Office of Internal Oversight Services

INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION

REPORT 2026/016

Audit of engineering projects in the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei

UNISFA needed to strengthen engineering project governance and oversight through effective monitoring, contractor performance management, and project closure processes

17 July 2026
Assignment No. AP2025-635-02

Audit of engineering projects in the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of engineering projects in the United Nations Interim Force for Abyei (UNISFA). The objective of the audit was to assess whether UNISFA adequately and effectively managed engineering projects to ensure efficient and economical use of resources in support of the implementation of the Mission mandate. The audit covered the period from January 2023 to June 2025 and included: (a) project planning and oversight; (b) project execution; (c) performance monitoring; and (d) project closure and evaluation.

There were weaknesses in project governance and oversight that reduced assurance over effective and efficient engineering project management. These weaknesses included inadequate oversight by the Project Management Group over major projects, lack of project-level expenditure analysis and monitoring, insufficient follow-up of contractor performance deficiencies, and inadequate accountability of United Nations-owned equipment issued to contractors. There were noted weaknesses in project closure reporting and post-implementation evaluation processes, limiting the ability to assess project outcomes and benefits realization.

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

- Enforce mandatory submission of all major engineering project proposals exceeding $1.0 million to the Project Management Group (recommendation 1).
- Strengthen the invoicing process by: (a) ensuring work orders capture all required information and are aligned with the task orders; and (b) requiring submission of work orders as supporting documentation for invoice payments (recommendation 2).
- Establish a mechanism to track engineering contractors' performance deficiencies and ensure timely follow-up and corrective action (recommendation 3).
- Enforce mandatory reconciliation of United Nations-owned equipment issued to contractors upon completion of each contract and establish a virtual verification mechanism (recommendation 4).
- Establish a centralized filing and records management system for engineering projects (recommendation 5).
- Ensure all major engineering projects comply with and document project closure reporting requirements and establish a structured post-implementation evaluation process for completed engineering projects (recommendation 6).

UNISFA accepted all recommendations and implemented recommendations 1 and 3. Actions required to close the remaining recommendations are indicated in Annex I.

CONTENTS

Audit of engineering projects in the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei

I. BACKGROUND

1. The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of engineering projects in the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA).

2. UNISFA was established by Security Council resolution 1990 (2011) with a mandate to support political dialogue between the involved parties, leading to an agreement that addresses the final status of Abyei and the border issues between Sudan and South Sudan. The latest resolution 2802 (2025) extended UNISFA's mandate until 15 November 2026.

3. Engineering project management follows six defined phases as shown in figure 1. Engineering projects start with user-generated requests vetted by the Chief Engineer and, for larger initiatives, reviewed by the Project Management Group (PMG). The design phase involves developing concepts into detailed technical specifications, based on environmental, technical, and risk assessments. Procurement ensures all acquisitions meet United Nations requirements through solicitation, evaluation, contract award, and resource planning. During implementation, the Project Manager oversees construction, monitors progress, and manages variations. Any changes to scope, cost, or schedule are handled through a formal change control process. The cycle ends with inspection and certification of the works, correction of defects, and financial and administrative closure.

Figure 1: **Engineering project management phases**

Source: Department of Operational Support Engineering Project Management Policy

4. Between July 2022 and June 2025, UNISFA had a total of 39 planned engineering projects at various stages with estimated costs of $52.1 million as shown in table 1. Of these, 26 projects were managed by the Engineering Unit, 5 by the Smart Camp Project Management Team (SCPMT), and 8 by the Facilities and Environmental Management Unit (FEMU).

Table 1**: Engineering projects for 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25 fiscal years**

No. of projects	Status	Estimated Cost (USD)
11	Completed	17,693,336
11	On-going	23,168,034
1	Partially executed	1,518,000
14	Not started	8,976,062
2	Under procurement solicitation	768,784
39		**52,124,216**

5. Engineering projects are the responsibility of three units: (a) Engineering Unit, responsible for managing major construction and infrastructure projects; (b) FEMU, responsible for minor works; and (c) SCPMT, responsible for camp reconstruction projects. The Engineering Unit reports to the Chief of Service Delivery, while SCPMT reports to the Chief of Mission Support. In the 2022-23 budget that established FEMU, FEMU was to report to the Chief of Service Delivery. However, due to delays in completing the recruitment of the Chief of FEMU , FEMU has been reporting to the Chief of Mission Support.

6. The Engineering Unit, headed by a Chief Engineer at the P-4 level, has three cells: (a) Planning and Design, consisting of one field staff member and three individual contractors; (b) Construction, comprising two field staff, one individual contractor, and two national staff; and (c) Integrated Force Mobility Team supported by four individual contractors and one international staff member. The PMG is the oversight body responsible for authorizing, guiding, and monitoring engineering projects.

7. Policy guidance for engineering project management includes the: Engineering Support Manual for Field Missions (March 2025), Governance of Major Construction Projects in Field Missions (November 2018), Procurement Manual (June 2024), United Nations Military Engineer Manual (January 2020), and United Nations Financial Regulations and Rules (July 2013, amended in July 2015 and December 2018).

8. UNISFA engineering projects are supported by Umoja, an enterprise resource planning system. Budget planning and expenditure monitoring are conducted via the Budget Preparation and Consolidation module. The Supplier Relationship Management module supports the administration of engineering contracts, while the Asset Under Construction (AUC) and Work Breakdown Structure Element (WBSE) modules are used for recording and monitoring expenditures on capital projects exceeding $100,000.

9. Comments provided by UNISFA are incorporated in italics.

II. AUDIT OBJECTIVE, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

10. The objective of the audit was to assess whether UNISFA adequately and effectively managed engineering projects to ensure efficient and economical use of resources in support of the implementation of the Mission mandate.

11. This audit was included in the 2025 workplan due to identified operational and financial risks related to the management of engineering projects, including inadequate project oversight, fragmented engineering structure, and inadequate performance monitoring of projects.

12. OIOS conducted this audit from August 2025 to February 2026 and covered the period from January 2023 to June 2025. The audit covered: (a) project planning and oversight; (b) project execution; (c) performance monitoring; and (d) project closure and evaluation.

13. The audit methodology comprised: (a) interviews with key personnel from the Engineering Unit, FEMU and SCPMT; (b) review of relevant documents, such as workplans, project files, contractor performance review minutes, and project budgets and expenditures; and (c) analysis of engineering data management systems, including Umoja for transactional data and Excel for project documentation design, execution, expenditure, performance monitoring and closure processes. OIOS sampled 22 completed and ongoing projects from the 39 engineering projects planned for 2022 to 2025, including camp reconstruction, infrastructure construction and concrete works, and force mobility engineering road works.

14. To assess the reliability of engineering project data, OIOS: (a) examined supporting documentation, including Microsoft Excel and Word files used to record project information; (b) interviewed UNISFA staff

responsible for maintaining these records; and (c) traced a sample of entries from the Excel records to original source documents to verify data integrity. The review concluded that the data were sufficiently reliable for meeting the audit objectives.

15. The procurement and resource planning stage of the engineering project management lifecycle was excluded from the scope of this audit, as procurement and contract management (report number 2023/005 and 2025/061) and acquisition planning (report number 2025/057) were recently audited.

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

III. AUDIT RESULTS

A. Project planning and oversight

UNISFA took actions to align its engineering reporting structure

17. In line with the Engineering Support Manual, the Chief Engineer, under the guidance of the Chief of Service Delivery, leads and oversees all engineering construction works, ensures that implementation strictly adheres to approved technical designs and specifications, and aligns construction activities with the mission's mandate, engineering budget, and operational priorities.

18. In UNISFA, engineering construction responsibilities were distributed across the Engineering Unit, FEMU, and, more recently, SCPMT. While the Engineering Unit reported to the Chief of Service Delivery, FEMU and SCPMT reported directly to the Chief of Mission Support, despite being involved in the same construction projects (e.g., camp reconstruction projects). The reporting structure limited the effectiveness of the coordination, leadership, and oversight functions of the Chief of Service Delivery and the Chief Engineer for construction projects implemented across the units. As a result, and as reflected in PMG minutes, project drawings, designs, and specifications for camp reconstruction were not reviewed and cleared through the Chief Engineer, contrary to the Governance of Major Construction Projects in Field Missions policy. Also, budget execution and monitoring for engineering construction projects were dispersed across multiple implementing units operating under separate reporting structures, leading to reduced financial oversight, weakened operational control, and diminished accountability for project delivery by both the Chief Engineer and the Chief of Service Delivery.

19. To improve the efficiency and effectiveness of mission support and to align staffing capacity with the evolving situation in Abyei and prevailing global fiscal constraints, UNISFA conducted a civilian staffing review and issued the report in October 2025. The review supported the establishment of a dedicated Facilities Management Unit (FMU) from the former Engineering Unit. As part of this restructuring, the General Assembly approved a new P-4 Chief of FMU position, and the incumbent assumed office in December 2025. The revised organizational structure has also been incorporated into the 2026/27 budget proposal for formal approval and regularization.

The Project Management Group did not exercise adequate oversight over engineering projects

a) Project Management Group did not review important engineering projects

20. The PMG terms of reference issued in June 2024 required PMG to convene monthly, or more often as needed, to address emerging priorities. Additionally, all major construction projects exceeding $500,000 must be submitted to the PMG for review and endorsement. Between December 2022 and June 2025, the

PMG was convened only four times. However, during the same 30-month period, five engineering projects with a combined estimated cost of $8.3 million, each exceeding $500,000, were initiated without the required PMG review or endorsement, as shown in table 2.

Table 2: **List of engineering projects without the required Project Management Group review or endorsement**

Project description	Status	Total project cost (USD)	Expenditure as at 30 June 2025 (USD)
Concrete works in Abyei Sector Center, Abyei South	Implemented	4,424,148	1,282,236
Concrete works in sector Abyei North	Expired	1,518,000	34,123
Secondary roofing and protection of prefab bases	On going	925,500	92,550
Construction of warehouses at UNISFA HQ	Ongoing	567,120	170,552
Drainage and footpath structure at UNISFA HQ	Completed	876,356	830,875

b) Post facto endorsements by the Project Management Group

21. The Governance of Major Construction Projects in Field Missions stipulates that the PMG must review and endorse every major construction project before the budget is submitted and any construction activities commence. In practice, the PMG endorsed five projects after construction had commenced and budget submissions were already finalized as listed in table 3. Camp reconstruction projects, totaling $19.93 million, received PMG approval in June 2024, although work on some had begun as early as May 2021. The Dokura camp was completed and handed over in July 2023, one year before PMG formally endorsed the project in 2024.

Table 3: **Camp construction projects reviewed and endorsed retrospectively by the Project Management Group in June 2024**

Camp	Date commenced	Estimated project cost (USD)
Dokura	May 2021	4,238,857
Highway	May 2023	3,217,260
Diffra	December 2023	4,842,585
Athony	June 2023	4,811,099
Agok	May 2023	2,821,069

22. The lack of or retrospective PMG endorsements limited the PMG's ability to maintain effective oversight of project scope, timelines, and costs, and weakened assurance that the completed projects aligned with Mission requirements. The deficiencies arose due to delayed submission or failure to submit major engineering project proposals to the PMG for review and endorsement.

(1) UNISFA should enforce mandatory submission of all major engineering project proposals exceeding $1.0 million to the Project Management Group for review and endorsement before budget approval and commencement of works.

UNISFA accepted recommendation 1 and stated that recent engineering projects were reviewed and endorsed by the PMG before construction commenced. UNISFA submitted supporting documentation for review to facilitate closure of the recommendation.

Inadequate monitoring of engineering work plans and lack of approved standard operating procedures

(a) Inadequate monitoring of developed annual work plans

23. In line with the United Nations Work Planning Guide for Managers, the annual work plan serves as a principal management instrument that translates strategic priorities into specific, time-bound engineering deliverables. It provides functional areas with a structured framework to forecast, allocate, and monitor financial, human, and material resources. OIOS review of the procedures for preparing, approving, and monitoring work plans revealed the following: FEMU, SCPMT, and the Engineering Unit each developed annual work plans for 2023 to 2025 that incorporated defined outputs, responsibilities, and links to Mission risk registers. However, none of the units demonstrated evidence of monitoring or tracking progress against their planned activities over the years. FEMU's workplans aligned with cross-cutting risks but showed no evidence of systematic follow-up. SCPMT established a work plan tracker to support oversight, yet there was no indication that it was used to track or report progress. The Engineering Unit also did not implement mechanisms for monitoring or reporting on implementation.

(b) Lack of formally approved standard operating procedures for the engineering function

24. The UNISFA Construction Project Management standard operating procedure (SOP) had remained in draft form without formal approval since 2022. This has resulted in misalignment with the DOS Engineering Support Manual and the Governance Guidelines for Major Construction Projects. The lack of a formally approved Mission SOP has also weakened the Chief Engineer’s central responsibilities for engineering functions, including technical designs, surveys, specifications, bills of quantities, and construction documents, and limits due diligence assurance. The current practice also does not explicitly require monthly progress reporting to the PMG, maintaining project files with Mission approvals and PMG decisions, or quarterly updates of project folders with schedule, cost, and variance analyses. In addition, the role of the Chief of Service Delivery in reviewing project submissions, ensuring resources are available, and confirming alignment with Mission priorities are not articulated through the draft SOP.

25. UNISFA acknowledged that it could strengthen governance and oversight of engineering activities by establishing a formal mechanism to monitor, track, and periodically report on the implementation status of annual work plans developed by Engineering and FMU, and by expediting the review, approval, and promulgation of the Construction Project Management SOP to align mission practices with the Engineering Support Manual and the Governance Guidelines for Major Construction Projects.

B. Project execution

UNISFA had effective site-level oversight, but could enhance project level budget-to-expenditure analysis

26. The Governance Guidelines for Major Construction Projects in Field Missions require major construction projects to be subject to ongoing supervision and management oversight throughout implementation to ensure progress is aligned with approved plans. OIOS carried out field visits to locations where engineering projects covering four ongoing and two completed projects, including Diffra, Athony, Nepal and Highway camps, the new warehouse project, and force mobility maintenance works. The field site visits verified that reported progress was aligned with actual milestones for on-going projects and noted that there was effective site-level oversight. The two completed Smart Camp for Highway and Nepal contingents were delivered at a combined cost of $1.65 million. The projects were to convert the camps into technology-enabled and sustainable operational bases.

27. The Governance Guidelines for Major Construction Projects in Field Missions assigns the project manager responsibility for establishing an integrated schedule and cost control system. OIOS noted that the Mission did not conduct regular project-level budget-to-expenditure variance analysis. Actual project expenditures were not systematically compared with approved budgets to identify variances or detect potential cost overruns during implementation. OIOS review of project-level budget and expenditure monitoring processes showed that no budget-to-expenditure analyses were prepared or reported for individual engineering projects. Consequently, the Mission could not accurately assess the alignment between actual expenditures and approved budgets or identify instances of under or overspending during implementation.

28. This limitation was aggravated by the lack of consolidated and complete project cost information. Cost data for individual projects were not aggregated to determine total expenditure. For capitalized projects exceeding $100,000, expenditures are recorded through Umoja WBSE. However, these records do not reflect the full project cost because assets recorded directly in the Umoja Asset Accounting module, including prefabricated modules and ablution units that represent over 50 per cent for camp reconstruction project costs, which bypassed the WBSE cost collector. Furthermore, the Engineering Unit records costs based on contractor invoice payments, which may exclude the value of Mission-supplied materials such as culverts, soil stabilizer, lateritic soil, murram, and barriers, even though these inputs constitute a significant portion of engineering project costs.

29. UNISFA stated that it conducted monthly budget-to-expenditure reviews throughout project implementation at the cost center budgeting level. OIOS notes that the engineering cost center has separate budget allocations at the project-level that could support budget-to-expenditure monitoring, and that Umoja WBSE does not capture other directly capitalized project costs, thereby not providing a complete view of project expenditures. To enhance management's ability to evaluate cost efficiency during project implementation, UNISFA could conduct periodic project budget-to-expenditure analyses, including consolidation of project cost information across all relevant Umoja sources.

Inadequate alignment of contractor payments with verified deliverables

30. The Procurement Manual stipulates that payments for goods, works, and services should be made only after the vendor has satisfactorily fulfilled its delivery obligations, which include progress payments tied to clearly defined milestones. This reflects the underlying principle that payments should be based on verified, measurable outputs, rather than input-based factors, such as attendance hours.

31. OIOS reviewed work orders for the two force mobility contracts, No. 4700028384 and No. 4700019794, with a total expenditure of $5.86 million, which processed payments based on attendance job hours. It was found that the work orders corresponded to activities outlined in the task orders. However, the work orders only listed tasks to be performed and did not include invoicing parameters, such as completed job hours, as reflected in the task orders. As a result, it was not possible to verify that the total hours spent across the work orders reconciled with the issued task order and ultimately with the invoiced hours.

32. In addition, the force mobility contracts stipulated that each invoice must relate to one task order only, unless written authorization was granted by a designated UNISFA official. However, several instances were noted in the force mobility contracts and the concrete works contract in which multiple invoices were submitted against the same task order, creating inconsistencies between billing and the related deliverables. In addition, advance payments for incomplete task orders are not allowed unless they comply with the exclusion clauses of the United Nations Financial Regulations and Rules on advance payments.

> **(2) UNISFA should strengthen the invoicing process by: (a) ensuring work orders capture all required information and is aligned with the task orders, including invoicing parameters; and (b) require submission of work orders as supporting documentation for invoice payments.**
>
> *UNISFA accepted recommendation 2 and stated that the observation relates to past practices under a previous Force Mobility contractual arrangement. Upon establishment of a new Force Mobility contract in the future, UNISFA stated it would ensure that invoicing controls are strengthened.*

UNISFA took action to address the lack of insurance coverage for construction contracts

33. Under the United Nations General Conditions of Contract, construction contractors must maintain workers' compensation, third-party liability, and general liability insurance. Contractors are also required to hold professional liability insurance to cover losses arising from professional errors or negligence. OIOS reviewed eight implemented contracts and found that four did not obtain the required insurance coverage. Contract 4700028384 had no insurance during the first eight months of its contract from October 2024 to May 2025 and later secured only a workers' compensation policy. It did not obtain any liability insurance, contrary to contractual provisions and the United Nations General Conditions of Contract. During the audit, the Procurement Unit addressed the noted deficiency. All current and newly awarded engineering contracts are now covered by valid insurance policies in line with contractual provisions and the United Nations General Conditions of Contract.

C. Performance monitoring

UNISFA took action to develop quality control and quality assurance plans for camp construction projects

34. For three sampled projects, namely Dokura, Highway and Agok delivered at a combined cost of $8.2 million, the project team was expected to prepare a quality assurance and quality control (QA/QC) plan prior to the commencement of construction. The plan was intended to define required standards, inspection procedures, and acceptance criteria for materials and completed works, and to support the management of deviations from established requirements. However, no QA/QC plan was developed. As a result, inspections were conducted without defined quality benchmarks and without performance reporting to assess compliance with required standards or project objectives. Instead, the team relied on on-site visits and Daily Progress Reports, which captured daily activities but did not establish the quality standards, inspection protocols, or acceptance criteria needed to effectively verify and control construction quality.

35. In contrast, for the Diffra and Athony camp reconstruction projects, FEMU assumed responsibility following the dissolution of the SCPMT Unit and introduced trade-specific inspection checklists across key construction disciplines, including electrical installations, roofing, masonry, and concrete reinforcement, to strengthen quality control over maintenance works. From July 2025, FEMU implemented the formal site quality inspection procedures supported by standardized construction checklists. The KPIs established for the camp service contractor include six KPIs related to schedule performance, quality compliance, efficiency of resource utilization, documentation requirements, client satisfaction, and compliance with health, safety, and environmental regulations.

UNISFA did not adequately follow up on external contractor's underperformance

36. The Engineering Support Manual requires a structured performance monitoring mechanism to assess performance against approved cost, schedule, scope, and technical baselines, and to apply corrective

actions for underperformance. UNISFA oversaw the performance of engineering construction projects through site inspections, progress reports, contractor performance assessments, and key performance indicators (KPIs). However, OIOS noted the following shortfalls in the performance evaluation processes:

37. The Mission developed project implementation schedules and milestone tracking tools for FEMU-managed camp reconstruction projects. The Engineering Unit and FEMU conducted regular site inspections during project execution. OIOS identified recurring and unresolved performance issues across contracts 4700019794, 4700028384, 4700023388, and 4700023389, which included:

- Inadequate spare parts management leading to prolonged equipment downtime.
- Delays in mobilizing the required contracted technical personnel.
- Late execution of task orders, with contract 4700023388 showing an average delay of 82 days across 35 task orders issued between February 2023 and July 2024.
- Non-compliance with safety requirements under contract 4700028384, including failure to provide protective equipment.
- Welfare issues, including delayed salary payments, unreimbursed deductions, inadequate food, and reported intimidation by management, which resulted in work stoppages.

38. The absence of systematic monitoring and follow-up on identified implementation shortfalls limited the Mission's ability to ensure that contractors addressed recurring deficiencies in a timely manner. In the absence of effective tracking and corrective action mechanisms, the Mission faces a risk of non-compliance with contractual obligations, reduced oversight of contractor performance, and declining quality standards at project sites.

(3) UNISFA should establish a mechanism to track engineering contractors' performance deficiencies and ensure timely follow-up and corrective action.

UNISFA accepted recommendation 3 and stated that it has established action plans and operational measures that address contractor performance tracking. UNISFA submitted supporting documentation to facilitate closure of the recommendation.

D. Project closure and evaluation

<u>Lack of reconciliation of returned United Nations-owned equipment provided to engineering contractors</u>

39. Where UNISFA provides United Nations-owned equipment (UNOE) to contractors under the contract provisions, it must maintain complete and jointly certified inventory records. Joint inspections should take place at both handover and contract closure to verify quantities, condition, losses or damages, and to confirm that all equipment is returned, repaired, or replaced.

40. OIOS reviewed the issuance and return of UNOE under the force mobility contract 4700028384. 66 construction equipment items were issued between 26 September and 10 October 2024 at contract commencement. A comparison of equipment issue vouchers with return vouchers showed that 38 items were returned out of 66 issued. Of these, 32 matched the original issuance records, while six did not correspond to the items initially issued. The condition of the returned equipment was also not documented. The handover forms listed Project Manager A as returning the equipment, although he separated from the Mission on 24 December 2024 and had been replaced prior to the reported return date. In addition, the

forms were neither signed nor dated by the contractor's authorized representative, contrary to the requirement for joint inspection and certification.

41. OIOS further review of UNOE issuance and return records for contract number 4700019794 under the force mobility project identified several weaknesses: (a) 44 construction equipment were recorded as issued to the contractor in November 2021; yet, return vouchers indicated 63 items returned to UNISFA; (b) issuance and return vouchers lacked essential details, including equipment type, United Nations registration numbers, barcodes, and serial numbers; and (c) following contract termination, the returned equipment was received by the Engineering Unit rather than the Transport Section that had originally issued the items.

42. OIOS inquiry with the Transport Section showed that contract termination procedures were not effectively implemented to reconcile issued and returned UNOE after the Engineering Unit issued the UNOE to contractors and Transport Unit received the returned items. The Transport Unit acknowledged responsibility for not completing the reconciliation process. In addition, seasonal constraints, particularly during the rainy period, restricted access to remote sites and prevented Transport from conducting physical verification of UNOE. Further, OIOS also noted that the PMG recently endorsed a replacement contract for similar services, which requires the issuance and operation of UNOE.

(4) UNISFA should (a) enforce mandatory reconciliation of United Nations-owned equipment issued to contractors upon completion of each contract; and (b) establish a virtual verification mechanism to address seasonal constraints affecting access to remote sites.

UNISFA accepted recommendation 4 and stated that, following the discontinuation of the Force Mobility contract, the Engineering Unit has not issued any United Nations-owned equipment to contractors. The Mission further indicated that annual physical verification exercises of UNOE is conducted in coordination with the Property Management Unit.

<u>Incomplete and dispersed filing and archiving construction records</u>

43. The Governance of Major Construction Projects in Field Missions requires project managers to maintain a complete, well-organized project file containing all key construction documentation. OIOS review of completed and ongoing construction projects found that dedicated project files were not complete, and the required documentation was not maintained for each engineering project. Information related to construction activities was dispersed and not centrally organized or stored. Project information was stored inconsistently, with individual staff members maintaining data on their personal computers. Documentation for the same project was also fragmented across multiple implementing units. For example, in camp reconstruction projects, FEMU retained documentation for vertical construction works, the Engineering Unit kept records for horizontal construction components, and the SCPMT maintained its own set of records for the same projects.

44. This occurred because UNISFA lacked a central filing system and related procedures mandating project managers to store project records in a central repository and archive them appropriately upon project completion. This hindered auditability, institutional learning, and continuity during staff transitions. This issue became evident during the SCPMT's reintegration into FEMU in June 2025, where some camp reconstruction records were found stored on the personal computers of former SCPMT personnel.

(5) UNISFA should establish a centralized filing and records management system for engineering projects as required by the Governance of Major Construction Projects in Field Missions policy.

UNISFA accepted recommendation 5 and stated that an initial corrective measure has been implemented by filing project records on SharePoint. The substantive implementation of the Archiving and Records Management System was initiated and was still in progress.

<u>Inadequate project completion reporting and post-implementation evaluations</u>

(a) Project completion reporting was inadequate

45. The Governance of Major Construction Projects in Field Missions requires the preparation of a comprehensive project completion report (PCR) that summarizes how the project performed, compares final results with the initial plan, explains scope changes, and provides variance analysis for cost or schedule deviations. Once completed, it must be submitted to the PMG and filed in the project folder together with all as-built documentation. The Mission shall also ensure that the commissioning is completed prior to turning over the facilities or infrastructure to the end users. A review of five camp reconstruction project completion reports, Agok, Highway, Dokura, Todach, and Nepal camps, identified the following control weaknesses in project closure and reporting:

- Project completion reports did not provide a comparison of final outcomes against the original project plans, and scope changes were neither adequately documented nor explained. In addition, variance analysis for cost, timelines, and schedule deviations exceeding the 10 percent threshold was not conducted. The reports consisted of certification statements and material inventories, with limited analytical assessment of overall project performance.
- Reported project costs were understated and did not reflect total expenditures, as they were derived solely from Umoja WBSE cost collectors or bills of quantities. This approach excluded significant cost components, including prefabricated structures, ablution units, and project-specific contractor labour costs.
- Project completion reports certified projects as complete despite the presence of outstanding works. For example, at Dokura Smart Camp, several deliverables remained unfinished, including painting of steel structures and construction of an ash pit shed. In addition, project completion reports did not provide justification for premature closure or explain the status of incomplete deliverables.
- Across the five projects completed between April 2022 and June 2025, similar challenges and lessons learned were repeatedly reported. However, there was no evidence that corrective actions were developed or implemented to address these deficiencies.

46. These weaknesses reduce the reliability of project reporting, obscure actual costs, and limit management's ability to assess performance. They increase the risk of accepting incomplete infrastructure, lead to potential budget overruns, and perpetuate recurring control deficiencies due to lack of corrective action.

(b) There was no post-implementation evaluation

47. While project inspections and completion certifications confirm compliance with project specifications, post-implementation evaluations assess whether completed projects meet end-user needs and expected benefits. Relevant best practices within the United Nations system further reinforce this

approach. For instance, the ICT Project Management Framework emphasizes benefits realization and post-project evaluation.

48. Post-implementation evaluations were not conducted for engineering projects after handover to users to assess whether intended outcomes and benefits were realized. A review of 5 out of 11 projects completed between 2023 and 2025, namely Dokura, Todach, Nepal, Agok, and Highway Smart Camps, confirmed that expected benefits were defined at project inception. However, no post-implementation assessments were undertaken to verify the achievement of these benefits across the sampled projects, except for the Field Remote Infrastructure Monitoring (FRIM) smart technology component integrated into smart camp projects, where benefits realization was tracked and reported.

(6) UNISFA should: (a) ensure all major engineering projects comply with and document project closure reporting requirements so that the project file is complete and accurate; and (b) establish a structured post-implementation evaluation process for completed engineering projects to systematically assess realized benefits.

UNISFA accepted recommendation 6 and stated that comprehensive project closeout reports are maintained and recorded, containing all relevant information and supporting data to ensure proper documentation and facilitate future reference. UNISFA submitted supporting documentation to facilitate closure of the recommendation.

IV. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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

Internal Audit Division
Office of Internal Oversight Services

ANNEX I

STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Audit of engineering projects in the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical[1]/ Important[2]	C/ O[3]	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date[4]
1	UNISFA should enforce mandatory submission of all major engineering project proposals exceeding $1.0 million to the Project Management Group for review and endorsement before budget approval and commencement of works.	Important	C	NA	Implemented
2	UNISFA should strengthen the invoicing process by: (a) ensuring work orders capture all required information and is aligned with the task orders, including invoicing parameters; and (b) require submission of work orders as supporting documentation for invoice payments.	Important	O	Evidence that work orders are linked to corresponding task orders and used to support invoice payments.	30 June 2027
3	UNISFA should establish a mechanism to track engineering contractors' performance deficiencies and ensure timely follow-up and corrective action.	Important	C	NA	Implemented
4	UNISFA should (a) enforce mandatory reconciliation of United Nations-owned equipment issued to contractors upon completion of each contract; and (b) establish a virtual verification mechanism to address seasonal constraints affecting access to remote sites.	Important	O	Evidence of reconciliation of United Nations-owned equipment issued to contractors.	30 June 2027
5	UNISFA should establish a centralized filing and records management system for engineering projects as required by the Governance of Major Construction Projects in Field Missions policy.	Important	O	Implementation of an Archiving and Records Management System.	30 June 2027
6	UNISFA should: (a) ensure all major engineering projects comply with and document project closure reporting requirements so that the project file is complete and accurate; and (b) establish a structured post-implementation evaluation process for completed engineering projects to systematically assess realized benefits.	Important	O	Evidence of comprehensive project closure reports and a structured post-implementation evaluation process for major engineering projects.	30 June 2027

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

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

[3] Please note the value C denotes closed recommendations whereas O refers to open recommendations.

[4] UNISFA did not provide dates in response to the recommendations. OIOS provided the implementation dates.

APPENDIX I

Management Response

UNITED NATIONS NATIONS UNIES

UNISFA

United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei

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INTER OFFICE MEMORANDUM

Date: 29 June 2026
Reference: UNISFA/HOM/IOM/021-2026

To: Byung-Kun Min
Director
Internal Audit Division, OIOS

From: Major General Ganesh Kumar Shrestha
Acting Head of Mission/Force Commander
UNISFA

Subject: **Draft report on an audit of engineering projects in the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (Assignment No. AP2025-635-02)**

1. Your interoffice memorandum of 12 June 2026 on the above subject matter is acknowledged with thanks.

2. UNISFA is pleased to submit management comments in the attached annex.

3. Thank you and best regards.

cc: Ms. Uchenna Odenigbo, Chief of Mission Support
Mr. Dal Bahadur Akheli Chhetri, Chief, Engineering Unit, UNISFA
Mr. Artem Zhelunitsyn, Chief, Facilities Management Unit, UNISFA
Mr. Josphat Kariuki, Chief, Audit Response Unit, UNISFA
Mr. Hoa Khuu, Section Chief, Internal Audit Division, OIOS

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Management Response

Audit of engineering projects in the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical[1]/ Important[2]	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
1	UNISFA should enforce mandatory submission of all major engineering project proposals exceeding $1.0 million to the Project Management Group for review and endorsement before budget approval and commencement of works.	Important	Yes	Chief Engineer and Chief Facilities Management Unit	Implemented	Implemented. The UNISFA projects are being handled by the Engineering Unit and the Facilities Management Unit. The Engineering Unit had the following projects exceeding the estimated cost of $500,000, and were submitted to the Project Management Group (PMG) for review and endorsement: 1. Contract for Provision of Horizontal Infrastructure Services - Estimated value: US$7 million for a five-year period. Endorsed by PMG on 28 November 2024 (Minutes attached). 2. Construction of Foundation and Floor for Helicopter Maintenance Facility/Hangar -Estimated cost: US$512,999.00. Endorsed by PMG on 28 November 2024 (Minutes attached). 3. Replacement Contract for Specialized Professional Services – Heavy Equipment and Ground Works - Estimated value: US$6 million for a five-year period. Endorsed by PMG on 17 December 2025. (Minutes attached). 4. Construction of Loading/Offloading Area, Drainage, and Walkway at Yard C - Estimated cost: US$524,000.00. Endorsed by PMG on 17 December 2025 (Minutes attached).

[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.

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						In addition, the ongoing progress of Engineering Unit projects was also reviewed and briefed to PMG on 9 March 2026 (Minutes attached). Similarly, FMU had two projects exceeding the estimated cost of $500,000, and they were submitted to the Project Management Group (PMG) for review and endorsement: 1. Construction of the Nigerian Smart Camp project with an estimated cost of $2,461,050.02. Endorsed by PMG on 25 February 2025 (Minutes attached) 2. Construction of Banton SMART camp with an estimated cost of $ 2,996,047.42. Endorsed by PMG on 9 March 2026 (Minutes attached). Finally, the mission seeks to inform the OIOS that, as the PMG serves as a coordinating and monitoring body rather than a delegated financial authority, making its endorsement a mandatory legal prerequisite for budget approval lacks valid ground within the current Delegation of Authority (DOA) framework. Furthermore, in the current environment of financial constraints, submitting projects to PMG prior to budget approval may result in unnecessary duplication of effort and diminish the value of PMG's oversight function. Such an approach assumes that the proposed engineering budget and associated projects will be approved as submitted, which may not ultimately be the case. As a result, projects reviewed and endorsed before budget approval may

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						subsequently require reprioritization, modification, or cancellation based on the final approved budget allocation. Finally, the Engineering Section, LSD, SCM, and DOS have confirmed that the PMG guidelines are currently under review.
2	UNISFA should ensure that periodic budget-to-expenditure analyses are conducted during project implementation, including consolidation of project cost information.	Important	No	Chief Engineer and Chief Facilities Management Unit		The recommended practice of conducting periodic budget-to-expenditure analyses during project implementation, including the consolidation of project cost information, is already fully institutionalized within the Mission. Since the 2024/25 budget cycle, UNISFA has conducted monthly budget-to-expenditure reviews throughout project implementation in response to liquidity constraints, necessitating continuous prioritization of activities and optimal use of available resources. In addition, the Mission established separate WBS elements (WBSEs) for Engineering/Projects and for Facilities Management, as reflected in the priority planning tools. This structure ensures the consolidation, traceability, and monitoring of project cost information across implementation. The formalization of the Facilities Management Unit (FMU) as a standalone unit in the 2026/27 budget cycle will further strengthen the clarity of budget allocation between these functions. As this reflects the intended organizational structure, the interim workaround currently in place will no longer be required. Furthermore, while the budgeting format for construction activities will remain consolidated, the allocation of approved resources will continue to follow the Unit Cost Centre

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						approach, ensuring consistency with established financial management practices. The audit did not consider the current practices in place
3	UNISFA should strengthen the invoicing process by: (a) ensuring work orders capture all required information and is aligned with the task orders, including invoicing parameters; and (b) require submission of work orders as supporting documentation for invoice payments.	Important	Yes	Chief Engineer and Chief Facilities Management Unit	NA	The Force Mobility contract referenced in the audit report has not existed since September 2025, and no replacement contract has been established to date. Therefore, the mission requests that the audit report be updated to reflect the current contractual status to avoid keeping the recommendation indefinitely open
4	UNISFA should establish a mechanism to track engineering contractors' performance deficiencies and ensure timely follow-up and corrective action.	Important	Yes	Chief Engineer and Chief Facilities Management Unit	Implemented	Implemented. The Engineering Unit currently has only one active contract with East Afro for concrete work. Monthly Performance Review Meetings (PRM) are conducted to monitor contract performance, review progress, identify deficiencies, and agree on corrective actions. Any deficiencies identified during these meetings are followed up with the contractor and rectified accordingly. A copy of the PRM records and supporting documents is attached for reference. The Facilities Management Unit also conducts monthly and weekly performance meetings, both in the office and on-site, to evaluate contractors' performance against the key project management parameters of time, scope, and quality. Copies of the Performance Review Meetings for March, April, and May 2026 are attached for reference.
5	UNISFA should (a) enforce mandatory reconciliation of United Nations-owned equipment issued to contractors upon completion of each contract; and (b) establish a virtual verification mechanism to address seasonal	Important	Yes	Chief Engineer and Chief Facilities Management Unit	Implemented	Implemented. The United Nations-owned equipment issued to contractors at Abyei Headquarters and the team sites through the Facilities Management Unit is regularly verified by the FMU in coordination with the PMU through physical verification exercises. Accordingly, physical verification is consistently conducted, and virtual verification is not

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	constraints affecting access to remote sites.					considered necessary. A sample of a handover voucher is attached for reference. The Engineering Unit confirmed that no UNOEs have been issued to any contractors since the discontinuation of the Force Mobility contract in September 2025.
6	UNISFA should establish a centralized filing and records management system for engineering projects as required by the Governance of Major Construction Projects in Field Missions policy.	Important	Yes	Chief Engineer and Chief Facilities Management Unit	Implemented	Implemented. Both the Engineering and Facilities Management Unit currently file all project records on SharePoint in Cloud as guided by the Archiving and Records Management System (ARMS). A screenshot of Teams is attached for reference. The Engineering Unit currently has no major construction projects valued at over $1 million underway. However, other ongoing Engineering projects/contracts records are maintained electronically on SharePoint.
7	UNISFA should: (a) ensure all major engineering projects comply with and document project closure reporting requirements so that the project file is complete and accurate; and (b) establish a structured post-implementation evaluation process for completed engineering projects to systematically assess realized benefits.	Important	Yes	Chief Engineer and Chief Facilities Management Unit	Implemented	Implemented. The Facilities Management Unit prepares project closeout reports for major projects (Smart camps) that have been handed over to the end users. Comprehensive project closeout reports are maintained and recorded, containing all relevant information and supporting data to ensure proper documentation and facilitate future reference. Evidence of the project closeout reports for Athony, Diffra, and Nigerian Base Defense Company camps is attached for reference. None of the five major projects referenced in paragraphs 44-47 of the audit report was managed by the Engineering Unit. There are no camp reconstruction projects ongoing currently under the Engineering Unit.