

JIU Standards and guidelines

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A. Applicability

1. The Unit follows a standard approach in planning, designing, conducting and reporting on inspections, evaluations and investigations.
2. These standards and guidelines, elaborated in accordance with the JIU statute, and having been approved by the Inspectors, apply to the selection, planning, conduct and reporting of the Unit's inspections, evaluations and investigations. They are subject to further change by the Unit, in the light of experience, following procedures established for approval.*

* The Unit's more detailed procedures and policies are documented in the internal operating manual.

B. Functions of the Joint Inspection Unit

3. Articles 5 and 6 of the Joint Inspection Unit statute stipulate that it conducts inspections, evaluations and investigations to provide an independent view of the efficiency of services and programmes, as well as the proper use of funds, of its participating organizations. The Unit is the only independent system-wide oversight body with the authority to perform inspections, evaluations and investigations throughout the United Nations system. In

practice, however, the Unit has concentrated primarily on evaluations and inspections, and conducts relatively few investigations. As stated in the statute, the Unit will satisfy itself that the activities undertaken by the participating organizations are carried out in the most economical manner and that optimum use is made of the resources available for carrying out these activities.

4. Since its inception in 1968, the work of the Unit has evolved in response to changes in both the issues of interest to the Member States and the methods of conducting inspections, evaluations and investigations. In the 1970s, the Unit placed emphasis on reports regarding evaluations and evaluation methodologies, which served to promote, in effect, the establishment of internal evaluation units throughout the United Nations system.

5. In response to increased concerns and calls from the Member States, since the 1980s the Unit's emphasis has shifted to reviewing whether services were provided efficiently and funds used properly and, therefore, the Unit gave greater attention to management, budgetary and administrative issues of specific activities of interest of Member States. The Unit is mindful of the mandates emanating from legislative organs when selecting topics for inclusion in its work programme.

6. In accordance with article 11 of the statute, the Unit prepares reports, notes and confidential letters on the work of its participating organizations. The Inspectors draw up, over their own signature, reports, notes and confidential letters for which they are responsible and in which they state their findings and propose solutions to the problems they have noted. The information and data contained in the reports, notes and confidential letters, as well as the conclusions and recommendations of Inspectors, are tested against the collective wisdom of the Unit.

7. Reports are issued when recommendations are addressed to legislative organs of the participating organizations concerned and require their consideration and approval.

8. Notes are issued and addressed to the executive heads of the participating organizations when decisions on recommendations can be made by the executive heads concerned, without governing body authorization.

9. Confidential letters are addressed to executive heads when the Unit wishes to draw their attention to findings that do not require issuing a report or note or are not suitable for inclusion in reports, and decisions on recommendations and/or corrective measures that can be taken by the executive heads alone.

10. The Joint Inspection Unit statute authorizes the Unit to conduct inspections, evaluations and investigations, which will be handled on a case-by-case basis, in consultation with appropriate standards and procedures. The broad criteria that will be used during formulation of the work programme will include applying the following definitions:

(a) An inspection is an independent, on-site review of the operations of organizational units to determine the extent to which they are performing as expected. An inspection examines the functioning of processes or activities to verify their effectiveness and efficiency. An inspection compares processes, activities, projects, and programmes to established criteria (e.g., applicable rules and regulations, internal administrative instructions, good operational practices of other units within or outside the organization concerned), and does so in view of the resources allocated to them;

(b) An evaluation is an independent review of the outputs of activities, projects or programmes to determine their relevance, added value and impact. An evaluation examines the quality and quantity of the outputs to verify whether they are meeting the intended objectives. An evaluation compares the outputs against objectives, as established through legislative mandates, and assesses whether managers are applying the best management and administrative practices;

(c) An investigation is an independent inquiry into the conduct of, or action taken by, an individual or group of individuals or a situation or occurrence resulting from accident or force of nature. An investigation pursues reports of alleged violations of rules and regulations and other established procedures, mismanagement, misconduct, waste of resources or abuse of authority with a view to proposing corrective management and administrative measures, and as appropriate, bringing the matter to the attention of suitable legal authorities and/or internal offices of investigation. An investigation compares the

subject under investigation to established criteria (e.g., rules and regulations, codes of conduct, administrative instructions and applicable law).

11. The Unit is assisted by an Executive Secretary and such staff as authorized, in accordance with the procedures set forth in article 20 of the statute.

C. Development of the work programme

12. In accordance with article 9 of the statute, the Unit is responsible for preparing its annual work programme. In doing so, it takes into account, besides its own observations, experience and assessment of priorities with regard to subjects for inspection, evaluation or investigation, any requests of the competent legislative organs of the participating organizations and suggestions received from the executive heads of the organizations and the bodies of the United Nations system concerned with budgetary control, investigation, coordination and evaluation.

13. The Unit develops its annual work programme based on a comprehensive analysis of requests, proposals and suggestions, which determines, inter alia, the nature of the undertaking, i.e., inspection, evaluation or investigation; its objectives and scope; and the availability of resources of the Unit for the purpose.

14. The work programme is subject to change by the Inspectors during the course of the year in order to address emerging requests from legislative organs or in response to changing priorities. New proposals to be included in the work programme during the course of the year will be subject to the established procedure.

15. The Unit attempts to prepare a balanced work programme that includes both system-wide and single organization issues. The total number of items chosen in respect of the current year's programme should not be more than those which can be completed or started during the year.

16. To prepare the Unit's work programme, the Chairman will write to the executive heads of participating organizations and to expert bodies referred to in article 9 of the Unit's statute, asking them for requests and suggestions. The Chairman also will solicit proposals and suggestions from the Inspectors and research staff. The Inspectors will hold a substantive session to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the requests, proposals and suggestions, taking into consideration deliberations in the legislative bodies of participating organizations, as well as their individual expertise or knowledge, with the objective of adopting a tentative list of topics for inclusion in the work programme. This session allows the Inspectors to have a thorough discussion of each topic and to arrive at a well-developed and balanced work programme.

17. The Executive Secretary will write to the participating organizations and expert bodies informing them whether or not their suggestions were included in the work programme and will transmit the full work programme to them.

D. Guidelines for planning and designing inspections, evaluations and investigations

18. Inspectors are fully responsible for the planning, design, scheduling, preparation and final content of their respective reports, notes and confidential letters.

19. In the planning phase of the inspections, evaluations and investigations, the Inspectors further clarify and define the purpose and the objectives; specify the scope; identify methodological issues; and gain familiarity with the processes, activities, projects or programmes under review, including relevant legislative mandates.

20. As soon as practicable, after an issue has been included in the work programme, a structured and detailed design plan for the inspection, evaluation or investigation and a detailed plan for scheduling activities, including the most effective and timely means of gathering the information required, is prepared by the responsible Inspector(s), assisted by the Executive Secretary and designated research staff. In this context, Inspectors examine readily available information and establish contacts as necessary to plan their work.

21. The detailed design plan specifies the approach to be used in conducting the inspection, evaluation or investigation and includes, inter alia, a more precise and detailed description of the purpose and objectives, which should be clear, specific, impartial and measurable; the specific issues and questions to be addressed; and potential conclusions and recommendations. The detailed design plan includes and specifies, inter alia, the type and amount of information and data required; the methods for data collection; techniques for data analysis; estimated travel costs; a description of the responsibilities of Inspectors and staff involved; and a distribution of tasks among them.

22. Inspectors consider the burden placed on organizations when selecting data collection and analytical techniques during the design phase. When it is determined that questionnaires are the most effective instruments for collecting data, they are as concise and clear as possible. Standards for developing questionnaires are found in the Unit's internal procedures manual.

23. In order to help limit the burden on secretariats, information readily available in programme budgets, financial regulations and rules, staff regulations and rules, financial reports and accounts, governing body reports, documents prepared for meetings of governing bodies, handbooks and manuals should not be requested. The information extracted may be verified with the organizations concerned if the Inspector(s) deem(s) it necessary to do so. Furthermore, the Unit endeavours to be more selective in its requests and makes increased use of information technology.

24. According to article 6 of the statute, Inspectors will be accorded full cooperation by organizations at all levels, including access to any particular information or document relevant to their work. In the event such cooperation is not forthcoming, the Inspector(s) may take the matter up with senior officials of the organization including, if necessary, the executive head. Should cooperation or information still not be forthcoming, the Inspector(s) may so state in the report and the Unit may include a statement in its annual report.

E. Guidelines for conducting inspections, evaluations and investigations

Inspection

25. The goal of an inspection is to improve operational effectiveness and efficiency. Accordingly, during the planning and design phases, the objectives and issues are formulated by the Inspector(s) in a manner that compares the processes and activities of an organizational unit to established criteria to determine whether resources are being managed effectively and efficiently. At the conclusion of the design phase, the Inspector(s) should be able:

- (a) To identify existing criteria, such as current rules, regulations or legislative mandates that govern the operations of the processes and activities being inspected, to be used as the basis for assessing operational efficiency and effectiveness;
- (b) To identify specific executive or legislative actions being considered that may affect the process or activity being inspected;
- (c) To understand the interest/concern of Member States regarding the process or activity;
- (d) To clarify the exact purpose of the inspection, which may include, as appropriate, answering the following:
 - (i) Is the entity being reviewed acquiring, protecting and using its resources (such as personnel, property and space) economically and efficiently?
 - (ii) What are the causes of inefficiencies and uneconomical practices?

- (iii) Has the entity complied with rules and regulations on matters of economy?
- (e) To understand the process, activity, project or programme to be inspected;
- (f) To determine the presence and use of relevant internal controls related to the processes, activities, projects or programmes being reviewed. The Inspector(s) should be alert to situations or transactions that could be indicative of violations of rules and regulations and misconduct that may have a direct impact on results.

Evaluation

26. The goal of an evaluation is to measure the outputs of an activity, project or programme against legislative mandates. The objectives and issues are formulated by the Inspector(s) in a manner that compares results or outputs to established mandates to determine relevance, compliance and impact. Two major categories of evaluation the Unit will likely be involved with include:

(a) Formative or process evaluation. This includes appraising the processes of an ongoing activity, project or programme in order to propose modification and/or improvements. Activities may include analysis of management strategies and of interactions among persons involved in the programme, personnel appraisal, surveys of attitudes towards the programme, and observation. In some cases, this will include comparisons between agencies;

(b) Impact or outcome evaluation. This evaluation category corresponds to one of the most common definitions of evaluation - that is, finding out how well an entire activity, project or programme works. The results of an impact evaluation - or of a programme results review - are intended to provide information useful in major decisions about programme continuation, expansion, or reduction. The value of an impact evaluation conducted by an independent body, like the Joint Inspection Unit, is that the more independent the analysis, the more credible the results of the impact evaluation.

27. At the conclusion of the design phase, the Inspector(s) should be able:

(a) To identify the existing criteria, or legislative mandates, which describe the expected outputs for the activity, project or programme being evaluated;

(b) To identify any specific executive or legislative actions being considered that may affect the activity, project or programme being evaluated;

(c) To understand the interest/concern of Member States regarding the activity, project or programme;

(d) To clarify the exact purpose of the evaluation that may include, as appropriate, answering the following:

(i) To what extent are the desired results or benefits established by the legislative body being achieved?

(ii) Is the activity, project or programme effective in meeting the objectives and goals identified by the legislative body?

(iii) Has the activity, project or programme being reviewed complied with significant, applicable rules and regulations?

(iv) Is the activity, project or programme achieving its objectives in an economical and efficient manner?

(e) To understand the activity, project or programme objectives and legislative history;

(f) To identify all applicable rules and regulations for the implementation of the mandate.

Although not specifically the emphasis of an evaluation, the Inspector(s) should design the work to provide reasonable assurance of detecting violations of rules and regulations and misconduct that could significantly affect evaluation objectives. The Inspector(s) should be alert to situations or transactions that could be indicative of mismanagement, misconduct or abuses of authority that may have a direct impact on results;

(g) To identify any relevant internal controls related to the programme being reviewed.

28. Evaluations may require a more structured methodology than an inspection. As a result, the structured design plan for an evaluation may include the following, as appropriate:

(a) If sampling is to be used, a description and justification of the details of the sampling methodology (e.g., choice of unit, method of selection, time-frame etc.);

- (b) Specification and description of the measurement methods and instruments as well as an estimate of their reliability and validity for the population to be measured;
- (c) Justification that the appropriate procedures and instruments have been specified.

Investigation

29. The goal of an investigation is to review a specific case involving alleged violations of rules and regulations or other established procedures; mismanagement; misconduct; waste of resources; or abuses of authority.

30. If an allegation pertains to violations of rules or regulations, misconduct or abuse of authority, the Unit will determine if it is necessary to involve personnel with the appropriate background to provide advice. Under some circumstances, the methodology to be observed in the conduct of such reviews will require the assistance of legal counsel. In addition, the Unit may decide the case should be referred to the appropriate authorities, namely the Office of Internal Oversight Services, internal investigation bodies of other participating organizations, and/or competent law enforcement agencies.

31. The appropriate guidance and standards for data collection and analysis are strictly applied, particularly with regard to corroboration of data/information collected from different sources. The development of evidence must be sufficient to prove the charge, which is done by following a detailed plan, subject to adjustment as new evidence is added. Due process and careful evaluation and testing of the evidence will be adhered to in all situations.

32. All data collected in the case of an investigation must be safeguarded to ensure both the physical protection of the data and evidence, from both modification and destruction, and the confidentiality of source(s).

F. Standards to be applied when conducting inspections, evaluations or investigations

General standards

33. In the course of conducting inspections, evaluations and investigations, the Unit abides by the following general standards as a tool to ensure consistency and quality in the information and conclusions presented in its reports, notes and confidential letters on the activities of participating organizations:

(a) Independence. The Inspectors must be independent and free of inappropriate influence, from any country or organization, in the conduct of inspections, evaluations and investigations. According to article 7 of the statute, they will discharge their duties in full independence and the sole interest of the organizations. The contents of reports, notes and confidential letters will be based on independent, objective analysis;

(b) Competence. The Inspectors, Executive Secretary and concerned staff must possess the required and relevant qualifications and competencies, according to their specific functions. Collectively, the Unit must be equipped with the full range of up-to-date methodologies, which may include system-based review techniques, analytical review methods, and statistical sampling;

(c) Integrity. The Inspectors, Executive Secretary and concerned staff must possess the highest standard of integrity for performing their duties;

(d) Due care. The Inspectors, Executive Secretary and concerned staff must give special attention to using objective and independent methods for gathering and evaluating evidence, and in developing conclusions and recommendations. They are bound by professional secrecy with regard to all confidential information they receive;

(e) Quality. The Unit plans, designs and conducts its work in a manner that ensures quality, which is defined as accuracy, objectivity, fairness, completeness, significance, added value, timeliness and clarity.

Other general standards

34. The Unit will avail itself of personnel with the suitable qualifications for conducting inspections, evaluations and investigations.

35. It is the general policy of the Unit to provide opportunities for training to improve, and keep updated, the skills and competencies of the Inspectors, Executive Secretary and staff in order to perform effectively.

Data collection and analysis standards

36. Each inspection, evaluation and investigation will be uniquely tailored to meet the stated objectives and address issues under review with the aim of identifying possible administrative shortcomings, weaknesses and deficiencies, and to propose corrective actions.

37. A variety of data sources will be used in each inspection, evaluation and investigation. The combination of these sources, the emphasis given to each, and the analytical approaches applied may vary, but each source should be used to corroborate and verify the other. Specific data sources may include:

On-the-spot inquiries

Record reviews of individual files

Computerized extraction of data

Document reviews of written material, tape recordings, films and videos

Mailed questionnaires and surveys

Personal observations

Interviews

38. Competent, relevant and reasonable evidence should be obtained to inform and support the Inspectors' judgement and conclusions regarding the organization, process, activity, project or programme under inspection, evaluation or investigation. Throughout the data collection and analysis phase, the Inspector(s) will apply the following standards to ensure consistency and quality:

Reliability - how dependable and consistent are the data/information being gathered?

Validity - how much confidence is there that the data/information measure what they purport to measure?

Relevance - will the data/information in fact be used to answer the decision makers' questions?

Significance - will the data/information go beyond what is apparent from direct observation and tell the decision makers something new and important?

Efficiency - are the data/information being collected in a manner that reflects the most economical use of resources and makes a unique contribution to improving concrete aspects of operations concerned?

Timeliness - will the analytical information, conclusions and recommendations be available in time to meet decision makers' schedules?

39. All data collected, including interviews and observations, should be documented to facilitate the sharing of information between the Inspectors, Executive Secretary and staff and for use during the analytical and writing phases, and to provide back-up support for presentation to legislative bodies.

G. Preparation of reports

General

40. At the conclusion of each inspection, evaluation or investigation, a written report, note or confidential letter will be prepared by the Inspector(s) setting out the objectives, conclusions and recommendations in a uniform and reader-friendly format. Contents of reports, notes and confidential letters should be easy to understand; be free of vagueness

or ambiguity; include only information which is supported by competent, valid and relevant evidence; take into account new publishing technologies; and be independent, objective, fair, constructive, short and concrete. Recommendations should be practical and action-oriented.

41. Reports should not exceed the applicable page limit, including annexes. If a report, by its nature, cannot be contained within the limit, the Unit should consider producing a shorter official version (for translation and submission to legislative bodies) and include background information and details in a separate note for reference purposes.

Internal consideration of reports

42. In his statutory role as coordinator, the Chairman is the focal point for ensuring a collective approach to the internal consideration of reports.

43. The first draft, amended as necessary, is circulated outside the Unit for external comments by the organizations and others concerned with the basic purpose of receiving factual corrections and clarifications and to ascertain accuracy of the data included. Once received, external comments are incorporated as appropriate into the draft report. The Unit normally includes the factual corrections and clarifications concerning the draft report, but reserves its discretion to include substantive comments.

44. The final draft of each report is discussed and tested against the collective wisdom of the Unit in a formal meeting of Inspectors.

Dissenting views

45. If an Inspector disagrees with the author of a report on its recommendation(s), he or she can request the Chairman to create a "good offices committee" composed of three Inspectors, none of whom will be the author or the Inspector in disagreement. This Committee seeks to reconcile the divergent points of view and reports to the Unit.

46. Whenever the "good offices committee" reports to the Unit that divergent points of view regarding the recommendation(s) have not been reconciled and the Unit itself fails also to reconcile these differences, a dissenting view might be expressed. Inspectors wishing to express any unresolved dissenting views will make a brief written statement that will be attached to the report.

H. Processing and issuance of reports

47. The Unit should not distribute reports to the media before such reports are issued as official public documents.

48. The Executive Secretary will verify that the detailed procedures for the handling and processing of reports contained in article 11, paragraphs 4 (a) to (e), of the statute are observed and will bring any departures from the procedures to the attention of the Chairman and the organizations concerned.

I. Follow-up of reports

49. The Unit includes a summary of the implementation of the Unit's major recommendations in its annual report.

50. Article 12 of the statute stipulates that executive heads of organizations will ensure that the recommendations of the Unit approved by their respective competent organs are

implemented as expeditiously as possible. In addition, in the follow-up procedure, the role of Inspector(s) who authored the report(s), assisted by the research staff, is prominent. A system has been established to facilitate this process.

51. When the Inspector(s) who authored a report has left the Unit, the responsibility for follow-up will pass to the Unit.

J. Annual report

52. The annual report of the Unit will include a brief description of the activities of the Unit during the period, any problems that should be brought to the attention of legislative organs, as well as a section on the status of implementation of its recommendations.