



INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION

REPORT 2016/166

Audit of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau

Efforts were needed to improve the effectiveness of the Office's substantive programmes and support functions

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Audit of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The objective of the audit was to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of governance, risk management and control processes over substantive programmes and support functions of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS). The audit covered the period from 1 January 2014 to 30 June 2016 and included a review of risk assessment and strategic planning, programme performance monitoring, coordination, human resources management and strategies, and management of support activities.

UNIOGBIS had organized capacity building training, improved collaboration with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to fight narcotic trafficking and organized crimes, and made arrangements to implement an integrated work programme with the United Nations Country Team. However, additional efforts were needed to improve the effectiveness of the Office's substantive programmes and support functions.

OIOS made 10 important recommendations. To address issues identified in the audit, UNIOGBIS needed to:

- Issue key strategic documents to guide the Mission in implementing its mandate, developing annual work plans and identifying and managing its risks;
- Develop comprehensive annual work plans with goals and key performance indicators in line with the Mission's Results-based Budgeting framework;
- Develop and implement standard operating procedures for routing official documents;
- Expedite the recruitment of the two vacant Human Rights Officer positions;
- Extend its senior leadership's good offices throughout Guinea-Bissau, especially to regional capitals where government representatives are located, to promote the National Political Dialogue, as mandated by the Security Council;
- Reinforce international civilian presence in regional offices and ensure heads of sections conduct periodic visits to regions to identify and attend to needs;
- Develop an annual recruitment plan and establish a mechanism to monitor and report on the status of vacancies and ensure timely recruitment of staff;
- Ensure proper segregation of duties in handling fuel-related transactions and explore alternative solutions to the current fuel issuance arrangements to mitigate the risk of fraudulent activities;
- Strengthen the controls over payment of per diems to training participants; and
- Liaise with the United Nations Peacebuilding Office to resolve the status of an unimplemented project for which \$1.12 million had been advanced to the Government

UNIOGBIS accepted the recommendations, implemented one and has initiated action to implement the other nine recommendations.

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Audit of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau

I. BACKGROUND

1. The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS).

2. UNIOGBIS was established by the Security Council by resolution 1876 (2009) for an initial period of 12 months beginning January 2010. Subsequent resolutions extended the mandate of the Mission. In its resolution 2267 (2016), the Security Council mandated UNIOGBIS to continue to lead international efforts in support of a number of priority areas including: strengthening of democratic institutions; establishment of effective and efficient law enforcement, criminal justice and penitentiary systems; promotion and protection of human rights; combatting of drug trafficking and transnational organized crime; promotion of an inclusive political dialogue and national reconciliation process to strengthen democratic governance; and incorporation by the Government of Guinea-Bissau, of a gender perspective into peacebuilding.

3. Guinea-Bissau has been in a continuous and prolonged political crisis that has deeply affected the functioning of State institutions and undermined progress in the implementation of national reforms as well as the country's socioeconomic prospects since elections held in 2014. Three successive changes in Government and political paralysis have resulted in the further weakening of State institutions and led to suspension of key priority reforms in the defense, security and judicial sectors. It is in this context that UNIOGBIS is implementing its mandated activities.

4. Substantive Sections of UNIOGBIS include Political Affairs (PAS), Rule of Law and Security Institutions (ROLSI), Human Rights (HRS), Public Information Unit (PIU), Gender Affairs, and Legal Affairs, supported by an Integrated Safety and Security Office. Support functions of UNIOGBIS are managed by a Chief of Mission Support at the P-5 level with the overall responsibility of managing the Mission's resources while providing support to substantive programmes. UNIOGBIS is also supported by the Department of Political Affairs (DPA) on substantive issues and by the Department of Field Support (DFS) on administrative and logistical issues.

5. The Mission's budget for 2016 was \$20 million covering an authorized strength of 61 international civilian personnel, 10 United Nations volunteers, and 66 national staff. UNIOGBIS has 13 United Nations Police on secondment and two Military Advisers. In addition to its core budget, UNIOGBIS also received extrabudgetary allocations of \$4.1 million and \$548,700 from the Peacebuilding Fund and from DPA, respectively, to implement peacebuilding projects.

6. Comments provided by UNIOGBIS are incorporated in italics.

II. AUDIT OBJECTIVE, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

7. The objective of the audit was to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of governance, risk management and control processes over substantive programmes and support functions of UNIOGBIS.

8. The audit was included in the 2016 risk-based work plan of OIOS due to operational and financial risks relating to the management of UNIOGBIS substantive and support functions.

9. OIOS conducted this audit in July and August 2016. The audit covered the period from 1 January 2014 to 30 June 2016. Based on an activity-level risk assessment, the audit covered higher and medium risk areas in the substantive and support activities of UNIOGBIS. These included risk assessment and strategic planning; programme performance monitoring; coordination; human resources management and strategies; and management of support activities.

10. The audit methodology included: (a) interviews of key personnel; (b) reviews of relevant documentation; (c) analytical reviews of data; and (d) sample testing of controls. The audit team conducted site visits to three regional offices and reviewed substantive sections' operations and support activities of UNIOGBIS relating to fuel management, procurement, finance, assets and human resources management, as well as travel and transport management.

III. OVERALL CONCLUSION

11. Significant efforts were needed to improve the effectiveness of UNIOGBIS substantive programmes and support functions. While its substantive sections had organized capacity building training activities and improved collaboration with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to fight narcotic trafficking and organized crime, UNIOGBIS needed to: (a) issue key strategic documents to guide the Mission in implementing its mandate; (b) develop comprehensive annual work plans; (c) extend its good offices throughout Guinea-Bissau; (d) resolve the status of a project not implemented by the Government; and (e) improve management of Mission support functions in the areas of human resources and fuel management and cash disbursements of per diems to training participants.

IV. AUDIT RESULTS

A. Risk assessment and strategic planning

Absence of key strategic documents hindered UNIOGBIS operations

12. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), DFS and DPA Mission Concept Guidelines recommend that missions develop mission-specific concepts. The mission concept is a management tool for strategic planning, communication and resource allocation. It is to include a statement of intent and strategy on how the mission planned to implement its Security Council mandate, taking into account the mission's role in the broader United Nations system and international context. It is also good practice for the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) to issue directives/priorities to serve as a basis for substantive components' work planning.

13. A review of documents and interviews with key Mission personnel noted that due to changes in leadership, UNIOGBIS had not prepared and formalized a Mission Concept. Thus, key components such as guiding principles for mandate implementation, UNIOGBIS' objectives and priorities, key assumptions, risks and mitigating controls had not been established. The SRSG directives/priorities had also not been issued as the SRSG was new to the Mission at the time of the audit.

14. The absence of a Mission Concept hampered UNIOGBIS' ability to clearly define its highest priorities and key strategic inputs, and allocate its resources on that basis. For example, HRS stated that they did not have sufficient resources to implement some of their mandated activities during 2014/15 financial year, as described later in this report.

15. UNIOGBIS did not have a Mission-wide risk assessment, and a review of documentation relating to projects and programmes conceptualization noted that risk factors had also not been identified and

assessed and relevant mitigating controls formally documented. This reduced UNIOGBIS' ability to effectively implement a number of its mandated activities and extrabudgetary funded projects as described further in this report.

16. There had been a high turnover in Mission senior leadership with three SRSGs during the review period, coupled with instability and political crisis in the country. This had limited the ability of the Mission to adequately consider and prioritize risk assessment and strategic planning. The Senior Mission Planning Officer indicated that a draft Mission Concept using other missions as benchmarks had been prepared, but not yet approved. Robust risk assessment and strategic planning were necessary to ensure effective implementation of the mandate, considering the high political instability in the country.

(1) UNIOGBIS should issue key strategic documents to guide the Mission in implementing its mandate, developing annual work plans and identifying and managing its risks. These should include the Mission Concept, directives of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and a strategic plan.

UNIOGBIS accepted recommendation 1 and stated that its mandate would be considered for renewal by the Security Council in February 2017. Relevant strategic documents would be prepared/adjusted to reflect the new Security Council resolution, recommendations of a recent retreat of the United Nations Strategic Policy Group in Guinea-Bissau and the outcome of the Strategic Review Mission that was ongoing. Recommendation 1 remains open pending receipt of key strategic documents, including the strategic plan, Mission Concept, and the directives of the SRSG.

UNIOGBIS substantive components needed to develop comprehensive annual work plans

17. The United Nations Planning Toolkit provides a checklist for the development of mission components' annual work plans and defined their objectives as a monitoring and accountability tool to ensure effective implementation of programmes.

18. OIOS review noted that although PAS, ROLSI, HRS and PIU had provided tables showing their planned activities and indicators of success, they had not prepared and approved comprehensive annual work plans. The tables provided included indicators of success that were not in line with the Mission's Results-based Budgeting (RBB) framework and did not consistently identify goals, roles, responsibilities and timelines for completion of related work. This was mainly due to inadequate intra-mission coordination. OIOS noted that substantive sections did not coordinate or liaise with the Mission's Planning Unit, which was responsible to coordinate Mission planning activities and assist in monitoring programme implementation. The absence of annual work plans could hinder effective implementation of substantive programmes and result in misdirected efforts by substantive components.

(2) UNIOGBIS should implement measures to improve intra-mission coordination and ensure that substantive sections liaise with the Mission Planning Officer to prepare and formalize comprehensive annual work plans with goals and key performance indicators in line with the Mission's Results-based Budgeting framework.

UNIOGBIS accepted recommendation 2 and stated that the Strategic Planning Unit was enhancing the support it provided to substantive sections in developing work plans for 2017, in line with the approved RBB. Recommendation 2 remains open pending receipt of evidence that formal and comprehensive annual work plans for substantive sections have been developed.

UNIOGBIS needed to improve the handling and routing of internal and external correspondence

19. DPKO Standard Directives for SRSGs and Standard Reporting Requirements dated 2004 stipulate that as head of mission, the SRSG is responsible for setting the direction of the mission's various components and for ensuring that there are clear lines of responsibility and accountability within the mission. As per standard UNIOGBIS practice, the Chief of Staff is responsible for overseeing regular flows of official documents, especially code cables and note verbales and maintaining a repository of all official correspondence for the attention of the SRSG and for proper archiving and records management.

20. OIOS noted that a number of substantive sections such as ROLSI and HRS were issuing correspondence to Government officials independent of the Office of the SRSG, which could undermine the reach and influence of the SRSG's good offices. For example, ROLSI corresponded directly with Government officials on the development of the Police Academy concept without involvement of the Office of the SRSG. In addition, while the Chief of Staff or Office of the SRSG was systematically copied on all official correspondence from Headquarters, some sections responded directly to such communications without copying the Office of the SRSG, thereby leaving the SRSG unaware of events within the Mission. For example, an important and sensitive note verbale concerning a request for feedback from Headquarters on the Sanctions Committee Meeting Readout was sent back to Headquarters without the Office of the SRSG's knowledge. This happened mainly because of inadequate formal standard operating procedures on handling of communication and correspondence from and to Headquarters and with the host Government officials.

(3) UNIOGBIS should develop and implement standard operating procedures for routing official documents to avoid deficiencies in handling sensitive information, including correspondence to and from Headquarters and the Government of Guinea-Bissau.

UNIOGBIS accepted recommendation 3 and stated that it had developed standard operating procedures for routing and disseminating official correspondence. Based on action taken by UNIOGBIS and OIOS verification, recommendation 3 has been closed.

B. Programme performance monitoring

UNIOGBIS implementation of substantive programmes needed improvement

21. Security Council resolution 2267 (2016) and preceding resolutions mandated UNIOGBIS to promote a stable political, security, social and economic environment in Guinea-Bissau including substantive support to rule of law (defence, police, justice, penitentiary); human rights, political dialogue and national reconciliation; democratic institutions; and coordination with international partners for implementation of national security sector reform.

22. To accomplish these outcomes, UNIOGBIS substantive components committed to a number of outputs during 2014 and 2015. RBB performance reports for the three main substantive sections (ROLSI, HRS and PAS) prepared by the Mission during the two years are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Statistics of achieved and non-achieved outputs

Component	Year							
	2014 outputs				2015 outputs			
	Accomplished	Non-accomplished	Total	Per cent achieved	Accomplished	Non-accomplished	Total	Per cent achieved
ROLSI	5	3	8	63%	7	3	10	70%
HRS	8	4	12	66%	4	2	6	66%
PAS	4	4	8	50%	8	2	10	80%

23. An analysis of documentation provided by UNIOGBIS noted that while the lack of key strategic documents including Mission Concept, SRSG directives, and a strategic plan to guide the Mission had affected the ability of the Mission to effectively achieve its mandate, there were other contributory factors as described in the following sections:

Rule of Law and Security Institutions Service

24. The position of Senior Police Adviser in ROLSI at P-5 level had been vacant for more than 10 months as at July 2016. UNIOGBIS had taken subsequent action to fill in the position.

25. ROLSI recruited a consultant to provide support to the Guinea-Bissau Ministry of Justice in the development of a five-year strategic plan for the prison sector. The consultant was a former government official, thereby raising perceptions of a potential conflict of interest despite a competitive hiring process. However, in discussions, UNIOGBIS agreed to refrain from recruiting former government officials for functions that could result in potential conflict of interest. Therefore, OIOS did not make a recommendation on this issue.

Human Rights Section

26. HRS accomplishments included advocating against the use of the media for political purposes and for the public's right to accurate, objective and impartial information. HRS did not achieve outputs relating to: (a) drafting a new law on protection of victims; (b) implementing recommendations of the National Conference on Impunity; (c) developing the National Human Rights Policy and its Plan of Action; and (d) establishing accountability for previous human rights violations in the Country.

27. While UNIOGBIS indicated that HRS had undertaken human rights monitoring missions to the most remote regions of the country, including Quinara, Tombali and Bolama-Bijagos, there was limited documented evidence that the Section had conducted the required periodic assessment visits to three out of the four UNIOGBIS regional offices; namely Buba, Bafata, and Sao Domingos, which were visited by OIOS during the audit.

28. Interviews held with national police officers at detention cells and UNIOGBIS staff at regional offices noted that there were limited or no periodic assessment visits to detention centres. HRS stated that due to inadequate resources, it conducted assessments during training activities in the regions, but could not provide sufficient evidence of such assessments; especially during 2015 and 2016 when they did not have adequate records of training conducted. The lack of periodic assessment visits reduced the opportunity to identify and report on potential human rights issues.

29. Also, although the Human Rights management guidelines issued by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) require HRS to submit weekly reports to OHCHR and HRS had previously submitted regular reports to OHCHR, the Section could not provide evidence of weekly reports submitted since March 2016. These deficiencies affected the Section's ability to achieve some of its mandated activities.

30. The shortcomings in the management of human rights activities were partly attributed to inadequate human resources. Although HRS had nine approved posts, two international positions at P-4 and P-3 levels had been vacant for eight and five months as of July 2016.

(4) UNIOGBIS should expedite the recruitment of the P-4 and P-3 Human Rights Officer positions to assist in improving the conduct and documentation of periodic assessment visits
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and the required reports to OHCHR.

UNIOGBIS accepted recommendation 4 and stated that the Mission was aiming to fill the posts temporarily by 31 December 2016. Recommendation 4 remains open pending receipt of evidence that the P-4 and P-3 Human Right Officer positions have been filled by regular staff appointment.

Political Affairs Section

31. PAS had committed to 8 and 10 outputs in 2014 and 2015 and the Section achieved 50 and 80 per cent of these outputs, respectively, including supporting the National Assembly ad hoc commission on constitutional reform; hosting meetings of civil society, non-governmental organizations and local associations; and supporting a training workshop on communications, advocacy and lobbying.

32. Although there was a high achievement rate in 2015 according to RBB reports, major mandated activities of PAS including support to the Constitutional Review Process, and the National Dialogue and Reconciliation had not taken place. OIOS noted that National Dialogue and Reconciliation was also not achieved in 2014, although it was included in the expected outputs.

33. While PAS mandated activities were heavily hampered by the ongoing political crisis and instability of the country, there were a number of factors within the control of the Mission that might have improved the achievement of key political mandated activities as described below:

- The position of Senior Political Affairs Officer at P-5 level had been vacant for 11 months and a UNIOGBIS Political Affairs Officer at P-4 level was acting as Officer-in-Charge and the temporary recruitment against the position had not been completed at the time of the audit. The former incumbent had been temporarily assigned to another mission and there was no evidence of action taken to replace him; and
- Although the new SRSG had travelled to Guinea-Bissau's neighbouring countries to meet with heads of states and had visited two of the four UNIOGBIS established regional offices as part his good offices, no regular or sufficient regional travels had been undertaken by the Head of the Mission's political pillar to meet with high level representatives of the Government in the regions capitals (e.g. Governors). This represented a missed opportunity to optimize the use of good offices throughout the Country and promote the National Dialogue Framework.

(5) UNIOGBIS should take action to ensure its senior leadership extends its good offices throughout Guinea-Bissau; especially at the regional capitals where the highest government representatives are located in order to promote the National Political Dialogue, as mandated by the Security Council.

UNIOGBIS accepted recommendation 5 and stated that the Mission Senior Leadership would continue to extend its good offices throughout Guinea-Bissau, including through more regular visits of the SRSG and Deputy SRSGs to meet government representatives in regions and advance mandate implementation. Outcomes and follow-up actions arising from these visits would be reported in the Mission's weekly situation reports. Recommendation 5 remains open pending receipt of evidence that the good offices have been extended at the regional level and throughout Guinea-Bissau.

C. Coordination

Coordination with UNODC was improving

34. Security Council resolution 2267 (2016), mandated UNIOGBIS to provide strategic and technical advice and support to the Government of Guinea-Bissau to combat drug trafficking and transnational organized crime, in close cooperation with UNODC. In addition, the Strategic Assessment Mission from United Nations Headquarters recommended collocation between UNIOGBIS and United Nations Country Team (UNCT) personnel working in specific thematic areas.

35. Interviews with UNIOGBIS and UNODC staff indicated that, while UNODC had shared its work plan with UNIOGBIS to avoid duplication, there was no formal joint work plan developed to clearly indicate the level of support, cooperation and coordination between the two entities. During the course of the audit, UNODC relocated to UNIOGBIS' premises and a joint work plan was being developed. To further strengthen coordination, UNIOGBIS assigned two United Nations police officers to collocate with the Guinea-Bissau Ministry of Justice to provide technical advice in the areas of rule of law and justice, including drug trafficking and organized crimes. OIOS concluded that UNIOGBIS was improving coordination with UNODC.

Arrangements to implement integrated work programmes with UNCT were being implemented

36. Secretary-General's Decision 2008/24 reaffirmed integration as the guiding principle for all conflict and post-conflict situations where the United Nations has a country team, with the purpose of maximizing individual and collective impact of the Organization's response. To achieve this, UNIOGBIS and UNCT in Guinea-Bissau, under the leadership of the SRSG, were expected to ensure that all components operate in a coherent and mutually supportive manner.

37. Following the Technical Assessment Mission organized by United Nations Headquarters in 2010, a Strategic Policy Group comprising all heads of United Nations agencies and all UNIOGBIS section chiefs in Guinea-Bissau was established to oversee joint strategies and to coordinate implementation of the related activities. UNIOGBIS, in collaboration with UNCT, developed the United Nations Development Assistance Framework plus (UNDAF+) signed in June 2010 for five years. In December 2015, the Framework was replaced by the United Nations Partnership Agreement Framework (UNPAF) covering the period from 2016-2020, with outcomes that were also in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

38. To ensure effective implementation of UNPAF, UNCT and UNIOGBIS established four Outcome Groups mandated to coordinate the planning, development, implementation, coherence and consistent quality of programme activities. UNIOGBIS was developing a monitoring mechanism to ensure regular meetings of the Outcome Groups. Therefore, OIOS concluded that adequate arrangements were in place to implement integrated work programmes with UNCT and other relevant partners.

D. Human resources targets and strategies

Management of regional offices, including staffing requirements needed to be reviewed

39. UNIOGBIS was responsible to manage its human resources and administer regional offices effectively.

40. In 2013, UNIOGBIS established three regional offices in Buba, Bafata, and Sao Domingos. In 2015, another regional office was opened in Bubaque with the aim of extending the Mission's activities to the regions. While the initiative to establish regional offices was commendable, there were a number of concerns that could impact their effective functioning. For example:

- At the time of the audit, only one regional office had an international civilian professional staff member due to imbalanced staff distribution throughout UNIOGBIS areas of operation;
- Staff at regional offices did not have access to the electronic movement of personnel system to submit their travel requests, which led to non-payment of entitled daily subsistence allowances for official travel for some staff. No alternative system had been put in place to resolve this issue;
- A number of general service and logistic issues reported by the regional office staff had not been addressed such as faulty air conditioners and missing lights in the Buba Office;
- Three national security assistants interviewed were not adequately informed that their deployment to a regional office was a permanent move; and
- The Chief Security Adviser's proposal to rotate national security assistants to relieve those who had spent about three years in hardship locations was not approved.

41. These deficiencies, if not addressed, could affect staff morale and result in high turnover, adversely impacting Mission operations. While these shortcomings could be attributed to the absence of a strategic plan, it had also been noted through interviews that visits of section chiefs and the then acting Chief of Mission Support to the regions to assess needs at the sectors' level had been limited.

(6) UNIOGBIS should take action to: (i) within existing resources, reinforce international civilian presence in its regional offices; and (ii) ensure heads of sections, including Mission Support, conduct periodic visits to the regions to identify and attend to existing needs.

UNIOGBIS accepted recommendation 6 and stated that the Mission had proposed the regularization of a P-3 post in one of the regional offices. Heads of substantive components would continue to undertake regular visits to the regions to participate in activities aimed at advancing UNIOGBIS' mandate, meet government representatives and oversee the implementation of mandated activities. In addition, UNIOGBIS Mission Support would continue to maintain a regular visit schedule of various heads of sections to the regional offices and document identified needs for appropriate resolution. Recommendation 6 remains open pending receipt of evidence that international civilian presence has been reinforced in regional offices and periodic visits to regions by heads of sections are conducted and appropriately documented.

Management of human resources activities including recruitment and filing of personnel records needed enhancement

42. The standard operating procedures on the staff selection system for special political missions requires UNIOGBIS to prepare a recruitment plan to ensure that current and projected vacant posts are filled in a timely manner. The procedures also set recruitment timelines from identification of vacancy to selection of candidate at 21 and 98 days for recruitment from roster and position specific job openings (PSJOs), respectively. Also, temporary job openings should not be used to fill positions expected to last one year or longer.

43. OIOS review of UNIOGBIS recruitment activities showed that the Mission did not prepare a recruitment plan for each budget period as required. Although a recruitment situation report was prepared and communicated to the Mission Leadership in early 2016, no evidence of updates of the situation was available to OIOS. On average, recruitment from rosters and PSJOs took 142 and 394 days, respectively. Also, contrary to the recruitment policy, temporary appointments were used to recruit against four regular international posts expected to last for more than a year although these positions could have been filled from other United Nations missions that are drawing down or about to liquidate.

44. UNIOGBIS recruitment and personnel records, including those for consultants, were not filed properly. For example, a review of files for all 12 international consultants hired during the period under review found that important documents were missing such as justification for five non-competitive selections, four signed contracts, and seven terms of reference as required by the administrative instruction on the use of consultants and individual contractors. A review of 10 out of 12 PSJO recruitment files indicated that three files were missing an assessment rating system, and one file had interview notes taken by only one interview panel member instead of by every panel member, as required.

45. Delays in the recruitment process and long outstanding vacancies could adversely impact mission operations. UNIOGBIS did not initiate necessary steps to fill vacancies through regular fixed-term appointments and did not take the opportunity to recruit staff from other United Nations downsizing or liquidating missions.

(7) UNIOGBIS should develop an annual recruitment plan and establish a mechanism to: (i) monitor and report on the status of vacancies to the Office of the SRSG on a regular basis; and (ii) ensure timely recruitment of staff while addressing the use of temporary appointments without proper justification.

UNIOGBIS accepted recommendation 7 and stated that it would develop an annual recruitment plan based on current and future vacancies expected through retirements. A monitoring and reporting mechanism would also be put in place and used to regularly inform UNIOGBIS senior leadership and heads of sections on the status of recruitments and vacancies requiring action. Recommendation 7 remains open pending receipt of evidence that an annual recruitment plan and regular status of vacancies have been prepared and shared with the Mission Senior Leadership.

E. Management of other support activities

Internal controls over management of fuel transactions were not adequate

46. The Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations require the Organization to maintain a system of internal controls to provide reasonable assurance that the Organization's resources and assets are safeguarded.

47. UNIOGBIS maintained an Excel database to record fuel transactions. Based on OIOS walkthrough and review of transactions at the time of the audit, a number of control deficiencies were noted as follows: (a) fuel issuances lacked adequate segregation of duties and necessary controls to mitigate the risk of abuse; for example, the national staff member handling fuel transactions data entry was also the custodian and issuer of fuel coupons; (b) fuel coupons could easily be exchanged for cash, and inaccurate quantity of fuel issued indicated on the receipts; and (c) the database comprising fuel consumption data showed inconsistencies in the recording of vehicle plate numbers and mileage, making it difficult to adequately monitor fuel consumption.

48. These control weaknesses increase the risk of financial exposure or fraud. UNIOGBIS had not established adequate controls to mitigate the risk of abuse with regards to its fuel management, nor had the Mission explored and implemented other mechanisms applied by other United Nations missions.

(8) UNIOGBIS should: (i) establish a mechanism to ensure proper segregation of duties in handling fuel-related transactions; and (ii) explore and implement alternative solutions to the current fuel issuance arrangements to mitigate the risk of fraudulent activities or financial exposure.

UNIOGBIS accepted recommendation 8 and stated that the Transport Section was in the process of strengthening the segregation of duties for fuel-related transactions. Notwithstanding the Mission's operating environment, it would continue to adapt measures to strengthen controls and minimize risks, including through seeking additional guidance from DFS. Recommendation 8 remains open pending receipt of evidence that UNIOGBIS has established proper segregation of duties for fuel-related transactions and explored and implemented alternatives to mitigate the risk of fraud and financial exposure in fuel issuances.

Action was needed to resolve an advance made to the host Government for the national military pension project

49. According to the grant agreement between UNIOGBIS and the Government of Guinea-Bissau for the establishment of a national Military Pension Fund, the grant was to be returned to UNIOGBIS should the Government fail to implement the project within 60 days.

50. During the audit period, 12 projects amounting to \$9.7 million were approved through the Peacebuilding Fund and extrabudgetary funds from DPA. Three projects were cancelled due to political unrest, which led to a change in donor commitment. In addition, \$1.12 million representing 40 per cent of the total amount committed by the Peacebuilding Fund was disbursed on a project for the establishment of a national Military Pension Fund. However, the project was not implemented as the Government was overthrown resulting in suspension of the project.

51. During the audit, OIOS followed up with UNIOGBIS on the status of the funds, which the Peacebuilding Fund had also been trying to determine for nearly three years. UNIOGBIS was able to obtain confirmation from the Government that the funds were still available in the Government's bank account. However, at the time of the audit, the funds had not yet been returned to UNIOGBIS. Also, due to depreciation of the local currency into which the funds had been converted upon initial disbursement, there were exchange losses and other fees amounting to the equivalent of \$90,000 assessed by the bank. Delays in resolving the status of the project meant that the funds were not being used for the purpose intended.

(9) UNIOGBIS should, in consultation with the Peacebuilding Support Office, take action to fully resolve the status of the unimplemented project for the establishment of a national Military Pension Fund in Guinea-Bissau, including recovery of the unused balance of the advance disbursed to the Government.

UNIOGBIS accepted recommendation 9 and stated that the Mission had started taking action to recover the unused funds in May 2014, following the country's return to constitutional order in accordance with the grant agreement. However, as this matter had taken too long and the funds were still yet to be effectively recovered, UNIOGBIS had formally requested the consent of the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) to refer the matter to OIOS Investigations Division in line with Clause 4 of the grant agreement. Meanwhile, the Mission would present a new project proposal to

PBSO to reprogramme the funds. Recommendation 9 remains open pending receipt of evidence that the status of the unused advance to the Government of Guinea-Bissau has been resolved.

Management of cash advances for payment of training attendees needed improvement

52. The Chief Finance Officer in UNIOGBIS had delegation of authority to make cash advances for authorized purposes in accordance with United Nations Financial Rule 104.9, which requires officials to whom cash advances are issued to submit reports within 30 days after the related activities have taken place.

53. During the audit period, cash advances amounting to \$650,000 were issued to UNIOGBIS training organizers/facilitators to pay per diems of training participants. Individual advances ranged from \$1,000 to \$43,000. However, there was no mechanism in place to verify whether cash issued had been used for the intended purpose as in some cases, sufficient documents to support the list of participants such as copies of picture identification were not provided. OIOS analysis of partial data available indicated that the timeframe within which UNIOGBIS training facilitators submitted their expense reports to the Finance Section after training took place, ranged from two to eight months.

54. UNIOGBIS Mission Support did not communicate a timeline to submit expense reports after training date to enable prompt recovery of unused balances. This created the risk of misappropriation of the Organisation's financial resources.

(10) UNIOGBIS Mission Support should take action to strengthen the controls over payment of per diems to training participants, including requiring Mission training facilitators to obtain copies of photo identification and signatures of the participants and to prepare and submit expense reports to the Finance Section timely.

UNIOGBIS accepted recommendation 10 and stated that the Mission would strengthen implementation measures, including through withholding further advances until previous workshop advances have been cleared and recovering advances not cleared within a maximum of three months. When possible, Finance Section would be present to support the administration of per diems to ensure strict compliance with these control measures. Recommendation 10 remains open pending receipt of evidence that the enhanced measures to control payment of per diems have been formalized.

V. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

55. OIOS wishes to express its appreciation to the management and staff of UNIOGBIS 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 United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	C/ O ³	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date ⁴
1	UNIOGBIS should issue key strategic documents to guide the Mission in implementing its mandate, developing annual work plans and identifying and managing its risks. These should include the Mission Concept, directives of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and a Strategic Plan.	Important	O	Submission of evidence of development key strategic documents, including the strategic plan, Mission Concept, and the directives of the SRSB.	31 March 2017
2	UNIOGBIS should implement measures to improve intra-mission coordination and ensure that substantive sections liaise with the Mission Planning Officer to prepare and formalize comprehensive annual work plans with goals and key performance indicators in line with the Mission's Results-based Budgeting framework.	Important	O	Submission of copies of formal and comprehensive annual work plans for substantive sections.	30 April 2017
3	UNIOGBIS should develop and implement standard operating procedures for routing official documents to avoid deficiencies in handling sensitive information, including correspondence to and from Headquarters and the Government of Guinea-Bissau.	Important	C	Action complete.	Implemented
4	UNIOGBIS should expedite the recruitment of the P-4 and P-3 Human Rights Officer positions to assist in improving the conduct and documentation of periodic assessment visits and the required reports to OHCHR.	Important	O	Submission of evidence that the positions of the P-4 and P-3 Human Right Officer positions have been filled by regular staff appointment.	31 December 2016
5	UNIOGBIS should take action to ensure its senior	Important	O	Submission of evidence of extension of good	31 March 2017

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 UNIOGBIS in response to recommendations.

STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Audit of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	C/ O ³	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date ⁴
	leadership extends its good offices throughout Guinea-Bissau; especially at the regional capitals where the highest government representatives are located in order to promote the National Political Dialogue, as mandated by the Security Council.			offices at the regional level and throughout Guinea-Bissau.	
6	UNIOGBIS should take action to: (i) within existing resources, reinforce international civilian presence in its regional offices; and (ii) ensure heads of sections, including Mission Support, conduct periodic visits to the regions to identify and attend to existing needs.	Important	O	Submission of evidence of increased international civilian presence in regional offices and conduct of periodic visits to regions by heads of sections.	31 March 2017
7	UNIOGBIS should develop an annual recruitment plan and establish a mechanism to: (i) monitor and report on the status of vacancies to the Office of the SRSG on a regular basis; and (ii) ensure timely recruitment of staff while addressing the use of temporary appointments without proper justification.	Important	O	Submission of evidence that an annual recruitment plan has been prepared and regular status of vacancies shared with the Mission Senior Leadership.	31 March 2017
8	UNIOGBIS should: (i) establish a mechanism to ensure proper segregation of duties in handling fuel-related transactions; and (ii) explore and implement alternative solutions to the current fuel issuance arrangements to mitigate the risk of fraudulent activities or financial exposure.	Important	O	Submission of evidence of establishment of proper segregation of duties for fuel-related transactions and exploration and implementation of alternatives to mitigate the risk of fraud and financial exposure in fuel issuances.	31 December 2016
9	UNIOGBIS should, in consultation with the Peacebuilding Support Office, take action to resolve the status of the unimplemented project for the establishment of a national Military Pension Fund in Guinea-Bissau, including recovery of the unused balance of the advance disbursed to the Government.	Important	O	Submission of evidence that the status of the unused advance to the Government of Guinea-Bissau has been resolved.	31 March 2017
10	UNIOGBIS Mission Support should take action to strengthen the controls over payment of per diems	Important	O	Submission of evidence that measures have been taken to enhance controls over payment of per	15 December 2016

STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Audit of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	C/ O ³	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date ⁴
	to training participants, including requiring Mission training facilitators to obtain copies of photo identification and signatures of the participants and to prepare and submit expense reports to the Finance Section timely.			diems for all training or capacity building activities.	

APPENDIX I

Management Response

Management Response

Audit of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (Assignment No. AP2016/646/01)

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation Date	Client comments
1	UNIOGBIS should issue key strategic documents to guide the Mission in implementing its mandate, developing annual work plans and identifying and managing its risks. These should include the Mission Concept, directives of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and a Strategic Plan.	Important	Yes	DSRSGs/Chief of Staff (CoS)/Senior Planning Officer	31 March 2017	UNIOGBIS's mandate will be considered for renewal by the Security Council in February 2017. Relevant strategic documents will be prepared/adjusted to reflect the new SC resolution. The revised documents will also be informed by and reflect the recommendations of the recent retreat of the UN Strategic Policy Group (SPG) which comprises the senior leadership of UNIOGBIS, heads of section and heads of United Nations agencies. At this retreat held on 18-19 November, the SPG reached an agreement on a shared vision and common priorities for the United Nations in Guinea-Bissau. Equally importantly, there is a Strategic Review Mission (SRM) ongoing at the time of this writing. The outcomes of this SRM will inform the development of strategic directives of the SRSG and an integrated Mission Concept for UNIOGBIS.
2	UNIOGBIS should implement measures to improve intra-mission coordination and ensure that substantive sections liaise with the Mission Planning Officer to prepare and formalize comprehensive annual work plans with goals and key performance	Important	Yes	DSRSG-P/CoS/Senior Planning Officer	30 April 2017	This process will also be guided by the new SC resolution expected in February 2017. The Strategic Planning Unit (SPU) of the Office of the SRSG is enhancing planning support to substantive sections in the

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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.

Management Response

Audit of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (Assignment No. AP2016/646/01)

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ₂	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation Date	Client comments
	indicators in line with the Mission's Results-based Budgeting framework.					development of work plans for 2017, in line with approved RBB and RBM frameworks, UNPAF (2016-2020), and national strategic and operational plans. The Mission is committed to enhancing quality control and standardization, and fostering an integrated approach across sections, including the United Nations country team.
3	UNIOGBIS should develop and implement standard operating procedures for routing official documents to avoid deficiencies in handling sensitive information, including correspondence to and from Headquarters and the Government of Guinea-Bissau.	Important	Yes	Chief of Staff	1 January 2017	The Mission complies with all essential standards for the transmission and reception, via secure e-mail connection, of code cables to and from Headquarters. Internal systems for routing and disseminating official correspondence are being strengthened, including through the development of standard operating procedures. An audit trail for substantive documents requiring the review and signature of the SRSG has been in place since June 2016.
4	UNIOGBIS should expedite the recruitment of the P-4 and P-3 Human Rights Officer positions to assist in improving the conduct and documentation of periodic assessment visits and the required reports to OHCHR.	Important	Yes	Chief Mission Support (CMS)/Chief of Human Rights Unit	31 December 2016	The recommendation is being implemented. TJOs for the positions of Human Rights Officer at the P-3 and P-4 levels were re-announced (for 15 days) and interviews with shortlisted candidates were held in November 2016. Completion of the recruitments is expected by the end of December 2016.
5	UNIOGBIS should take action to ensure its senior leadership extends its good	Important	Yes	SRSG and DSRSGs	31 March 2017	The Mission's senior leadership will continue to extend its good offices

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Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ₂	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation Date	Client comments
	offices throughout Guinea-Bissau; especially at the regional capitals where the highest government representatives are located in order to promote the National Political Dialogue, as mandated by the Security Council.					throughout Guinea-Bissau, including through more regular visits of the SRSG and DSRSGs to meet government representatives in the regions and advance mandate implementation. Outcomes and follow up actions arising from these visits of the senior leadership to the regions are reported, as appropriate, in regular Mission Weekly Situation Reports.
6	UNIOGBIS should take action to: (i) within existing resources, reinforce international civilian presence in its regional offices; and (ii) ensure heads of sections, including Mission Support, conduct periodic visits to the regions to identify and attend to existing needs.	Important	Yes	DSRSG-P and Chief of Staff	31 March 2017	<p>(i) The recommendation is being implemented, within the limits of existing resources. In March 2016, the Mission relocated a Security Sector Reform Officer at the P-3 level to the UNIOGBIS regional office of Bafatá. The regularization of the post in the regional office of Bafatá is being proposed for the 2017 budget.</p> <p>(ii) Heads of substantive components will continue to undertake regular visits to the regions to, inter alia, participate in activities aimed at advancing UNIOGBIS mandate, meet government representatives and oversee the implementation of mandated activities. Substantive components will develop a regular visit schedule of heads of section to the regions.</p> <p>In addition to emergency technical maintenance visits, UNIOGBIS Mission Support retains a regular visit schedule of various heads of section to</p>

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						the regional offices. The observed and identified needs are documented in a log for appropriate resolution and this practice is set to continue.
7	UNIOGBIS should develop an annual recruitment plan and establish a mechanism to: (i) monitor and report on the status of vacancies to the Office of the SRSG on a regular basis; and (ii) ensure timely recruitment of staff while addressing the use of temporary appointments without proper justification.	Important	Yes	CoS/Chief of Mission Support/ Unit Heads	31 March 2017	By March 2017, an annual recruitment plan will be developed based on current and future vacancies expected through retirement. A monitoring and reporting mechanism will be put in place and used to regularly inform the senior leadership and heads of section of the status of recruitments and vacancies requiring action
8	UNIOGBIS should: (i) establish a mechanism to ensure proper segregation of duties in handling fuel related transactions; and (ii) explore and implement alternative solutions to the current fuel issuance arrangements to mitigate the risk of fraudulent activities or financial exposure.	Important	Yes	Chief of Mission Support and Chief Transport Officer	31 December 2016	Transport Section is in the process of strengthening the monitoring mechanism in place to maintain segregation of duties for fuel-related transactions. Notwithstanding the Mission's operating environment and the limited technology available in the local market, the Mission continues to adapt measures to strengthen controls and minimize risks. The Mission is seeking additional guidance from DFS on existing procedures so as to enhance risk mitigation measures currently in place.
9	UNIOGBIS should, in consultation with the Peacebuilding Support Office, take action to resolve the status of the unimplemented project for the establishment of a national Military Pension Fund in Guinea-Bissau, including recovery of the unused balance of the advance disbursed to the Government.	Important	Yes	DSRSG-P	31 March 2017	The recommendation is already being implemented in line with the terms and conditions of the Grant agreement signed in February 2012 between the UN Comptroller and the Government of Guinea Bissau. UNIOGBIS has taken steady action to recover the unused funds since May

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						<p>2014, following the country's return to constitutional order two years after the coup d'état of 2012 which frustrated the implementation of the Pension Plan. Regular follow up is ongoing by UNIOGBIS with the Government to ascertain whether the funds were still available at the Bank. Relevant correspondence and documentation have been shared with the auditors. However, as this matter has taken too long and the funds are still yet to be effectively recovered, UNIOGBIS has formally requested the consent of PBSO to allow an investigation by the OIOS/ Investigation Division in line with Clause 4 of the Grant Agreement.</p> <p>In parallel, the Mission will present an IRF project to the new government, and submit it for the approval of PBSO. The project will serve as the appropriate legal framework for re-programming the returned funds in question for the Special Military Pension Fund, as agreed by PBSO.</p>
10	UNIOGBIS Mission Support should take action to strengthen the controls over payment of per diems to training participants, including requiring Mission training facilitators to obtain copies of photo identification and signatures of the participants and to prepare and submit expense reports to the Finance Section timely.	Important	Yes	Chief of Mission Support	15 December 2016	The Mission will strengthen implementation measures, including through: withholding further advances until previous workshop advances have been cleared with all required documentations; any advances not cleared within a maximum of 3 months will be forwarded to UNHQ for recovery from the recipients. When possible, Finance Section will be

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						present to support the administration of per diems to ensure strict compliance with these control measures.