processes.
16. It is expected that the external quality assessment of IED will be performed in accordance with norms and standards for evaluation in the United Nations system issued by UNEG.
17. While the external assessment team will consult with relevant stakeholders and seek information and feedback from them, it will conduct its assessment independently and impartially.
18. **External Assessment Team**
19. The Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services is responsible for selecting and appointing the external assessment team in accordance with applicable United Nations Regulations and Rules.
20. The external assessment team will be comprised of two or more qualified individuals who have significant experience and recognized credentials in the professional practice of evaluation and the external quality assessment process. Due regard will be paid to gender and geographic diversity in selecting the external assessment team.
21. The external assessment team will not include current OIOS staff or staff having separated from OIOS within the last three years, nor individuals who have an actual or potential conflict of interest. The members of the external assessment team will be subject to confidentiality agreements and conflict of interest declarations.
22. **Confidentiality of information**
23. Appropriate measures will be taken to ensure that sensitive information is not disclosed. Such measures include storing electronic information obtained or electronic records created during the course of the assessment in a secure manner to avoid unauthorized access to such data.
24. The identity of individuals interviewed as part of the external quality assessment will not be disclosed without their consent.
25. The external assessment team will return or will destroy all materials received during the review and all copies of the report.
26. **Report**
27. Prior to finalizing its report, the external assessment team will share a draft report with and invite feedback from the Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services. While the external assessment team will finalize its findings and conclusions independently, it will take into account the feedback provided, including the need to remove information that may have the result of identifying, either directly or indirectly, sensitive information.
28. The external assessment team will finalize and submit its report to the Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services.
29. The report will include an executive summary that may be shared publicly.
30. The Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services will share with the Executive Office of the Secretary-General and the Independent Audit Advisory Committee the final external assessment report, together with the action plan prepared by OIOS to address the recommendations made by the external assessment team. The OIOS action plan will include a timeline for the implementation of the recommendations made by the external assessment team.
31. **Timing**
32. The external assessment, including the issuance of the report, should be completed within six months.