



United Nations

Joint Inspection Unit

2022 Self-Assessment summary report

Geneva, January 2023

The Self-assessment was undertaken between May 2021 and December 2022 by the Self-Assessment team, which was composed of the following persons that participated either throughout the entire project cycle or for specific periods:

Jesús Miranda-Hita, Inspector. Coordinator of the Self-Assessment

Jesús Lara Alonso, Senior Evaluation and Inspection Officer

Stefan Helck, Evaluation and Inspection Officer

Sharon Messerschmidt, Consultant

Carren Okallo, Information Management Assistant

Krista Tingbrand, Intern

Giulia Russo Waelti, Intern

Julia Heringer Lourenco, Intern

Carla Marie Barletta, Intern

We thank all JIU stakeholders that contributed their input to the self-assessment terms of reference, benchmark framework, and surveys, and took part in follow-up interviews and focal groups.

Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	5
INTRODUCTION	7
MAIN FINDINGS	10
OBJECTIVE 1. RESULTS FROM THE 2013 JIU SELF-EVALUATION	10
OBJECTIVE 2. STAKEHOLDER PERCEPTIONS	10
OBJECTIVE 3. ADEQUACY AND USE OF JIU RESOURCES	11
OBJECTIVE 4. QUALITY AND USEFULNESS OF JIU’S ACTIVITIES, PROCESSES, AND PRODUCTS	14
OVERALL CONCLUSIONS	16

Executive Summary

The Joint Inspection Unit (JIU or the Unit) is committed to making continuous efforts to enhance its effectiveness and has made a number of important improvements in recent years. As part of this commitment and in line with good oversight practices, the Unit decided to undertake a Self-Assessment to review the progress made since the Self-Evaluation completed in 2013 and to give a new impetus to the Unit's continuous improvement process. In addition, the results of the Self-Assessment and the implementation of its ensuing action plans will feed into the comprehensive mid-point assessment of the Unit's Strategic Framework, which is scheduled to be conducted in 2024, as requested by the General Assembly resolution 75/270.

Objectives, scope, and methodology of the Self-Assessment

The purpose of this Self-Assessment was to improve the added value, effectiveness, efficiency, and quality of the Unit's work, based on an assessment of the current situation from both strategic and operational perspectives and considering the evolution since the last self-evaluation. The assessment concentrated on areas in which JIU Inspectors and secretariat staff have the capacity and the resources to implement improvements without relying on external entities or factors.

The Self-Assessment was carried out between 2021 and 2022 using a bespoke Self-Assessment Benchmark Framework that was developed by the self-assessment team and discussed internally with the participation of JIU Inspectors and staff. The review used a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods for data collection, research, and analysis and included detailed questionnaires to internal and external stakeholders, including Member States, participating organizations, and JIU Inspectors and staff. The review was overseen by a JIU governance mechanism, composed of a Self-Assessment Board and Self-Assessment Coordinating Committee, and conducted under the direction of one JIU Inspector with a team that included an external consultant to provide independent expertise and advice.

Main Findings

This Self-Assessment makes 48 recommendations for the JIU to consider. These were presented to the JIU in December 2022 in the detailed Self-Assessment report. These recommendations will be considered by the JIU for acceptance, prioritization, and the development of action plans in 2023.

The assessment shows that in a number of important areas, the work of the JIU was perceived quite favourably by stakeholders. This included the relevance of JIU report topics, the importance of its system-wide reviews, and in the overall independence, credibility, and impartiality of the Unit. Internally the JIU is supported by a sound set of internal working procedures and systems that are generally aligned with its Statute.

A number of improvements have been suggested throughout the assessment. One area to improve is on the effectiveness by which internal practices support the JIU's statutory requirements. This includes reconsidering the reporting governance of JIU reports and notes to ensure that all important products are presented to the General Assembly. Also, a more systematic means of incorporating and referencing General Assembly resolutions into its internal working procedures should be considered. Adding additional information to the JIU annual report on the results of its recommendations as well as the impact of resource levels on its work output is recommended.

The JIU is urged to consider the implementation of a charter document that would compile and describe information on its mandate, responsibility, and authority into one source. This should be further

supported by a clear hierarchy to the JIU internal regulations and guidance. The JIU could also consider the implementation of its own internal code of ethics and conflict of interest procedures.

The Self-Assessment provides recommendations to further improve the effectiveness of the Unit's programme of work planning process including the development of criteria to guide its decisions, careful consideration of resource availability to improve the timeliness of its reports, and to ensure adequate coverage of the thematic areas as per its Strategic Framework. The Unit may also wish to consider review topics that include only subsets of participating organizations in order to provide better topical focus and to reduce oversight fatigue.

A number of recommendations were made to improve processes that directly support JIU projects. It was clear from the survey that stakeholders desired more streamlined processes to gather data and information. Recommendations were made for the JIU to consider a more comprehensive approach to data collection that makes better use of desk reviews in the planning stages, to develop strategies that take into account all available information including from other JIU reviews, and to better use collaboration tools to gather information.

Other recommendations suggested better guidelines and templates to improve quality and the consistency of style in JIU reporting. Improvements were also suggested on the formulation of JIU recommendations, including their cost effectiveness and in ensuring that they are directed to the appropriate addressees, notably recommendations requiring action by multiple organizations and governing bodies. The JIU is urged to consider how it can implement a more formal quality assurance process on a project-by-project basis as well as, overall, through the regular use of internal reviews such as this self-assessment.

It was felt by the Member States that participated in the self-assessment questionnaire and interviews, that the JIU's work, and results should be made better known to governing bodies and legislative organs. As a result, improvements to the JIU's outreach and communications strategy would be desirable. The JIU should also conduct deeper qualitative and quantitative analysis on the impact of its recommendations and also share these results more broadly with its stakeholders.

Regarding resources, the JIU should revisit its work on resource mobilization to have a strategy, policy, and mechanism in place to accept, as appropriate, financial resources for non-project activities while safeguarding its independence. The development of an HR strategy including training and competency requirements is also suggested. Finally, the JIU should consider how to address structural issues in its HR processes in order to foster a productive and effective work environment in which to best achieve its mandate.

Conclusion

The undertaking of this Self-Assessment was an important step in the JIU's commitment to continuously improving the quality and utility of its products and its internal working processes. The foundation of the JIU's work is well set out and the Unit's work is overall appreciated by stakeholders. Careful consideration of the recommendations in this review will provide opportunities to make further improvements to the work of the JIU over the coming years. A set action plan should be developed in conjunction with a focus on promoting a productive work environment and a culture of full adherence to the high standards that the JIU has set for itself.

Introduction

Background

1. The Joint Inspection Unit (JIU or the Unit) was established by the United Nations General Assembly resolution 31/192 as the only independent external oversight body mandated with conducting inspections, evaluations, and investigations system wide. The JIU, through its strategic long-term goals, aims to:
 - Assist the governing bodies and legislative organs of the participating organizations in meeting their governance responsibilities in respect of their oversight function concerning management by the secretariats of human, financial, and other resources.
 - Help to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the respective secretariats in achieving the legislative mandates and the mission objectives established for the organizations.
 - Promote greater coordination among the organizations of the United Nations system.
 - Identify best practices, propose benchmarks, and facilitate information sharing throughout the system.

2. According to the JIU Statute, the Unit consists of not more than eleven Inspectors, chosen from among members of national oversight or inspection bodies, or from among persons of a similar competence based on their expertise in national or international administrative and financial matters, including management questions. The Inspectors are elected officials who serve in their personal capacity. According to Article 19 of the JIU Statute, the Inspectors are assisted by an Executive Secretary, who heads a secretariat composed of 20 United Nations Secretariat staff members (secretariat staff), as authorized in the Unit's budget.

3. In accordance with Article 20 of the Unit's Statute, the budget of the JIU is included in the regular budget of the United Nations Secretariat under Section 31 (Jointly financed administrative activities), while the expenditures of the Unit are funded by all participating organizations on the basis of a cost-sharing agreement. The annual regular budget allocation to the Unit in 2021 was \$7,512,000. The level of resources has not changed in real terms in well over a decade.

4. As stated in its Strategic Framework for 2020-2029, the JIU remains committed to an ongoing process of improvement, in the context of which this self-assessment constitutes a particularly important milestone. In July 2020, it was agreed by the Inspectors that a self-assessment would be conducted to assess the progress made since the last self-evaluation carried out in 2013 and give a new impetus to the Unit's continuous improvement process. The results of the self-assessment and the implementation of its ensuing action plans will feed into the comprehensive mid-point assessment of the Unit's Strategic Framework, which is scheduled to be conducted in 2024, as requested by the General Assembly resolution 75/270.

Self-Assessment objectives, scope, and methodology

5. The purpose of the self-assessment is to propose recommendations to improve the added value, effectiveness, efficiency, and quality of the Unit's work, based on an assessment of the current situation from both strategic and operational perspectives and considering the evolution since the last self-evaluation. Specifically, the self-assessment has the following objectives:
 - To take stock on the Unit's evolution since the 2013 self-evaluation, with particular reference to the implementation of actions derived from its conclusions and proposals under the purview of the Unit.

- To obtain and analyze feedback from participating organizations and other stakeholders on the work of the Unit and its compliance with the JIU Statute as well as mandates and resolutions of the legislative organs.
 - To review the adequacy and utilization of the Unit's resources (human, financial, and technological ones, as well as corporate information and knowledge), including its internal regulatory framework (i.e., Norms and Standards and Internal Working Procedures).
 - To self-assess the utility of JIU's activities, processes, and products, including outreach and communications.
 - To recommend actions in areas requiring further improvement in all dimensions considered above.
6. The scope of the Self-Assessment covers and focuses on the following areas: quality and utility of JIU products; stakeholder relations and perceptions; quality and comprehensiveness of its regulatory framework, with particular attention to quality assurance procedures; as well as resourcing. The assessment concentrates on areas in which JIU Inspectors and secretariat staff have the capacity and the resources to implement improvements without relying on external entities or factors.
7. The main stakeholders and clients of the JIU, and therefore of the self-assessment are: (i) the JIU participating organizations of the United Nations system, including their governing bodies and legislative organs and, therefore their Member States, and secretariats; (ii) the United Nations system-wide coordination machinery; and (iii) the Inspectors and JIU secretariat staff. As governing bodies and legislative organs are composed of Member States representatives, the self-assessment stakeholder survey was channelled to all Member States through their permanent missions in Geneva.
8. The self-assessment was carried out using a bespoke Self-Assessment Benchmark Framework which was developed at the beginning of the project. The benchmarks reflect the JIU Statute, mandate, relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, norms, guidelines, standards, its Strategic Framework for 2020-2029, the Unit's internal working procedures, as well as stakeholders' perceptions. The review used a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods for data collection, research, and analysis. This included extensive desk review of documents related to the JIU mandate and performance and tailored stakeholders' satisfaction surveys.
9. The work was mainly conducted by an external consultant to provide independent expertise and advice. Some sections, most notably the follow-up to the last self-evaluation (2013) and other project support tasks, including input and downloading of the questionnaires, were completed by JIU secretariat staff and interns assigned to the project.

Self-assessment governance

10. According to the self-assessment terms of reference, the self-assessment governance was based on two bodies: a governing body composed of all Inspectors, the Executive Secretary, and one staff representative (The Self-Assessment Board), and an executive body (The Self-Assessment Coordinating Committee), composed of the JIU Bureau, the Inspector-Coordinator, and the staff representative. Overall, the Self-Assessment Board retained the highest-level functions, discussed, or approved all major decisions, acting as a guarantor of the Self-Assessment impartiality and transparency, including participation of stakeholders according to their respective profile. The overall coordination of the project was led by the Inspector-Coordinator.
11. Throughout the review, the self-assessment team sought the active involvement of all JIU Inspectors and secretariat staff and kept them informed of the progress made and documents produced through regular updates, briefings, and sharing of draft and final versions of those documents, including the self-assessment terms of reference and the Self-Assessment Benchmark Framework. All Inspectors

and secretariat staff were invited to fill out the self-assessment questionnaires and were provided with several opportunities to be interviewed. Before the draft report was distributed for collective consideration, a draft summary of key findings and proposed recommendations was disseminated among Inspectors and secretariat staff. At the summary of findings stage and the draft report stage, Inspectors and secretariat staff were invited to share their views and comments in group meetings and in writing.

12. The JIU would like to thank those participating organizations and Member States who contributed so thoughtfully to the self-assessment questionnaire and to interviews. This involvement provided invaluable information to this self-assessment and is very much appreciated.

Main findings

13. The Self-Assessment Benchmark Framework was organized into four objectives against which a series of review questions was developed and assessed.

Objective 1. Results from the 2013 JIU self-evaluation

14. Objective 1 examined the JIU's response to recommendations of the 2013 self-evaluation. This response included a comprehensive action plan, approved by the JIU Inspectors in December 2014 that outlined some 55 actions to be taken to address recommendations and other issues. Overall, some 2/3 of the actions were completed, with the other 1/3 partially completed. Important results from this work included a series of updates to the JIU's Internal Working Procedures and an improved process by which to seek participating organizations' feedback on topics for the JIU's programme of work.
15. The main conclusion on this objective was that the 2014 action plan was not adequately monitored and reported on. As a result, many actions were not fully implemented. In this section, the one recommendation made is to ensure that a response and action plan is developed for this self-assessment with clear responsibilities assigned for the achievement and evaluation of overall results.

Objective 2. Stakeholder perceptions

16. Under Objective 2, feedback was gathered from stakeholders on their perceptions regarding the work of the JIU. A series of questionnaires were issued and well responded to by internal JIU stakeholders, including all 11 Inspectors and over 2/3 of JIU secretariat staff. Regarding external stakeholders, 20 of the 28 (71%) participating organizations and 11 Member States completed the questionnaire.
17. Views were very positive on the relevance of the topics chosen for the JIU programme of work. It was recognized that it would be almost impossible for all topics to be relevant to all organizations, but, nonetheless, participating organizations most appreciated reviews that were relevant to their own work and mandates. The most valued reviews by the participating organizations and Member States pertained to the subjects of oversight, IT and related issues, and specialized management areas, such as risk, knowledge, and implementing partner management.
18. The JIU ranked very highly among external stakeholders for being a credible, independent, and impartial body. It was also seen as providing added value to the United Nations System through its products and activities. System-wide reports were seen as highly useful by all stakeholders and as a specialized area that only the JIU possesses a mandate to work in. Participating organizations were overall neutral in their view of management and administrative reviews, expressing that they were less relevant for larger organizations that had strong internal oversight mechanisms.
19. An area noted for improvement was in the timeliness of the delivery of JIU reviews. Many of the topics in the programme of work were important and time sensitive for participating organizations, who looked forward to JIU results. There are a number of root causes for the delays in issuing JIU reports, including limits to the number and type of resources available to the JIU that can be deployed to projects, and data collection processes that can be cumbersome and time consuming. Overall, better planning processes and project monitoring would help to improve the programme of work planning cycle and overall project delivery.
20. Stakeholders would appreciate greater information sharing and outreach by the JIU beyond the website publication of its reviews. Among the Member States that responded to the questionnaire and participated in the group interview, the Geneva Group was seen as a very valuable outreach

mechanism that should be replicated in New York and other United Nations centres. The past practice of assigning Inspectors as liaisons for specific participating organizations was seen as another good approach to develop more systemic interactions with them and their governing bodies and legislative organs. Improving outreach with Member States and participating organizations through a review of the outreach and communications strategy would enable the JIU to better share knowledge and information, including best practices, across the United Nations System.

Objective 3. Adequacy and use of JIU resources

21. Objective 3 of the self-assessment weighed up whether the JIU's internal regulatory framework, human, financial and material resources, and information and knowledge management tools were sufficient, used efficiently, and were fit-for-purpose, including under extraordinary circumstances.

Alignment with the JIU statute and General Assembly resolutions

22. Overall, the JIU internal regulations were found well aligned with the statute and clearly referenced. However, General Assembly resolutions are less clearly reflected in internal regulations while, over the years, some of them have demanded several important changes for the JIU. These include the evolution of the follow-up process and the participation of Inspectors at meetings of legislative organs. Carefully tracking General Assembly resolutions and ensuring that they are appropriately referenced in the JIU's internal regulations is important, in particular because of the extensive volume of resolutions passed since the Statute was approved.
23. Review of the Statute's reporting requirements, with responsibility for the JIU to present its reviews to the General Assembly and the governing bodies or legislative organs of the participating organizations, called into question the JIU's current definition of reports and notes. In oversight practice, reporting governance is determined, based on significance of the topic, the rigour of the required methodology, and the requirement to report fully to the governing body. The JIU's practice of only presenting reports to the General Assembly and other governing bodies and legislative organs if they contain recommendations to such bodies may be depriving them of relevant information contained in what is currently conceptualized as "notes". To enhance JIU accountability, transparency and possibly impact, a careful review of the JIU's current definition of reports and notes should be undertaken, bearing in mind that results should be presented to those organs regardless of whether recommendations are made to them or not.
24. On review of the JIU's Internal Working Procedures, the extensive requirements placed on the Inspector's collective wisdom review process were noted. This has resulted in a great deal of responsibility to be placed on Inspectors in a very short time period to review, comment on, and endorse highly complex JIU reports. It is recommended that there be in place quality review processes before collective wisdom to allow Inspectors to focus on substantive issues and the quality of recommendations in its reporting.

Consideration of best practices from oversight bodies

25. With full consideration of the specific nature of the Unit's normative framework and the fact that it is composed of Inspectors appointed by the General Assembly, the Self-Assessment found merits for improving some aspects of JIU working methods and practices based on guidance provided by external entities, such as the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions and also the Institute of Internal Auditors.
26. The JIU currently has multiple General Assembly-endorsed documents, including its 1997 Standards and Guidelines, as well as the 2014 Norms and Standards, which appear somewhat outdated and out-of-step with recent General Assembly resolutions and its current Internal Working Procedures. The JIU could consider the development of a charter document to clearly, and in one

place, articulate its mandate, authority, and operating modalities emanating from the Statute and the General Assembly resolutions.

27. Although there are overall codes of conduct and ethics which apply to United Nations staff members, the JIU normative framework does not include a specific code or require the issuance of any conflict-of-interest statements for JIU Inspectors and secretariat staff. Professional oversight bodies require such codes and conflict-of-interest statements to uphold their independence and objectivity. Such a practice for the JIU would enhance and demonstrate its commitment to its own requirements for independence and objectivity as enshrined in its Statute.
28. Professional oversight bodies require an ongoing quality assurance programme to ensure compliance to standards. Throughout the self-assessment, instances of non-adherence to the JIU's internal regulations were observed and were also noted in comments from Inspectors and JIU secretariat staff. A common commitment to comply with these standards, that is supported by a sound quality assurance structure should be put in place. A quality program should include a commitment to a regular cycle of internal and external assessments with reporting on results to key stakeholders. It should also include a mechanism to seek regular feedback on the quality and utility of its products using post engagement surveys.

Functioning of the JIU's system of internal regulations

29. The JIU has a range of internal guidance, some previously endorsed by the General Assembly as noted above, and other parts internally approved by Inspectors. The Internal Working Procedures form a comprehensive overview of procedures and yet there are other documents in place such as the Norms and Standards that seem to serve a similar purpose. Throughout this self-assessment, cases have been noted where there are gaps and overlaps in internal policies and procedures. Having a clearly established hierarchy for the JIU's internal regulations, with a well-coordinated set of regulations or standards, would provide a framework to better guide JIU policy and practice.
30. Since the 2013 self-evaluation, the JIU has improved its programme of work external consultation process. Nonetheless, several opportunities for further improvements were noted during the process of reviewing programme of work policies and procedures and in the comments provided by stakeholders. For example, consideration could be made to establish a more structured approach to planning by using a universe of topics to ensure the inclusion of all thematic areas of the Strategic Framework, considering elements of risk and priority, and articulating the value that would emanate from each proposed review. Elaborating the source of projects, how they fit within the JIU Strategic Framework, and the expected outcome could further improve the programme of work document. Finally, participating organizations suggested that the JIU consider coverage of specialized topics that may better suit only a subset of organizations as a means of focusing more specifically on key issues in the programme of work. The formalization of gender considerations in projects at the planning stage is also suggested.

Sufficiency and quality of human resources

31. The extent to which the JIU's human resources are commensurate with requirements to carry out its programme of work and to deliver on its mandate was examined. A recurring theme through the comments provided by Inspectors and JIU secretariat staff was the insufficiency of the current secretariat staffing complement. Ensuring that the number of projects per year be limited to what is possible based on availability of resources would seem a necessary strategy for the JIU.
32. The JIU's staff structure has remained essentially the same since the 2013 self-evaluation. In this self-assessment, suggestions were received for adding new skill sets, including oversight, IT, data analytics and others. The JIU should develop a human resources strategy to account for its current

and emerging needs, together with a staffing structure and a recruitment strategy that supports this. The role that interns play in the JIU workforce should also be formalized in these documents.

33. Both elected Inspectors and secretariat staff from the United Nations Secretariat come to their roles and their projects with a range of experience, skill, and background knowledge, that does not always support them well for the projects that they must undertake. A training and development strategy should be considered to provide a plan and roadmap for the JIU to obtain the additional skills and competencies needed for its projects. In addition, as Inspectors and their projects have unique requirements, having a discussion on the assignment of secretariat resources at the planning stage with Inspectors and the Executive Secretary would be helpful to meet needs and expectations.
34. There has been a decline in reporting on gender in JIU activities in recent years. Developing an approach to the gender dimension in the JIU and its projects has been an item noted as outstanding in the last two JIU internal annual reports.
35. The unique structure of the JIU with 11 independent Inspectors appointed by the General Assembly and a small secretariat that supports them portrays a challenging work environment. This is due in part to the small teams of staff available to undertake complex multi-stakeholder projects. There are only 1.2 full time secretariat staff available per Inspector to directly support project work. It is also a function of the matrix environment where Inspectors are overall responsible for, and oversee, their projects while secretariat managers are isolated from the day-to-day work and performance management of their staff. There are a number of structural and procedural HR issues that need to be addressed to improve the ability of the JIU to function as effectively as possible with limited resources. Inspectors are reliant on the staff of the secretariat to support them in the technical requirements of JIU review work and thus the culture and work environment is an important aspect to address as well.

Adequacy of financial resources

36. The JIU generally perceives its funding to be insufficient in terms of staff resources and consultants as its budget has remained the same for over the last decade. It is recommended, as it was in the 2013 self-evaluation, that the JIU put in place a resource mobilization strategy, policy, and mechanism by which it can receive extra-budgetary funding. This strategy will need to ensure that funds are sought and used in a manner that fully preserves the JIU's independence.
37. A strategy noted throughout this self-assessment, as well as the 2013 self-evaluation, has been to deal with the budget restrictions by reducing the number of reports produced. However, at some point, this strategy will impact the effectiveness of the JIU to fulfil its mandate. The JIU has at its disposal several mechanisms in its Statute that it should use to clearly signal what its budgetary shortfalls are, and how these are impacting its work. These include making budget proposals, being present at meetings when its budget is being discussed and disclosing the impact of resource limitations in its annual report.

Efficiency and effectiveness of data and information management processes

38. Participating organizations were not satisfied with the JIU's data gathering methods and the questionnaire process in particular, which was not viewed as efficient or effective. Several suggestions were provided to improve the process, including the use of pre-surveys followed with an enhanced desk review to provide a greater level of focus to the main data request.
39. Information requests of various JIU projects are often made in isolation of other projects and participating organizations felt that this resulted in duplicative efforts. Cohesion of requests could be improved by setting in place a data plan for each project as well as an overall data collection and

information management strategy and related technical tools. Providing a SharePoint platform for participating organizations to use would also ease the data collection burden.

40. In the review of JIU information management practices, it was found that in general, the key review files, like questionnaires, reports, participating organizations comments and more, could be found on the JIU's SharePoint site. Better naming conventions would improve the ability to quickly locate important documents. There was a wide range of practices observed in terms of quantity and comprehensiveness of the working paper files. In some cases, there was simply raw data and final reports on file with little evidence of analysis and documentation of key findings and conclusions. Development of a set of standard working papers and templates would help to record important steps in the review process, including the analysis of questionnaire data and the documentation of findings to back up the conclusions reached.
41. Regarding information technology resources, there was general internal satisfaction with the tools and systems that the JIU has available. The immediate goal here would be to fully maximize the use of existing tools, including those available for data analysis.
42. The JIU relies on the United Nations Office at Geneva for business continuity planning. This approach worked well during the pandemic. Nonetheless, it would be important to review the United Nations Office at Geneva plan carefully to ensure that it meets the unique business needs of the JIU for a variety of business disruptions.

Objective 4. Quality and usefulness of JIU's activities, processes, and products

43. Under the last objective, the self-assessment examined the quality and usefulness of JIU's products, activities, and procedures with a particular emphasis on reports and recommendations. Stakeholder's perceptions about the quality of JIU reporting were generally high, although it was noted that there was variation in terms of quality across reports. This speaks to the importance of implementing quality assurance processes.
44. In a review of the file from a sample of 8 JIU published reports, a range of practices were noted in their executive summary and introduction sections. These summaries and introductions are important as they are often the extent to what is read in a report. In a number of cases, concise executive summaries with clear statements of objectives and scope were missing. There was also a range of practices observed in the listing of formal (hard) and informal (soft recommendations), as the latter were often not listed even though they contain useful findings. In several of the reports reviewed, a statement of ethical compliance could not be found nor could the assertion about collective wisdom. The reporting process would benefit from additional guidance and templates on the style and content requirements for the introduction and executive summary sections of the reports.
45. On review of the body of the reports, they were found generally well organized with clear headings and easily identified recommendations. One challenge was to differentiate between the parts of the report; for example, between what the key findings were, and the conclusions reached. The development of a more detailed report and style guide might help in these regards.
46. In reviewing the requirements for reports as listed in the Internal Working Procedures, the results were overall satisfactory but with some exceptions. For example, there was a case where a stated objective did not appear to have been addressed in the report, while in another an area noted as out of scope was included. These are the sorts of issues that would be easily picked up in a systematic quality review process. Several very good practices were also observed, including the development and use of defined criteria to support conclusions reached and the use of a maturity models as benchmarks. Certain reports showed a high quality of reasoning and argumentation. Such good practices should be shared and replicated.

47. The self-assessment also examined the quality of recommendations and captured stakeholder perceptions thereof. Participating organizations were only moderately in agreement that JIU recommendations were of high quality. On review and from the surveys, recommendations were found to be well aligned with the purpose of the reviews and supported by facts.
48. However, participating organizations found that there was room for improvement in terms of practicality, ability to track impacts, and the way they are communicated. Less than half of participating organizations thought that recommendations were appropriately directed at the right bodies. They had issues with getting action for those directed at governing bodies/legislative organs and more so if recommendations were not well formulated for action. More challenges were expressed for multi-organizational recommendations; here it would be preferred to direct recommendations to a lead body to coordinate the action.
49. Another significant challenge with JIU recommendations was their precision and actionability, which participating organizations ranked as low. JIU recommendations are often long and complex and, as a result, become challenging to interpret and take action on. Given the importance of getting recommendations right, some additional guidance on formulation would be beneficial.
50. The most problematic area of JIU recommendations according to participating organizations was in their cost effectiveness and realistic ability to be implemented. Seeking input of participating organizations as to the practicality of implementation at the draft reporting stage could be helpful in this regard.

Outreach activities

51. Member States and participating organizations value the JIU's follow-up activities. However, taking a multi-pronged approach to assessing impact through a review of results from the recommendation tracking system, more regular and structured follow-up processes, post-review surveys, and other methods may help the JIU better assess the effectiveness and impact of its recommendations and improve the depth and quality of its outreach activities.
52. Although the JIU serves the General Assembly and governing bodies/legislative organs of the United Nations system organizations, Member States seem the least aware of the Unit's work, products, and results. It would be very important for the JIU to work on its outreach and communication of results to Member States.

Overall conclusions

53. The undertaking of this self-assessment shows the JIU's commitment to quality to support its critical role in the United Nations system. The keen interest and participation of Inspectors, JIU secretariat staff, participating organizations, and some Member States has yielded excellent insights into the Unit's working mechanisms, highlighting what is functioning well and what could be further improved.
54. The results of this self-assessment show that Inspectors and secretariat staff can take collective pride in their work and the overall quality of JIU products. The system-wide reviews of relevant topics and the resulting information dissemination of United Nations good practices are well valued by external stakeholders. The JIU is seen to be an independent, credible, and impartial body. This Self-Assessment also noted the improvements that have been put in place since the 2013 self-evaluation, including the enhanced consultations with participating organizations and improvements to the Unit's Internal Working Procedures.
55. The purpose of this review was to identify opportunities to develop internal practices in the spirit of continuous improvement so that the JIU can provide even more value. In this area, there are a number of recommendations that have been made to ameliorate internal procedures, including those pertaining to programme of work planning, streamlining data collection, improving information management practices, the clarity of reporting and the formulation of recommendations. The JIU should consider instituting more regular quality review processes, such as compliance reviews before collective wisdom, post-engagement stakeholder surveys, and a commitment to regular self-assessments. Finally, a more structured focus on assessing results from participating organizations reported follow-up actions would help the JIU better determine its impact and how it can further improve practices to get results.
56. In this review it was apparent that there are issues on several human resources areas, from staff complement to training and to the working environment at the Unit. One of the major problems is the lack of staff resources and the strain that this places on individuals and the JIU itself to achieve its mandate. Not addressing these issues will continue to have a negative impact on the ability of the JIU to become more effective and fully benefit from and promote the knowledge and skills of the entire Unit. The JIU is advised to implement a human resources strategy to address those issues and make use of all its statutory abilities to get needed staff and consulting resources as well as to align its programme of work to available resources accordingly.
57. The final area of great importance for the JIU will be to reinforce a culture of adherence among all Inspectors and secretariat staff to the high standards that it has set out for itself in its internal regulations. For this Inspectors will need to give additional impetus to the collective wisdom and quality assurance processes.
58. The JIU has accomplished much in the past and it is hoped that it will approach this self-assessment and its recommendations with firm commitment, a solid set of action plans, and a vision to achieve even greater future success.

Geneva, 4 January 2023