

**REVIEW OF THE ACCEPTANCE AND IMPLEMENTATION
OF JIU RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE UNITED NATIONS
OFFICE FOR PROJECT SERVICES (UNOPS)**

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CONTENTS

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Paragraphs</i>	<i>Page</i>
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1-9	3
II. ACCEPTANCE AND IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS.....	10-19	5
A. Above-average rates of acceptance and implementation of recommendations.....	11	5
B. Decreasing trend of acceptance of recommendations.....	12	5
C. Higher rates of acceptance and implementation of recommendations addressed to the executive head.....	13-15	6
D. Long-outstanding recommendations for five years or more	16-17	6
E. “Not relevant” recommendations.....	18-19	6
III. CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS BY UNOPS LEGISLATIVE BODIES.....	20-28	8

ANNEXES

I. Rates of acceptance and implementation by organization (2006-2012)	10
II. UNOPS trend of acceptance and implementation of JIU recommendations (2006-2012)	11
III. “Not relevant” recommendations (2006-2012).....	12

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The General Assembly of the United Nations has repeatedly noted the importance of enhancing the effectiveness of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) and its follow-up system and has reaffirmed that the effectiveness of the JIU is a shared responsibility of the Unit, member States, and the secretariats of the participating organizations.¹

2. In its resolution 54/16, the General Assembly endorsed the proposal of the Unit to establish a system for handling of JIU reports and recommendations by its participating organizations. The proposal, entitled “Towards a more effective system of follow-up on reports of the Joint Inspection Unit”, was attached as an annex to the Unit’s annual report for 1996-1997.² Subsequently, the Unit undertook negotiation on specific follow-up agreements with the secretariats of its participating organizations, which were ratified by their respective governing bodies between 2000 and 2005. Likewise all the United Nations funds and programmes, the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), since its separation from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 1995, is mutatis-mutandis bounded de jure by General Assembly resolution 54/16, which endorsed the follow-up system. It is noted that the UNDP Executive Board provided support and oversight functions to UNOPS until 2010, when the General Assembly decided to include UNOPS in the Board’s title,³ while welcoming the practice of holding a separate segment for UNOPS.

3. In 1998, the Unit started tracking the action taken by legislative bodies on JIU recommendations. That tracking system evolved over the years to a web-based tracking system (WBTS), which was introduced in 2002. The WBTS serves as an online platform allowing participating organizations to access and update the status of consideration of JIU reports and the acceptance and implementation of recommendations. The General Assembly in its resolution 69/275 requests the heads of participating organizations to make full use of the web-based system and to provide an in-depth analysis of how the recommendations of the Unit are being implemented.⁴

4. The Unit is committed to further enhancing the effectiveness of its follow-up system and therefore decided to include in its programme of work for 2015 a review of the acceptance and implementation of JIU recommendations by its participating organizations during the period 2006-2012. The years 2013 onwards have been excluded from the analysis since it takes some time for reports to be considered by legislative bodies and for recommendations to be implemented by management. All recommendations prior to 2006 had been closed and their acceptance/implementation was no longer tracked.

5. The review is being conducted in two phases. The objectives of the present first phase are to review:

- The acceptance and implementation of recommendations by JIU participating organizations, based on the statistics provided in the WBTS, to prompt action to clear recommendations outstanding for five years or more; and
- The process of consideration of JIU reports by the legislative bodies of organizations in order to identify shortcomings and delays in the process.

¹ General Assembly resolutions 50/233, 54/16, 62/246, 63/272, 64/262, 65/270, 66/259, 68/266 and 69/275.

² A/52/34.

³ A/RES/65/176, OP.2: “Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Population Fund/United Nations Office for Project Services”.

⁴ OP.15.

6. A questionnaire on the process of handling JIU reports, notes and management letters was sent to the JIU focal points at each organization.

7. The results of the first phase of the review are being presented in a series of management letters addressed to executive heads of participating organizations. The second phase will identify good follow-up practices at organizations and draw lessons to enhance the follow-up process.

8. The present management letter, which is addressed for action to the Executive Director of UNOPS includes:

- A comparison of the acceptance and implementation rates for the period 2006-2012 in order to position UNOPS within the spectrum of JIU participating organizations;
- A trend analysis of the acceptance and implementation rates at UNOPS for the period 2006-2012;
- A review of recommendations formulated during the period 2006-2009 still outstanding, the acceptance of which is “not available” or “under consideration”, and/or the implementation of which is “in progress”, “not started” or “not available”; and
- A recommendation to set up a process of handling JIU reports by UNOPS.

9. Comments on the draft management letter were sought from UNOPS management and taken into account in finalizing the letter. In accordance with article 11, paragraph 2, of the JIU statute, the present management letter was finalized after consultation among the Inspectors so as to test its conclusions and recommendations against the collective wisdom of the Unit.

II. ACCEPTANCE AND IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS

10. It is noted that UNOPS initiated reporting on the acceptance and implementation of JIU recommendations from 2009 onwards, therefore the years 2006-2008 are excluded from the statistical analysis below. However, for the sake of comparison with other participating organizations, the same reporting period 2006-2012 have been used.

A. Above-average rates of acceptance and implementation of recommendations

11. At the time this review was initiated in February 2015, UNOPS ranked 10th in the acceptance and 13th in the implementation of JIU recommendations among all participating organizations and entities considered in our review for the period 2006-2012, as shown in the table below. By the time this management letter was completed in May 2016, the rate of implementation has increased to 86.5 per cent. UNOPS's acceptance and implementation rates are well above the average of all organizations (see annex I for more details). **The Inspector commends UNOPS management on these results.**

Table 1
Rates of acceptance and implementation (2006-2012)*

	UNOPS	All organizations
Number of recommendations	137	7692**
Number of accepted recommendations	111	5000**
Number of implemented recommendations	91	4020**
Rate of acceptance	81%	65%
Rate of implementation	82%	80.4%

*As of February 2015. Period covered 2009-2012.

** Number of recommendations multiplied by the number of organizations concerned, to which recommendations are addressed for action.

B. Decreasing trend of acceptance

12. It can be further noted that while the rate of implementation has increased over the period 2008-2012, the rate of acceptance of recommendations has decreased, as shown in the table below (see annex II for more details). **The Inspector invited UNOPS management to analyse the reasons of this decreasing trend and report to the JIU by 31 August 2016.** In its comments to the draft management letter, UNOPS indicated that it focused its review on the year 2012 when the rate of acceptance was the lowest and cited specific examples of recommendations which were not relevant, or not acceptable being not in line with the mandate or strategic priorities, or existing policy requirements was deemed sufficient.

Table 2
Trend of acceptance and implementation (2006-2012)*

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Number of recommendations	n/a	n/a	n/a	12	38	56	61
Rate of acceptance	n/a	n/a	n/a	66.7%	97.45	89.3%	51.6%
Rate of implementation	n/a	n/a	n/a	50%	64.9%	94%	100%

*As of February 2015.

C. Higher rates of acceptance and implementation of recommendations addressed to the executive head

13. Likewise most participating organizations, UNOPS's rate of acceptance of recommendations addressed for action to the executive head during the period 2006-2012 was higher than the rate of acceptance of recommendations addressed for action to the legislative body. The rates of implementation of recommendations addressed to both addressees were similar. In principle, recommendations addressed to executive heads are more easily accepted and implemented since they do not entail significant policy changes or costs requiring the approval of member States.

Table 3
Rates of acceptance and implementation by addressee (2006-2012)*

	UNOPS executive head	UNOPS legislative body
Rate of acceptance	83.2%	75%
Rate of implementation	88.1%	70.4%

*As of August 2015. Period covered 2009-2012.

14. Given that JIU reports and recommendations addressed to UNOPS are not taken up by the Executive Board, as further explained in chapter III below, the **Inspector invites UNOPS management to comment on the above rates of acceptance and implementation of recommendations addressed to the legislative body.**

15. In this regard, UNOPS sought clarification on how to deal with these recommendations based on the experience of other organizations and was advised that **the executive head could propose a course of action to accept, reject, etc. any report's recommendation in his/her comments to the legislative body, which, in its turn, would accept, take notes or endorse the comments of the executive head.** UNOPS also indicated that it would contact UNDP and UNFPA to build on their experiences.

D. Long-outstanding recommendations for five years or more

16. A review of 12 recommendations in one JIU report addressed for action to UNOPS during the period 2006-2009 showed that at the beginning of January 2016, there were three outstanding recommendations for five years or more, for which action should have already been taken by UNOPS to either accept and implement or to reject them. **Action by UNOPS was required to clear these long-outstanding recommendations, as applicable.** Five years or more after being sent for action, no recommendation should appear as acceptance "not available" or "under consideration", implementation "in progress", "not available" or "not started". They should be either accepted or rejected and their implementation of those accepted for the most completed.

17. UNOPS responded that it had reviewed these recommendations and updated their status in the WBTS. UNOPS would continue to review aged recommendations still in progress and close them to the extent possible.

E. "Not relevant" recommendations

18. UNOPS had a relatively high percentage of recommendations reported as "not relevant" (11.7 per cent), just below the average of all organizations for the period 2006-2012 (12 per cent), as of February 2015 (for more details see annex III). **The Inspector invited UNOPS management to clearly indicate the non-relevance of recommendations at the time the draft report is received for comments, requesting that these recommendations be reflected as for information only in**

the annex table “Overview of actions to be taken by participating organizations on the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit”.

19. UNOPS agreed to review its internal procedures and ensure that, to the extent possible, for all reports going forward, recommendations would be assessed for relevancy at the draft comments’ stage and communicated to the JIU.

III. CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS BY UNOPS LEGISLATIVE BODIES

20. JIU reviewed the handling of 17 JIU reports containing at least one recommendation addressed for action by UNOPS legislative body during the period 2010-2012. However, contrary to UNDP and UNFPA, where specific reports on the JIU are considered and action taken thereof at the annual session of the joint UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS Executive Board in June, as part of the annual reports of the UNDP Administrator and UNFPA Executive Director under the respective segments, there is no agenda item of the UNOPS segment dedicated to JIU and no reporting to the Board is done or action is taken on JIU reports and recommendations addressed to this Organization.

21. **The Inspector invites UNOPS management to institute reporting to the Executive Board on the JIU reports addressed for action to the Organization, in order to comply with the relevant provisions of the JIU statute (articles 11.4 and 12), to which UNOPS has adhered to, mutatis mutandis.**

22. The above-mentioned provisions of the JIU statute require that:

- Immediate action is taken by the executive heads to distribute JIU reports, upon receipt, to the member States of their Organization;
- The JIU reports are submitted at the next meeting of the competent organs of the organizations, together with the joint comments of executive heads within the framework of the CEB, as applicable, which should be ready not later than 6 months after their receipt, and any comments of the respective executive head on matters that concern his/her organization;
- The JIU is informed of decisions taken by the competent organ on the reports of the Unit, and;
- Expeditious implementation of approved/accepted recommendations is ensured by executive heads.

23. **In the Inspector's view, such reporting may be either part of the annual report on JIU of the UNDP Administrator to the Board or may take the form of a separate report of UNOPS Executive Director, as part of his/her annual report to the Board in June** (as currently done by the UNDP Administrator and the UNFPA Executive Director).

24. In line with good practices to enhance transparency and accountability, such report to the Board should contain:

- A brief summary and comments on each JIU report issued of direct relevance to the Organization and its recommendations, with hyperlinks to the relevant report and CEB comments, to facilitate access to them on an economical and effective manner;
- A status matrix indicating the acceptance or rejection of the recommendations addressed specifically to the legislative body, as well as to the executive head, and the official responsible for implementation, and comments thereon, as applicable;
- The implementation status of previous years' recommendations; and
- A draft decision for action by the Executive Board to endorse/take note of the report and comments thereon on the status of recommendations.

25. **Relevant information on the consideration of reports should be inserted in the WBTS** (date and document reference of executive head's comments and action taken by legislative bodies).

Recommendation 1

The Executive Director of UNOPS should set up a system to report to the Executive Board on JIU reports and recommendations, in line with relevant provisions of the JIU statute, by the next annual session of the Board in June 2017.

26. UNOPS replied that it would review its internal procedures and liaise with UNDP and UNFPA to identify the best course of action to ensure that reporting is in place for the next annual session of the Board in June 2017. **The Inspector welcomes this positive response by UNOPS.**

27. It is noted that, in its response to the JIU questionnaire, UNOPS indicated that within the organization JIU reports are distributed to relevant departments for comments and information.

28. We would appreciate receiving a response to this management letter and recommendations by 31 August 2016.

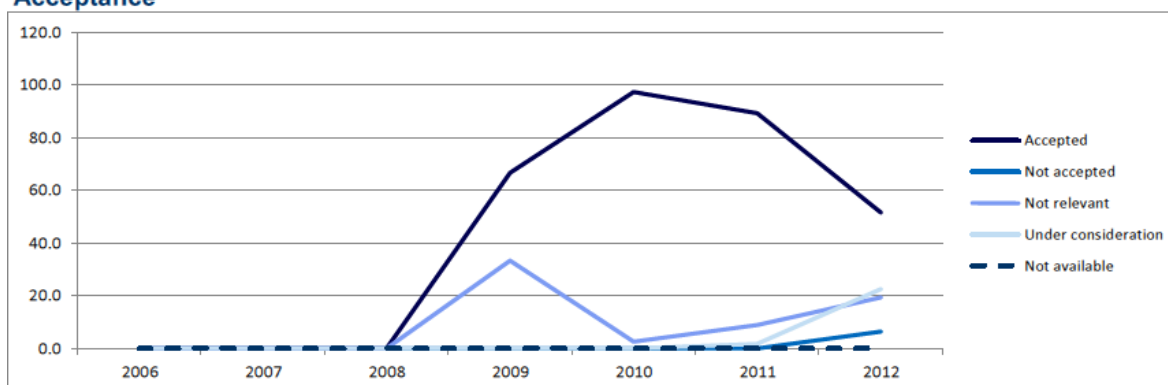
Annex I

Rates of acceptance and implementation by organization (2006-2012), as of February 2015

	<i>(percentage)</i>		<i>(percentage)</i>
	<i>Accepted</i>		<i>Implemented</i>
FAO	93.7	OHCHR	100.0
UNRWA	91.2	FAO	97.3
WFP	89.6	ICAO	94.1
UNHCR	86.2	WFP	93.4
UNFPA	85.7	WMO	92.8
WHO	83.6	UNIDO	92.6
UNIDO	82.9	UNESCO	90.4
UNDP	82.3	UNHCR	89.2
UNESCO	81.9	WHO	88.3
UNOPS	81.0	UNEP	86.7
ICAO	80.8	UNCTAD	86.6
UNICEF	80.4	UNRWA	82.4
UNEP	78.7	UNOPS	82.0
UNAIDS	77.8	ILO	80.5
IMO	72.8	All organizations	80.4
ILO	68.2	UNFPA	80.1
UN	67.0	WIPO	78.2
All organizations	65.0	UNWTO	73.7
WMO	63.9	UN	69.8
WIPO	56.3	UNDP	69.5
ITU	47.4	UNICEF	66.3
OHCHR	38.5	IAEA	61.3
IAEA	35.3	UN-Habitat	61.2
UNCTAD	32.8	UNODC	57.9
UPU	25.7	IMO	57.2
UNODC	22.4	UNAIDS	51.4
UN-Habitat	19.2	ITC	50.0
ITC	18.2	UPU	46.8
UNWTO	6.3	ITU	46.2
CEB	0.0	CEB	0.0
UN-WOMEN	0.0	UN-WOMEN	0.0

Annex II
UNOPS trend of acceptance and implementation of JIU recommendations (2006-2012),
as of February 2015

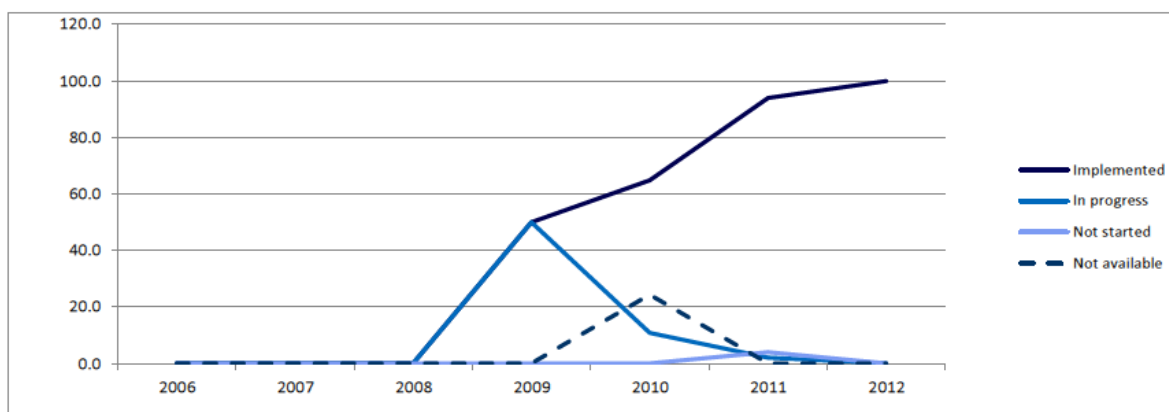
Acceptance



%	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Accepted	0.0	0.0	0.0	66.7	97.4	89.3	51.6
Not accepted	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.5
Not relevant	0.0	0.0	0.0	33.3	2.6	8.9	19.4
Under consideration	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.8	22.6
Not available	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Values	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Accepted	0	0	0	8	37	50	16
Not accepted	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Not relevant	0	0	0	4	1	5	6
Under consideration	0	0	0	0	0	1	7
Not available	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Implementation



%	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Implemented	0.0	0.0	0.0	50.0	64.9	94.0	100.0
In progress	0.0	0.0	0.0	50.0	10.8	2.0	0.0
Not started	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.0	0.0
Not available	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	24.3	0.0	0.0

Values	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Implemented	0	0	0	4	24	47	16
In progress	0	0	0	4	4	1	0
Not started	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
Not available	0	0	0	0	9	0	0

Annex III

“Not relevant” recommendations (2006-2012), as of February 2015

	<i>(percentage)</i>
	<i>Not relevant</i>
UNCTAD	65.2
OHCHR	53.9
UNODC	39.4
WMO	26.4
UN-Habitat	20.8
ILO	15.4
WIPO	15.0
UNEP	14.2
IMO	12.7
All organizations	12.0
UNOPS	11.7
ICAO	11.0
UNFPA	10.6
ITU	10.1
UPU	9.3
UNESCO	8.8
IAEA	8.3
UNHCR	8.0
UNIDO	7.4
UNDP	7.1
UNAIDS	6.7
UN	6.1
WFP	5.4
UNICEF	5.0
UNRWA	5.0
WHO	4.6
FAO	1.9
CEB	0.0
ITC	0.0
UN-WOMEN	0.0
UNWTO	0