



Joint Inspection Unit of the United Nations System

Independent system-wide inspection, evaluation, investigation

The work of the Joint Inspection Unit to improve management and administration policies and practices throughout the United Nations system

This article is part of an ongoing series to commemorate the Joint Inspection Unit's 50th anniversary and highlight the JIU's work and achievements over the last 50 years.

The review of management and administration policies and practices throughout the United Nations (UN) system is an important function of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU). The JIU's authority to look at management issues is encapsulated in Article 5 of the JIU's Statute, which states that the JIU "shall provide an independent view through inspection and evaluation aimed at improving management and methods and at achieving greater co-ordination between organizations". This authority is reiterated in several UN General Assembly resolutions, including resolutions 44/184, 45/237 and 50/233, which call on the JIU to "focus more on management, budgetary and administrative issues."

The JIU provides recommendations on management and administration policies and practices both at the system-wide and individual organization levels. Across the UN system, in the last decades, the JIU has examined a number of management related issues, including but not limited to human resources, planning, common services, travel, procurement, finances and executive management. The JIU has developed benchmarks in a number of areas such as Results-Based Management, recruitment, reference checks and capital/construction/refurbishment projects. Based on these benchmarks it has formulated recommendations aimed at improving the management framework, policies and related practices in order to achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness system-wide. Nevertheless, each participating organization must decide on its own whether to accept and implement the recommendations according to its specific needs. The JIU's participating organizations each have a unique operational and management framework. Thus, when making system-wide recommendations, the JIU works to ensure that its proposals are implementable across

the full range of organizations. The JIU also looks to highlight best practices with respect to management that can be implemented within various UN entities. JIU benchmarks and recommendations are often referenced by the participating organizations when drawing up new policies and frameworks for internal restructuring.

As part of its efforts to improve management and administration in the UN, the JIU has looked at the implementation of common services as a means to improve efficiency and limit spending. In the context of UN reforms, there has been renewed interest in common services for non-programmatic activities such as human resources, finance, travel, procurement, and other management and administrative functions, to improve coordination and coherence of representative offices of United Nations agencies at the country and regional levels.

In light of these priorities, the Unit reviewed common services at various headquarters location such as Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi and at the locations of UN Regional Commissions. The shared objective of these reviews was to provide recommendations to improve common services and a rational framework for their governance and management in order to scale down structures and overhead costs and allow for more efficient and effective programme delivery.

In recent years, organizations have redesigned administrative support services through shared services and service centres. Taking note of this development the JIU decided to include in its current Programme of Work a review of common and shared administrative services delivery in a number of UN system organizations.

Management and administration reviews issued since 1999

Improving Management in Single Organizations

The JIU's strategic framework foresees the periodic analyses of the management and administration of the Unit's participating organizations. While the scope and available resources may limit the ability to compile these reports, the JIU is working to ensure full coverage of all organizations over time. The timeline on this page indicates the management and administration reviews (MARs) carried out to date. These MARs provide recommendations for improving management and administrative policies and practices within particular entities and taking into account their own specificities. Once a MARs report is completed, the Inspector presents the report directly to the legislative or governing body of the organization for consideration. The organization's internal management is required to provide general comments on the report and specific comments related to each recommendation, to indicate whether or not the recommendations addressed to it are acceptable. MARs reports are recognized as an important guide for JIU's participating organizations. Of the recommendations provided in MARs reports conducted between 2012 and 2016, more than 70% had been accepted and implemented.

Following the release of the World Intellectual Property Organization's MARs report in 2014, the organization's Programme and Budget Committee noted that it "recognized the important role of the JIU in undertaking management and administration reviews of UN agencies and welcomed the JIU practice to undertake these at regular intervals." Of the recommendations JIU provided and WIPO accepted, 87 % were implemented. Likewise, among the recommendations provided in the two MARs reports conducted for the World Health Organization, 74% were accepted. Of those, 98% have been implemented. Furthermore 100% of the JIU's recommendations provided in the MAR report on the ITU in 2016 were endorsed by the organization's governing Council.

These reviews of management and administrative policies and practices are useful not only for the participating organizations - they help to enhance the JIU's knowledge of the participating organizations as well. This allows the JIU to fulfil one of the major components of its mission: to identify and disseminate best practices across the system.

1999	
2000	
2001	 
2002	
2003	
2004	
2005	
2007	  
2008	 
2009	 
2010	
2011	
2012	  
2014	 
2016	

Enhancing efficiency, effectiveness, accountability and transparency across the United Nations system