



INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION

REPORT 2020/034

Audit of document management systems and related processes in the United Nations Secretariat

Document management and related processes need to be strengthened to facilitate collaboration, knowledge management and optimal use of technological solutions in the Secretariat

30 September 2020

Assignment No. AT2019-517-04

Audit of document management systems and related processes in the United Nations Secretariat

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of document management systems and related processes in the United Nations Secretariat. The objective of the audit was to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of governance, risk management and control processes in ensuring the effective and efficient implementation, use and support of document management systems in the Secretariat. The audit covered the period from January 2016 to May 2020 and included a review of relevant risk areas which included: (a) document management processes; and (b) technological solutions.

The audit showed that document management and related processes need to be strengthened to facilitate collaboration, knowledge management and optimal use of technological solutions in the Secretariat. OIOS made six recommendations. To address the issues identified in the audit:

The Office of Information and Communications Technology (OICT) needed to:

- In collaboration with the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance (DMSPC), explain document management within the context of the information management framework for the Secretariat and develop standards for managing documents throughout the lifecycle;
- Assist business owners in gathering user requirements pertaining to document management and in configuring and customizing enterprise solutions to meet their specific needs in document management;
- Clarify the enterprise solution for document management in the Secretariat and for the storage of strictly confidential documents; and
- Prepare a plan for migration of documents from legacy applications to SharePoint Online; implement a plan for decommissioning of legacy applications after migration is complete; and implement change management activities and strengthen the communication and coordination mechanism for ongoing deployment of the Unite Workspace project.

DMSPC needed to:

- Strengthen the guidance on business continuity and assign monitoring responsibilities to ensure the completeness and testing of business continuity plans, including identification and updating of each entity's vital documents and the tools required for business continuity; and
- In collaboration with the Department of Operational Support (DOS) and OICT, establish a retention policy for digital/electronic documents.

OICT and DMSPC accepted the recommendations and have initiated action to implement them.

CONTENTS

I. BACKGROUND	1
II. AUDIT OBJECTIVE, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY	1-2
III. AUDIT RESULTS	2-9
A. Document management processes	2-5
B. Technological solutions	5-9
IV. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	9
ANNEX I	Status of audit recommendations
APPENDIX I	Management response

Audit of document management systems and related processes in the United Nations Secretariat

I. BACKGROUND

1. The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of document management systems and related processes in the United Nations Secretariat.
2. Documents are a type of information asset and document management is essential to ensure adequate oversight of the Organization's transactional documents, decision-making records, and transitory documents of importance regardless of the authoring or medium (paper or electronic). Documents should be secure, accessible, and retrievable throughout their lifecycle, from creation to disposal.
3. Within the Secretariat, the management of documents is split between parliamentary documents and substantive, operational support and administrative type documents. Parliamentary documents are largely managed by the Department of General Assembly and Conference Management and the Department of Global Communications. Documents relating to substantive programmes, operational support and administration are managed at the department/entity levels of the Secretariat.
4. Document modalities within the Secretariat have evolved over time from the generation of manual paper-based documents to mainly electronically generated documents, and documents that are processed manually and stored electronically. Some documents are products of business processes (e.g. forms filled by various parties, signed and finalized in administrative transactions), and some are substantive documents that are non-transactional but their drafting and dissemination processes are facilitated by workflows.
5. The media for creating documents are largely within enterprise applications, systems for substantive programmes, business specific applications, and systems for parliamentary documents. The media for delivery is mainly paper, emails, collaboration tools and electronic workflow systems. The media for storage includes a variety of containers ranging from shared drives, hard drives, document management systems, cloud and locally hosted databases, mobile storage media, and paper files.
6. The Secretariat deployed several technological solutions to enable document management and related processes. In 2007-08, an enterprise document management solution based on the 'Documentum' platform was deployed. In 2015-16, a Unite Docs system based on 'FileNet (IBM)' was implemented and in 2019, a Unite workspace project for deployment of 'Microsoft Office 365 productivity tools' including SharePoint Online, Microsoft Teams (MS Teams) and OneDrive was initiated. Further, there were many ad-hoc document management systems in use across the Secretariat (e.g., STARS, Comet and Cosmos).
7. Complete data on the Secretariat's expenditure relating to document management was not readily available. However, based on data obtained from the Office of Information and Communications Technology (OICT) and the Procurement Division, the best estimate of the expenditure incurred on document management since 2008 was approximately \$140 million.
8. Comments provided by DMSPC, DOS and OICT are incorporated in italics.

II. AUDIT OBJECTIVE, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

9. The objective of the audit was to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of governance, risk management and control processes in ensuring the effective and efficient implementation, use and support of document management systems in the Secretariat.

10. This audit was included in the 2019 risk-based work plan of OIOS due to the risks associated with preservation of institutional memory and knowledge management within the Secretariat.

11. OIOS conducted this audit from November 2019 to May 2020 at Headquarters, New York. The audit covered the period from January 2016 to May 2020. Based on an activity-level risk assessment, the audit covered risk areas in document management which included: (a) document management processes; and (b) technological solutions.

12. The audit methodology included: (a) interviews with key personnel; (b) review of relevant documentation; (c) analytical review of data; (d) system walk throughs; and (e) survey.

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

III. AUDIT RESULTS

A. Document management processes

Need to define policies and procedures for managing the lifecycle of documents

14. Documents are a type of information asset that form a vital component in the Secretariat's mandate delivery, workflows, transactions, and decision-making processes. The management lifecycle of a document starts from its creation and ends with its final disposal. Policies and procedures should direct the end-to-end process of secure and efficient document management, with appropriate oversight mechanisms. This includes developing classification/indexing systems and standard taxonomies that enable collaboration, storage and retrieval of documents.

15. The Secretariat's information management capacity was mainly in OICT and the Department of Operational Support (DOS). Additionally, some capacity also existed in certain other departments and offices, including the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, the Department of Global Communications, the Department of Peace Operations, and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Although, there were procedures for records management (i.e., the Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/2007/5) defined by the Archives and Record Management Section (ARMS) within DOS, there were no formalized policies or procedures to guide or facilitate the entire lifecycle of documents from creation to final disposal. Also, there was no clarity as to which entity within the Secretariat had the authority and responsibility to set the policies and procedures for document management in the Organization. OICT stated that in the absence of an information management policy for the Secretariat, the ST/SGB/2007/5 has been used as the information management policy. OICT acknowledged that this is not adequate due to the much narrower and specific scope of records and archives management compared to broader information management.

16. The Information Management Unit within OICT was in the process of drafting an information management framework for the Secretariat which will encompass and highlight the specific policies needed for the management of information throughout its lifecycle. OICT envisaged that documents, as a form of information, should follow the overall information management policy framework. OIOS is of the opinion that this is an opportune time to define the standards for capturing and integrating document management requirements to facilitate effective collaboration, knowledge management and technological solutions, in view of the following issues identified by the audit:

(i) The Secretariat's ability to collaborate effectively and facilitate knowledge management was impaired by the lack of standardized policies and procedures to direct versioning, naming conventions, taxonomies, metadata, indexing, workflow, retention and disposal. This caused duplication of the same documents, duplication of tasks/efforts, and the inability to search for documents because there were no defined criteria for search and accessibility across the various authoring departments.

(ii) The lack of formalized procedures limited users' sensitivity towards, and awareness of, the value of the documents they create as an important information resource for possible use in the future by others within the Organization. Some departments stated that the location of important documents was sometimes unknown or lost, especially when staff members were re-assigned or separated from the Organization. This impaired the preservation of institutional memory and sharing of knowledge, thereby leading to duplication of effort in recreating documents that were created previously.

(iii) Standards to enhance the capacity for collaboration, exchange and use of documents were not defined in regard to processes and technology. For instance, users sometimes were faced with challenges in the retrieval of documents stored in the enterprise systems.

(iv) The Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/2007/6 (Information sensitivity, classification and handling) defines the classification levels as unclassified, confidential and strictly confidential. It assigns the responsibility for classification and marking to the originator of the information or its recipient if the information originated from an outside source. However, in many cases, classification mechanisms and procedures were not implemented effectively and, as a result, the handling of user access, sharing, and protection of documents was not adequately controlled. In some field missions, obsolete documents and records were being retained beyond their retention life because there was no established process for identifying and disposing of these records.

(1) OICT, in collaboration with DMSPC, should: (i) explain document management within the context of the information management framework for the Secretariat; and (ii) develop standards for managing documents throughout the lifecycle.

OICT accepted recommendation 1 and stated that the implementation of this recommendation is dependent on the approval of the newly drafted Secretary-General's Bulletin on Information Management Framework for the United Nations Secretariat, which is currently being presented to the Information and Communications Technology Steering Committee. Recommendation 1 remains open pending receipt of evidence that: (i) document management has been explained within the context of the information management framework; and (ii) standards for managing documents throughout the lifecycle have been developed.

Need for establishing a digital preservation programme

17. Documents/electronic information no longer in active use and repurposed as records were not transferred from the working space to retention and archiving repositories for retention or disposal. Also, there were no established procedures defining the roles and responsibilities for ownership, preservation and handling of legacy documents/electronic records; likewise, there was no standard digital repository, which exposed the long-term and permanent digital archives (including documents, maps, and audio visual records) to the risk of loss. Legacy documents were handled by both ARMS and the Department of Global Communications. However, these responsibilities were not formalized and caused delays in the timely preservation of legacy documents (e.g., records pertaining to closed peacekeeping missions, and the unique repository of documents, maps, audiovisual records, and approximately 200TB of tapes, some of which dated to the inception of the United Nations in 1945). There is a risk that long-term accessibility may be lost if the records/documents are not actively managed and preserved in a digital preservation system. To

address these issues effectively, there was a need to: (i) enhance the existing archives management function to include a digital preservation programme by defining clear business processes, roles and responsibilities and technical requirements, as well as selecting a technical solution that is aligned with international standards; and (ii) in collaboration with OICT, ensure that the system meets all security requirements and can be implemented and hosted in the United Nations information and communications technology environment. *DOS agreed and stated that the actual implementation of the system and the establishment of a digital preservation programme will not be possible until additional resources are secured. DOS further stated that it was considering potential funding sources including extra-budgetary funding to enhance the existing archives management function.* OIOS takes note of the actions proposed by DOS and will review the progress achieved during future audits.

Business continuity requirements need to be defined and embedded into document management

18. Best practices recommend that organizations should have robust and effective document management processes and tools to facilitate business continuity during disaster/crisis scenarios. Access to information and the ability to continue to work remotely during a crisis need to be supported by well-defined processes, tools, and technology.

19. New guidelines for business continuity management were issued for the Secretariat in February 2020. The guidelines defined the principles of business continuity for the Secretariat and prescribe that continuity strategies should be reflected in the Headquarters entities' individual business continuity plans (BCP), which will collectively constitute the BCP for Headquarters. The Sustainability and Resilience Management Unit in the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance (DMSPC) was responsible for strengthening the programme on business continuity and updating the guiding document as needed. The concerned entities and offices were responsible for their individual BCPs, identification of vital records, and liaising with OICT on critical systems required for business continuity during a disaster scenario. However, the guidelines did not assign responsibility for monitoring the completeness of the BCPs and testing of various scenarios. OIOS also noted the following:

20. On 13 March 2020, the Secretary-General advised staff members to telecommute and work remotely from 16 March 2020 onwards, to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. At this point, only 8 per cent of the Secretariat (15 per cent of Headquarters) had migrated their shared drives to the SharePoint Online solution. The Secretariat's document management processes were not fully ready for unforeseen situations such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Many offices/entities had not adequately identified and prioritized their business continuity requirements, which included identification and prioritization of vital¹ documents, and the available tools to facilitate access to documents remotely and securely. Further, in many duty stations, the host country implemented lockdowns and staff members who had proceeded on entitlement leave or official travel were either stranded at the place of leave or in transit and were unable to access documents to continue working remotely. Documents located in shared drives, network drives, computer hard drives and information systems were not readily accessible from outside the United Nations network.

21. In response to the urgent need to access documents, OICT decided to speed up the migration of documents from shared drives to SharePoint Online irrespective of the nature and contents of the information. This helped to alleviate the problem temporarily, but other users continued to rely on back up data held on USB drives, back up databases, personal laptops and other similar devices. OICT stated that in coordination with ARMS/DOS, it formalized a project for shared drive migration in February 2020. Guidance was provided to departmental shared drive focal points regarding the review and segregation of content based on classification to determine whether content should be migrated to SharePoint Online or

¹ Any data or information essential for the ongoing functioning of an organization without which it cannot continue to function effectively.

SharePoint on premises. However, OIOS noted that many departments proceeded with the migration without separating strictly confidential documents from documents migrated to SharePoint Online.

22. The absence of clearly defined business continuity plans and related actions could put the Secretariat's information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure and documents at risk and may lead to an adverse impact on the business continuity of its operations.

(2) DMSPC should strengthen the guidance on business continuity and assign monitoring responsibilities to ensure the completeness and testing of business continuity plans, including identification and updating of each entity's vital documents, and the tools required for business continuity.

DMSPC accepted recommendation 2 and stated that its Sustainability and Resilience Management Unit will create a dashboard on SharePoint for monitoring of business continuity plans. This dashboard will also provide an update on the testing of various business continuity plans. The dashboard will be completed by December 2021. The Sustainability and Resilience Management Unit will further ensure that the vital records and tools required for business continuity are included in the individual entities' business continuity plans. Recommendation 2 remains open pending receipt of evidence that guidance on business continuity has been strengthened, and monitoring responsibilities have been assigned for completeness and testing of business continuity plans, including identification and updating of each entity's vital documents and the tools required for business continuity.

B. Technological solutions

Deployment of document management systems need to be driven by user requirements

23. Document management processes should be user driven and technological solutions should facilitate end-to-end management of documents throughout the lifecycle. Best practices recommend that document management systems should facilitate collaboration, security and accessibility, regardless of the authoring or publishing medium.

24. The Secretariat had spent approximately \$140 million on various document management solutions between 2007-2020 which were still in use. These included Documentum, Unite Docs, Unite Workspace (i.e. SharePoint Online, MS Teams, OneDrive) and several other platforms in use across the Secretariat such as Cosmos, Comet/Comet Plus, internal and external files sharing tools, and cloud storage systems.

25. The gathering of user requirements is vital for user acceptance and effective use of deployed solutions. OIOS reviewed various project management documents on the deployment of document management solutions (i.e. legacy document management solutions and Unite Workspace) within the Secretariat and conducted a survey of the user community. The review and survey results indicated that most of these solutions were technology driven rather than user driven. This caused the proliferation of tools for document management among various offices because users continued to require an integrated document management solution which could manage the entire lifecycle of documents, facilitate remote access, and provide access to all components in one single place.

26. Even though the two earlier enterprise solutions (Documentum and Unite Docs) did not fully achieve their objectives, there were no lessons learned from these experiences to inform future initiatives. Various stakeholders indicated that user requirements and feedback were not adequately considered in the selection of SharePoint Online as the enterprise solution for document management. OIOS noted the following with regard to the Unite workspace project:

(i) Although OICT stated that the functional requirements for Unite Workspace were gathered in collaboration with senior users who represented various stakeholders' interests from entities such as United Nations Offices at Nairobi and Geneva, the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic, user requirements provided to OIOS indicated that user requirements were compiled by the OICT project implementation team (e.g. FR.05-Deploy MS Team application to all users, FR.06-Deploy SharePoint Online solution to all users, FR.07-Deploy OneDrive application to all users). Further, senior users were all from OICT and there was no indication that the functional requirements were signed-off.

(ii) Some departments/offices indicated that the SharePoint Online solution did not meet their internal requirements. To use SharePoint Online, it was necessary for them to develop interfaces or additional functionalities. Since the funding for such additional functionalities or integration had to come from the concerned departments/offices, it is likely that they may explore alternative solutions instead. This situation could be mitigated by gathering the user requirements that would enable identification of gaps in existing customizations and configurations and allow for appropriate solutions to address them effectively.

27. Lack of user buy-in in the deployment of technological solutions for document management may lead to users seeking alternative solutions at extra cost to the Organization, thereby negating the economies of scale that would be derived from an enterprise solution.

(3) OICT should assist business owners in gathering user requirements pertaining to document management, and in configuring and customizing enterprise solutions to meet their specific needs in document management.

OICT accepted recommendation 3 and stated that new user requirements can occur at any time and OICT's assistance may or may not be needed. Therefore, there is no predictable end date. The proposed implementation date is for showing evidence that OICT has provided at least one business owner with assistance in requirement gathering and in customizing solution. Recommendation 3 remains open pending receipt of evidence of mechanisms established to assist in gathering document management user requirements to inform the customization and configuration of enterprise solutions.

Clarity is required as to the enterprise system to be used for documents management

28. Best practices state that a clearly defined roadmap for use of document management systems within an organization alleviates ambiguity and provides standardized practices and tools.

29. The status of the existing legacy systems (i.e. Unite Docs, Cosmos) vis-à-vis the deployment of SharePoint Online as the enterprise solution for document management needs to be clarified. Following on from the decision to deploy SharePoint Online as a document management system, there was no clarity provided as to whether existing legacy systems will remain and function side by side with SharePoint Online. Further, conflicting guidelines were issued by OICT on which system was to be the enterprise document management system, even as investment in other platforms was continuing at the same time. The lack of clarity caused confusion among users as to which platform should be used as the enterprise document management system (see Table below).

Table: Inconsistencies in communication regarding enterprise system for document management

Date	Communication	Instructions/clarification by OICT
22 March 2019	OICT memorandum to all entities within the Secretariat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SharePoint Online is the system for file management, policies and practices, basic collaboration, correspondence and records management. • OneDrive to be used for personal documents. • SharePoint-Azure based solution proposed for correspondence management.
4 November 2019	OICT email to OIOS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For strictly confidential documents, Unite Docs will be used until SharePoint Online is security compliant. • Unite Docs remains the enterprise document management solution and is currently the only platform cleared for storage and management of strictly confidential documents. • SharePoint Online is being rolled out as the enterprise document management platform. • Specialized modules of Unite Docs such as Official Status Files and Unite Correspondence will be retained until such time security features are available in SharePoint Online.
12 February 2020	OICT communication to implementation leads for Unite Workspace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OICT cleared: (i) Unite Docs; and (ii) the SharePoint On-Prem instance of the hybrid SharePoint/Unite Workspace environment, for storing strictly confidential information.

30. User feedback indicated that the solution for strictly confidential documents was not as reliable, as the SharePoint interim hybrid solution was based on the older version and technology of SharePoint which did not integrate with the current version and had aggressive timeout issues. This caused concern about its reliability and usability. This weakness further meant that both Unite Docs and SharePoint Online will co-exist for the foreseeable future with significant financial and maintenance implications for the Organization.

(4) OICT should clarify the enterprise solution for document management in the Secretariat and for the storage of strictly confidential documents.

OICT accepted recommendation 4 and stated that it will be working towards implementing the recommendation in a timely manner. Recommendation 4 remains open pending receipt of evidence that users in the Secretariat have been clearly informed on the enterprise solution to be used for document management, and for the storage of strictly confidential documents.

Adequate planning procedures are required for secure migration of documents

31. Planning procedures for ensuring the secure and effective migration of documents from legacy systems to new solutions should consider business requirements, reliability, accessibility, availability, serviceability and security of the migrated documents.

32. While OICT had prepared a high level ‘Unite Workspace project roadmap’, it did not describe in detail the plan for migrating documents from legacy applications to SharePoint Online and for decommissioning of legacy applications. OICT stated that the detailed plan for migrating to SharePoint Online was the responsibility of the local implementation leads and a migration baseline was prepared with inputs from local project managers and published in the Unite Workspace migration dashboard. At the time of audit, OICT was transitioning users’ documents from shared drives to SharePoint Online. OIOS noted that planning considerations were inadequate for ensuring that users cleaned up the data and prevented the migration of strictly confidential documents to SharePoint Online. Users complained that the migration was forced upon them without adequate time to clean up the data because OICT had issued a

notification that access to shared drives will discontinue after 31 March 2020 (this date was later extended to 30 September 2020). OIOS noted cases where ‘strictly confidential documents’ were inappropriately migrated from shared drives to SharePoint Online and there were no established procedures/guidance for corrective action. This posed an information security risk to the Secretariat. OICT stated that it would not have been technically possible to assign classification level to artefacts during their migration, and strictly confidential documents should not have been stored on shared folders.

33. There was lack of clarity on the plan to migrate the documents from the legacy applications such as Unite Docs (other than Standard² Unite Docs) to SharePoint Online and decommissioning of the existing legacy system after completion of migration of documents, which may potentially expose the Organization to the risk of disclosure of sensitive information and additional costs.

34. Change management activities including training on the migration to SharePoint Online did not adequately cover data cleansing and retention policies. Fourteen out of 23 (61 per cent) user groups interviewed expressed dissatisfaction with the training imparted, mentioning that it did not focus on governance aspects, data cleansing, and lacked practical timelines for secure, efficient and effective migration. The inadequate change management activities prevented users and offices from adequately estimating and preparing for the deployment of the new system in their respective functional areas.

(5) OICT should: (i) prepare a plan for migration of documents from legacy applications to SharePoint Online; (ii) implement a plan for decommissioning of legacy applications after migration is complete; and (iii) implement change management activities and strengthen the communication and coordination mechanism for ongoing deployment of the Unite Workspace project.

OICT accepted recommendation 5 and stated that the timely completion of migration related work is subject to the availability of funding. Recommendation 5 remains open pending receipt of: (i) a plan for migration of documents from legacy applications to SharePoint Online; (ii) evidence of implementation of a plan for decommissioning of legacy applications after migration is complete; and (iii) evidence of implementation of change management activities.

Document management requirements should be considered for enterprise applications

35. Best practice prescribes that document management requirements should be embedded in the requirements for related software acquisition, software development, and integrated with any in-house document management systems. Further, software applications should be able to preserve the integrity of information, including quality control, security, indexing, search and retrieval features for documents captured by these applications. OIOS noted the following with regard to enterprise applications:

(i) OICT had established an Architecture Review Board which reviewed requests for acquisition and development of new systems/applications against a set of pre-defined technological standards before approval. However, the standards did not include document management requirements, which were therefore not considered in the process of acquisition and development of new systems/applications. Projects for acquisition and development of enterprise applications such as Umoja and Inspira, which are not inherently document management solutions but contain a large number of transactional documents created by the Organization, did not consider how such documents would be managed. These systems had limited capability to capture metadata and the use of indexing, standard taxonomies, naming conventions, and content categories to support the search and retrieval of documents contained within these systems.

² Standard Unite Docs refers to the Unite Docs repositories used to replace business units shared drives

The Umoja project team stated that the ‘search and retrieval’ was not part of the intended design and functionality of the Umoja Records Management solution; the metadata associated with an Umoja attachment was sufficient for the intended use.

(ii) There were no built-in retention schedules in the enterprise applications (Umoja, Inspira, Cosmos, Comet). As such, there was no mechanism to identify active and obsolete documents (i.e. within or beyond the retention schedule). Also, documents were being retained indefinitely as there was no reliable process for identifying and disposing of obsolete documents in these applications. OIOS noted that indefinite retention could affect the performance of these systems when they become over-burdened with documents and also lead to inadvertent disclosure of the sensitive information. In addition, there was no enterprise-wide retention schedule for digital documents. The Umoja project team stated that the retention schedule was an attribute of an Umoja transaction - not the document attached to the transaction; as long as the transaction is in the system, the supporting documentation must also be available. Further, the Umoja project team stated that proactive measures were taken in 2018 to manage this situation. For example, the infrastructure team in Valencia continuously monitors the disk usage of the databases that store the attachments and they also monitor the database growth rates.

36. OICT issued a guidance document (i.e. ‘Guideline on O365 Naming Convention, Sites Creation, and Content Retention’) which described the ‘big bucket’ approach as the methodology for document retention in SharePoint Online. This approach contradicts existing retention policies whereby retention schedules are based on the functional nature of the documents. The change in approach was not backed by any policy to ensure a standardized approach for document retention. This could cause unnecessary retention of documents no longer required. OICT agreed an enterprise policy on content retention should be established.

37. These matters need to be addressed to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the Secretariat’s document management practices.

(6) DMSPC, in collaboration with DOS and OICT, should establish a retention policy for digital/electronic documents.

DMSPC accepted recommendation 6 and stated that it will establish a task force, with client involvement, to develop a policy for the retention of digital/electronic documents, taking into account the general policies for document retention, technological capabilities and limitations, long term sustainability, as well as funding constraints. Recommendation 6 remains open pending receipt of evidence that a retention policy for digital/electronic documents is established.

IV. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

38. OIOS wishes to express its appreciation to the Management and staff of DMSPC, DOS and OICT 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 document management systems and related processes in the United Nations Secretariat

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical³/ Important⁴	C/ O⁵	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date⁶
1	OICT, in collaboration with DMSPC, should: (i) explain document management within the context of the information management framework for the Secretariat; and (ii) develop standards for managing documents throughout the lifecycle.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that document management has been explained within the context of the information management framework; and standards for managing documents throughout the lifecycle have been developed.	31 December 2021
2	DMSPC should strengthen the guidance on business continuity and assign monitoring responsibilities to ensure the completeness and testing of business continuity plans, including identification and updating of each entity's vital documents, and the tools required for business continuity.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that guidance on business continuity has been strengthened, monitoring responsibilities have been assigned for completeness and testing of business continuity plans, including identification and updating of each entity's vital documents and the tools required for business continuity.	31 December 2021
3	OICT should assist business owners in gathering user requirements pertaining to document management, and in configuring and customizing enterprise solutions to meet their specific needs in document management.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that mechanisms have been established to assist in gathering document management user requirements to inform the customization and configuration of enterprise solutions.	31 December 2021
4	OICT should clarify the enterprise solution for document management in the Secretariat and for the storage of strictly confidential documents.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that users in the Secretariat have been clearly informed on the enterprise solution to be used for document management, and for the storage of strictly confidential documents.	31 December 2021
5	OICT should: (i) prepare a plan for migration of documents from legacy applications to SharePoint Online; (ii) implement a plan for decommissioning of legacy applications after migration is complete; and (iii)	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that a plan for migration of documents from legacy applications to SharePoint Online and for decommissioning of legacy applications after migration is complete,	31 December 2022

³ 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.

⁴ 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.

⁵ Please note the value C denotes closed recommendations whereas O refers to open recommendations.

⁶ Date provided by DMSPC, DOS and OICT in response to recommendations.

STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Audit of document management systems and related processes in the United Nations Secretariat

	implement change management activities and strengthen the communication and coordination mechanism for ongoing deployment of the Unite Workspace project.			has been prepared, change management activities implemented and the communication and coordination mechanism for ongoing deployment of the Unite Workspace project strengthened.	
6	DMSPC, in collaboration with DOS and OICT, should establish a retention policy for digital/electronic documents.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that a retention policy for digital/electronic documents has been established.	31 December 2021

APPENDIX I

Management Response

United Nations  Nations Unies

INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

MEMORANDUM INTERIEUR

TO: Mr. Gurpur Kumar, Deputy Director
A: Internal Audit Division
Office of Internal Oversight Services

DATE: 22 September 2020

THROUGH: *C. Monier*
Christophe Monier, Director

S/C DE: Business Transformation and Accountability Division
Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance

FROM: *Mario Baez*
Mario Baez, Chief, Accountability Service

DE: Business Transformation and Accountability Division
Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance

SUBJECT: **Draft report on an audit of document management systems and related processes
in the United Nations Secretariat (Assignment No. AT2019-517-04)**

OBJET: **Draft report on an audit of document management systems and related processes
in the United Nations Secretariat (Assignment No. AT2019-517-04)**

1. We refer to your memorandum dated 26 August 2020 regarding the above-mentioned draft report. Please find below and in annex I the consolidated comments from the Office of Information and Communications Technology (OICT), Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance (DMSPC) and the Department of Operational Support (DOS).

Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance

Page 3, first bullet

Collaborate In collaboration with the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance (DMSPC), to explain document management within the context of the information management framework for the Secretariat; and develop standards for managing documents throughout the lifecycle.

2. DMSPC would like to request OIOS to revise the above paragraph as indicated so that the wording is consistent with that of the recommendation.
3. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to provide comments on the draft report.

Management Response

Audit of document management systems and related processes in the United Nations Secretariat

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
1	OICT, in collaboration with DMSPC, should: (i) explain document management within the context of the information management framework for the Secretariat; and (ii) develop standards for managing documents throughout the lifecycle.	Important	Yes	Director, Policy, Strategy and Governance Division, OICT	31 December 2021	The implementation of this recommendation is dependent on the approval of the newly drafted Secretary-General's Bulletin on Information Management Framework for the United Nations Secretariat, which is currently being presented to the Information and Communications Technology Steering Committee.
2	DMSPC should strengthen the guidance on business continuity and assign monitoring responsibilities to ensure the completeness and testing of business continuity plans, including identification and updating of each	Important	Yes	Senior Management and Programme Analyst; Environmental and Organizational Resilience	31 December 2021	DMSPC accepts this recommendation and its Sustainability and Resilience Management Unit will create a dashboard on SharePoint for monitoring of business continuity plans. This dashboard will also provide

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.

Management Response

Audit of document management systems and related processes in the United Nations Secretariat

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
	entity's vital documents, and the tools required for business continuity.			Management, DMSPC.		an update on the testing of various business continuity plans. The dashboard will be completed by December 2021. The Sustainability and Resilience Management Unit will further ensure that the vital records and tools required for business continuity are included in the individual entities business continuity plans.
3	OICT should: (i) assist business owners in gathering user requirements pertaining to document management, and in configuring and customizing enterprise solutions to meet their specific needs in document management; and (ii) establish a governance and oversight mechanism for creation and decommissioning of MS Teams sites.	Important	(i) Yes (ii) No	(i) Chief, Enterprise Solutions Service, OICT (ii) Director, Operations Support Division, OICT	(i) 31 December 2021	(i) New user requirements can occur at any time and OICT's assistance may or may not be needed. Therefore, there is no predictable end date. The proposed implementation date is for showing evidence that OICT has provided at least one business owner with assistance in requirement

Management Response

Audit of document management systems and related processes in the United Nations Secretariat

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
						<p>gathering and in customizing solution.</p> <p>(ii) OICT does not accept part (ii) of the recommendation because it has already established an effective mechanism of governing the creation and decommissioning of Microsoft Teams sites. The mechanism defines two types of Teams:</p> <p>a) Official Teams, which are created and governed by strict naming conventions. These Teams are created for each office and this is communicated through the Unite Workspace.</p> <p>b) Ad-hoc Teams, which can be created by anyone. These</p>

Management Response

Audit of document management systems and related processes in the United Nations Secretariat

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
						<p>are deleted if they are not used for six months. The Teams owner is informed of the deletion, and the data can be archived should the owner wish to do so.</p> <p>This approach represents a balance between central control and operational flexibility for the users. Adding more governance and oversight in the creation of Teams is contrary to the spirit of a flexible collaboration platform and can be counterproductive.</p>
4	OICT should clarify the enterprise solution for document management in the Secretariat and for the storage of strictly confidential documents.	Important	Yes	Chief, Enterprise Solutions Service, OICT	31 December 2021	ICT will be working towards implementing the recommendation in a timely manner.
5	OICT should: (i) prepare a plan for migration of documents from legacy applications to SharePoint Online; (ii)	Important	Yes	Chief, Enterprise Solutions Service and Director,	31 December 2022	The timely completion of migration related work is

Management Response

Audit of document management systems and related processes in the United Nations Secretariat

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
	implement a plan for decommissioning of legacy applications after migration is complete; and (iii) implement change management activities and strengthen the communication and coordination mechanism for ongoing deployment of the Unite Workspace project.			Operations Support Division, OICT		subject to the availability of funding.
6	DMSPC, in collaboration with DOS and OICT, should establish a retention policy for digital/electronic documents.	Important	Yes	Principal Management Officer, Office of the Under Secretary-General, DMSPC	31 December 2021	DMSPC will establish a task force, with client involvement, to develop a policy for the retention of digital/electronic documents, taking into account the general policies for document retention, technological capabilities and limitations, long term sustainability, as well as funding constraints.