



**WO/IAOC/75/2**  
**ORIGINAL: ENGLISH**  
**DATE: FEBRUARY 6, 2025**

**WIPO Independent Advisory Oversight Committee**

**Seventy-Fifth Session**  
**Geneva, December 9 to 13, 2024**

REPORT

*adopted by the WIPO Independent Advisory Oversight Committee*

## **INTRODUCTION**

1. The 75<sup>th</sup> Session of the WIPO Independent Advisory Oversight Committee (IAOC) took place from December 9 to 13, 2024. Present were Messrs. Bert Keuppens (Chair), David Kanja (Vice-Chair), Kamlesh Vikamsey, German Deffit, Danil Kerimi, and Guan Jian (who joined virtually on December 9 and 10). Mr. Igors Ludboržs attended the meetings on December 11, 12, and 13.

## **AGENDA ITEM 1: ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

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2. The Committee adopted its Agenda as proposed, (which is attached to this Report as Annex I). A list of session documents is attached as Annex II.

## **AGENDA ITEM 2: DECLARATION OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

3. Members present were asked to disclose any actual or potential conflicts of interest. No conflicts of interest were reported.

## **AGENDA ITEM 3: MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS SESSION**

4. The Chair briefed the Committee on matters that took place between sessions. Following up on items of the previous session, the Committee noted that a peer review of the evaluation function has now been conducted. The Committee was briefed on the outstanding oversight recommendations, where good progress had been made in the implementation of recommendations. The Committee was also expected to meet with the new External Auditor in person. The Committee was briefed by the Chair on the status of ongoing investigations, within the mandate of the IAOC.

## **AGENDA ITEM 4: BRIEFINGS ON THE OUTCOMES OF THE 9<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF THE UN SYSTEM AUDIT AND OVERSIGHT COMMITTEES**

5. The Chair and Vice-Chair attended the 9<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Oversight and Audit Committees which was held in Bern on December 3 and 4, 2024. This meeting was hosted by the Universal Postal Union (UPU), on the occasion of its 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Matters of interest were the adoption of the Terms of Reference of the UN Oversight Advisory Committees Network. Matters discussed included best practices in Oversight Committees in the UN system, handling of secretariat functions of the oversight committees, the independence and reporting lines of these Committees, practices of self-assessment, stakeholders feedback and the new mechanism of peer reviews of oversight committees. It was decided to create an Oversight Advisory Committees Network consisting of all members of oversight committees who would have access to a digital platform.

6. Also discussed were two Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) Reports: Review of Consideration of and Action Taken on the Reports and Recommendations of Joint Inspection Unit by United Nations System Organizations (JIU/REP/2024/2), and the Review of Governance and Oversight of the Executive Boards of the United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Population Fund/United Nations Office of Project Services, the United Nations Children's Fund and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (JIU/REP/2023/7). It was noted that the WIPO Oversight Committee already followed best practices on independence and reporting lines in compliance with JIU recommendations. WIPO also followed best practice in the follow-up of JIU recommendations.

## **AGENDA ITEM 5: MEETING WITH THE DIRECTOR GENERAL**

7. The Director General briefed the Committee on the recent adoption of the new Design Law Treaty and other significant developments. He expressed his satisfaction with the outcome which resulted in the adoption of a new treaty. He welcomed in particular the collaboration between delegates, staff and observers. The Committee congratulated the Director General on this groundbreaking and historic achievement.

8. The Committee updated the Director General on the status of its work, including the follow-up of outstanding recommendations and issues of concern to the Committee.

## **AGENDA ITEM 6: INTERNAL OVERSIGHT**

9. The IAOC reviewed the Internal Oversight Activity Report, IOD's draft 2025 Workplan, and the revised Internal Audit Policy. The Committee also reviewed the draft results of a peer review of IOD's evaluation function that was conducted by the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG). This peer review was near completion.

### *Internal Oversight Activity Report*

10. The Committee reviewed the Internal Oversight Activity Report, which highlighted the progress of WIPO's Internal Oversight Division (IOD), as of December 2024, and indicated that most 2024 oversight plan activities were on schedule. The remaining audits of the 2024 Workplan, including reviews of the PCT Translation Division and WIPO's Nigeria Office, were in their final stages. Two evaluation reports were also completed during the review period. These were the Evaluation of Indigenous and Local Community Women Entrepreneurship Program and the Evaluation of the Project on Increasing the Role of Women in Innovation and Entrepreneurship. The IAOC was informed that despite challenges in staffing key positions, IOD was expected to deliver on its Workplan for 2024, with the exception of one evaluation that was deferred to the first quarter of 2025.

11. The IAOC welcomed the changes that had taken place in IOD and appreciated the efforts that had been made to re-orient the activities of the Division. The Committee also noted that some vacancies had been filled in the Audit and Investigation Sections, and two key positions were still vacant in the Evaluation Section. The Committee was informed that those vacancies would be advertised in 2025, after a revision of the relevant job descriptions.

### *Draft 2025 Internal Oversight Workplan*

12. The IAOC reviewed the Draft 2025 Internal Oversight Workplan, which was prepared after consultation with Member States and internal stakeholders. The Workplan also took into account feedback provided by the Risk Management Group, and the results of IOD's Risk Assessment. The IAOC welcomed the new format and provided some preliminary inputs into the Workplan. The Committee also welcomed the inclusion in the Workplan of the rendering of an opinion issued by IOD to support WIPO's Statement of Internal Control.

### *Review of the Revised Internal Audit Policy*

13. The IAOC reviewed the revised Internal Audit Policy and provided some inputs. The Director, IOD, informed the Committee that the proposed revisions were aimed at ensuring that the Internal Audit Policy was aligned with the new 2024 Global Internal Audit Standards and the updated Internal Oversight Charter.

### *Draft Results of the UNEG Peer Review*

14. The IAOC had a meeting with the UNEG panel members to discuss the draft results of the UNEG Peer Review of WIPO's Evaluation Function. This review assessed the evaluation function's maturity against UNEG standards, focusing on independence, credibility, and utility for accountability and learning. Key findings from the review highlighted positive attitudes toward evaluations within WIPO. Resourcing challenges and outdated job descriptions for evaluation staff were noted as constraints. Other recommendations included revising the evaluation policy; establishing quality assurance systems; enhancing participatory processes; and addressing staffing gaps to strengthen WIPO's evaluation functions, strategic and operational effectiveness.

15. The IAOC commended the peer review as a valuable initiative that identified key opportunities and provided actionable feedback for strengthening WIPO's evaluation function. The Committee appreciated the UNEG Peer Review efforts and looked forward to the finalization of the report.

### *Investigations*

16. The Committee reviewed the status of ongoing investigations. The Committee welcomed the changes made to the intake process which now referred matters to other functions within the Organization such as the Ombudsperson, Ethics Office, Human Resources Management Department (HRMD), as appropriate. As of December 5, 2024, 43 complaints were received in comparison to 45 in 2023, all of which had undergone preliminary evaluations, and 23 were referred to other functions.

### *Evaluation Reports*

17. The Committee reviewed four evaluation reports, including two prepared for the Committee on the Development of Intellectual Property (CDIP). These reports were: (i) Independent External Review of WIPO's Technical Assistance in the Area of Cooperation for Development, (ii) Impact Evaluation Report of the Project on Specialized Databases' Access and Support, (iii) Evaluation of Indigenous and Local Community Women Entrepreneurship Program and (iv) Evaluation of the Project on Increasing the Role of Women in Innovation and Entrepreneurship.

18. The two reports prepared by external evaluators at the request of the CDIP, were considered useful and included a number of recommendations. The Committee discussed with IOD whether a closer collaboration could be envisaged in the future to select the subjects for evaluation, to decide on the terms of reference and to ensure overall quality in the output. The Committee advised IOD to ensure that the recommendations from the first two evaluations were being followed up by the Secretariat.

## **AGENDA ITEM 7: UPDATE ON OUTSTANDING RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE EXTERNAL AUDITOR, THE JOINT INSPECTION UNIT (JIU) AND THE INTERNAL OVERSIGHT DIVISION (IOD)**

19. The IAOC reviewed the progress in the implementation of outstanding recommendations from the Internal Oversight Division, External Auditor, and Joint Inspection Unit. At the end of September 2024, 57 recommendations were outstanding from IOD and External Auditor. Twenty-seven recommendations were closed during the period. Therefore, 30 recommendations remained outstanding as of December 5, 2024, including six from the External Auditor. These include three high-priority recommendations which were being addressed. Significant progress had been made in the implementation of outstanding recommendations, for instance, compared with the situation a few years ago,

when there were over 150 outstanding recommendations. All JIU recommendations were also being addressed.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 8: FINANCIAL REPORTING: CHANGE IN THE ACCOUNTING POLICIES AND ACCOUNTING STANDARD**

20. The Committee was briefed about the new International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS), which WIPO was analysing for implementation. The standards that were expected to impact WIPO include IPSAS 45 (property, plant and equipment), IPSAS 46 (measurement), IPSAS 47 (revenue), and IPSAS 48 (transfer expenses).

21. The Committee was updated on WIPO's plans to conduct an actuarial assessment for After-Service Health Insurance (ASHI), which would include a full medical claims review through 2024. The Committee was also briefed about a possible 2024 post-balance sheet disclosures for the separate Multi-Employer entity. The Committee expressed interest in reviewing the assumptions being used by the actuary in determining the ASHI liability in view of its extreme sensitivity.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 9: EXTERNAL AUDIT: 2024 INTERIM AUDIT OUTCOMES AND UPDATE ON AUDIT STRATEGY AND ENGAGEMENT LETTER**

22. The IAOC met with the new External Auditor, the Audit Board of the Republic of Indonesia, *in persona*. The External Auditor briefed the Committee on an update on the status of arrangements for the external audit. The External Auditor's plan, dated December 11, 2024, provided updates on WIPO's audit activities for the year. The External Auditor indicated that the previous External Auditor had issued 41 audit recommendations since 2018, of which 35 recommendations had been implemented, and six remained in progress with target completion by the end of 2025. The timelines for the audit were discussed with the IAOC and key audit areas were discussed. The IAOC stressed the importance of a number of audit areas including the ASHI liability, investments, and the External Auditor's opinion on compliance and their performance audit.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 10: UPDATE ON INVESTMENT GOVERNANCE AND PERFORMANCE**

23. The IAOC was briefed on the updates to the Investment Governance Framework. The Committee was informed that one external investment expert was appointed to the Advisory Committee on Investments (ACI) and a second expert had been identified and would shortly join that committee. The Committee noted the progress on the implementation of the World Bank (RAMP) recommendations.

24. The Committee was provided with the performance reports as of the end of October 2024, which showed that both portfolios (core and strategic) were performing in line with their respective benchmarks and exceeding their investment objectives.

25. The Committee advised the Secretariat to undertake an update of the investment policy, including a review of the investment objectives and corresponding performance targets, considering financial market conditions and economic outlook.

26. The Committee reviewed the investment reports and noted that the Custodian reported no breach, active or passive, or justified exceptions. The Committee would like to disclose that its role is limited to conveying information contained in the Investment Performance Reports and Investment Monitoring Reports and does not provide any assurances in that regard.

### **AGENDA ITEM 11: STATUS AND UPDATE ON THE NEW ENTERPRISE RESOURCE PLAN (ERP) SYSTEM**

27. The IAOC reviewed the status of the selection of the new ERP system (AIMS 2.0 Transformation Project). The Secretariat indicated that the selection of the vendor had been completed and final negotiations, before signing the contract, were underway. The implementation, scheduled to begin in Q1 of 2025, involved a six-month design phase, detailed resource planning, and process mapping, with the new system starting to be operational by Q4 of 2025, with the employee performance element. The IAOC was aware of the many challenges that such a project underwent. The Secretariat indicated that the organizational arrangements were adequate to handle any challenges.

### **AGENDA ITEM 12: UPDATE ON DATA GOVERNANCE**

28. The IAOC received an update from the Chief Security Officer (CSO) and the Chief Information Officer (CIO). Data Governance was an emerging issue that was being addressed by the hiring of a Chief Data Officer, the development of a Data Governance Strategy and a heightened focus on data security and privacy. Data was a critical asset and resource for the Organization which, according to the IAOC, deserved the highest level of attention from senior leadership. The Committee looked forward to receiving a further briefing when the new data strategy would be ready.

### **AGENDA ITEM 13: REVIEW OF ETHICS OFFICE 2024 ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING UPDATE ON PROPOSED REVIEWS OF ETHICS-RELATED POLICIES**

29. The Committee reviewed an update on the 2024 activities of the Ethics Office. The update indicated that the Office had received a total of 164 advisory requests during 2024. There was a considerable increase in requests for advice since the arrival of the new Chief Ethics Officer on August 1, 2024. A total of 113 requests were received and addressed during the four months ending on November 30, 2024. The majority of these requests related to outside activities, retaliation and/or reprisals, standards of conduct, and other ethics advice. The Chief Ethics Officer had a number of outreach activities including meetings with Sector Leads and other key stakeholders, and members of personnel. The Chief Ethics Officer completed a number of training activities and outreach events. The Chief Ethics Officer further developed an annual workplan for 2025, which was discussed with the Committee. The 2025 Workplan included the review of the : policy on outside activities as well as the Financial Disclosure and Declaration of Interests (FDDI) Guidelines. The workplan also included a review of the Ethics Office's terms of reference. The longer-term biennial plan for 2026/2027 was also discussed.

### **AGENDA ITEM 14: REVIEW OF THE OMBUDSPERSON 2024 ACTIVITIES AND UPDATE ON OMBUDSPERSON ARRANGEMENTS FOR 2025**

30. The Committee reviewed a dashboard provided by the Ombudsperson which summarized the activities of the Ombuds Office. This dashboard indicated that over the first 11 months of 2024, the Ombuds Office handled 54 cases, of which the majority related to supervisory relationships, prohibited conduct and compliance, and job and career concerns.

31. The Committee noted the importance of this function and the increase in demand for consultations. The Committee welcomed the new six-month extension of the staffing of this function until the implementation of a different arrangement with United Nations Ombuds Service (UNOMS) had been made. The Committee was keen to evaluate the effectiveness of the new arrangements which were delayed and were now scheduled to be in place by mid-year 2025. The interim Ombudsperson formulated advice on: (i) the need to focus on

the role of supervisors in mitigating conflicts including managerial training; (ii) the need to pay attention to team building and morale; and (iii) the need to re-enforce the ethics, values and standards of the Organization. The Committee expressed appreciation for the work done by the interim Ombudsperson.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 15: IAOC SELF-ASSESSMENT OF ITS 2024 ACTIVITIES**

32. The Committee conducted a Self-Assessment in accordance with the requirements of its Terms of Reference (ToR). These ToR require the Committee to conduct a Self-Assessment every year relating to the Committee's purpose and mandate and to ensure it was operating effectively. The Committee again decided to adopt the use of the 13 JIU criteria for good practices for Audit and Oversight Committees in the United Nations system Organizations. The Self-Assessment document can be found in Annex III.

33. Overall, using the JIU criteria, the Committee concluded that it was functioning effectively and discharging its mandate in accordance with its Terms of Reference, and following these criteria the Committee was functioning according to best practices within the United Nations system. While doing so, the Committee also asked the Secretariat to provide feedback into the functioning of the Committee. The Secretariat's overall evaluation was one of appreciation of the IAOC's contributions. Specific items where the Committee's contributions were appreciated included: (i) strengthening of the investment governance framework; (ii) advice on all fiduciary issues; (iii) focus on risk management; (iv) suggestions to strengthen and reform IOD; (v) the follow-up on oversight recommendations; and (vi) the engagement with Member States. The Secretariat also mentioned the concern of duplication in some oversight work and the desire for an improved scheduling of the agenda of IAOC's meetings, considering other commitments of the Secretariat, and a clearer communication of what needed to be prepared as background information for the meetings.

34. The Committee also decided in accordance with its Terms of Reference, that an external assessment would be conducted in 2025, using the mechanism of the UN peer review which had been piloted successfully in one UN Organization.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 16: INPUT INTO THE PERFORMANCE EVALUATION OF THE DIRECTOR, IOD, THE CHIEF ETHICS OFFICER, AND THE IAOC SECRETARY**

35. In accordance with its Terms of Reference, the Committee discussed and evaluated the performance of the Director of IOD, the Chief Ethics Officer and the IAOC Secretary, in view of providing input in their performance evaluations.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 17: ELECTION OF IAOC CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR FOR 2025**

36. The Committee elected Mr. David Kanja as Chair and Mr. Kamlesh Vikamsey as Vice-Chair for the year 2025. The Committee also re-affirmed its standing practice whereby the Vice-Chair would become Chair in the following year, and another member would become Vice-Chair on a rotational basis.

37. The Committee members thanked Messrs. Bert Keuppens and David Kanja for their excellent leadership and extensive contributions to the work of the Committee.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 18: INFORMATION MEETING WITH MEMBER STATES' REPRESENTATIVES**

38. As provided in its Terms of Reference, an Information Meeting for Member States' representatives was held at the end of the session. The Committee briefed the Delegates

on its deliberations during the IAOC Session and responded to questions posed by the attending Delegates. The Committee also discussed its rolling agenda for 2025, the draft agenda for its next session and the proposed session dates for 2025.

#### *Next Session*

39. The next session of the IAOC is scheduled to take place from March 24 to 28, 2025. The draft Agenda was discussed and prepared by the Committee, for adoption at the beginning of the next meeting:

- (1) Adoption of the Agenda
- (2) Declaration of Conflict of Interest
- (3) Matters arising from previous Session
- (4) Meeting with the Director General
- (5) Internal Oversight
- (6) Review of High-Priority Oversight Recommendations
- (7) Update on Risk Management and Internal Control Framework (including Top Risks)
- (8) Financial Reporting: Draft 2024 Financial Report and Financial Statements
- (9) External Audit: Update on 2024 Audits (Financial and Performance)
- (10) Update on Investment Governance Framework and Policies
- (11) Update on HR Matters
- (12) Ethics (including 2025 Workplan Implementation Update)
- (13) Meeting with the Ombudsperson
- (14) Update on the Selection Process for New Members of the IAOC
- (15) Draft IAOC 2024 Annual Report
- (16) Information Meeting with Member States' Representatives
- (17) Other Matters
- (18) Debriefing with the Secretariat

#### **AGENDA ITEM 20: DEBRIEFING WITH THE SECRETARIAT**

40. In line with the IAOC's practice, the Committee debriefed the Secretariat, following the meeting with Member States' representatives.

[Annexes follow]





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**DATE: FEBRUARY 6, 2025**

## **WIPO Independent Advisory Oversight Committee**

**Seventy-Fifth Session**  
**December 9 to 13, 2024**

### AGENDA

*prepared by the WIPO Independent Advisory Oversight Committee*

1. Adoption of the Agenda
2. Declaration of Conflicts of Interest
3. Matters arising from previous Session
4. Briefings on the Outcomes of the 9<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the UN System Audit and Oversight Committees
5. Meeting with the Director General
6. Internal Oversight (including Input into the Review of the Revised Internal Audit Manual, Input into the Preparation of the 2025 Annual Workplan, and Discussion on the Proposed 2025 Annual Workplan)
7. Update on Outstanding Recommendations from the External Auditor, the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) and the Internal Oversight Division (IOD)

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8. Financial Reporting: Change in the Accounting Policies and Accounting Standards
9. External Audit: 2024 Interim Audit Outcomes and Update on Audit Strategy and Engagement Letter
10. Update on Investment Governance Framework and Performance
11. Status and Update on New Enterprise Resource Plan (ERP) System
12. Update on Data Governance
13. Review of Ethics Office 2024 Activities (including Update on Proposed Ethics-related Policies and Disclosures)
14. Review of the Ombudsperson 2024 Activities and Update on Ombudsperson Arrangements for 2025
15. IAOC Self-Assessment of its 2024 Activities
16. Input into the Performance Evaluation of the Director, IOD, the Chief Ethics Officer, and the IAOC Secretary
17. Election of IAOC Chair and Vice-Chair for 2025
18. Information Meeting with Member States' Representatives
19. Other Matters
20. Debriefing with the Secretariat

[Annex II follows]



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## **WIPO Independent Advisory Oversight Committee**

**Seventy-Fifth Session**  
**Geneva, December 9 to 13, 2024**

LIST OF DOCUMENTS  
PROV. LIST OF DOCUMENTS

**ITEM 1: ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

- [01a] Agenda
- [01b] Timetable
- [01c] List of Documents

**ITEM 2: DECLARATION OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

*No document:* Oral account.

**ITEM 3: MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS SESSION**

*No document:* Oral account.

**ITEM 4: BRIEFINGS ON THE OUTCOMES OF THE 9<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF THE UN  
SYSTEM AUDIT AND OVERSIGHT COMMITTEES**

*No document:* Oral account.

**ITEM 5: MEETING WITH THE DIRECTOR GENERAL**

*No document:* Oral account.

**ITEM 6: INTERNAL OVERSIGHT**

*Internal Oversight Division:*

- [06a] IOD Activity Report – December 2, 2024 (Reference: IOD-IAOC-2024/04)
- [06b] IOD Draft Annual Workplan 2025, December 2, 2024

- [06c] IOD Draft (Revised) Internal Audit Policy – (Reference: IOD/IAP/2024)
- [06d] Proposed Revisions to the Internal Audit Policy – Change Matrix, December 2024

*Evaluations:*

- [06e] UNEG Peer Review of WIPO Evaluation Function, December 9, 2024
- [06f] Evaluation of Indigenous and Local Community Women Entrepreneurship Program (WEP), (Report II) November 20, 2024 (IOD Ref.: EVAL 2023-02)
- [06g] Evaluation of the Project on Increasing the Role of Women in Innovation and Entrepreneurship, December 2, 2024 (IOD Ref.: EVAL 2023-02 – Report III)
- [06h] External Evaluator's Report: Independent External Review of WIPO's Technical Assistance in the Area of Cooperation for Development, October 7, 2024 (document CDIP/33/4)
- [06i] External Evaluator's Report: Impact Evaluation Report of the Project on Specialized Databases' Access and Support, October 3, 2024 (document: CDIP/33/8)
- [06j] Appendixes - Impact Evaluation Report of the Project on Specialized Databases' Access and Support, October 3, 2024 (document CDIP/33/8)

*Investigations:*

**ITEM 7: UPDATE ON OUTSTANDING RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE EXTERNAL AUDITOR, THE JOINT INSPECTION UNIT (JIU) AND THE INTERNAL OVERSIGHT DIVISION (IOD)**

- [07a] Open Oversight Recommendations, as of December 6, 2024
- [07b] Progress Report on the Implementation of the Joint Inspection Unit's (JIU) Recommendations, as at December 1, 2024

**ITEM 8: FINANCIAL REPORTING: CHANGE IN THE ACCOUNTING POLICIES & ACCOUNTING STANDARD**

- [08] Presentation - Change in the Accounting Policies and Accounting Standards, December 2024

**ITEM 9: EXTERNAL AUDIT: 2024 INTERIM AUDIT OUTCOMES & UPDATE ON AUDIT STRATEGY AND ENGAGEMENT LETTER**

- [09a] Presentation: Entity Service Plan of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), prepared by the Audit Board of the Republic of Indonesia – November 2024
- [09b] Powerpoint presentation – WIPO IAOC Meeting document, prepared by the Audit Board of Indonesia, December 2024

**ITEM 10: UPDATE ON INVESTMENT GOVERNANCE AND PERFORMANCE**

- [10] Update on Investment Policy and Governance Framework, December 2024

**ITEM 11: STATUS AND UPDATE ON THE NEW ENTERPRISE RESOURCE PLAN (ERP) SYSTEM**

- [11] Powerpoint Presentation - AIMS Transformation, December 10, 2024

**ITEM 12: UPDATE ON DATA GOVERNANCE**

*No document:* Oral account.

**ITEM 13: REVIEW OF ETHICS OFFICE 2024 ACTIVITIES (INCLUDING UPDATE PROPOSED ETHICS-RELATED POLICIES)**

[13a] Work-related Objectives of the Ethics Office, August to December 2024, October 28, 2024

[13b] Propose Workplans for 2025, and for 2026-2027, November 4, 2024

[13c] Putting Ethics in Focus, December 12, 2024

**ITEM 14: REVIEW OF OMBUDSPERSON 2024 ACTIVITIES AND UPDATE ON OMBUDSPERSON ARRANGEMENTS FOR 2025**

[14] Presentation: Ombudsperson Report Dashboard, Period January - December 2024

**ITEM 15: IAOC SELF-ASSESSMENT OF ITS 2024 ACTIVITIES**

[15] IAOC Self-Assessment Questionnaire 2024

**ITEM 16: INPUT INTO THE PERFORMANCE EVALUATION OF THE DIRECTOR, IOD, THE CHIEF ETHICS OFFICER, AND THE IAOC SECRETARY**

*No document:* Oral account.

**ITEM 17: ELECTION OF IAOC CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR FOR 2025**

*No document:* Oral account.

**ITEM 18: INFORMATION MEETING WITH MEMBER STATES' REPRESENTATIVES**

*No document:* Oral account.

**ITEM 19: OTHER MATTERS**

[19a] Report – Seventy-Fourth Session (document WO/IAOC/74/2)

[19b] Draft IAOC Rolling Agenda, 76<sup>th</sup> to 79<sup>th</sup> Sessions

**Investment Reports:**

[19c] Credit Suisse – Investment Monitoring Reports for September and October 2024

[19d] Capital Advise – Investment Performance Report for September and October 2025

**ITEM 20: DEBRIEFING WITH THE SECRETARIAT**

*No document:* Oral account.

[Annex III follows]

IAOC Self-Assessment Questionnaire  
December 2024

JIU criteria for good practices for audit and oversight committees in the United Nations system organizations	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	What could the Committee do better or differently?
	1	2	3	4	5	
<p><b>Criterion 1:</b> Audit and oversight committees should be established by terms of reference or charter that are formally approved by the legislative and/or governing body of the organization.</p> <p>This criterion is fundamental to satisfy the legislative and/or governing body of the organization. The terms of reference should cover fully and comprehensively all areas of the intended purview of an audit and oversight committee and should contain the best possible arrangements for its oversight work.</p>					X	Terms of reference of the IAOC were approved by the Program and Budget Committee (PBC) and the General Assembly.

<p><b>Criterion 2:</b> Audit and oversight committees should be independent and report to the legislative and/or governing body as well as to the executive head of the organization.</p> <p>This criterion distinguishes two basic control environments for audit and oversight committees in the United Nations system organizations: one (the vast majority) in which the committee already has the function of a true oversight committee in the service of the legislative and/or governing body; and another in which it is a high-level executive management advisory committee to help the legislative and/or governing body ensure that the entity in question is managed according to all applicable standards of good practice.</p>					<p><b>X</b></p>	<p>The IAOC report to WIPO General Assembly and the PBC and holds the briefing with the Secretariat and information meeting with Member States Representative after the conclusion of each session, which is recognized as best practice within the United Nations system.</p> <p>The IAOC feels strongly that its only reporting line is to the Governing Bodies, with information sharing with the Secretariat including Executive Bodies.</p>
<p><b>Criterion 3:</b> Audit and oversight committees should review and advise on the mandate, charter, plan of action and resources of the internal oversight function.</p> <p>This criterion covers the core responsibilities of audit and oversight committees that originally started out as audit committees before gradually assuming a much broader oversight role.</p>					<p><b>X</b></p>	<p>The IAOC reviews and advises on the mandate, Charter, Workplan, Internal Audit Policy and Implementation of Workplan. The IAOC also review the activity Report during each Session. The IAOC will assess the allocation of resources on a risk-based approach and a benchmarking with other organizations.</p>

<p><b>Criterion 4:</b> Audit and oversight committees should review and advise on the effectiveness of the internal control systems of the organization, including enterprise risk management.</p> <p>This criterion extends the role of an audit and oversight committee beyond pure audit review to the whole internal control framework of the entity it serves. During the past two decades, the role of enterprise risk management in this process has become increasingly important as the sophistication of the risk assessment process has greatly increased and, in parallel, risk mitigation has been professionalized.</p>				X	<p>The IAOC will in future discuss with management the location and conduct of the risk management function. The IAOC will monitor the plan of the IOD to provide an opinion on the statement of internal control.</p>
<p><b>Criterion 5:</b> Audit and oversight committees should advise the legislative and/or governing body on the operational implications for the organization of the issues and trends apparent in the financial statements of the organization and reports of the external auditor, as well as the appropriateness of accounting policies and disclosure practices.</p> <p>This criterion is aimed at ensuring that an appropriate follow-up is undertaken by management and legislative and/or governing bodies alike on all matters of concern identified in the audit reports in relation to the financial statements of the organization in question.</p>				X	<p>While the IAOC looks at the Annual Financial Statements, meets with the External Auditors periodically, monitors the implementation and applicability of new accounting standards, it could also consider reviewing interim financial reports.</p>
<p><b>Criterion 6:</b> Audit and oversight committees should review and advise on the ethics function.</p> <p>This criterion, in conjunction with criterion 7, on fraud prevention, is intended to bring the increasingly important role of the ethics function under the review of the audit and oversight committee and strengthen the accountability framework.</p>				X	<p>The IAOC welcomes the appointment of the New Ethics Officer and re-affirms the importance of this function for the organizational culture of integrity.</p>



<p><b>Criterion 7:</b> Audit and oversight committees should review and advise on the systems established and measures taken by the organization to prevent fraud.</p> <p>As several high-profile fraud cases in the United Nations system and other non-profit organizations have shown, major fraud is not confined to for-profit settings and can inflict considerable reputational damage on United Nations entities. As a consequence, the role of the audit and oversight committee has evolved to include the review of policies and measures related to fraud prevention.</p>				X	<p>The Committee started the monitoring of fraud prevention as part of the IAOC's revised Terms of Reference (ToR). This review will continue in the future in other areas as well as procurement, which was reviewed in 2024.</p>
<p><b>Criterion 8:</b> Audit and oversight committees should strengthen communication and cooperation among stakeholders, external and internal auditors, management and the legislative and/or governing body.</p> <p>While each individual element in the accountability system and internal control framework might work well, there is still a need to ensure better and more seamless coordination and cooperation among all the actors concerned.</p>				X	<p>Since last year, the IAOC now briefs the Secretariat in addition to the information meetings with member states, as a result of last year's self-assessment.</p>
<p><b>Criterion 9:</b> Criteria for audit and oversight committee membership should be clearly defined in the terms of reference or charter.</p> <p>This criterion is of high importance, since the skills, knowledge and experience which audit and oversight committee members need to collectively possess should be rigorously defined, or redefined, so as to respond to the current and evolving needs and specificities of the function.</p>				X	<p>The IAOC would welcome improved gender diversity in the Committee as required by its ToR in the future. The actual composition of the Committee is decided by Member States.</p>

<p><b>Criterion 10:</b> Audit and oversight committees should have administrative support and adequate resources in order to fulfil their oversight responsibilities.</p> <p>The most wide-ranging powers of inquiry and the best guarantees for independence and competence of an audit and oversight committee and its members would be rendered ineffective if the committee's administrative support and the resources at its disposal were to be insufficient or unduly influenced by management or other stakeholders.</p>				<p><b>X</b></p>	<p>The Committee looks forward on drawing on external investigative capacity when needed.</p> <p>In its commitment to excellence and as a good practice, the Committee would welcome support for continuous learning on new and emerging topics, as well as on the changes in the areas within its terms of reference, for example, cybersecurity.</p>
<p><b>Criterion 11:</b> Audit and oversight committees should establish an annual workplan to ensure that their responsibilities and stated objectives for the period are effectively addressed.</p> <p>This criterion is needed because the arrangements for planning, preparing, organizing and reporting on an audit and oversight committee's work and periodic meetings, as well as following up on its conclusions and recommendations, should be specified in advance and, to the extent and detail possible, be stipulated in its terms of reference or charter.</p>				<p><b>X</b></p>	<p>The Committee periodically reviews its rolling agenda to ensure all items in its Terms of Reference are covered. The Committee also have assigned focal-points the various areas in its agenda.</p>
<p><b>Criterion 12:</b> The performance of audit and oversight committees should be assessed in order to evaluate their effectiveness and efficiency.</p> <p>Few audit and oversight committees in the United Nations system have reached the level of good practice concerning this criterion, which is nonetheless of growing importance.</p>				<p><b>X</b></p>	<p>The IAOC conducts an annual self-assessment which will include for the first time, feedback from the Secretariat on its operations. In line with its ToR, the Committee will perform an independent assessment within a period of three years, as required by its revised Charter.</p>

<b>Criterion 13:</b> In order to take into account emerging priorities and challenges faced by the organizations, audit and oversight committees' terms of reference or charter should be periodically revised and reviewed by the legislative and/or governing body.					<b>X</b>	The IAOC Terms of Reference were revised in 2023 and meet best practice in line with JIU recommendations.
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[End of Annex III and of document]