



INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION

REPORT 2015/120

Audit of recruitment of national staff in the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Overall results relating to the effective management of the recruitment of national staff in the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo were initially assessed as partially satisfactory. Implementation of five important recommendations remains in progress

FINAL OVERALL RATING: PARTIALLY SATISFACTORY

14 October 2015
Assignment No. AP2014/620/08

CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
I. BACKGROUND	1
II. OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE	1-2
III. AUDIT RESULTS	
Regulatory framework	2-6
IV. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	6
ANNEX I Status of audit recommendations	
APPENDIX I Management response	

AUDIT REPORT

Audit of recruitment of national staff in the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

I. BACKGROUND

1. The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of recruitment of national staff in the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO).
2. In accordance with its mandate, OIOS provides assurance and advice on the adequacy and effectiveness of the United Nations internal control system, the primary objectives of which are to ensure: (a) efficient and effective operations; (b) accurate financial and operational reporting; (c) safeguarding of assets; and (d) compliance with mandates, regulations and rules.
3. MONUSCO had separated 336 national staff in the west and initiated recruitment for 311 posts which it transferred to the east as part of its reconfiguration. As at February 2015, MONUSCO had filled 251 of these posts from a pool of external and internal candidates.
4. The Human Resources Section is responsible for ensuring that the Mission complies with the United Nations recruitment policies. The Section is headed by a staff at the P-5 level, assisted by 13 international and 25 national staff. MONUSCO had established a recruitment team of 12 staff (8 from the Human Resources Section and 4 on temporary duty from other missions) to handle the surge in recruitment activities related to the Mission's reconfiguration. The team was also intermittently assisted by five staff seconded from hiring sections. The team reported to the Director of Mission Support.
5. The 2013/14 and 2014/15 budgets for national staff were \$80.1 million and \$79.1 million respectively.
6. Comments provided by MONUSCO are incorporated in italics.

II. OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE

7. The audit was conducted to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of MONUSCO governance, risk management and control processes in providing reasonable assurance regarding the **effective management of the recruitment of national staff in MONUSCO**.
8. The audit was included in the 2014 risk-based work plan of OIOS due to operational risks related to the failure to recruit qualified national staff in a transparent and fair manner.
9. The key control tested for the audit was regulatory framework. For the purpose of this audit, OIOS defined this key control as the one that provides reasonable assurance that procedures: (a) exist to guide the management of the recruitment of national staff in MONUSCO; (b) are implemented consistently; and (c) ensure the reliability and integrity of financial and operational information.
10. The key control was assessed for the control objectives shown in Table 1. The control objective shown in Table 1 as "Not assessed" was not relevant to the scope defined for this audit.

11. OIOS conducted the audit from January to April 2015. The audit covered the period from January 2014 to January 2015 and focused on the recruitment of national staff in the east as a result of the Mission’s reconfiguration.

12. OIOS conducted an activity-level risk assessment to identify and assess specific risk exposures, and to confirm the relevance of the selected key control in mitigating associated risks. Through interviews and analytical reviews, OIOS assessed the existence and adequacy of internal controls and conducted necessary tests to determine their effectiveness.

III. AUDIT RESULTS

13. The MONUSCO governance, risk management and control processes examined were initially assessed as **partially satisfactory**¹ in providing reasonable assurance regarding the **effective management of the recruitment of national staff in MONUSCO**. OIOS made six recommendations to address the issues identified. MONUSCO implemented adequate procedures for preparing and advertising job openings for national professional posts and established interview panels for both national professional and general service posts. However, MONUSCO needed to: (a) implement a strategy and plan of action to fill the remaining posts that were transferred to the east; (b) advertise job openings for a minimum of 30 days; (c) ensure job openings for general service posts accurately reflected requirements and recruitment assessment methods; (d) implement adequate controls over the preparation of written tests; (e) ensure hiring sections interview candidates prior to selection; and (f) allocate resources for the onboarding of staff and to ensure that their personnel files were complete.

14. The initial overall rating was based on the assessment of key control presented in Table 1. The final overall rating is **partially satisfactory** as implementation of five important recommendations remains in progress.

Table 1 Assessment of key control

Business objective	Key control	Control objectives			
		Efficient and effective operations	Accurate financial and operational reporting	Safeguarding of assets	Compliance with mandates, regulations and rules
Effective management of the recruitment of national staff in MONUSCO	Regulatory framework	Partially satisfactory	Partially satisfactory	Not assessed	Partially satisfactory
FINAL OVERALL RATING: PARTIALLY SATISFACTORY					

Regulatory framework

There was a need for adequate pre-screening of candidates and certification of the recruitment process

15. The United Nations Recruitment Manual, the Department of Management’s administrative instruction and DFS standard operating procedures on the staff selection system, and MONUSCO guidelines for the local recruitment of staff requires the MONUSCO Human Resources Section to: (a) pre-screen and shortlist applicants for requirements that do need subject-matter experts to assess; and (b)

¹ A rating of “**partially satisfactory**” means that important (but not critical or pervasive) deficiencies exist 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.

ensure the quality of the recruitment process by formally certifying compliance with the United Nations recruitment policies for each recruitment exercise.

16. As of February 2015, MONUSCO had filled 251 of 311 posts that were transferred to the east from a pool of external and internal candidates of which 99 were internal candidates, mainly from the west. Interviews with the staff of the Human Resources Section, staff of 11 hiring sections and a review of 33 (8 national professional and 25 general service) of 93 job openings indicated that the Section did not pre-screen candidates for 19 job openings. Instead, hiring sections such as Property Management, Aviation, Human Rights, Justice Support and Security pre-screened their respective candidates. The Section also did not formally certify compliance of the recruitment process with United Nations recruitment policies for 24 of the 25 job openings for general service posts.

17. The above was because MONUSCO did not adequately assess the human resources requirements and develop a formal strategy and plan as well as procedures to handle the surge in recruitment activities. Further, the recruitment team of 12 persons, established to fill the vacancies, did not have the relevant experience in human resources management to expedite the recruitment process and to implement an effective quality control mechanism.

18. As a result, a review of 33 of 520 personal history forms of shortlisted candidates indicated that 13 did not meet requirements such as the number of years of relevant work experience. Four of these 13 candidates did not provide adequate information for pre-screening in their personal history forms such as educational level and language abilities. One of the 13 shortlisted candidates was recruited by MONUSCO and the other 12 were placed on rosters. Moreover, MONUSCO recruited candidates that lacked the relevant experience. For example, the Mission recruited: (a) an administrative assistant with only 13 months of experience for a position that required 24 to 36 months of experience; and (b) a mechanic who lacked the required four years of work experience.

(1) MONUSCO should implement a formal strategy and related plan of action and procedures to fill the remaining vacancies in the east.

MONUSCO accepted recommendation 1 and stated that it had filled all vacant posts that were transferred from the west to the east, and legislative bodies had established a 10 per cent vacancy factor for financial year 2015/16 for national staff posts. The Mission had already attained a 90 per cent incumbency rate for 2,662 budgeted national staff posts. Based on the action taken by MONUSCO, recommendation 1 has been closed.

Job openings were advertised for periods that were shorter than the requirement

19. MONUSCO guidelines for the local recruitment of staff require the Human Resources Section to advertise job openings on national radio stations, the MONUSCO Radio Okapi website, MONUSCO electronic bulletin board and notice boards outside MONUSCO premises. The guidelines also require MONUSCO to directly email job openings to all national staff. The United Nations Recruitment Manual requires MONUSCO to advertise job openings for general service posts for 30 days.

20. A review of MONUSCO vacancy announcements and related documentation indicated that the Mission advertised all 93 job openings used to recruit 251 candidates on its Radio Okapi website, the Mission's electronic bulletin board, notice boards outside its premises, and was emailed to all national staff. In Goma, MONUSCO also advertised vacancy announcements on two private radio stations. However, MONUSCO advertised 31 of 33 sample job openings for 14 days and the other 2 for 7 and 21 days. This was because MONUSCO had not implemented procedures to ensure all vacancies were announced for a minimum of 30 days.

21. A review of applications indicated that the Mission had received a significant number of applications; however, there was an increased risk that MONUSCO did not attract a sufficient number of qualified candidates for some job openings. This also posed the risk of legal action against MONUSCO from former employees for non-compliance with established procedures.

(2) MONUSCO should advertise job openings for general service posts for a minimum of 30 days.

MONUSCO accepted recommendation 2 and stated that it would ensure that future job openings are advertised for a minimum of 30 days except in cases of rapid deployment or ad hoc vacancies. Recommendation 2 remains open pending receipt of evidence that MONUSCO has advertised job openings for a minimum of 30 days.

Need to accurately reflect in job openings all requirements for posts and assessment methods to be used

22. The United Nations Recruitment Manual and MONUSCO guidelines for the local recruitment of staff require hiring managers to prepare terms of reference for technical/substantive posts for use by the Human Resources Section in preparing job openings. The Human Resources Section is required to include in each job opening: (a) the assessment methods to be used; (b) the location of the post; (c) duties to be performed; and (d) the relevant competencies, level of education, years of work experience and required working languages. The Human Resources Section is required to establish rosters for general administration posts such as administrative assistants from which hiring managers could select candidates.

23. Interviews with staff of the Human Resources Section and 11 hiring sections, and a review of 33 job openings indicated that hiring managers prepared the terms of reference for technical/substantive posts, which the Human Resources Section used to prepare the related job openings. The Human Resources Section also used generic job openings for posts such as administrative assistants and established rosters from which hiring sections selected suitable candidates. However, the Human Resources Section did not include the assessment methods in all of the 33 job openings. Also, 4 of the 33 job openings required six competencies instead of three and 1 required two years of work experience instead of five years.

24. This occurred because MONUSCO had not implemented adequate procedures and trained staff to ensure consistent compliance with the established requirements for job openings. As a result, there was an increased risk that MONUSCO did not adequately assess the candidates and recruited individuals that did not have the requisite competencies.

(3) MONUSCO should implement procedures and train staff to ensure that job openings accurately reflect all requirements for the posts and the assessment methods to be used for the selection of candidates.

MONUSCO accepted recommendation 3 and stated that it would issue instructions to staff responsible for recruiting staff to ensure consistent compliance with the established requirements for job openings. Recommendation 3 remains open pending receipt of evidence that MONUSCO has consistently reflected all relevant requirements such as competencies and assessment methods in job openings.

There was a need to improve the quality of written assessment exercises

25. MONUSCO guidelines for the local recruitment of staff require hiring sections to develop and mark their written technical/substantive tests and, where appropriate, administer practical tests for posts

such as mechanics, drivers and communication and information technology assistants. The United Nations Recruitment Manual requires MONUSCO to assess candidates using the most relevant competencies.

26. A review of 33 job openings indicated that hiring sections developed technical/substantive tests for both general service and national professional job openings. The hiring sections also marked these tests. However, a review of the multiple choice-based tests used for 25 general service job openings in the sample indicated that:

- Some questions had more than one correct answer and the assessors for four of these did not mark the papers consistently; and
- The Mission tested candidates using two different papers for the same job opening with one paper having 17 questions and the other having 20 questions. The assessors scored and ranked the candidates based on 17 questions, giving an advantage to those who were tested using the paper with 20 questions.

27. The above resulted because MONUSCO had not implemented procedures to ensure the quality of written tests. As a result, there was a risk that MONUSCO missed opportunities to recruit the most suitable candidates.

(4) MONUSCO should implement procedures over the preparation of written tests to ensure consistency in assessing candidates.

MONUSCO accepted recommendation 4 and stated that the Human Resources Section would develop clear procedures to guide hiring managers in the preparation of written tests to ensure consistency and confidentiality. Recommendation 4 remains open pending receipt of evidence that MONUSCO has implemented effective procedures over the preparation of written tests.

There was a need for competency-based interviews for general service job openings

28. The Department of Management's administrative instruction on staff selection system requires MONUSCO to conduct competency-based interviews, where appropriate, for job openings using assessment panels. An assessment panel should comprise at least three members, one of whom should be female. Two members should be subject matter experts at the same or higher level of the job opening and one should come from outside the work unit where the job opening is located.

29. A review of recruitment files and assessment results for 33 job openings indicated that MONUSCO constituted assessment panels and conducted interviews for all 8 national professional job openings in the sample. MONUSCO; however, did not conduct competency-based interviews for 24 of the 25 job openings for general service posts. This was because MONUSCO had not implemented procedures for hiring sections to interview candidates for general service job openings. As a result, MONUSCO recruited candidates that were not suitable for some posts. For instance, the Mission recruited a photographer as a journalist and a mechanic who did not have the required four years of work experience.

(5) MONUSCO should implement procedures to ensure hiring sections interview candidates for general service job openings.

MONUSCO accepted recommendation 5 and stated that it would ensure that competency-based interviews were conducted for general service job openings and that a Human Resources representative is part of the interview panel particularly for specialized posts such as National

Professional Officers and Language Assistants. Recommendation 5 remains open pending receipt of evidence that competency-based interviews have been conducted for general service job openings.

The onboarding of selected candidates was not effectively carried out as key documents were missing

30. MONUSCO guidelines for local recruitment require the Human Resources Section to obtain and retain copies of documents for recruited national staff such as evidence of education, references of work experience, medical clearance, marriage certificates and birth certificates of dependents, national identification cards, proposals for grade/level and related salary, letters of offer and appointment, and medical insurance enrolment forms. The guidelines include a checklist to ensure that all required documents are obtained and filed. MONUSCO also has a practice of updating the recruitment files of rehired and internal candidates.

31. A review of 109 of the 251 personnel files for candidates onboarded in January and February 2015 noted that: (a) the checklists were not available in any of the 109 files to aid in ensuring that all the required documents were collected; (b) 30 files did not contain medical insurance enrolment forms and 9 were missing copies of national identity cards; and (c) the personnel files for internal candidates lacked most of the required documents. For example, evidence of education was available for only 2 of the 99 staff recruited internally from the west.

32. The above resulted as inadequate resources had been allocated to the onboarding process. As a result, there was an increased risk that recruited staff lacked the required qualifications and competencies, and were not medically fit.

(6) MONUSCO should allocate resources for the onboarding of staff and ensure that personnel files are kept up-to-date and complete.

MONUSCO accepted recommendation 6 and stated that it had re-allocated eight posts to the Recruitment Unit to assist with the recruitment and onboarding of staff. MONUSCO also developed a checklist indicating mandatory documents to be placed on personnel files. Recommendation 6 remains open pending receipt of evidence that MONUSCO has completed the onboarding of national staff and updated their personnel files with all the required documents.

IV. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

33. OIOS wishes to express its appreciation to the Management and staff of MONUSCO for the assistance and cooperation extended to the auditors during this assignment.

(Signed) David Kanja
Assistant Secretary-General, Acting Head
Office of Internal Oversight Services

STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Audit of recruitment of national staff in the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Recom. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	C/ O ³	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date ⁴
1	MONUSCO should implement a formal strategy and related plan of action and procedures to fill the remaining vacancies in the east.	Important	C	Action taken.	Implemented
2	MONUSCO should advertise job openings for general service posts for a minimum of 30 days.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that job openings are advertised for 30 days.	31 December 2015
3	MONUSCO should implement procedures and train staff to ensure that job openings accurately reflect all requirements for the posts and the assessment methods to be used for the selection of candidates	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that MONUSCO has consistently reflected all relevant requirements such as competencies and assessment methods in job openings.	31 December 2015
4	MONUSCO should implement procedures over the preparation of written tests to ensure consistency in assessing candidates.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that MONUSCO has implemented effective procedures over the preparation of written tests.	1 March 2016
5	MONUSCO should implement procedures to ensure hiring sections interview candidates for general service job openings.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that competency-based interviews have been conducted for general services job openings.	31 October 2015
6	MONUSCO should allocate resources for the onboarding of staff and ensure that personnel files are kept up-to-date and complete.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that MONUSCO has completed the onboarding of national staff and updated their personnel files with all the required documents.	31 October 2015

¹ 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.

² 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.

³ C = closed, O = open

⁴ Date provided by MONUSCO in response to recommendations.

APPENDIX I

Management Response



Mission de l'Organisation des Nations Unies
pour la Stabilisation en République
démocratique du Congo

United Nations Organisation Stabilization
Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo

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INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

01 October 2015
Ref. ODMS/15/OM/03488

To: Ms. Eleanor T. Burns, Director
Internal Audit Division
Office of Internal Oversight Services

From: Guy Siri 
Director of Mission Support
MONUSCO

Subject: **Management Response to Draft Audit Report – Recruitment of National Staff in MONUSCO
(Assignment No. AP2014/620/08)**

1. Thank you for your interoffice memorandum reference IAD-15-7-5-7(17) dated 10 August 2015, requesting the mission to provide comments on the recommendations in the draft audit report on the recruitment of national staff in MONUSCO.
2. Attached please find Appendix I - Management Response, for your consideration. Supporting documents will be provided to the Resident Audit Team.

Best regards.

Cc Mr. Philip Compte, Deputy Director of Mission Support, MONUSCO
Ms. Christine Xaba-Motsa, Chief Human Resources Officer, MONUSCO
Mr. Bolton Tarleh Nyema, chief, Peacekeeping Audit Service, Internal Audit Division, OIOS
Ms. Kerry Zillner, Audit Focal Point, MONUSCO
Ms. Cynthia Avena-Castillo, Professional Practices Section, Internal Audit Division, OIOS
Mr. George Musiska, OIOS Resident Audit Office in MONUSCO

Attachment: Appendix I - Management Response

Peace it!

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Management Response

**Audit of recruitment of national staff in the
United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo**

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
1	MONUSCO should implement a formal strategy and related plan of action and procedures to fill the remaining vacancies in the east.	Important	Yes	Chief Human Resources Officer	31 July 2015	MONUSCO has filled all vacant posts that were transferred from the West to the East. It should be noted that legislative bodies have established a 10% vacancy factor for the financial year 15/16 for national staff posts. As such, of the 2,662 budgeted national staff posts, the Mission has already attained a 90% incumbency rate. Notwithstanding, recruitment will continue for the remaining 234 posts.
2	MONUSCO should advertise job openings for general service posts for a minimum of 30 days or obtain approval from the Department of Field Support for waiver of this requirement.	Important	Yes	Chief Human Resources Officer	31 December 2015	MONUSCO will ensure that future job openings will be advertised for a minimum of 30 days. In cases of rapid deployment or ad hoc vacancies, MONUSCO will seek prior approval from Department of Field Support on an exceptional basis to waive the requirement of 30 days to advertise national staff posts.
3	MONUSCO should implement procedures to ensure that job openings accurately reflect all requirements for the posts and the	Important	Yes	Chief Human Resources Officer	31 December 2015	MONUSCO will issue instructions to all recruitment staff to ensure consistent compliance with the established requirements for job

¹ Critical recommendations address significant and/or pervasive deficiencies or weaknesses in governance, risk management or internal control processes, such that reasonable assurance cannot be provided regarding the achievement of control and/or business objectives under review.

² Important recommendations address important deficiencies or weaknesses in governance, risk management or internal 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 recruitment of national staff in the
United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo**

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
	assessment methods to be used for the selection of candidates					openings, thereby ensuring that all relevant information such as competencies, assessment methods and the required work experience are duly reflected in the advertised job openings.
4	MONUSCO should implement effective procedures over the preparation of written tests to ensure consistency in assessing candidates and the integrity of the recruitment process.	Important	Yes	Chief Human Resources Officer	01 March 2016	MONUSCO will develop clear procedures to guide hiring managers in the preparation of written tests to ensure consistency and confidentiality.
5	MONUSCO should implement procedures to ensure hiring sections interview candidates for general service job openings.	Important	Yes	Chief Human Resources Officer	31 October 2015	MONUSCO will ensure that competency based interviews are conducted for general service job openings and that a Human Resources representative is part of the interview panel particularly for specialized posts such as National Professional Officers and Language Assistants.
6	MONUSCO should allocate resources for the onboarding of staff and ensure that personnel files are kept up-to-date and complete.	Important	Yes	Chief Human Resources Officer	31 October 2015	MONUSCO has relocated eight (8) posts to the Recruitment Unit to assist with the recruitment and onboarding of staff. To ensure that personnel files are complete and up to date, the Mission has developed a check list indicating mandatory documents to be placed on file.