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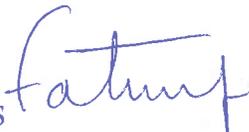
OFFICE OF INTERNAL OVERSIGHT SERVICES · BUREAU DES SERVICES DE CONTRÔLE INTERNE
INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION · DIVISION DE L'AUDIT INTERNE

TO: Mr. Albert Gerard Koenders
A: Special Representative of the Secretary-General
United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire

DATE: 9 January 2012

REFERENCE: IAD: 12-00004

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



SUBJECT: **Assignment No. AP2011/640/08 – Audit of the recruitment of national staff in UNOCI**

OBJET

Overall results relating to the effective management of recruitment of national staff were partially satisfactory

1. Attached please find the final report on the above-mentioned audit.
2. Annex-I shows the status of the recommendations.
3. The audit also identified two opportunities for improvement (see Annex-II). While OIOS will not report on the implementation of these opportunities, we encourage you to implement them to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of your operations. OIOS will review their implementation as part of future audits.
4. Please note that OIOS will report on the progress made to implement its recommendations in its annual report to the General Assembly. OIOS will also report to the Secretary-General annually for important recommendations.

Mr. George Rautenbach, Chief of Staff, UNOCI
Mr. Gianni Deligia, Chief of Mission Support, UNOCI
Mr. Nester Odaga-Jalomayo, Chief Administrative Services, UNOCI
Mr. Edjene Akouete-Akue, Chief Civilian Personnel Officer, UNOCI
Mr. Swatantra Goolsarran, Executive Secretary, UN Board of Auditors
Ms. Susanne Frueh, Executive Secretary, Joint Inspection Unit
Mr. Seth Adza, Chief, Audit Response Team, Department of Field Support
Mr. Moses Bamuwanye, Executive Secretary, IAAC
Mr. Zachary Ikiara, Chief, Oversight and Coordination Support Unit, DM
Mr. Byung-Kun Min, Special Assistant to the USG-OIOS
Ms. Eleanor T. Burns, Chief, Peacekeeping Audit Service, OIOS
Ms. Amy Wong, Programme Officer, Internal Audit Division, OIOS

AUDIT REPORT

Audit of the recruitment of national staff in UNOCI

BACKGROUND

The Head of Mission has the overall authority at the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) to recruit national staff. The Head of Mission had sub-delegated recruitment authority to the Personnel Section through the Chief of Mission Support. As of July 2011, UNOCI had 735 national staff against 814 authorized posts. National staff consisted of 662 locally-recruited general service staff and 73 national professional officers (NPO). In addition, as of August 2011, the Mission had 652 individual contractors.

The Personnel Section is responsible for anticipating, identifying and meeting the civilian personnel requirements of the Mission and ensuring their efficient deployment, management, administration and separation. The Personnel Section is headed by a Chief Civilian Personnel Officer at the P-4 level. The National Staff Unit is headed by a professional staff member at the P-3 level and is composed of 10 field service staff and 14 general service staff.

This audit was included in OIOS 2011 risk-based work plan because of the criticality of ensuring that there is an effective and transparent recruitment process.

OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE

The audit was conducted to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of risk management, control and governance processes in UNOCI in providing reasonable assurance regarding the effective management of recruitment of national staff. The key control tested for the audit was recruitment policies and procedures. The audit was conducted from July to October 2011, and covered the period from 1 January 2009 to 31 July 2011. During this period, 154 national staff were recruited.

AUDIT RESULTS

In OIOS opinion, risk management, control and governance processes examined in UNOCI were **partially satisfactory** to provide reasonable assurance regarding the effective management of recruitment of national staff. UNOCI had a National Recruitment Cell to process all national staff recruitments, and circulated vacancy announcements and constituted interview panels. However, there were no Mission-specific procedures to guide staff responsible for recruitment. As a result, vacancy announcements were advertised for too short a period; reference checks were not carried out for all successful candidates; and recruitment of individual contractors did not comply with required rules and procedures. The recruitment filing system also needed to improve.

Mission-specific standard operating procedures on recruitment of national staff needed to be established

The Department of Field Support (DFS) has promulgated draft standard operating procedures on staff selection for Peacekeeping Operations and Special Political Missions. However, Mission-specific procedures were not developed to take into consideration the unique operating environment of the Mission to guide both staff of the Personnel Section and programme managers on their roles and responsibilities in the recruitment process. The lack of guidance to staff resulted in processes that were inconsistent and in some cases lacked transparency, as follows:

- Vacancy announcements did not contain all the mandatory information such as planned assessment method and a statement that the United Nations does not charge fees at any stage of the recruitment process. Also, while DFS draft procedures stipulate 15 days as the minimum period for circulating generic job offers, 16 of 32 vacancy announcements were only advertized for between 2 to 10 days.
- Reference checks to verify candidates' educational qualifications and employment records should be performed for all external candidates, and for serving staff members for whom reference checks had not been conducted. However, reference checks were not being conducted.
- While a list of successful candidates that met the minimum competencies for posts was sometimes included on a roster to provide easy access to a pool of eligible prospective candidates, the rosters were not properly maintained or systematically used. Consequently, only one general service recruitment was done by selecting a candidate from the roster.
- There were no guidelines and procedures for implementing the agreement signed in 2005 between UNOCI and the Government of Côte d'Ivoire regarding the proportion of Ivorian national staff that should be recruited versus nationals from other Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). It was agreed that the national staff component would be made up of 70 per cent Ivorians and 30 per cent from ECOWAS.

(1) UNOCI should develop Mission-specific standard operating procedures for national staff recruitment to clarify the roles and responsibilities of staff involved in the recruitment process, as well as the procedures to be followed, including monitoring compliance with United Nations staff regulations and rules.

UNOCI accepted recommendation 1 and stated that the Field Personnel Division is developing new procedures for national staff recruitment. UNOCI will also develop specific guidelines on national recruitment which will be shared with all hiring managers. Recommendation 1 remains open pending receipt of a copy of the Mission guidelines on national staff recruitment, and evidence of compliance monitoring and results thereof.

Inadequate filing system

For all 43 recruitment files reviewed, there was insufficient information regarding the interview and selection process. For example, while summaries of interview recommendations were processed, the comparative scoring reports of interviewed candidates and the basis for arriving at recommendations were not on file. In addition, in four cases the decision for the selected candidate was not documented, and there was no evidence that it had been certified by the Chief Civilian Personnel Officer.

(2) UNOCI should ensure that all relevant documentation on the recruitment process and procedures is filed to promote transparency.

UNOCI accepted recommendation 2 and stated that the Mission has taken the necessary steps to ensure that recruitment documentation is properly filed and a database has been created to reflect assessments of short-listed candidates and their curriculum vitae. Recommendation 2 remains open pending OIOS verification that an adequate filing system has been established.

Individual contractors were engaged beyond the stipulated timeframe

UNOCI had 652 individual contractors of which 404 were recruited in May 2011 for engineering projects. A review of 61 individual contractors engagement files did not contain necessary documentation such as copies of pre-screening and short-listing documents, interview reports, verification of credentials and contracts. Further, 28 individual contractors had been employed for over three years without any break in service. Moreover, there was no evidence to show that individual contractors' services were properly evaluated.

(3) UNOCI should ensure that individual contractor recruitment process adheres to Administrative Instruction ST/AI/1999/7 of August 1999 and that all recruitment documentation, including contracts and performance evaluations are kept on file.

UNOCI accepted recommendation 3 and stated that on 1 October 2011, the Chief of Mission Support issued an administration instruction on the recruitment of individual contractors to ensure compliance with ST/AI/1999/7 by all parties. Recommendation 3 remains open pending OIOS verification that UNOCI is complying with the rules and procedures governing individual contractors.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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

AUDIT RESULTS

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AUDIT RESULTS

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of the recruitment of national staff in the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI).

II. AUDIT OBJECTIVE

2. The audit was conducted to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of risk management, control and governance processes in UNOCI in providing reasonable assurance regarding the effective management of the recruitment of national staff. The key control tested for the audit was recruitment policies and procedures. For the purpose of this audit, OIOS defined this key control as controls designed to provide reasonable assurance that policies and procedures exist and are adhered to.

III. AUDIT SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

3. OIOS conducted this audit from July to October 2011, and covered the period from 1 January 2009 to 31 July 2011.

4. To gain a general understanding of the current recruitment practices, processes and activities in UNOCI, OIOS interviewed the Chief Civilian Personnel Officer (CCPO), the Supervisor of the National Recruitment Unit, the Deputy Police Commissioner and the Chief of Integrated Mission Training Centre (IMTC). OIOS also reviewed the Department of Field Support (DFS) draft standard operating procedures (SOPs) on Staff Selection for Peacekeeping Operations and Special Political Missions (DFS draft SOPs), Administrative Instruction ST/AI/2010/3, and other relevant documents relating to the recruitment of national staff. An activity-level risk assessment was conducted to identify and evaluate specific risk exposures and to determine whether controls existed to mitigate such risks.

5. Through interviews, analytical reviews and tests of controls, OIOS assessed the existence and adequacy of written policies and procedures, and also whether they were implemented consistently.

IV. OVERALL ASSESSMENT

6. In OIOS opinion, risk management, control and governance processes examined in UNOCI were **partially satisfactory** to provide reasonable assurance regarding the effective management of recruitment of national staff. UNOCI had a National Recruitment Cell to process all national staff recruitments, and circulated vacancy announcements and constituted interview panels. However, there were no Mission-specific procedures to guide staff responsible for recruitment, As a result, vacancy announcements were advertized for too short a period; reference checks were not carried out for all successful candidates; and recruitment of individual contractors did not comply with required rules and procedures. The recruitment filing system also needed to improve.

V. AUDIT RESULTS

A. Policies and procedures related to recruitment

Mission-specific standard operating procedures on recruitment of national staff needed to be established

7. UNOCI had not developed Mission-specific SOPs on the recruitment of national staff, and were using the DFS draft SOPs, as well as Administrative Instruction (ST/AI/2010/3), as procedures for staff selection. The lack of guidance to staff resulted in processes that were inconsistent and in some cases lacked transparency, including the lack of mandatory information being included in vacancy announcements and lack of reference checks, as detailed in the paragraphs below. Mission-specific SOPs for recruitment of national staff will ensure consistency, as well as transparency in the process. The CCPO stated that the Field Personnel Division of DFS is developing specific SOPs that can be adapted to local conditions.

8. Moreover, there were no guidelines and procedures for implementing the agreement signed in 2005 between UNOCI and the Government of Côte d'Ivoire regarding the proportion of Ivorian national staff versus nationals from other Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) that should be recruited. It was agreed that the national staff component would be 70 per cent Ivorian and 30 per cent from ECOWAS. Of the 735 national staff in the Mission, 720 (98 per cent) were Ivorian and the remainder was from other ECOWAS states.

Vacancy information and circulation periods did not meet minimum requirements

9. Vacancy announcements (VAs) did not contain all mandatory information such as planned assessment method and a statement that the United Nations does not charge fees at any stage of the recruitment process as provided in section 1.4.2 of the DFS draft SOPs. Further, although generic VAs should be posted/in circulation for a minimum of 15 days, they were typically posted for shorter periods. A review of 32 of 154 VAs (generic job openings) posted between January 2009 and July 2011 showed that 16 VAs were circulated for between 2 to 10 days. Also, besides posting on UNOCI website, the Mission circulated vacancy announcements in Ivorian press only, limiting accessibility to other ECOWAS states.

Documentation of recruitment and selection process should be fully completed to promote transparency

10. A review of 43 recruitment files noted that there was insufficient information regarding the interview and selection process. For example, only one out of 43 personnel files had a copy of the interview panel members' scoring and evaluation worksheet. Also, while summaries of interview recommendations were duly processed, the comparative scoring reports of all candidates and the basis of arriving at recommendations were not on file. In addition, in four cases, when the first successful candidate was not selected, the decision for the selected candidate was not documented, and there was no evidence that it had been certified by the CCPO. Moreover, contrary to the DFS draft SOPs, programme managers did not document the selection proposal and certify that all selections were made based on a fair selection process.

Roster of candidates was not properly maintained

11. As part of the recruitment process, the interview panel provided a list of unsuccessful candidates who met the minimum competencies for posts, to be included on the roster. The roster should provide easy access to a pool of eligible prospective candidates for further recruitment consideration. However,

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the roster was inadequately maintained and was not made available to programme managers during recruitment exercises. Consequently, even though there were 15 candidates (2 national professional officers and 13 general services staff) included on a roster maintained by the Mission between March 2009 and June 2011, only one general service candidate was selected from the roster in a subsequent recruitment. The CCPO stated that programme managers preferred to go through fresh interviews and view roster candidates as candidates imposed on them. However, the Chief Administrative Services acknowledged the need to provide programme managers with a roster of eligible candidates to expedite the recruitment process, and indicated that the Office of Mission Support will ensure that a credible roster is maintained.

Reference checks for all candidates were not performed

12. The DFS draft SOP provides that reference checks should be conducted for all external candidates, as well as serving staff members for whom reference checks had not been conducted. Reference checks, which consist of verification of a candidate's educational qualifications and employment records as indicated in the application, should be completed prior to the appointment of a selected candidate or placement on a roster. Reference checks were not conducted for any of the 43 local staff recruitments reviewed. The CCPO explained that it was difficult to obtain information from local institutions and relied on information contained in the candidate Personal History form. The CCPO further explained that letters of appointment issued were subject to verification of qualifications/employment and that staff contracts could be terminated if the staff profile was found inaccurate. However, there was no evidence that qualifications and prior work experience of candidates were ever verified.

Recommendation 1

(1) UNOCI should develop Mission-specific standard operating procedures for national staff recruitment to clarify the roles and responsibilities of staff involved in the recruitment process, as well as the procedures to be followed, including monitoring compliance with United Nations staff regulations and rules.

13. *UNOCI accepted recommendation 1 and stated that the Field Personnel Division is developing new SOPs for national staff recruitment. UNOCI will also develop specific guidelines on national recruitment which will be shared with all hiring managers.* Recommendation 1 remains open pending issuance of Mission guidelines on national staff recruitment, and evidence of compliance monitoring and results thereof.

Inadequate filing system

14. Section 4.1.9 of the DFS draft SOPs provides that in the interest of fairness and integrity, the confidentiality and objectivity of the process must be maintained at all stages of the assessment exercise. The National Recruitment Cell did not maintain all the required documentation in recruitment files. Of the 43 personnel files reviewed, only eight (19 per cent) had copies of required information such as vacancy announcements, short listing/initial clearance, interview questions, candidates answer sheets, results of the interview, recommendation by the panel members and report to the CCPO for appointment action, medical clearance, confirmation of certificates, and appointment letters. Twelve files only contained copies of VAs while the remaining 23 files, (65 per cent), did not contain the relevant information

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Recommendation 2

(2) UNOCI should ensure that all relevant documentation on the recruitment process and procedures is filed to promote transparency.

15. UNOCI accepted recommendation 2 and stated that the Mission has taken the necessary steps to ensure that recruitment documentation is properly filed and a database has been created to reflect assessments of short-listed candidates and their curriculum vitae. Recommendation 2 remains open pending OIOS verification that an adequate filing system has been established.

There was a need to develop a recruitment plan to ensure timely recruitment action

16. Section 1.1.1 of the DFS draft SOP provides that at the start of each budget cycle, the CCPO shall develop a recruitment plan to ensure that current and projected vacant posts are filled in a timely manner, prioritizing critical positions required to maintain operational priorities of the Mission. The audit observed that vacancy rates for National Professional Officers for example, had increased from 16 per cent to 21 per cent from the 2009/10 to 2010/11 fiscal year. However, the Personnel Section had not developed a recruitment plan to fill the vacancies. The CCPO attributed the increase in vacancy rates to resignations, nationalization of posts and newly created posts for which the Mission was awaiting reclassification before starting recruitment. OIOS noted however, that of the 79 vacant posts, the re-classification of posts affected only eight General Service positions and six National Professional Officers' grades. There was a need to develop a recruitment plan to ensure that current and projected vacant posts are filled in a timely manner to maintain operational priorities of the Mission. **UNOCI could facilitate the timely recruitment of staff by developing a recruitment plan.** UNOCI will continue to sensitize programme managers who play the most crucial roles in the national recruitment process.

Mandatory induction training for national staff was not monitored resulting in low attendance

17. Induction training is mandatory in the Mission area to ensure that all new staff are briefed on the United Nations regulations and rules, culture, security risks, among others. However, of the 154 staff recruited from January 2009 to July 2011, only 68 (44 per cent) had participated in induction training. The remaining 86 staff did not attend the training due to a lack of collaboration between the Personnel Section and the IMTC to ensure attendance by all newly recruited national staff. The checklist given to new staff arriving in the Mission did not include the requirement for mandatory training. The CAS stated that the Office of Mission Support will inform all section chiefs to ensure that newly recruited staff members attend the induction training before they are assigned. **UNOCI could improve the orientation process by ensuring that all newly recruited national staff take induction training before being assigned to their respective sections.** IMTC is continuously working on improvement measures to ensure all newly recruited staff members undergo training before joining their respective sections.

Individual contractors engaged beyond the stipulated timeframe

18. Section 8.3 of the Administrative Instruction ST/AI/1999/7 of August 1999 provides that the services of an individual contractor (ICs) shall be limited to six or, in special circumstances; nine work months in any period of twelve consecutive months, except for ICs engaged to perform language functions on a unit-cost basis. The Mission had 652 ICs as of August 2011 out of which, 404 were recruited in May 2011 in Engineering Section to construct twelve team sites in the Mission. OIOS reviewed 61 files and noted that recruitment procedures were not adhered to when hiring ICs to serve for the period between April and December 2011. Recruitment files did not contain information on number of applicants, pre-screening and short listing documents, interview reports, verification of credentials and contracts. Salaries for ICs were paid based on an approval of an IC service request order signed by the

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Police Commissioner, the CCPO and the Chief of Budget. Management explained that the recruitment process had to be expedited to meet operational requirements and that the Mission hired ICs who had previously worked for the Mission to mitigate related risks. Further, 28 ICs had been employed for over three years without any break in service. Out of the 28 ICs, 20 of them were language assistants, of which 17 were assigned to United Nations Police (UNPOL).

19. Furthermore, section 5.13 and 5.14 of ST/AI/1999/7 provides that the performance of all consultants shall be evaluated on form P.106/A and a summary rating shall be recorded. However, the services of language assistants assigned to UNPOL had not been evaluated. The Deputy Police Commissioner of UNPOL informed OIOS that UNPOL had not been instructed to evaluate the performance of language assistants.

Recommendation 3

(3) UNOCI should ensure that individual contractor recruitment process adheres to Administrative Instruction ST/AI/1999/7 of August 1999 and that all recruitment documentation, including contracts and performance evaluation, is retained on files.

20. *UNOCI accepted recommendation 3 and stated that on 1 October 2011, the Chief of Mission Support issued an administration instruction on the recruitment of individual contractors to ensure compliance with ST/AI/1999/7 by all parties.* Recommendation 3 remains open pending OIOS verification that UNOCI is complying with the rules and procedures governing individual contractors.

AUDIT RESULTS

ANNEX I STATUS OF RECOMMENDATIONS Audit of recruitment of national staff in UNOCI

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Risk category	Critical/ Important	C/O ¹	Actions needed to close the recommendation	Responsible individual	Implementation date ²
1	UNOCI should develop Mission-specific standard operating procedures for national staff recruitment to clarify the roles and responsibilities of staff involved in the recruitment process, as well as the procedures to be followed, including monitoring compliance with United Nations staff regulations and rules.	Human resources	Important	O	Receipt of a copy of Mission-specific guidelines on national staff recruitment and evidence of compliance monitoring and results thereof.	Edjene Akouete-Akute, CCPO / Rose Gonzales, HRO	30 December 2011
2	UNOCI should ensure that all relevant documentation on the recruitment process and procedures is filed to promote transparency.	Human resources	Important	O	OIOS verification that an adequate filing system has been established.	Rose Gonzales, HRO	30 November 2011
3	UNOCI should ensure that Individual Contractor recruitment process adheres to Administrative Instruction ST/AI/1999/7 of August 1999 and that all recruitment documentation, including contracts and performance evaluation, is retained on files	Human resources	Important	O	OIOS verification that UNOCI is complying with the rules and procedures governing individual contractors.	Edjene Akouete-Akute, CCPO	1 October 2011

1. C = closed, O = open

2. Date provided by UNOCI in response to recommendations.

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ANNEX II OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT Audit of recruitment of national staff in UNOCI

Para. no.	Opportunity for improvement	Client comments
16	UNOCI could facilitate timely recruitment of staff by developing a recruitment plan.	<i>UNOCI will continue to sensitize programme managers who play the most crucial roles in the national recruitment process.</i>
17	UNOCI could improve the orientation process by ensuring that all newly recruited national staff take induction training before being assigned to their respective sections.	<i>IMTC is continuously working on improvement measures to ensure all newly recruited staff members undergo training before joining their respective sections.</i>