



## **INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION**

### **REPORT 2022/058**

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#### **Audit of performance monitoring and reporting in the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management**

**While performance monitoring at the departmental and divisional levels was effective and the established key performance indicators were adequate, the Department needed to improve the presentation and completeness of statistics monitored and maintain an audit trail**

**7 November 2022  
Assignment No. AH2021-550-01**

# **Audit of performance monitoring and reporting in the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of performance monitoring and reporting in the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management (DGACM). The objective of the audit was to assess the adequacy and efficiency of DGACM processes to produce accurate, reliable and complete information for effective performance monitoring and reporting. The audit covered the period from 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2021 and addressed three main questions:

- a. How adequately did the performance indicators used by DGACM measure implementation of its mandate?
- b. How efficiently did DGACM collect, collate and analyze data for performance monitoring and reporting?
- c. To what extent were the reported performance indicators accurate and reliable?

DGACM established adequate key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure implementation of mandates and reported on its performance annually in official and internal reports. Performance monitoring at the departmental and divisional levels was effective and contributed to delivering of DGACM mandates. However, the existing document management statistics and KPIs did not cover the entire work programme for the Documentation Division to allow for internal monitoring and trend analysis. Also, DGACM used different bases to calculate document management statistics and indicators that were not presented clearly in the reports to Member States. It also did not retain an audit trail of all calculations. Although the Department reviewed and approved each document reissuance request, it did not regularly analyze the causes of reissuance to address recurring issues.

OIOS made five recommendations. To address issues identified in the audit, DGACM needed to:

- Monitor statistics on processing and timeliness of issuing slotted documents submitted after the slot date and exceeding the word limit to identify issues and monitor trends;
- Formalize periodic analysis of requests to reissue documents to implement appropriate corrective actions and monitor trends;
- Summarize procedures for cleaning document and meeting management data to formalize the important process of data cleaning;
- Retain underlying calculations of document timeliness indicators and meeting management indicators including detailed methodical guidance to maintain an audit trail of indicators reported in DGACM official reports; and
- Improve presentation of document management indicators in reports to Member States to provide a clearer picture of the basis of computation.

DGACM accepted the recommendations and initiated actions to implement them. Actions required to close the recommendations are indicated in Annex I.

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# **Audit of performance monitoring and reporting in the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management**

## **I. BACKGROUND**

1. The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of performance monitoring and reporting in the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management (DGACM).

2. DGACM is responsible for, among others, implementing policy, formulating standards and guidelines, and overseeing and coordinating United Nations conference services and related resources at New York Headquarters and at the United Nations Offices at Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi (UNOG, UNOV and UNON)<sup>1</sup>.

3. DGACM reports annually on the procedures, activities and performance of these four duty stations in providing conferences services in several official reports to Member States, including reports of the Secretary-General on the pattern of conferences and supplementary information thereon, proposed programme budgets and reports of the Secretary-General on multilingualism. DGACM also prepares other annual reports for internal purposes such as the conference management report, which includes programmatic indicators for all four conference servicing duty stations and is shared in March with all heads of entities who submit documents for processing by DGACM. The established indicators fall under the following categories:

- a. Document management;
- b. Meetings management;
- c. Productivity measures;
- d. Cost efficiency; and
- e. Quality measures, i.e., satisfaction of Member States.

4. The audit focused on performance monitoring and reporting activities of three divisions in New York: Documentation Division, Meetings and Publishing Division (MPD) and Central Planning and Coordination Division (CPCD)<sup>2</sup>. The Documentation Division is responsible for processing high-quality, multilingual parliamentary documentation required by the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and other entities of the United Nations. MPD provides a wide range of conference services, including interpretation, verbatim reporting and meetings support. CPCD, among other functions, reviews legislative mandates and incorporates them into the programme of work for both meetings and documentation.

5. All three divisions play a role in ensuring accurate and consistent document and meeting management data are maintained in the information technology systems, mainly: gDoc for document management, gMeets for meeting management, gData and gData 2.0 for business intelligence and reporting, and eAPG for assignment and utilization monitoring of interpreters. In addition, the Evaluation, Analysis and Monitoring Unit (EAMU) in CPCD conducts self-evaluations for DGACM and consolidates programmatic performance results for all four conference servicing duty stations based on data provided by the other duty stations. The Executive Office prepares reports on human resources, financial and budgetary information from multiple sources, which informs proactive actions by managers and facilitates effective risk management.

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<sup>1</sup> These offices remain responsible and accountable for day-to-day operational conference servicing activities.

<sup>2</sup> Governed by the Secretary-General's bulletin on the organization of DGACM (ST/SGB/2021/3)

6. The regular budget for 2021 across the four conference servicing duty stations was approved at \$329.8 million, of which \$258.7 (78 per cent) were for post resources. As of 31 December 2021, there were 1,787 approved regular budget posts, of which 962 were in New York, 577 in Geneva, 186 in Vienna and 62 in Nairobi. A total of 237 posts were vacant, representing 13.3 per cent vacancy rate. CPCD had 47 approved regular budget posts; Executive Office, 26; Documentation Division, 516; and MPD, 288. EAMU had a chief at P5 level, two professional and four general service staff.

7. Comments provided by DGACM are incorporated in italics.

## **II. AUDIT OBJECTIVE, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY**

8. The objective of the audit was to assess the adequacy and efficiency of DGACM processes to produce accurate, reliable and complete information for effective performance monitoring and reporting. The audit addressed three main questions:

- a. How adequately did the performance indicators used by DGACM measure implementation of its mandate?
- b. How efficiently did DGACM collect, collate and analyze data for performance monitoring and reporting?
- c. To what extent were the reported performance indicators accurate and reliable?

9. This audit was included in the 2021 risk-based work plan of OIOS due to the risk that performance monitoring in DGACM may not be adequate and efficient. As DGACM reports extensively on its performance to Member States, the audit scope focused on assessing how performance results were compiled, measured, monitored and reported. The audit did not comment on the performance results themselves or on efforts made to ensure business continuity during the pandemic.

10. OIOS conducted this audit from July 2021 to June 2022. The audit focused on performance monitoring and reporting activities of three divisions in New York: Documentation Division, MPD and CPCD. The audit covered the period from 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2021. The audit reviewed prior years' data where the information for 2020 and 2021 was limited or for comparative purposes. The audit methodology included: (a) interviews with key personnel, (b) review of relevant documentation, (c) analytical reviews of data from DGACM information systems, and (d) benchmarking of efforts at multilingualism by other intergovernmental and multinational organizations.

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

## **III. AUDIT RESULTS**

### **A. How adequately did the performance indicators used by DGACM measure implementation of its mandate?**

Overall, DGACM established adequate performance indicators to measure implementation of its mandate

12. DGACM established a working group in 2017 to select indicators for integrated global management and to examine 46 indicators mandated by the General Assembly in various resolutions. The working group completed its review in 2019 and produced a list of 37 quantifiable indicators required by Member States and for use internally. They comprised 14 indicators for integrated global management, 8 indicators for planning and coordination of conference services, 9 indicators for documentation services, and 6 indicators

for meetings and publishing services. (Nine indicators were identified as duplicates or no longer relevant.) The working group also updated and harmonized the methodology used to calculate some of the indicators between the duty stations. The proposed indicators were also used as a basis for the gData 2.0 project, which would provide dashboards in Power BI for senior management and for inclusion in official reports. To ensure KPIs continue to meet the requirements of Member States, EAMU reviewed relevant resolutions annually for any changes, and every February prepared a matrix of mandated actions and reporting requirements based on which responsibilities to DGACM focal points for each mandate were assigned.

13. There were also adequate indicators for internal monitoring of divisions. The Documentation Division had sufficient information available for the day-to-day monitoring in gDoc, gData and monthly productivity reports provided by EAMU. Similarly, MPD current meetings management indicators were adequate to provide a clear and complete picture of their annual performance and additional indicators such as interpreter's productivity were monitored internally on a more frequent basis. Operational information was readily available in gMeets, gDoc and eAPG. In addition, DGACM introduced seven cost efficiency KPIs for inter-duty station performance monitoring including cost per day (meeting services), cost per word (translation, editing, text-processing), cost per page (publishing) and cost per copy (distribution). These indicators were calculated annually but were only used for estimating programme budget implications and for extrabudgetary meetings when costs were recovered by DGACM.

Member States were generally satisfied with the quality of services provided by DGACM but response rates to surveys remained low

14. DGACM collected feedback on the quality of conference services from Member States through various sources including surveys and annual interviews, although the response rates/participation remained low. The main source of feedback in 2020 was a global online survey that included all four conference servicing duty stations for the first time. The survey covered 55 questions, and while the responses were predominantly positive, only 213 responses were received (31 for New York, 94 for Geneva, 45 for Vienna and 43 for Nairobi). DGACM did not set any targets on the expected number of responses as historically, the response rates had been low. Also, some respondents did not answer all questions, with some questions having as few as 20 responses. This occurred despite DGACM having shared the survey link widely, including in the UN Journal and One-Stop-Shop in gMeets so all delegates from 193 Member States in the four conference duty stations could be reached. Most survey responses had ratings of "very good" and "good", including on the overall quality of conference services (175 "very good" or "good", 25 "satisfactory" and 3 "poor"). Only remote simultaneous interpretation and a participant registration system for large conferences (Indico.UN) received several "poor" ratings. While DGACM attributed the low response rate to survey fatigue, DGACM did not send official communications and reminders to Member States to request the completion of the 2020 survey.

15. For the 2021 survey, DGACM sent an email to Member States on 8 December 2021 inviting delegations to provide feedback through the 2021 online survey. The survey link was also shared online through platforms used by Member States representatives. Nevertheless, only 141 responses had been received as of 13 June 2022: 41 for New York, 20 for Geneva, 31 for Vienna and 49 for Nairobi. The 2021 survey was open until 1 March 2022; however, the long response period without periodic reminders did not result in a higher response rate. DGACM commented that a low response rate did not necessarily indicate quality issues as Member States tended to give feedback when they were not happy.

16. DGACM had not considered splitting the global survey of 55 questions into smaller more focused surveys covering specific topics such as translation, interpretation, verbatim records and technological tools, or reducing the number of questions in the current survey. Also, DGACM did not send regular reminders to Member States before the closing date. DGACM indicated that they already had other ways

to collect feedback, including annual interviews, register of complaints and compliments, and the survey of Bureau members.

17. In addition, the Office of the Under-Secretary-General (USG) maintained a register of complaints and compliments. Out of 108 records between 2019 and 2021, there were only six complaints. The General Assembly secretariat also collected feedback from Bureau members of General Assembly/ECOSOC main committees, and the 14 responses provided in 2020 and 20 responses in 2021 were mostly very positive and praising DGACM for support given. DGACM reported on the feedback received in official reports. Nevertheless, the General Assembly requested in resolution 75/244 of 7 January 2021 that the Secretary-General seek a larger rate of response to DGACM surveys and intensify exploration of innovative ways to systematically capture and analyze feedback from Member States and Chairs and Secretaries of committees on the quality of conference services.

18. DGACM commented that it planned to reduce the number of questions covered in the 2023 survey. Also, a shorter survey was being administered by the General Assembly and ECOSOC Affairs Division to bureau members, and reminders would be sent in advance of the closing date.

#### Completeness of reported document management statistics and indicators needed to be enhanced

19. The main indicators for document management are timely submission of reports by author departments, processing<sup>3</sup> and issuance<sup>4</sup> of documents within the stipulated timeframes, simultaneous issuance of documents in all official languages, number of translated words, and the translation throughput productivity<sup>5</sup> statistics that measure the number of translated pages per day per translator.

20. Slotted documents are documents that are produced based on mandates contained in resolutions from governing bodies and must comply with the issuance deadlines of six, four or two weeks before meetings, as set by the General Assembly. They represent 60 per cent of the workload of DGACM (based on the number of words processed). Non-slotted documents are all other documents received for processing, representing the remaining 40 per cent of the workload<sup>6</sup>. They mostly comprise draft resolutions and other documents that further the work of meeting bodies that are of an unpredictable nature.

21. The existing document management KPIs did not cover the entire work programme for the Documentation Division to allow for internal monitoring and trend analyses.

22. **Slotted documents submitted late, exceeding the word limit, or both:** DGACM did not establish statistics or KPIs on processing and timely issuance of slotted documents that are submitted late, exceed the word limit or both. In 2020, this amounted to 457 or 33 per cent of the 1,374 slotted documents for which processing KPI was not calculated and 176 or 13 per cent of slotted documents for which KPI on timely issuance was not calculated. DGACM stated that it always met the requirement to issue documents before they were due for consideration at meetings. Although this could not be independently verified, there was no evidence of complaints from Member States about documents not being available for meetings. However, non-availability of statistics or indicators did not allow DGACM to determine the additional burden placed on its resources to ensure manuscripts submitted late or above the word limits were produced in time for meetings. Furthermore, DGACM could not determine trends over the years on the length of time it took to finalize processing these documents, i.e., whether three weeks, one week, or two days before the

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<sup>3</sup> Processing mandate is a four-week turnaround of documents submitted on time and within word limit.

<sup>4</sup> General Assembly resolution 47/2020 mandated issuance of pre-session documents at least six weeks before a meeting in all official languages. In specific cases, this is decreased to four or two weeks.

<sup>5</sup> Throughput productivity is calculated as follows: All words received and processed divided by the net working days of all translators who worked directly to produce them.

<sup>6</sup> Table 3 of this report includes a breakdown of translation workload in DGACM from 2019 to 2021.

meeting and the direction of the trend (whether improving, deteriorating or flat). Such statistics could also demonstrate the negative impact that late submissions or submissions over the word limit or both by author departments have on processing and issuance timelines and on resources such as staff being required to work overtime or additional cost of hiring temporary assistance.

23. To address late submissions of manuscripts, the Planning Team in the Document Management Section sent reminders to author departments when document submissions were due or overdue, but these were replaced with informal discussions during the pandemic, when meeting dates were frequently being rescheduled. In 2021, informal reminders were used due to a vacancy in the section, which was filled in March 2022. Since timely submission of manuscripts for multilingual processing is a KPI in senior managers' compacts, reinstating regular formal reminders could contribute to more timely submission and thus improve processing and issuance of slotted documents. Fifteen entities in 2020 and 13 in 2021 had a submission compliance rate of below 90 per cent compared with 9 entities in 2019; DGACM partly attributed this to the pandemic.

**(1) DGACM should monitor statistics on processing and timeliness of issuing slotted documents submitted after the slot date and exceeding the word limit to identify issues and monitor trends.**

*DGACM accepted recommendation 1 and stated that a report would be implemented in gDoc regarding issuing slotted documents submitted after the slot date and exceeding the word limit. The statistical report for monitoring and periodic analysis would be built in gData 2.0 based on gDoc inputs.*

24. **Non-slotted documents:** There were no statistics analyzed to monitor turnaround time of processing approximately 9,000 non-slotted documents annually, amounting to at least 40 million translated words. Apart from draft resolutions and reports for the Security Council, many of the non-slotted documents had the lowest priority and were postponed if more urgent or important processing requests were received. For example, there was a significant backlog in translating treaties, which was eventually cleared in 2021. While DGACM stated that they always issued draft resolutions before a meeting as mandated and that they rarely received complaints on other categories of documents, there were no internal statistics readily available to confirm this. As DGACM did not calculate the timelines for any category of non-slotted documents, it was not possible to establish to what extent adverse events, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, budget constraints and the liquidity crisis had impacted processing timeliness or turnaround time, i.e., how long it took on average to process non-slotted documents, how much potential backlog was accumulating, how many documents were postponed beyond their original deadlines, etc.

25. The ongoing upgrades to gDoc and gData 2.0 projects presented an opportunity for DGACM to ensure that these new systems collect, track and report on processing and where applicable timely issuance of all 10,000 to 11,000 documents processed by DGACM annually. DGACM commented that it would work on providing a list of parameters for the gData team to capture statistics on non-slotted documents using available fields in gDoc.

#### DGACM needed to monitor accuracy of issued documents through analysis of reissuance requests

26. One of the indicators of the accuracy of issued documents is the number of documents that had to be reissued. DGACM logged 228 reissuance requests in 2020 and 203 requests in 2021. This led to 775 reissued documents in 2020 and 505 reissued documents in 2021 as per gDoc data, as reissuance requests might impact just one, some or all language versions of a document. The higher reissuances in 2020 were attributed to the need to revise meeting dates on the cover page, after they had been rescheduled. While the Document Management Section reviewed and approved each reissuance request and maintained a log of



them, it did not regularly analyze the requests to identify any recurring causes/issues. The last such analysis was conducted in 2019.

27. The Document Management Section stated that they informed programming officers in the Documentation Division informally about recurring issues, where necessary. However, it was not easy to analyze reissuance requests as the more recent logs did not categorize reasons for reissuance but stated them as free text, often with very generic descriptions, such as reissuance due to material error. The Document Management Section commented that mistranslation was the most common reason for a reissuance. Without an in-depth analysis of the reasons for reissuance requests, DGACM may not timely identify quality issues for resolution.

**(2) DGACM should formalize periodic analysis of requests to reissue documents to identify common reasons or recurring issues and implement appropriate corrective actions and monitor trends.**

*DGACM accepted recommendation 2 and stated that statistics would be extracted from gDoc to analyze reissuances. The statistical report for monitoring and periodic analysis will be built by gData 2.0 based on gDoc inputs.*

While DGACM mainstreamed multilingualism, there were challenges in its Secretariat-wide implementation

28. One of the mandates of DGACM is to provide multilingual meeting and documentation services with equal treatment of all six official languages. Also, a KPI of 100 per cent simultaneous issuance of documents in the six official languages is included in the USG, DGACM compact. Thus, multilingualism is inherently embedded in all core activities of DGACM and multilingualism and the equal treatment of all six official languages are an intrinsic part of day-to-day operations. During the audit period, DGACM continued to mainstream multilingualism by: (a) organizing language days to raise awareness of multilingualism and language diversity; (b) aligning the new DGACM public website with multilingual requirements; (c) enhancing outreach efforts, recruitment and succession planning for language professionals; (d) further developing technological tools supporting multilingualism such as the UNTERM portal on terminology and the translation assisting tool eLuna; and (e) supporting other United Nations system organizations in their multilingualism efforts.

29. OIOS benchmarking showed that multilingualism is an important concept for all 19 intergovernmental and multinational organizations<sup>7</sup> reviewed. In addition to interpretation and translation of official documents and online content, these organizations implemented initiatives similar to those in the Secretariat, including promotion of language learning and common language frameworks for assessing language proficiency; raising multilingual awareness through celebration of language days, language contests and awards; and use of information technology tools in translation. The Joint Inspection Unit report on multilingualism in the United Nations system in 2020 (JIU/REP/2020/6) showed that the Secretariat was ahead of other United Nations system organizations in several different areas reviewed, although it had issued seven formal and six informal recommendations for action.

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<sup>7</sup> United Nations Children Fund, World Health Organization, International Monetary Fund, World Trade Organization, United National Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization, South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, Asian Development Bank, Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, International Monetary Fund, International Labour Organization, African Union, Southern Common Market, World Bank, United Nations Development Programme, European Union, and Federal Delegate for Plurilingualism of Switzerland

30. The USG, DGACM is responsible for coordination of multilingualism in the Secretariat, and for a coordinated, consistent and coherent approach at the United Nations system level through the Chief Executives Board for Coordination. The terms of reference (A/71/757) categorizes the responsibilities of the Coordinator for Multilingualism under three main headings: (a) acting as an entry point for concerns and queries from Member States and Secretariat entities; (b) serving as a facilitator to attain a coordinated, consistent and coherent approach to multilingualism in the Secretariat and, at the request of the Secretary General, at the United Nations system level; and (c) initiating and suggesting innovative solutions to departments and offices to foster an organizational culture conducive to multilingualism. DGACM appointed one Public Information and Multilingualism Officer at P4 level to coordinate multilingualism, outreach efforts and other tasks. Outreach activities include 23 memorandums of understanding (MOUs) with universities, associated membership agreements with universities that do not fully meet MOU requirements, remote practicum agreements for internships, and ad hoc cooperation with professional organizations, the European Commission, universities, etc.

31. Coordination of multilingualism had been requested by the General Assembly as far back as in 1999 and a Coordinator for Multilingualism has been serving in the United Nations Secretariat since 2000. As Coordinator for Multilingualism, USG, DGACM prepared the Secretary-General's biennial reports on multilingualism, providing examples on how Secretariat entities had mainstreamed multilingualism in their programmes. While there were three indicators in the USG, DGACM compact for 2020 and 2021 on coordination of multilingualism,<sup>8</sup> and senior managers' compacts have included two performance indicators on multilingualism since 2018,<sup>9</sup> there were no Secretariat-wide indicators to measure overall progress towards multilingualism. DGACM stated that they did not have authority to establish specific indicators on multilingualism and request other entities to report on them, but they had provided a toolkit proposing a wide range of qualitative indicators that entities may establish. Limited availability of metrics disaggregated by language in many entities and lack of a strategic policy framework on multilingualism in the Secretariat had contributed to the absence of measurable targets on multilingualism, their monitoring and reporting and thus prevented measuring progress.

32. In March 2021, the Management Committee approved work on the development of a strategic policy framework on multilingualism. Formalizing multilingualism efforts in a document indicating baselines, objectives and targets to be achieved, gaps in data collection and measures to address them, monitoring mechanisms and reporting guidelines would allow for measuring progress towards multilingualism. A dedicated working group chaired by the director of the Division of Conference Management at UNOG was launched in 2022. The working group was expected to formally propose the adoption of the framework by the end of 2022, incorporating the objectives and policies as well as a matrix of indicators, accompanied with reporting requirements, related stakeholders and implementation timeframes.

#### The evaluation function needed more operational independence

33. DGACM conducted 14 self-evaluations over the last three years in the four conference servicing duty stations, of which 6 were conducted by EAMU in New York and the rest by the other duty stations. The evaluations covered areas of DGACM that were of concern, such as servicing of non-calendar meetings

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<sup>8</sup> (a) All concerns and queries related to multilingualism coming from Member States or Secretariat entities are monitored and addressed (2020 only). (b) Further steps are taken (2020) / Extrabudgetary funding is mobilized and intra-Secretariat coordination strengthened (2021) towards the development of a strategic policy framework on multilingualism with a view to achieving a coherent approach to multilingualism in the UN Secretariat. (c) Good practices and creative solutions to strengthen multilingualism are compiled and disseminated.

<sup>9</sup> (a) 100 per cent of the entity's work plans integrate multilingualism and/or language considerations; and (b) 100 per cent of manuscripts submitted to Conference Services by mutually agreed slot dates, within the word limits, and in full compliance with all editorial directives.

and capacity planning, and high priority areas such as realization of Sustainability Development Goal 12 on responsible consumption and production. The evaluation reports gave detailed description and analysis of the current situation but were less focused on the causes, consequences and necessary corrective actions of the issues reviewed. Even though recommendations were issued, they often involved continuation of existing efforts. Nevertheless, the evaluations contributed to programme planning and reporting on programme performance.

34. Hierarchically the evaluation function was not sufficiently independent as it is part of EAMU in CPCD, which was sometimes one of the divisions being evaluated. The evaluation function should have operational independence from the divisions and services it evaluates to facilitate objective analysis and to render impartial and unbiased judgments. Placement of the Unit in an organizational area that is not frequently the subject of its reviews, such as the Office of Under-Secretary-General, may improve its operational independence. DGACM acknowledged the need to further bolster the independence of DGACM's evaluations but noted that any changes to the organizational structure needed to be approved by the General Assembly. As EAMU performed other functions including keeping all DGACM processes and programmes under review, DGACM internal oversight structure needed to be reviewed within the context of integrated global management. In the meantime, the Office of USG, DGACM would directly oversee evaluations of the processes within CPCD to ensure the independence and objectivity of the review. According to DGACM this oversight had been in place for the last several years.

## **B. How efficiently did DGACM collect, collate and analyze data for performance monitoring and reporting?**

Controls for monitoring substantive data quality in gMeets and gDoc were adequate but not sufficiently documented to ensure consistency

35. **Document and meetings management data quality:** gDoc and gMeets were the main data sources for measuring meeting and document management indicators. CPCD and the Documentation Division implemented several controls, including ongoing data cleaning, to maintain data quality in gDoc and ensure that document management statistics were based on accurate data. However, CPCD did not have any guidance or checklist for the data clean-up exercise and relied mainly on their own experience. A documented process would help to ensure consistency and proper handover of tasks between staff members and will formalize the important process of data clean-up on which the accuracy of indicators reported to Member States depend. Furthermore, while monthly data cleaning was conducted in 2020 when exception reports in the DIMO tool were available, it was only performed in April/May, August and December 2021 due to lack of exception reports in the gDoc Planning Dashboard that had replaced DIMO. Therefore, timeliness indicators reported in the monthly reports may not be entirely accurate; although the data was cleaned before the year-end report was produced. CPCD had requested the gDoc project team to develop exception reports.

36. The Meetings Management Section of CPCD and MPD also implemented controls to ensure data quality in gMeets. For example, during weekly coordination meetings, the Meetings Management Section and MPD reviewed details of calendar and non-calendar meetings in the previous week captured in gMeets and made any corrections necessary. The Meetings Management Section conducted monthly data cleaning of extracted meeting data from gMeets. However, there was also no written guidance or checklist for this data cleaning.

37. **Translation throughput productivity data quality:** The calculation of translation throughput productivity depended on accurate recording of the number of translated words and net working days in gDoc and further calculations of net working days in gData. Data quality controls for the first three systems

are described above. To ensure net working days were calculated accurately by gData, the various language translation services in the Documentation Division reviewed exception monitoring reports from gDoc and corrected identified issues such as overlapping assignments and other inconsistent data entries. Data on staff leave and absences were entered manually into gDoc, which increased the risk of human error, but this was replaced by an interface between Umoja and upgraded gDoc in 2021, allowing for automated transmission of staff leave information. Also, EAMU shared monthly throughput productivity reports with translation services to obtain feedback on any irregularities.

38. **gData 2.0 project:** The project, still in the development stage, was expected to improve data availability in the form of automated management dashboards eliminating time-consuming data compilation, manual calculation of formulas in excel spreadsheets and reporting. The new tool should provide more harmonization across the four duty stations as opposed to gData, which worked well for New York only. It should also replace the need for EAMU monthly productivity reports and additional monitoring spreadsheets at the individual service level. Thus, it was expected to increase the efficiency of monitoring as less time would be spent on compiling data from different sources. While testing of gData 2.0 was ongoing during the time of audit, the accuracy of 2021 data in gData 2.0 was not yet at the desired level; therefore, DGACM had to collect, collate and analyze data for performance monitoring and reporting manually as in prior years.

**(3) DGACM should summarize in writing, procedures for cleaning document and meeting management data to ensure effective handover of tasks between staff members and to formalize the important process of data cleaning.**

*DGACM accepted recommendation 3 and stated that data cleaning should be kept at minimum with proper standard operating procedures in place to facilitate the process, and regular quality controls performed by responsible officers. In addition, DGACM was finalizing a data management policy requiring that data wrangling processes be formalized through global standard operating procedures. The exercise to document the processes globally will commence upon approval of the policy.*

Human resources, financial and budgetary indicators were reported monthly and presented clearly though their preparation was time consuming

39. The Executive Office of DGACM was responsible for producing human resources, financial and budgetary indicators and preparing monthly, bi-annual and annual reports for USG monitoring based on Umoja data for all four conference servicing duty stations. The internal monitoring reports were clearly presented and easy to follow. However, the preparation of these reports was time-consuming. For example, the monthly monitoring reports required seven team members to work on them for several days at the beginning of each month by extracting, consolidating and visualizing data from Umoja. The Executive Office, as did EAMU, expected the gData 2.0 project to automate the calculation of indicators and thus increase the efficiency of their monitoring and reporting processes. gData 2.0 was expected to combine Umoja data at the programme level and programmatic data from gDoc, gMeets and eAPG. The Executive Office communicated detailed requirements for the gData 2.0 reports to the project team in 2022 but no clear deadline had been set. This was because the scope of this part of the project was increased in June 2022 and was yet to be approved by the Programme and Project Review Board, including the new timeline.

**C. To what extent were reported performance indicators accurate and reliable?**

DGACM needed to retain information to demonstrate accuracy and reliability of reporting to Member States

40. **Document management indicators:** CPCD did not retain the underlying calculations for the document statistics and indicators reported for 2020. Therefore, it was not possible to reconcile information in gDoc with that reflected in the 2020 reports, including reports to Member States. Underlying calculations for 2021 were only produced after several OIOS requests in April 2022, even though they had been calculated and reported in the internal Conference Management Report in February 2022. CPCD did not see the need to maintain an audit trail; however, this is an important element in the internal control framework.

41. **Meeting management indicators:** CPCD maintained the underlying data from gMeets, as well as calculations to support meetings management statistics and indicators for New York included in the latest pattern of conferences report and related supplementary information. However, their reconciliation with gMeets reports and calculations in a CPCD spreadsheet was only partially possible. This was because the workings of staff who left to join another organization were not sufficiently documented and there were no written procedures to explain how the data should be calculated before it was reported. While there was no indication that meetings indicators for 2020 were misrepresented, there were unexplained differences as indicated in Table 1.

**Table 1: Reconciliation of the number of meetings held in New York in 2020 reported in Pattern of conferences report**

Number of meetings held in 2020	CPCD spreadsheet	gMeets report	Pattern of conferences report	Difference with gMeets	Difference with pattern of conferences report
	A	B	C	A – B	A – C
With Interpretation Services	979	972	979	7	0
Without Interpretation Services	3,237	3,878	3,097	-641	140
Total Meetings Held	4,216	4,850	4,076	-634	140
Percentage difference				-15 per cent	3.3 per cent

42. **Translation throughput productivity:** Data for throughput productivity calculation for 2020 and 2021 was extracted from gData by EAMU. OIOS reviewed productivity calculation by EAMU and found no issues.

**(4) DGACM should retain underlying calculations of document timeliness indicators and meeting management indicators including detailed methodical guidance to maintain an audit trail of indicators reported in DGACM official reports.**

*DGACM accepted recommendation 4 and stated that the data management policy being drafted would include an annex with consolidated applicable methodologies and require documentation of any data wrangling processes applied for audit traceability purposes.*

Presentation of the reported document management statistics and indicators should be enhanced

43. DGACM reported document management statistics and indicators in the pattern of conferences report to Member States. The indicators were calculated on different bases, but these were not clearly explained or presented to facilitate interpretation of the information. For example, as shown in Table 2, the number of manuscripts received by the slotted dates in 2020 was calculated based on the 1,374 slotted documents in New York but compliance with the requirement to process documents within four weeks was calculated based on the 917 slotted documents submitted on time and within the word limit (including post-session documents), while compliance with the requirement to issue documents six/four/two weeks before meetings was based on 1,198 documents submitted on time including those above the word limit (but did not include post-sessions documents).

**Table 2: Document management statistics and indicators for 2019-2021**

	2019	2020	2021
1. <b>Total slotted</b>	1,584	1,374	1,384
2. <b>Manuscripts received</b>			
(a) Total received by the slot date	94%	93%	91%
	(1,482/1,584)	(1,268/1,374)	(1,258/1,384)
3. <b>Processing</b>			
(c) Overall processing compliance	99%	82%	98%
	(1,162/1,167)	(752/917)	(935/955)
4. <b>Issuance</b>			
(f) Overall issuance compliance in accordance with the mandated time frame (including negotiated late slotting)	97%	85%	93%
	(1,445/1,495)	(1,017/1,198)	(1,204/1,288)

*Source: 2019 and 2020 data from supplementary information to the Pattern of conferences report (A/75/89) and 2021 data provided by CPCD*

44. While the calculations were based on General Assembly requirements to process and issue documents, these needed to be explained to allow the reader to quickly navigate the different pieces of information. A summary information, such as in the Table 3, would be helpful for readers to determine how the calculations fit into the whole picture and would clearly show that submission, processing and issuance compliance are calculated only for some of the documents processed by DGACM and thus do not provide a complete picture of the document management by DGACM.

**Table 3: Overview of translation workload in DGACM**

	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>
Number of slotted documents	1,584	1,374	1,384
<i>Number of slotted documents received by slot date</i>	<i>1,482</i>	<i>1,268</i>	<i>1,258</i>
<i>Number of slotted documents received by slot date and within word limits</i>	<i>1,167</i>	<i>917</i>	<i>955</i>
<i>Post session documents</i>	<i>89</i>	<i>174</i>	<i>96</i>
Number of non-slotted documents	9,456	8,308	9,168
<b>Total number of documents received for processing</b>	<b>11,040</b>	<b>9,682</b>	<b>10,552</b>
<b>Workload in words (in millions)</b>			
Slotted documents	73.6	71.2	70.7
Non-slotted documents	60.2	48.4	45.3
<b>Total workload</b>	<b>133.8</b>	<b>129.6</b>	<b>116.0</b>

*Source: Document Management Section, CPCD, DGACM*

**(5) DGACM should improve presentation of document management indicators in reports to Member States to provide a clearer picture of the basis of computation.**

*DGACM accepted recommendation 5 and stated that an improved presentation would be included in the 2024 Conference Management Report to be prepared at the end of 2023 following feedback from the interdepartmental task force on documentation. CPCD will also seek feedback on the revised version to ensure satisfaction of Member States.*

#### **IV. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

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

Internal Audit Division  
Office of Internal Oversight Services

## STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

## Audit of performance monitoring and reporting in the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical <sup>10</sup> / Important <sup>11</sup>	C/ O <sup>12</sup>	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date <sup>13</sup>
1	DGACM should monitor statistics on processing and timeliness of issuing slotted documents submitted after the slot date and exceeding the word limit to identify issues and monitor trends.	Important	O	Evidence of monitoring of slotted documents submitted after the slot date and over the word limit in gData 2.0.	31 December 2023
2	DGACM should formalize periodic analysis of requests to reissue documents to identify common reasons or recurring issues and implement appropriate corrective actions and monitor trends.	Important	O	Receipt of analysis of the reasons for reissuance of documents.	31 December 2023
3	DGACM should summarize in writing, procedures for cleaning document and meeting management data to ensure effective handover of tasks between staff members and to formalize the important process of data cleaning.	Important	O	Receipt of procedures for cleaning document and meeting management data.	31 December 2023
4	DGACM should retain underlying calculations of document timeliness indicators and meeting management indicators including detailed methodical guidance to maintain an audit trail of indicators reported in DGACM official reports.	Important	O	Receipt of the guidance for retention of calculations to support reported indicators.	31 December 2023
5	DGACM should improve presentation of document management indicators in reports to Member States to provide a clearer picture of the basis of computation.	Important	O	Receipt of the revised presentation of document management indicators.	31 March 2024

<sup>10</sup> 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.

<sup>11</sup> 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.

<sup>12</sup> Please note the value C denotes closed recommendations whereas O refers to open recommendations.

<sup>13</sup> Date provided by DGACM in response to recommendations.



# **APPENDIX I**

## **Management Response**

United Nations  Nations Unies  
INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM MEMORANDUM INTERIEUR

ROOM S-3065 NEW YORK NY 10017 USA TEL:(212) 963 4151

TO: Ms. Muriette Lawrence-Hume, Chief  
A: New York Audit Service, Internal Audit Division  
Office of Internal Oversight Services

DATE: 10 October 2022

THROUGH:  
S/C DE:

IMMEDIATE  
CONFIDENTIAL

FROM: Movses Abelian, Under-Secretary-General for  
DE: General Assembly and Conference Management



SUBJECT: **Response to draft report on an audit of performance monitoring and**  
OBJET: **reporting in the Department for General Assembly and Conference**  
**Management (Assignment No. AH2021-550-01)**

1. Reference is made to your memo dated 26 September 2022 containing the draft report on an audit of performance monitoring and reporting in the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management (DGACM).
2. Attached herewith is the appendix matrix containing the action plans and the target dates, as well as the titles of the individuals responsible for implementing the recommendations. Out of six recommendations, five have been accepted fully and one was not accepted for the reasons stated in the appendix. Additionally, several factual inaccuracies in the text of the report have been identified and are listed below with an aim of facilitating the improved quality of the report:
  - 2.1. Para. 4. contains a description of the functions of the Central Planning and Coordination Division (CPCD) which is rather narrow and incomplete as compared with the descriptions of the functions of the Documentation Division (DD) and the Meetings and Publishing Division (MPD) in the same paragraph. It is suggested that the report refers to ST/SGB/2021/3 where the functions of all DGACM Divisions are described appropriately.
  - 2.2. In para. 5, in the interest of accuracy and consistency with reports prepared by DGACM for intergovernmental and expert bodies, it could be suggested not to mention gDoc 2.0 as a separate system. gDoc 2.0 will replace gDoc by the end of 2022. DGACM will not use the name gDoc 2.0 going forward. These are not parallel or duplicative systems; rather, gDoc 2.0 is the second-generation iteration of gDoc. The same comment applies to para. 38.
  - 2.3. In the same paragraph, it is stated that the Executive Office “prepares and reports on...”. This phrase is not clear syntactically and may benefit from rewording.

- 2.4 In para. 12, it is stated that the Evaluation, Analysis and Monitoring Unit (EAMU) assigned responsibilities to DGACM focal points for each mandate. If this level of the detail is indeed required, please note that in fact, these responsibilities are assigned by the Office of the Under-Secretary-General (OUSG). EAMU does not assign responsibilities.
- 2.5 In para. 25, the last sentence is factually incorrect. DGACM has always used temporary assistance, and for the last two decades when actually employed (WAE) contracts, to complement its core capacity when needed to cope with the workload. This has been a standard capacity management policy of the Department fully supported by the Member States. In 2021, the Department further optimized and streamlined the process of retaining such temporary assistance by introducing a Global Language Roster of pre-tested and accredited language professionals. It is not correct to say that only in 2021, DGACM started taking a proactive approach of using the WAE contractual modality. Additionally, the use of the WAE modality is not connected with the alleged issue of timeliness of the non-slotted documents. Therefore, consideration could be given to deleting this sentence.
- 2.6 In para. 34, it is stated that DGACM commented that the capacity of the Coordinator for Multilingualism would need to be increased to monitor implementation of the multilingualism framework. DGACM would like to clarify that it does not agree with the recommendation to include such monitoring into the area of the Coordinator's responsibility because this would not be in line with the intergovernmental-approved terms of reference of the Coordinator. What DGACM tried to convey was that it was not resourced, and should not be resourced, for performing such monitoring. Additionally, in reference to para. 33, OIOS may wish to note that a Coordinator for Multilingualism has been serving in the UN Secretariat since 2000. The role was discharged at times by the Under-Secretary-General of DGACM from 2000 to 2003, and since 2015 to present, and the Under-Secretary-General for Public Information from 2003 to 2015.
- 2.7 In the last sentence of para. 37, it is suggested that OUSG-DGACM should directly oversee evaluations of the processes within CPCD. In fact, this oversight has already been in place for the last several years.
3. DGACM is appreciative of the auditors' efforts and exemplary collegiality.

cc: Ms. Fatoumata Ndiaye  
Ms. Cherith Norman-Chalet

## Management Response

## Audit of performance monitoring and reporting in the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical/ <sup>1</sup> Important <sup>2</sup>	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
1	DGACM should monitor statistics on processing and timeliness of issuing slotted documents submitted after the slot date and exceeding the word limit to identify issues and monitor trends.	Important	Yes	Director-CPCD	End 2023	A report will be implemented in gDoc regarding issuing slotted documents submitted after the slot date and exceeding the word limit. The statistical report for monitoring and periodic analysis will be built in gData2 based on gDoc2 inputs.
2	DGACM should formalize periodic analysis of requests to reissue documents to identify common reasons or recurring issues and implement appropriate corrective actions and monitor trends.	Important	yes	Director-CPCD	End 2023	Statistics will be extracted from gDoc to analyze reissuances. The statistical report for monitoring and periodic analysis will be built by gData2 based on gDoc2 inputs.
3	The Under-Secretary-General of DGACM should, in his capacity as Coordinator for Multilingualism, assess challenges relating to achievement of multilingualism in the Secretariat and propose solutions, including the need for resources to monitor the implementation of the strategic policy framework on multilingualism, when approved.	Important	No		N/A	This recommendation has not been accepted since the monitoring of the outcomes does not fall under the Terms of Reference of the Coordinator, but rather should be conducted by BTAD/DMSPC as part of the overall accountability framework. On the other hand, the TORs endorsed by the General Assembly in A/RES/71/328, and thereafter reiterated in A/RES/73/346 and A/RES/76/268, the Coordinator “act[s] as an entry point for concerns and queries from Member States and Secretariat entities”. As such, the Coordinator is expected to “centralize proposals and requests relating to multilingualism throughout the Secretariat”, and “assist, as needed, in conducting assessments of the challenges relating to multilingualism in the Secretariat, including in the

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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 performance monitoring and reporting in the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical/ Important <sup>2</sup>	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implemen- tation date	Client comments
						area of public information and communications". The above-mentioned tasks are already implemented by the Coordinator, therefore the recommendation would be superfluous. One of main avenues for centralizing such proposals and requests, and sharing assessment outcomes is the biennial report of the Secretary-General on multilingualism, for which the Coordinator compiles inputs from all Secretariat entities. The Coordinator will continue to include in these drafts, for the consideration of the Secretary-General, any proposals or requests received from relevant Secretariat entities, and outcomes of assessments, including those conducted under their authority (such as, inter alia, the Secretariat staff surveys on multilingualism). Inputs regarding the need for additional resources will be consistently compiled and included in such reports if requested by the respective relevant entities, such as BTAD/DMSPC in the context of the established accountability framework.
4	DGACM should summarize in writing, procedures for cleaning document and meeting management data to ensure effective handover of tasks between staff members and to formalize the important process of data cleaning.	Important	Yes.	Director-CPCD; and DGACM Chief Data Officer	End 2023	Data cleaning should be kept at minimum with proper SOPs in place to facilitate the process, and regular quality controls should be performed by responsible officers. DGACM is finalizing a data management policy requiring that data wrangling processes to be formalized through global standard operating procedures. The exercise to document the processes globally will commence upon approval of the policy.

## Management Response

## Audit of performance monitoring and reporting in the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical/Important <sup>2</sup>	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
5	DGACM should retain underlying calculations of document timeliness indicators and meeting management indicators including detailed methodical guidance to maintain an audit trail of indicators reported in DGACM official reports.	Important	Yes	Director-CPCD; and DGACM Chief Data Officer	End 2023	The data management policy being drafted will include an annex with consolidated applicable methodologies and will require the documentation of any data wrangling processes applied for audit traceability purposes.
6	DGACM should improve presentation of document management indicators in reports to Member States to provide a clearer picture of the basis of computation.	Important	Yes	Director-CPCD; and Director-DD	1Q 2024	An improved presentation will be included in the 2024 Conference Management Report to be prepared at the end of 2023 following the feedback of the interdepartmental task force on documentation. CPCD/DMS has sought feedback and should conclude the exercise by March/April 2023. CPCD/DMS will seek feedback on the revised version, to ensure it is to satisfaction of Member States.

Key

BTAD	Business Transformation and Accountability Division
CPCD	Central Planning and Coordination Division
DD	Documentation Division
DMS	Documents Management Section