



INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION

AUDIT REPORT

Recruitment of national staff in MONUSCO

Due to the lack of documentation to support the recruitment of national staff, OIOS was unable to establish if the process was fair and transparent

29 July 2010
Assignment No. AP2009/620/04

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INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

MEMORANDUM INTERIEUR

OFFICE OF INTERNAL OVERSIGHT SERVICES · BUREAU DES SERVICES DE CONTRÔLE INTERNE
INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION · DIVISION DE L'AUDIT INTERNE

TO: Mr. Roger Meece
A: Special Representative of the Secretary -General
MONUSCO

DATE: 29 July 2010

REFERENCE: IAD: 10-**00677**

FROM: Fatoumata Ndiaye, Director
OF: Internal Audit Division, OIOS

SUBJECT: **Assignment No. AP2009/620/04 - Audit of recruitment of national staff in MONUSCO**
OBJET:

1. I am pleased to present the report on the above-mentioned audit.
2. In order for us to close the recommendations, we request that you provide us with the additional information as discussed in the text of the report and also summarized in Annex 1.
3. Please note that OIOS will report on the progress made to implement its recommendations, particularly those designated as high risk (i.e., recommendation 4), in its annual report to the General Assembly and semi-annual report to the Secretary-General.

cc: Mr. Amadu Kamara, Acting Director of Mission Support, MONUSCO
Mr. Swatantra Goolsarran, Executive Secretary, UN Board of Auditors
Ms. Susanne Frueh, Executive Secretary, Joint Inspection Unit
Mr. Moses Bamuwamyé, Chief, Oversight Support Unit, Department of Management
Mr. Seth Adza, Chief, Audit Response Focal Point, DFS
Mr. Byung-Kun Min, Special Assistant to the USG-OIOS
Ms. Eleanor T. Burns, Chief, Peacekeeping Audit Service, OIOS

INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION

FUNCTION

“The Office shall, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations examine, review and appraise the use of financial resources of the United Nations in order to guarantee the implementation of programmes and legislative mandates, ascertain compliance of programme managers with the financial and administrative regulations and rules, as well as with the approved recommendations of external oversight bodies, undertake management audits, reviews and surveys to improve the structure of the Organization and its responsiveness to the requirements of programmes and legislative mandates, and monitor the effectiveness of the systems of internal control of the Organization” (General Assembly Resolution 48/218 B).

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Audit of recruitment of national staff in MONUSCO

OIOS conducted an audit of recruitment of national staff in the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). The overall objective of the audit was to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of the internal controls over the recruitment of national staff. The audit was conducted in accordance with the International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing.

Due to the lack of documentation to support the recruitment of national staff, OIOS was unable to establish if the recruitment process was fair and transparent. The main findings were as follows:

- The vacancy announcements for the recruitment of national staff were not reviewed and formally approved by the Chief Civilian Personnel Officer before they were circulated. There are 16 human resources management offices throughout the Mission that helped programme managers in preparing vacancy announcements. The review and approval of the announcements would ensure consistency and further improve compliance with the UN recruitment policies.
- While most of the vacancy announcements were posted on the Mission's Bulletin Board, some vacancy announcements were also circulated at UN agencies and broadcasted on Radio Okapi. At one location, vacancy announcements were also circulated through print media. There were no internal controls to ensure consistency in how vacancies are advertised and this presents the risk of some vacancies not attracting a sufficient number of qualified candidates.
- The recruitment records for national staff were not systematically maintained. Recruitment records such as vacancy announcements, list of applicants, interview and comparative evaluation reports, list of candidates for vacancy announcements, and documents showing the reasons why some candidates were not considered by programme managers were not maintained. In the absence of these documents, it was not clear if recruitment activities were conducted in a fair and transparent manner and if the most qualified candidates were selected.

OIOS has made five recommendations to address the control weaknesses identified in order to improve the management of the recruitment of national staff.

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of recruitment of national staff in the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). The audit was conducted in accordance with the International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing.

2. Recruitment of national staff is decentralized in MONUSCO. The National Staff Unit of the Human Resources (HR) Section in Kinshasa is responsible for the recruitment of general service staff at G-5 level and above. The HR sub-offices in the Western Region (based in Kinshasa) and the Eastern Region (Based in Goma) are responsible for the recruitment of staff below the G-5 level for their respective regions. There are 16 HR sub-offices including nine in the Western Region, six in the Eastern Region and one in Entebbe.

3. From 2007 to 2009, the Mission recruited 705 national staff. The approved and actual national staffing levels of the Mission are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Approved and actual national staff posts in MONUSCO

Description	2007/2008	2008/2009
Approved posts	2,190	2,868
Actual staffing position	2,112	2,582
Vacant posts	78	286

4. Comments made by MONUSCO are shown in *italics*.

II. AUDIT OBJECTIVES

5. The main objective of the audit was to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of internal controls over the recruitment of national staff.

III. AUDIT SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

6. The audit covered the national staff recruitment activities for the period 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009.

7. During the audit, OIOS requested 28 case files of the recruitment of general service staff at the G-5 level, but the Mission provided only six of the requested case files. Recruitment records such as vacancy announcements, list of applicants, interview and comparative evaluation reports, list of candidates for vacancy announcements, and documents showing the reasons why some candidates were not considered by programme managers were not maintained. Due to the lack of documentation to support the recruitment of national staff, OIOS was unable to establish if the recruitment process was fair and transparent.

8. The audit methodology included review of records and documents related to recruitment, analysis of relevant data, interview of key personnel, field visits and testing of recruitment related transactions and records.

IV. AUDIT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Inadequate management of recruitment risks

Preparation of vacancy announcements for the recruitment of national staff

9. The vacancy announcements for the recruitment of national staff must be reviewed and cleared by the Chief Civilian Personnel Officer (CCPO) before they are circulated. Vacancy announcements were drafted by HR staff in consultation with the concerned programme managers; however, these announcements were not reviewed and formally cleared by the CCPO as required. As indicated in paragraph 2 above, there are 16 HR offices, and the absence of the CCPO's review of vacancy announcements increases the risk of inconsistent practices on the establishment of the requirements for posts and noncompliance with the UN recruitment policies.

Recommendation 1

(1) The MONUSCO Office of Mission Support should ensure that locally drafted vacancy announcements are cleared by the Chief Civilian Personnel Officer prior to issuance.

10. *The MONUSCO Office of Mission Support accepted recommendation 1 and stated that an instruction had been issued to all HR officers that all vacancy announcements should be cleared by the CCPO.* Recommendation 1 remains open pending receipt of a copy of the instruction issued to HR Offices regarding the clearance of the vacancy announcements by the CCPO.

Circulation of vacancy announcements

11. The draft guidelines on the recruitment and selection of MONUSCO staff require the posting of vacancy announcements on the Bulletin Board on the MONUSCO web-site. While most of the vacancy announcements were posted on the Bulletin Board, some vacancy announcements were also circulated at UN agencies and broadcast on Radio Okapi. In Entebbe, vacancy announcements were also circulated through print media. There were no internal controls to ensure transparency and consistency in how vacancies were advertised and this presents the risk of some vacancies not attracting sufficient number of qualified candidates.

Recommendation 2

(2) The MONUSCO Office of Mission Support should implement appropriate controls over the circulation of vacancy announcements to enhance transparency and to ensure the recruitment of the most qualified candidates.

12. *The MONUSCO Office of Mission Support accepted recommendation 2 and stated that instructions had been issued to all sectors to ensure that all vacancy announcements and mode of transmission were cleared by the CCPO to ensure transparency. Recommendation 2 remains open pending receipt of a copy of the instructions that were issued stating that the CCPO must approve the mode of advertising vacancy announcements.*

Timeliness of recruitment

13. Timely recruitment of staff is essential for the implementation of the Mission's programmes. Therefore, the HR Section needs to establish timeframes for the completion of recruitment actions and appropriately monitor recruitment activities.

14. The HR Section had not established the timeframes for completing recruitment activities and as a result, it was not properly monitoring those activities. OIOS requested 28 case files of the recruitment of general service staff at the G-5 level, but the Mission provided only six of the requested case files. The recruitment actions for the six cases were finalized in 42 to 109 days. In the absence of recruitment standards, it is not clear if these cases were processed in a timely manner.

Recommendation 3

(3) The MONUSCO Office of Mission Support should improve the management of the recruitment process by establishing timeframes for recruitment activities in line with the standards set by the Department of Field Support and properly monitoring those activities to ensure their timely completion.

15. *The MONUSCO Office of Mission Support accepted recommendation 3 and stated that it will establish a policy to streamline and reduce the time it takes to recruit national staff to six weeks. Additionally, a system has been put in place to systematically review and follow-up on all pending recruitments on a weekly basis. Recommendation 3 remains open pending receipt of a copy of the policy streamlining the recruitment process and establishing timeframes for completing recruitment actions.*

Maintenance of recruitment records

16. The Mission's Administrative Circular 2008/017 requires the maintenance of proper records and that all staff should comply with the MONUSCO records management policy and UN Archives and Records Management System.

17. The recruitment records for national staff were not systematically maintained. Recruitment records including records such as vacancy announcements, list of applicants, interview and comparative evaluation reports were maintained in separate files without any order. As a result, the Mission had difficulties substantiating compliance with the relevant policies and procedures on the recruitment of national staff. For example, as indicated in paragraph 13 above, OIOS requested 28 case files of recruitment of general service staff at the G-5 level, but the majority of them could not be found. Additionally, the checklist for ensuring that all critical activities were performed during the recruitment process, list of candidates for vacancy announcements, and documents showing the reasons why some candidates were not considered by programme managers were not maintained. In the absence of these documents, it was not clear if recruitment activities were conducted in a fair and transparent manner and if the most qualified candidates were selected.

18. There was no system for proper recordkeeping including the classification of records to be maintained and how such records should be maintained.

Recommendation 4

(4) The MONUSCO Office of Mission Support should ensure the development and implementation of a proper filing system for the recruitment of national staff.

19. *The MONUSCO Office of Mission Support accepted recommendation 4 and stated that management has initiated procedures to improve filing of recruitment data.* Recommendation 4 remains open pending receipt of the procedures for improving the filing of recruitment records.

B. Need for formal training of staff involved in recruitment

20. Staff who are involved in recruitment activities must be properly trained to ensure the recruitment of the most qualified candidates in a timely manner.

21. The HR staff and programme managers who were involved in the recruitment activities had not been trained in performing their recruitment-related tasks. The lack of training provides scope for inconsistent application and noncompliance with HR policies.

Recommendation 5

(5) The MONUSCO Office of Mission Support should ensure that suitable training on recruitment is provided to

Human Resources staff, programme managers and other staff that are involved in recruitment.

22. *The MONUSCO Office of Mission Support accepted recommendation 5 and stated that on-the-job training is now being provided and management is also planning formal and systematic training programmes for HR staff involved in recruitment of national staff.* Recommendation 5 remains open pending receipt of evidence that training has been provided to HR staff and programme managers involved in recruitment.

V. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

23. We wish to express our appreciation to the Management and staff of MONUSCO for the assistance and cooperation extended to the auditors during this assignment.

STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Recom. no.	Recommendation	Risk category	Risk rating	C/O ¹	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date ²
1	The MONUSCO Office of Mission Support should ensure that locally drafted vacancy announcements are cleared by the Chief Civilian Personnel Office.	Operational	Medium	O	Instructions issued to HR Offices regarding the clearance of the vacancy announcements by the Chief Civilian Personnel Office.	30 June 2010.
2	The MONUSCO Office of Mission Support should implement appropriate controls over the circulation of vacancy announcements to enhance transparency and to ensure the recruitment of the most qualified candidates.	Operational	Medium	O	Instructions that the Chief Civilian Personnel Office must approve the mode of advertising each vacancy announcement.	30 June 2010
3	The MONUSCO Office of Mission Support should improve the management of the recruitment process by establishing timeframes for recruitment activities in line with the standards set by the Department of Field Support and properly monitoring those activities to ensure their timely completion.	Operational	Medium	O	Policy streamlining the recruitment process and establishing timeframes from completing recruitment actions.	31 July 2010
4	The MONUSCO Office of Mission Support should ensure the development and implementation of a proper filing system for the recruitment for national staff.	Operational	High	O	Procedures for improving the filing of recruitment data.	31 July 2010
5	The MONUSCO Office of Mission Support should ensure that suitable training on recruitment is provided to Human Resource staff, programme managers and other staff that are involved in recruitment.	Operational	Medium	O	Evidence that training has been provided HR staff and programme managers involved in recruitment.	30 October 2010

1. C = closed, O = open

2. Date provided by MONUSCO in response to recommendations