



INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION

OFFICE OF INTERNAL OVERSIGHT SERVICES

AUDIT REPORT

Recruitment Process in UNAMA

13 December 2007

Assignment No. AP2007/630/02

United Nations  Nations Unies

INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

MEMORANDUM INTERIEUR

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

TO: Mr. Tom Koenigs
A: Special Representative of Secretary-General
UNAMA

DATE: 13 December 2007

REFERENCE: AUD-7-5:9 (07- 00800

FROM: Dagfinn Knutsen, Director
DE: Internal Audit Division, OIOS



SUBJECT: **Assignment No. AP2007/630/02: Recruitment Process in UNAMA**

OBJET:

1. I am pleased to present the report on the above-mentioned audit, which was conducted from February and March 2007.

2. Based on your comments, we are pleased to inform you that we will close recommendations 6 and 7 in the OIOS recommendations database as indicated in Annex I. In order for us to close the remaining 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 critical (i.e., recommendations 1, 2, 5, 9, 14 and 16) in its annual report to the General Assembly and semi-annual report to the Secretary-General.

4. IAD is assessing the overall quality of its audit process and kindly requests that you consult with your managers who dealt directly with the auditors and complete the attached client satisfaction survey form.

cc: Mr. Philip Cooper, Director, DFS
Mrs. Neva Donalds, Chief Administrative Officer, UNAMA
Mr. Takahisa Kawakami, Chief of Staff, UNAMA
Mr. Swatantra Goolsarran, Executive Secretary, UN Board of Auditors
Mr. Jonathan Childerley, Chief, Oversight Support Unit, Department of Management
Mr. Byung-Kun Min, Programme Officer, OIOS
Mr. Iswari Bhattarai, Chief Resident Auditor, UNAMA

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

Recruitment Process in UNAMA

OIOS conducted an audit of the recruitment process in the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) in February and March 2007. The main objectives of the audit were to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the process and its compliance with applicable policies, rules and procedures. The audit was conducted in accordance with the International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing.

OIOS found that the Mission needed to address a number of issues in the recruitment process as discussed below:

- Most of the recruitment activities pertaining to vacant posts (42 international and 110 national as of 8 March 2007) were pending with programme managers. Some processing delays were also caused by the late submission by the concerned sections of incomplete information on recruitment activities performed. There was no timeframe established for the completion of recruitment activities, nor was there a reliable monitoring mechanism to expedite the recruitment process if there were unnecessary delays.
- There was no system for recording applications received for national posts to ensure that: (i) candidates had submitted their applications before the closing date of the vacancy announcement; and (ii) all applications received in different locations had been taken into consideration during the short listing of candidates.
- Recruitment and personnel files needed to be maintained properly by using a checklist to identify all relevant documents that should be filed.
- Reference checking of academic qualifications and work experience of selected candidates was not conducted. For example, the P.11 (Personal History Profile) did not always include academic qualifications, a recruited candidate had fewer years of work experience than required by the vacancy announcement, and the summary report on the selection process was prepared before the closing date. There were also instances where documented justifications were not maintained when selecting candidates other than the best candidate.
- Three international consultants were selected, although the Mission had not obtained at least three proposals from probable candidates. In some cases, consultancy contracts were awarded/renewed several times for discharging similar types of work. Terms of reference and measurable outputs of some of the consultancies were not clear or specific
- The UNAMA Personnel Section did not maintain a roster of pre-cleared, pre-screened national candidates within an appropriate database in order to expedite recruitment for national posts in an efficient and transparent manner. In addition, some of the national individual contractors (IC) were working continuously for more than 9 months without approval of PMSS/OHRM. The

terms of payment to ICs, as per the contract were stipulated in US dollars, which contradicted the guidelines in DPKO HR Handbook.

OIOS has issued 18 recommendations to UNAMA to address these and other related issues. UNAMA accepted all of OIOS' recommendations.

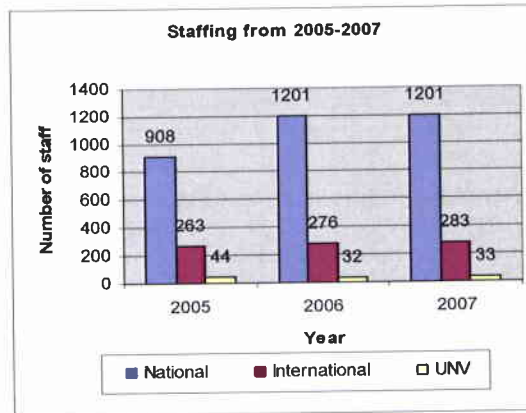
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I. INTRODUCTION

1. OIOS conducted an audit of the recruitment process in the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) in February and March 2007.
2. UNAMA had budgeted for 1,517 civilian staff for calendar year 2007 including 283 international staff, 1,201 national staff and 33 United Nations Volunteers (UNVs). Figure 1 shows the budgeted civilian posts for calendar years 2005 to 2007.

Figure 1: Budgeted civilian posts 2005-2007



3. The overall objective of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations' (DPKO's) recruitment policy is to provide field missions with the right person for the right post at the right time, and to attract and retain the best qualified and experienced candidates. The recruitment process is to be guided by the principle of selecting staff on the basis of merit, demonstrated competencies and performance, through a competitive and transparent process for the purpose of securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity. It is equally important to pay due regard to recruiting staff on as wide a geographical basis as possible and to meeting the gender distribution goals set by the General Assembly.

4. The authority to recruit staff members is limited to the Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) by ST/AI/2002/4. This authority is in turn delegated to DPKO and the Personnel Management and Support Service (PMSS) for the purpose of staffing missions, including UNAMA. PMSS retains strict authority to recruit and appoint all international staff. UNAMA is authorized to recruit national staff including National Officers, General Service and individual contractors, in accordance with the policies and procedures applicable to the UN system. The head of mission was authorized from 1 November 2006 to exercise technical clearance authority and assume responsibility vested in some offices at headquarters for specified occupational groups and levels. The programme managers are responsible for conducting competency-based interviews and the Chief Civilian Personnel Officer (CCPO) is responsible for documenting the selection process and informing PMSS about recruitment activities. All
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recruitment for both international and national staff must be processed through the office of the CCPO.

5. Comments made by UNAMA are shown in *italics*.

II. AUDIT OBJECTIVES

6. The major objectives of the audit were to assess:

- (a) Recruitment process efficiency and effectiveness;
- (b) Compliance with relevant recruitment policies, rules and procedures; and
- (c) Whether adequate attention has been given to maintaining gender balance and geographical distribution when recruiting staff members.

III. AUDIT SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

7. The audit covered recruitment activities for both national and international civilian staff, including those recruited as consultants, individual contractors and daily paid workers for the period from January 2005 to March 2007. The audit involved: (i) reviews of recruitment and personnel files; (ii) inquiries and interviews with key Mission personnel, including the Acting Chief of Staff and Chief of Personnel Section; and (iii) collection and analysis of pertinent data on recruitment activities.

IV. AUDIT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Vacancy rate and recruitment status

8. Figure 2 shows the monthly vacancy rates from January 2005 to February 2007, when vacancy rates ranged from 16 per cent to 35 per cent.

Figure 2: Vacancy rates from 2005-2007



9. Table 1 below shows the average vacancy rates for the three categories of civilian personnel, i.e. national, international and UNVs from January 2005 to February 2007. During this period, the overall average vacancy rate for the national and international staff categories was 26 per cent, and 12 per cent for UNVs. The creation of new local posts for regional offices, according to the Personnel Section, was the major reason for the 27 per cent vacancy rate in national posts in 2006. In the case of international staff, the Personnel Section explained that candidates preferred postings to other peacekeeping missions where the prevailing security situation and financial benefits were perceived to be better than in UNAMA. There were also instances where the total number of outgoing international staff members was greater than the number of those joining the mission in a year. For example, in 2005, only 55 international staff members joined the Mission, while 68 staff separated. As of March 2007, there were 75 international and 204 national vacancies.

Table 1: Average percentage vacancy rates (2005-2007)

Staff category	Year			Average
	2005	2006	2007	
International	31	24	25	27
National	20	27	26	24
Average	26	26	26	26
UNVs	9	11	15	12

Notes: 2005 data include electoral staff. 2007 numbers cover January and February 2007.

Delays in the recruitment process

10. Most of the vacancies as of March 2007 were pending with programme managers (PMs), who were responsible for: requesting the Personnel Section to initiate the recruitment activities to fill a vacant post; initial short-listing of qualified national candidates; interviewing technically cleared/short-listed candidates; and preparing and submitting interview results to the Personnel

Section for further action. OIOS identified backlogs in the initial short-listing of national candidates, interviews, and preparation of interview results.

11. In two cases, although technical clearance for the conduct of interviews for vacant national posts was given in December 2006, the interview results were not submitted to the Personnel Section until 8 March 2007. Delays were also noticed in the recruitment of international staff. For example, PHPs and technical clearances to conduct interviews for the recruitment of a Civil Affairs Field Coordination Officer for Pillar II and a Human Rights Officer (P-5) were provided to the concerned PM on 26 September and 1 October 2006, respectively. As of March 2007, the recruitment action was still pending with the PMs.

12. On the other hand, some delays of eight to eleven months in the recruitment for GL-4 post # L0269, a P-4 Political Affairs Officer post, a P-3 Security Officer post and a P-4 Judicial Affairs Officer post occurred in the Personnel Section. The relevant PM requested the Personnel Section to post the vacancy announcement (VA) for a Judicial Affairs Officer post on 22 September 2004. On 21 February 2006, since the vacancy announcement had not been posted, the Personnel Section requested PMSS to re-advertise it. There was no documentation explaining the delay in advertising the VA. Further, there were no timeframes for completing each recruitment task, and no monitoring and follow-up by the concerned sections regarding recruitment delays.

Recommendation 1

(1) The UNAMA Administration should establish timeframes for the completion of each recruitment activity and a corresponding mechanism to monitor and follow up with the concerned sections regarding any delays in the recruitment process.

13. *The UNAMA Administration accepted recommendation 1 and explained that the issue had been addressed and, on a weekly basis, programme managers (and high-level management) had been apprised of the situation vis-à-vis vacant posts under his/her supervision but without time frames. From 1 October 2007, UNAMA had introduced a six week deadline for the completion of each recruitment activity by programme managers from identification of a VA to completing the comparative evaluation. Recommendation 1 remains open pending receipt of documentation supporting the newly established policies and procedures and their implementation.*

Internal controls for managing applications need to be strengthened

14. Applications from national candidates were generally received by the Personnel Section and the Regional Offices. In cases where the programme managers received the applications, they forwarded them to the Personnel Section, which did not have a system to record the receipt of applications against each vacancy announcement. The Personnel Section sent all applications received to the respective PMs or Regional Administrative Officers (RAOs) for

initial short-listing, without recording this transmittal. Subsequently, the PMs/RAOs forwarded shortlists to the Personnel Section, which in turn provided technical clearance for the PMs/RAOs to interview candidates. Without proper documentation of the transmittal of applications from the candidates to the Personnel Section and to the concerned PMs/RAOs, there was no assurance that all applications received had been taken into consideration during the short listing of candidates. Furthermore, there was also no assurance that all short-listed candidates had submitted their applications before the closing date of the vacancy announcement.

Recommendation 2

(2) The UNAMA Administration should require that the short-listing of candidates and the transmittal of candidates' applications from the Personnel Section to the programme managers are properly documented, to ensure that all applications received are considered in the selection of candidates.

15. *The UNAMA Administration accepted recommendation 2 and stated that remedial action had been taken in the handling of applications for national posts to ensure that all applications received in respect of each VA are recorded and accounted for. For this purpose, the concerned Programme Manager is required to send the names of all candidates who apply for a position to Personnel Section to be registered, and the Personnel Section then includes these candidates in the outgoing memo submitting the applications to the Programme Manager for review.* Recommendation 2 remains open pending receipt of documentation supporting the newly established policies and procedures and their implementation. Furthermore, the Mission may wish to review its overall procedures for receiving and transmitting candidates' applications.

B. Post classification

Absence of HQ's authorization for implementing post classification exercise

16. On 3 August 2005, UNAMA established an *ad hoc* 9-member Post Review Panel. The Personnel Section was represented on the Panel in an *ex officio* capacity, as an advisor and non-voting member, although it participated in the Panel's deliberations. The purpose of the post review, an alternative to a post classification exercise, was to create opportunities for the upward movement of the Mission's national staff through the identification of functions, the performance of which may require a higher-level post than the level of the incumbent. The Panel was mandated to review all UNAMA General Service posts and related categories *vis-à-vis* the incumbent's job description to determine the appropriate post level and recommend to the CAO whether a post is confirmed at the present level, or should be upgraded or downgraded.

17. As a result of the post review, which was completed in December 2005, forty-five local General Service posts were upgraded and announced in connection with a competitive selection process. The Panel recommended that

50 GS posts be downgraded, which would occur when the incumbent left the post. However, the Personnel Section could not provide specific data on the status of these downgraded posts. It appeared that the post review was based on verbal authorization, as we were not provided any written authorizations of this exercise. As per Section 2.3 of ST/AI/1998/9, decisions regarding the classification of posts in the Mission will be taken by, or on behalf of, the Assistant Secretary-General for the Human Resources Management.

Recommendation 3

(3) The UNAMA Administration should obtain *post facto* approval from the Office of Human Resource Management to regularize the post review exercises that were conducted and implemented in 2005 and 2006.

18. *The UNAMA Administration accepted recommendation 3 and stated that the post review exercise was carried out following information received from the Senior Human Resources Officer, sent to UNAMA by (then) PMSS to assist in the alignment of posts in the mission. A fax requesting for post-facto approval was sent to FPD on 26 September 2007, since the previous information received in this respect was verbal. Recommendation 3 remains open pending the receipt of the documentation from UNAMA showing that the post-facto approval has been received.*

C. Recruitment of staff

19. Selection of staff for appointment to field posts is to be made from either a roster of pre-screened candidates or through vacancy announcements. Preferably, at least three candidates whose background matches the qualifications required for the post are to be reviewed. Selection and recruitment for a post should proceed only after a comparative evaluation of each candidate has been conducted and recorded.

Recruitment case files were not properly maintained

20. OIOS reviewed 30 recruitment files (10 for international and 20 for national staff including, 10 NPOs) and observed that the files were not properly maintained in many cases. For example, some documents did not match the file names, and different VAs and other relevant documents were kept in a single file in many occasions. Of the 10 international case files reviewed, the vacancy announcements (VA) were not in the files in 4 cases, making it difficult to ascertain whether: (i) the deadline for submission of the application was provided and complied with; (ii) the pertinent information such as identification of the vacant post, job description, proposed level, duty station, projected vacancy date etc.) as required by AI 03/04, "Recruitment and Selection" issued by UNAMA was included in the VA; and (iii) the candidates' academic qualifications and work experiences met the criteria specified in the relevant VA. There were no documents relating to the conduct and the results of interviews held in all 10 international and 10 NPO case files examined, and in six out of 10 GSL case files. Without adequate documentation of the recruitment procedures conducted,

there was no assurance that recruitment rules were complied with and that recruitment decisions were transparent.

Recommendation 4

(4) The UNAMA Administration should ensure that all documentation relating to pertinent recruitment actions and decisions is systematically filed, by using a checklist showing all required documentation.

21. *The UNAMA Administration accepted recommendation 4 and stated that the Personnel Assistant/Clerks and filing Clerk had been trained in the standard system for filing documents (including being apprised of the documents that should be included in the file). In the future all recruitment documents for international recruitment will also be attached to the nucleus upon completion of recruitment activity.* Recommendation 4 remains open pending verification by OIOS of the action taken to ensure completeness of the files.

Reference checks on academic qualifications and work experience were not made

22. For external candidates, reference checks are to be made to verify the candidate's academic qualifications and work history. To expedite the recruitment process in light of immediate operational requirements, it was necessary for candidates to report for duty before the responses to the reference checks had been received and verified. Recruitment may proceed but the candidates' contracts should not be extended beyond the initial appointment if the reference checks are not completed. None of the 20 recruitment case files reviewed (10 international and 10 NPOs) pertaining to academic qualifications and prior work experience contained documentation showing that reference checks were performed. The Personnel Section explained that reference checks of international staff were done by PMSS, but the documentation of such reference checks was not made available to the Mission. Regarding the reference checks of national staff, the Personnel Section stated that the candidates were responsible for the accuracy of information written in their Personal History Profiles (Form P.11) regarding academic qualifications and work history. Therefore, UNAMA did not perform reference checks, but relied on photocopies of academic and work experience certificates presented by the applicants. This has increased the risk of recruiting national staff, who might not have acquired genuine academic credentials and/or relevant work experience as required by the post.

Recommendation 5

(5) The UNAMA Personnel Section should conduct reference checks on the academic qualifications and work histories of each newly recruited national staff member under an external vacancy announcement, preferably before issuance of the letter of appointment and latest by the expiration of his/her initial contract, and take appropriate action.

23. *The UNAMA Administration accepted recommendation 5 but stated that it had been difficult to get responses to educational references checks as the country (Afghanistan) had been in conflict for a long period. However, candidates recommended for recruitment are required to submit original educational documents prior to issuance of a letter of appointment. In the event that post-secondary educational qualifications are required, there is a stipulation that the recommended candidate obtain certification, on his/her original post-secondary educational document, from both the Ministry of Higher Education and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The shortage of qualified persons in Afghanistan who meet all the requirements of a vacancy announcement is therefore not always possible especially at the regional and provincial offices. However, the Personnel Section is putting procedures in place for reference checks where appropriate. In OIOS' view, the justification regarding the absence of original records from the respective educational institutions, in a country in conflict for a long period, could be considered valid had the Personnel Section of UNAMA corresponded with concerned educational institutions for reference checks and no responses were received. Further, some of the candidates had received their education outside Afghanistan, where the reference checks could have been conducted. In our sample review, there was no correspondence regarding reference checks. In view of this, recommendation 5 remains open pending receipt of documentation showing that reference checks are being performed by the Mission.*

Non-compliance with applicable procedures in selecting staff

24. There were instances of non-compliance with applicable procedures in the 30 cases sampled. For example, under VA 407586, for a FS-5 post, two candidates were recruited, even though the P.11 forms did not mention their respective academic qualifications. The candidate recruited for one NPO post had only 3 years of work experience, whereas, the vacancy announcement required 5 years. These instances increased the risk of selecting staff members who don't have requisite qualifications and/or work experience, which might ultimately, affect the level of performance.

25. In another case, the review panel report was not signed by the panel members when selecting an NPO, and the Personnel Section was not represented at the interview. VA number 016/03/2006 for a GSDL Administrative Assistant showed March 2006 as both the opening and closing date. In another case, one candidate whose spouse was working at UNAMA, was considered the best candidate for recruitment, and was appointed under an appointment of limited duration contract at the GSL-4/A level. The interview sheets in this case were signed by only one person and kept in his personal file. These instances increased the risk of selecting candidates without complying with some of the applicable procedures.

26. The DPKO HR handbook states that an external candidate who is the father, mother, son, daughter, brother or sister of a staff member is normally not entitled to be recruited. We were informed that the Personnel Section relies on the P.11 (Personal History Profile), in which the applicants state whether they

have relatives working in the UN system. However, there is no procedure to verify if the staff member has relatives working for UNAMA. Further, it is not practical to verify whether an applicant's relatives are working anywhere in the UN System except where the applicant declares this in the P.11. We were informed that inquiries are made if there are any indications the applicant's relatives are working in the UN system, and if so the applicant will not be appointed.

Recommendation 6

(6) The UNAMA Personnel Section should ensure that recruitment procedures are complied with to ensure that staff selected are fully qualified and are not close relatives of current Mission staff.

27. *The UNAMA Administration accepted recommendation 6 and explained that unless a prospective staff member answers No 18 (relatives employed in the UN) truthfully, there is no way in which this information can be verified for every staff member. Action is taken in instances where it later comes to light that staff member did not disclose this information. Similarly, the Personnel Section issued an Information Circular IC04/2007 to all staff, to declare if they have relations in UNAMA so that corrective action is taken. Responses were reviewed and actions were taken as appropriate. Based on the explanation provided by the Mission, recommendation 6 has been closed.*

Consultants were not selected competitively and were used to perform core functions

28. As per the DPKO Human Resources Handbook, consultants and individual contractors should not be used to perform core functions normally carried out by regular UN staff. Also, in the interest of transparency, at least three qualified candidates have to be considered for the assignment.

29. Our review of seven of nine international consultant recruitment case files showed that two contracts (L4P/UNAMA – Index number: ICO484 and 13419-Index number: 790426) were issued to perform core functions normally carried out by regular UN staff. The consultant recruited under Contract L4P/UNAMA was assigned as a Political Affairs Officer and the individual selected under the second contract was assigned the duties of a Transitional Justice Focal Point for Afghanistan. In 3 of the 7 files reviewed, contractors were selected without obtaining at least three proposals from probable candidates. We were informed that the approvals for recruiting these consultants without three proposals were obtained from HQ, but we were not provided with these approvals.

Recommendation 7

(7) The UNAMA Administration should ensure that: (i) consultants are hired to discharge specific tasks, which are not considered core functions; and (ii) at least three

proposals from candidates are obtained and evaluated before awarding a consultancy contract.

30. *The UNAMA Administration accepted recommendation 7 and stated that since mid-2006 consultants had not been recruited to carry out core functions. Furthermore, programme managers had been required to provide detailed ToRs, with time frames, as well as review proposals from at least three consultants and provide comprehensive justifications regarding their selections. Based on the explanation provided by the Mission, recommendation 7 has been closed.*

Consultancy contracts were awarded/renewed several times for discharging similar types of work

31. Assignments given to consultants should be of a temporary nature and capable of being performed within a limited and specified period. There were some instances where new contracts were repeatedly awarded or the previous contracts were renewed to discharge similar types of work. For example, a consultancy contract (index number IC0484) was awarded nine times between 2002 and 2005 generally covering periods of from one to a maximum of six months. This consultancy involved drafting and finalizing the Transitional Assistance Programme for Afghanistan's core strategy document and to discharge functions as per Sec.7 of ST/AI/1999/7 four times. This indicated that the time needed to discharge the assigned work was not estimated accurately or the work had not been done timely by the consultant. However, his performance was evaluated satisfactory and payments were made accordingly.

Recommendation 8

(8) The UNAMA Administration should ensure that programme managers requiring consultancy services: (i) prepare accurate estimates of the time needed to complete the consultancy based on the volume of work and expected outputs; and (ii) discontinue the practice of repeatedly awarding or renewing consultancy contracts for discharging similar types of work.

32. *The UNAMA Administration accepted recommendation 8 and stated that remedial action had been taken and detailed terms of reference had been required for all requests for consultancy contracts including expected timeframes. Recommendation 8 remains open pending receipt of documentation showing the remedial action taken and examples of the detailed TORs that had been required.*

Terms of reference and measurable outputs of consultancy contracts were not clear

33. Detailed TORs were available in three of the 7 files reviewed. While signing contract documents with a consultant, the terms of reference were referred to as per Sec. 7 of ST/AI/1999/7 on four occasions. Section 7 of this AI specifies that the provisions contained in section 3 shall apply in case of

individual contractors. As per section 3.1 of the AI, Heads of departments and offices shall ensure that detailed terms of reference describing the work to be performed are prepared well in advance of the engagement of the consultant, and submitted in a timely manner to the executive or administrative office for processing. Section 3.3 states inter-alia, that the terms of reference shall be clear and specific to include objectives and targets, tangible and measurable outputs of assignment and performance indicators for evaluation of results. In view of the above, referring to Sec.7 of ST/AI/1999/7 alone as a terms of reference, does not constitute an actual TOR. Further, due to non-availability of detailed TORs in three other cases (Index numbers: IC0601, IC0602 and 506792), OIOS could not determine whether their performance had in fact achieved expected outputs.

Recommendation 9

(9) The UNAMA Administration should ensure that detailed TORs are prepared for all consultancy services clearly indicating tangible and measurable outputs to be achieved within a specified time-frame by incorporating specific indicators for evaluation purposes.

34. *The UNAMA Administration accepted recommendation 9 and stated that remedial action had been taken as explained in paragraph 32. Recommendation 9 remains open pending receipt of documentation showing the remedial action taken and that TORs had been prepared with sufficient detail.*

Non-compliance with applicable requirements

35. None of the seven consultants selected had furnished a written statement indicating their agreement to abide by the standard of conduct pertaining to Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse and the standards of conduct contained in ST/SGB/2003/13. Also, in 6 of the 7 cases reviewed, the individual contractors did not furnish statements of good health as required by the DPKO HR Handbook.

Recommendation 10

(10) The UNAMA Administration should ensure that all consultants and individual contractors furnish written statements showing that they will comply with the standards of conduct contained in ST/SGB/2003/13, and furnish statements of good health.

36. *The UNAMA Administration accepted recommendation 10 and stated that remedial action had been taken since mid 2006 and all consultants and individual contractors had been required to provide a statement of good health. This action will also be taken as regards to furnishing written statements regarding compliance with the contents of ST/SGB/2003/13. Recommendation 10 remains open pending verification that the appropriate written statements are being obtained.*

D. Maintenance of staff members' personnel files

Staff members' personnel files were not properly maintained

37. We reviewed 16 randomly selected local staff files (consisting of 10 individual contractors and 6 appointments of limited duration contract holders) of the 950 personnel files to determine whether the files were up to date and contained necessary documents. The letter of appointment translated into the local language was not in any of the 12 locally recruited lower level staff case files, as required. The terms of reference were found in only 5 of 16 files. Photocopies of individual credentials and academic qualifications were found in only 2 of 16 files. Staff had not signed contract documents issued to them in 11 cases and Medical Clearance Reports were available in only 6 cases. The staff members' employment applications were missing in 8 cases. In addition, staff members' national ID cards were not available in 6 cases. Similarly, in two cases, the national ID cards for staff members' spouses were not kept in the file. Some irrelevant documents and/or documents belonging to other staff members were also found in some files.

38. DPKO PMSS has to approve all letters of appointment for international staff, whereas the Review Panel's recommendation is required for letters issued to NPOs. Our review of a sample of 10 personnel files of the 310 current NPO and international staff personnel files showed that PMSS approvals of contract renewal were not found in 3 of the 5 international staff files. There were no letters of appointment in two of the national staff files.

Recommendation 11

(11) The UNAMA Personnel Section should ensure that all relevant documents are appropriately maintained in staff member personnel files.

39. *The UNAMA Administration accepted recommendation 11 and stated that the entire staff in the Personnel Section – but particularly those directly responsible for official status files – had been provided with training and written guidelines on the maintenance of the files. In order to bring all files up to date, an individual contractor had been engaged to ensure that this exercise was completed by the end of October 2007. Recommendation 11 remains open pending verification by OIOS of the action taken to ensure completeness of the files.*

E. Gender balance and geographical distribution

40. As set out in Article 101 (paragraph 3) and Article 8, of the United Nations Charter, the selection of staff must be made with due regard to the principle of equitable geographical distribution and gender equality. While mission posts are not subject to geographical distribution per se, every effort should be made to ensure an equitable geographical distribution and to increase the numbers of staff from under-represented and unrepresented Member States.

41. Table 2 below shows that females constituted 15 per cent of total staff. However, while females constituted 12 per cent of national staff, 31 per cent of the international staff was female.

Table 2: Gender Distribution of on board staff

Staffing	Male	Female	Total	Male %	Female %
International	150	66	216	69%	31%
National	853	111	964	88%	12%
Total	1003	177	1180	85%	15%

Note: National staff does not include individual contractors

42. Our analysis of the geographical distribution of international staff showed that the highest percentage (43 per cent) of UNAMA staff was from Europe followed by 25 per cent from Asia. The highest number of staff (19) were from the United Kingdom, followed by Canada and the United States with 13 staff each. Romania, Philippines, India, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Germany and Kenya were also well represented in the Mission.

Further efforts were needed to improve gender balance and geographical distribution

43. We were told that the Personnel Section had data on the efforts made by UNAMA to maintain gender balance and geographical distribution of international staff received from PMSS and that the Section distributed a staffing table to all participants in a monthly meeting in the SRSG's office. The policy of recruiting staff members to maintain gender balance and geographical distribution is also discussed in weekly meetings held by the SRSG. Programme managers are responsible for complying with these recruitment policies when recommending candidates for appointment. However, the Personnel Section did not provide the detailed recruitment data to Programme managers/RAOs limiting their ability to appropriately implement the gender balance and geographical distribution policies.

Recommendation 12

(12) The UNAMA Personnel Section should periodically furnish analyses of gender balance and geographical distribution related data to programme managers/regional administrative officers and provide guidelines to support gender balance and geographical distribution while selecting qualified staff.

44. *The UNAMA Administration accepted recommendation 12 and stated that the Personnel Section already provides this information to all programme managers as well as the senior management on a weekly basis, in accordance with the SOPs on the field mission selection process. OIOS could not locate evidence of such an analysis being disseminated nor were any administrative instructions giving guidelines to programme managers found. As a result, recommendation 12 remains open pending the receipt of a copy of the indicated*

SOP as well as examples of the information which is provided by the Personnel Section to all programme managers and senior management on a weekly basis.

F. Reporting to PMSS

45. UNAMA was forwarding recruitment related reports to DPKO, NY on a timely basis. The Incumbency Report was sent monthly and included recruitment related information. The Recruitment Status Report was sent weekly and showed the specific status of international staff recruitment.

46. As outlined in the DPKO HR Handbook, at least twice each year, the Chief Civilian Personnel Officer should request all eligible locally-recruited staff members to express their interest in special mission assignments. Interested staff members should complete and submit an application for mission assignment together with a copy of his /her latest performance appraisal report, through the immediate supervisor and/or Section Chief, to the Personnel Section. The local panel is to meet to consider all applications and recommend suitable applicants for international mission assignments. A consolidated presentation of applicants, together with supporting documentation, is to be sent to PMSS for review.

47. We were informed that the Chief Civilian Personnel Officer has never requested eligible locally-recruited staff members to express their interest in special Mission assignments. We were also told that all national staff members had internet access, where they could find vacancy announcements for different missions by themselves and apply directly, and that there was no need to perform the local recruitment exercise. Also, according to the Personnel Section due to manpower shortages such an exercise could not be carried out.

Recommendation 13

(13) The UNAMA Chief Civilian Personnel Officer should comply with the DPKO HR Handbook's guidelines on forwarding to PMSS a consolidated presentation of suitable applicants of locally recruited staff members interested in special mission assignments.

48. *The UNAMA Administration did not accept recommendation 13 and stated that recruitment in the UN Secretariat, including for peacekeeping/peacemaking/political missions, is currently governed by ST/AI/2006/3- requiring competitive selection to all posts and applications of interested individuals, including staff members, to posts via the galaxy system.* OIOS wishes to point out that per annex III of ST/AI/2006/3, staff members are expected to review regularly the compendium of vacancies, preferably in its electronic version, to decide on suitable vacancies for which they should apply. However, this AI neither supersedes the guidelines as specified in DPKO HR Handbook nor prohibits compliance. As such, recommendation 13 is reiterated for UNAMA's reconsideration and remains open pending the receipt of documentation supporting that the UNAMA Chief Civilian Personnel Officer is complying with the respective DPKO HR Handbook's guidelines.

G. Other Matters

Roster of technically cleared national applicants was not maintained

49. Selection of staff for appointment/assignment to field posts is made from a roster of pre-screened candidates or through vacancy announcements. In order to expedite the recruitment of national staff, the Mission is responsible for maintaining a roster of technically cleared candidates in a systematic manner. If there are sufficient technically cleared candidates in the roster for a vacant post, they may be directly approached for an interview to fill the vacant post as quickly as possible. However, the Personnel Section did not maintain a roster of technically cleared applicants in an appropriate database for this purpose. Rather, it maintained unsystematic records of interview panels' recommendations relating to previous vacancy announcements. We were told that the Personnel Section consulted previous interview panels' recommendations and that they informed programme managers to recruit from among these individuals provided they have a sufficient number of technically-cleared candidates for a particular post. However, the database of technically cleared candidates was not maintained properly and did not show names, qualifications, work experience, suitability to a particular post, validity of technical clearance, etc. Therefore, the recruitment of national staff failed to guarantee transparency or certainty that the best candidate was chosen from among pre-qualified candidates.

Recommendation 14

(14) The UNAMA Personnel Section should maintain a roster on an appropriate database of pre-cleared, pre-screened national candidates to expedite recruitment of national staff in an efficient and transparent manner.

50. *The UNAMA Administration accepted recommendation 14 and explained that due to the shortage of personnel, a database had not been created for roster purposes. In instances where an interview panel lists second/third ranking candidates, programme managers have been asked to review these candidates in the event of similar type of vacancies in the same location. However, the Personnel Section has been working to implement this recommendation. Recommendation 14 remains open pending receipt of documentation showing that the roster has been created and is being maintained.*

Use of daily paid workers

51. UNAMA employed daily paid workers or casual laborers although it had no policies regarding the use of such workers. During the construction of staff accommodations at the UNOCA complex, there were approximately 100 daily paid workers on board, but the number has been reduced to between 20 and 30. The Personnel Section had no records concerning such workers and played no role in recruiting them. UNAMA had established individual contractor's (IC) daily remuneration, which was supplied to programme managers who were asked to adhere to these rates as applicable. The programme managers hired daily paid workers directly based on requirements, certified attendance records and

forwarded them directly to Finance Section for payment. We were informed that a circular has been drafted to control the use of daily paid workers, but had not been issued until the time of our audit. Daily paid workers should be employed under existing mechanisms such as an IC contract or through outsourcing.

Recommendation 15

(15) The UNAMA Administration should stop hiring daily paid workers/casual workers and instead arrange service contracts wherever practical to better control the employment and compensation of such workers.

52. *The UNAMA Administration accepted recommendation 15 and stated that it had informed all programme managers to discontinue hiring daily paid/casual workers. To this end, the General Services Section is working with the Procurement Section to implement this recommendation. Recommendation 15 remains open pending receipt of documentation showing that daily casual workers are no longer being hired and that other approaches have been developed.*

Need for a control mechanism to limit numbers of national individual contracts

53. There were 97 national individual contractors (IC) on board in UNAMA. Our review of a sample of seven personnel files showed that five of these were recruited to discharge core functions. Further, three of the ICs were working continuously for more than nine months, including one who had served more than two years. The services of the ICs are limited to six months, or in special circumstances to a maximum of nine months, in any period of twelve consecutive months. Any extension of contracts beyond these time limits requires the approval of PMSS/OHRM. The personnel files contained no such approvals. Moreover, the terms of payment to national ICs in the contracts were in US dollars. However, the DPKO HR Handbook states that ICs, who are not required by the United Nations to travel outside the country of their usual residence, shall normally be paid in the currency of that country. The remuneration of these ICs was provided under the approved budget line item 4105 Maintenance Services, which was also used to meet the cost of cleaning services, UNOCA common cost sharing, waste disposal and daily paid workers. We were informed that most of the daily paid workers were converted to ICs in 2005, and the ICs, who were discharging core functions, would be replaced by regular staff once the vacant posts were filled. However, there was no clear policy or control mechanism to monitor the replacement of ICs by regular staff on vacant posts. This has increased the risk of continuing to employ ICs even after all national staff's posts have been filled.

Recommendations 16 and 17

(16) The UNAMA Administration should: (a) ensure that no individual contractor (IC) is awarded a contract for more than 9 months in any period of 12 consecutive months without obtaining approval from the Field Personnel

Division or OHRM, and (b) make arrangements to pay all local ICs in Afghan currency.

(17) The UNAMA Administration should develop a policy for terminating independent contractors after recruiting national staff to replace them.

54. *The UNAMA Administration accepted recommendation 16 and stated that remedial action has been taken and no IC will be allowed to work continuously for more than 6 months. The salary scale for nationally recruited staff is currently quoted in US dollars, however, all future contracts effective 1 October 2007, will be reflected in local currency.* Recommendation 16 remains open pending verification by OIOS of the action taken to ensure ICs are not inappropriately retained and that they are paid in the local currency.

55. *The UNAMA Administration accepted recommendation 17 but stated that the only ICs performing 'core' functions are drivers due to the lack of budgeted posts. As posts become available, the ICs are given appointments of limited duration.* Recommendation 17 remains open pending receipt of a copy of the newly developed policy for terminating independent contractors.

56. The Personnel Section is the key player in the recruitment process, and is primarily responsible for processing recruitment-related activities, and efficiently managing personnel administration. The Personnel Section had 18 budgeted posts (5 international and 13 national), including one P-4 Chief Civilian Personnel Officer. Four of the posts were allotted to the staff welfare unit, and the remaining fourteen were assigned to recruitment and personnel administration. All of the posts, except two (one P-4 and one local staff) were filled during the audit period. Two staff members, an FS-5 and FS-4, were borrowed from other units. Three staff members were responsible in each national and international unit for processing recruitment activities under the supervision of two international staff members.

Post review and filling Personnel Section vacant posts need attention

57. The budgeted staffing in Regional Offices had increased from 443 in 2005 to 622 in 2006 and 2007 creating a substantially increased workload for the Personnel Section. Staffing in the Section has increased slightly from 15 in 2005 to 18 in 2006 and 2007, which could pose problems for the Section's staff in efficiently handling recruitment-related activities. Proper planning of the number of posts and effective monitoring of the performance of each Personnel Section staff member are important in achieving desired objectives. Moreover, the Section's vacant posts should be filled on a priority basis to facilitate the overall UNAMA recruitment process.

Recommendation 18

(18) The UNAMA Administration should ensure that the Personnel Section's vacant posts are filled as soon as possible in order to accelerate the recruitment process in UNAMA.

58. *The UNAMA Administration accepted recommendation 18 and stated that there is only one vacant post in the Personnel Section (CCPO; P-4) which had been vacant since 2005 and is currently under recruitment. Additional posts are requested in the 2008 budget to bridge the gap between the increased volume of work due to increased numbers of posts in the mission and the posts allocated to the Personnel Section during the period of 2006-2007. Recommendation 18 remains open pending the receipt of documentation indicating that the vacant post has been filled.*

V. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

59. We wish to express our appreciation to the management and staff of UNAMA for the assistance and cooperation extended to the auditors during this assignment.

ANNEX 1

STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Recom. no.	C/O ¹	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date ²
1	O	Submission of documentation supporting the newly established policies and procedures and their implementation.	1 October 2007
2	O	Submission of documentation supporting the newly established policies and procedures and their implementation.	Implemented
3	O	Submission of documentation showing that the post-facto approval has been received.	25 September 2007
4	O	Verification by OIOS of the action taken to ensure completeness of the files.	Implemented
5	O	Submission of documentation showing that reference checks are being performed.	Ongoing since June 2006
6	C	Action completed	Implemented
7	C	Action completed	Implemented
8	O	Submission of documentation showing the remedial action taken and examples of the detailed TORs that had been required	Implemented since mid 2006
9	O	Submission of documentation showing that remedial action had been taken and that detailed TORs had been prepared with sufficient detail.	Implemented since mid 2006
10	O	Verification by OIOS that the appropriate written statements are being obtained.	Implemented since mid 2006
11	O	Verification by OIOS of the action taken to ensure completeness of the files.	End of October 2007
12	O	Submission of a copy of the indicated SOP as well as an example of the information which is provided by the Personnel Section to all programme managers and senior management on a weekly basis.	Implemented since 2006
13	O	Submission of documentation supporting the fact that the UNAMA Chief Civilian Personnel Officer is now complying with the respective DPKO HR Handbook's guidelines.	Not provided
14	O	Submission of documentation showing that the roster has been created and is being maintained.	End of October 2007
15	O	Submission of documentation showing that daily casual workers are no longer being hired and that other approaches have been developed.	Not provided
16	O	Verification by OIOS of the action taken to ensure individual contractors are not inappropriately retained and that they are paid in the local currency.	1 October 2007
17	O	Submission of a copy of the newly developed policy for terminating independent contractors.	Implemented since September 2005
18	O	Submission of documentation indicating that the vacant post has been filled.	Not provided

¹ C = closed, O = open

² Date provided by UNAMA in response to recommendations

UNITED NATIONS



OIOS Client Satisfaction Survey

Audit of: Recruitment process in UNAMA

(AP2007/630/02)

	1	2	3	4	5
By checking the appropriate box, please rate:	Very Poor	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
1. The extent to which the audit addressed your concerns as a manager.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. The audit staff's understanding of your operations and objectives.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Professionalism of the audit staff (demeanour, communication and responsiveness).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. The quality of the Audit Report in terms of:					
• Accuracy and validity of findings and conclusions;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Clarity and conciseness;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Balance and objectivity;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Timeliness.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. The extent to which the audit recommendations were appropriate and helpful.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. The extent to which the auditors considered your comments.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your overall satisfaction with the conduct of the audit and its results.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please add any further comments you may have on the audit process to let us know what we are doing well and what can be improved.

Name: _____ Title: _____ Date: _____

*Thank you for taking the time to fill out this survey. Please send the completed survey as soon as possible to:
 Director, Internal Audit Division, OIOS
 By mail: Room DC2-518, 2 UN Plaza, New York, NY 10017 USA
 By fax: (212) 963-3388
 By E-mail: knutsen2@un.org*