



INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION

AUDIT REPORT

Audit of recruitment practices in UNOG Security and Safety Service

Overall results relating to the recruitment of security staff at UNOG were initially assessed as partially satisfactory. Implementation of three important recommendations remains in progress.

**FINAL OVERALL RATING: PARTIALLY
SATISFACTORY**

3 October 2012

Assignment No. AE2011/311/05

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AUDIT REPORT

Audit of recruitment practices in UNOG Security and Safety Service

I. BACKGROUND

1. The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of recruitment practices in the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG) Security and Safety Service (SSS).
2. In accordance with its mandate, OIOS provides assurance and advice on the adequacy and effectiveness of the United Nations internal control system, the primary objectives of which are to ensure (a) efficient and effective operations; (b) accurate financial and operational reporting; (c) safeguarding of assets; and (d) compliance with mandates, regulations and rules.
3. UNOG SSS had 233 staff as at 30 September 2011, of which 229 (98 per cent) were at the General Service (G) category and 4 (2 per cent) at the Professional (P) category. UNOG SSS conducts regular recruitment only for levels G-3 and above while recruitment below G-3 level is used for short-term staff for temporary posts which were not covered in this audit. During the period 1 January 2010 - 30 September 2011, UNOG SSS advertised 24 vacancy announcements (VAs) as shown in Table 1, some of which were for multiple posts.

Table 1: Vacancy Announcements for UNOG SSS from 1 January 2010 to 30 September 2011

Grade	Title	2010	Title	2011
P-3			Security Officer	1
G-6	Security Lieutenant	1	Security Lieutenant	2
G-5	Security Sergeant	4	Administrative Assistant (1), Security Sergeant (2)	3
G-4	Security Corporal	3	Administrative Assistant (1), Administrative Clerk (1), Security Corporal (4)	6
G-3	Security Officer	2	Security Officer	2
	Total	10	Total	14

Source: UNOG Human Resources Management Service, September 2011

4. Comments provided by UNOG and the Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) of the Department of Management are incorporated in *italics*.

II. OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE

5. The audit was conducted to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of UNOG's governance, risk management and control processes in providing reasonable assurance regarding the **effective recruitment of security staff in UNOG SSS**.
6. The audit was included in the 2011 internal audit work plan for UNOG following concerns raised by the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) in their Management Letter JIU/ML/2010/1 about recruitment practices in UNOG SSS.
7. The key controls tested for the audit were: (a) regulatory framework; and (b) recruitment policies and procedures. For the purpose of this audit, OIOS defined these key controls as follows:

- (a) **Regulatory framework** – controls that provide reasonable assurance that policies and procedures: (i) exist to guide the recruitment activities; (ii) are implemented consistently; and (iii) ensure the reliability and integrity of information.
- (b) **Recruitment policies and procedures** – controls that provide reasonable assurance that policies and procedures are followed in recruiting and promoting competent security staff in a competitive and transparent manner.

8. The key controls were assessed for the control objectives shown in Table 2.

9. OIOS conducted this audit from July 2011 to March 2012. The audit covered the period from 1 January 2010 to 30 September 2011.

10. OIOS conducted an activity-level risk assessment to identify and assess specific risk exposures, and to confirm the relevance of the selected key controls in mitigating associated risks. Through interviews, analytical reviews and tests of controls, OIOS assessed the existence and adequacy of internal controls and conducted necessary tests to determine their effectiveness.

III. AUDIT RESULTS

11. UNOG’s governance, risk management and control processes examined were assessed as **partially satisfactory** in providing reasonable assurance regarding the **effective recruitment of security staff in UNOG SSS**. OIOS made three recommendations to address the issues identified in the audit.

12. The roles and responsibilities for recruitment of security staff at UNOG were not sufficiently clear. There was also a need to clarify policies and procedures for the recruitment of G-3 and G-4 level security staff. *OHRM indicated that it was finalizing an Administrative Instruction on the recruitment for such positions.* Furthermore, there was inconsistency in the language requirements between different VAs, and background checks were not systematically documented. *UNOG was taking action to address these shortcomings.*

13. The initial overall rating was based on the assessment of key controls presented in Table 2 below. The final overall rating is **partially satisfactory** as implementation of three important recommendations remains in progress.

Table 2: Assessment of key controls

Business objective	Key controls	Control objectives			
		Efficient and effective operations	Accurate financial and operational reporting	Safeguarding of assets	Compliance with mandates, regulations and rules
Effective recruitment of security staff	(a) Regulatory framework	Partially satisfactory	Partially satisfactory	Partially satisfactory	Partially satisfactory
	(b) Recruitment policies and procedures	Partially satisfactory	Partially satisfactory	Partially satisfactory	Partially satisfactory
FINAL OVERALL RATING: PARTIALLY SATISFACTORY					

A. Regulatory framework

Lack of clarity of roles, responsibilities and applicable policies and procedures for recruitment of security staff

14. There was a need to clarify procedures applicable for recruiting security staff at UNOG. The Department of Safety and Security (DSS) in consultation with OHRM established guidelines for such recruitment. UNOG had also established procedures for recruiting staff at levels G-1 to G-4. These procedures were applied in recruiting UNOG SSS staff and differ from the guidelines established by DSS in the areas of advertising and prescreening.

(1) The Office of Human Resources Management, in consultation with the Department of Safety and Security, should clarify the roles, responsibilities, policies and procedures for the recruitment of security staff at the United Nations Office at Geneva.

OHRM accepted recommendation 1 and stated that it was finalizing an Administrative Instruction (AI) on the recruitment for such positions. The new AI would be promulgated in the first quarter of 2013 and would clarify policies for this kind of recruitment, and contribute to their consistent application. Recommendation 1 remains open pending receipt of the finalized AI defining the respective roles, responsibilities, policies and procedures for recruiting security staff at UNOG.

B. Recruitment policies and procedures

Language requirements were not consistently applied in the vacancy announcements

15. The language requirements in six job descriptions in UNOG SSS were not reflected in the 24 VAs advertised during the period under review. In addition, the language requirements for different job descriptions at the G-6 and G-5 levels were not consistent within the same grade for different VAs. Inconsistent application of language requirements in VAs could compromise competitive and transparent recruitment.

(2) The United Nations Office at Geneva should determine the language requirements for each level of post in UNOG Security and Safety Service and apply them in a consistent manner in the vacancy announcements.

UNOG accepted recommendation 2 and stated that UNOG Human Resources Management Service (HRMS) together with UNOG SSS would review the language requirements in the classified job descriptions to better reflect the operational needs of the service. UNOG HRMS would ensure that language requirements in the job openings are identical to the language requirements reflected in the corresponding job descriptions. Recommendation 2 remains open pending receipt of documentation showing that language requirements for posts at UNOG SSS have been reviewed and are being consistently applied in VAs.

Background checks were not systematically documented

16. In accordance with DSS guidelines, HRMS conducts background checks at other duty stations, if necessary, with assistance from a DSS office in a certain country if the candidate is from that particular country. During the period covered by the audit UNOG HRMS had not systematically documented background checks for new recruits at UNOG SSS, which did not provide assurance about staff who will have permission to carry firearms and have unrestricted access to United Nations premises.

- (3) The United Nations Office at Geneva should conduct and clearly document the background checks on all security staff, including existing staff for whom the background check may not have been conducted at the time of appointment.**

UNOG accepted recommendation 3 and stated that OHRM had developed draft guidelines which, when promulgated, would ensure the consistent application of verification procedures upon recruitment across the duty stations. In the meantime, UNOG HRMS would undertake regular background checks to review the official status of UNOG Security Staff and to ensure that all documentation related to the verification of diplomas, criminal background checks on candidates to security positions are being properly made. UNOG SSS, however, also emphasized that external candidates are requested to bring originals or certified copies of their criminal records for their interviews, and such records are then kept on file. Furthermore, in the course of medical clearance, security officers undergo additional tests for detection of substance abuse and are subjected to psychological tests to verify whether they are suited to carry firearms. All new recruits begin employment with a six-week mandatory induction course, which includes some 40 hours of training on handling of firearms in order for them to obtain certification to carry firearms. Recommendation 3 remains open pending receipt of documentation of background checks conducted for all existing security staff at UNOG SSS.

IV. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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



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STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Audit of recruitment practices in UNOG Security and Safety Service

Recom. no.	Recommendation	Critical/ ¹ Important ²	C/ ³ O ³	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date ⁴
1	The Office of Human Resources Management, in consultation with the Department of Safety and Security, should clarify the roles, responsibilities, policies and procedures for the recruitment of security staff at the United Nations Office at Geneva.	Important	O	Submission to OIOS of the final Administrative Instruction defining the respective roles, responsibilities, policies and procedures for the recruitment of security staff at UNOG	31 March 2013
2	The United Nations Office at Geneva should determine the language requirements for each level of post in UNOG Security and Safety Service and apply them in a consistent manner in the vacancy announcements.	Important	O	Submission to OIOS of documentation showing that language requirements for posts at UNOG SSS have been reviewed and are being consistently applied in Vacancy Announcements	30 June 2013
3	The United Nations Office at Geneva should conduct and clearly document the background checks on all security staff, including existing staff for whom the background check may not have been conducted at the time of appointment.	Important	O	Submission of documentation of background checks conducted for all existing security staff at UNOG SSS	30 June 2013

¹ Critical recommendations address significant and/or pervasive deficiencies or weaknesses in governance, risk management or internal control processes, such that reasonable assurance cannot be provided regarding the achievement of control and/or business objectives under review.

² Important recommendations address important deficiencies or weaknesses in governance, risk management or internal control processes, such that reasonable assurance may be at risk regarding the achievement of control and/or business objectives under review.

³ C = closed, O = open

⁴ Date provided by UNOG and OHRM/DM in response to recommendations