

COUNTRY OFFICE AUDIT

INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT
UN WOMEN COUNTRY OFFICE IN
UKRAINE



INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

UN WOMEN COUNTRY OFFICE IN UKRAINE



**INDEPENDENT EVALUATION, AUDIT AND INVESTIGATION
SERVICES (IEAIS)**

Internal Audit Service (IAS)

UN WOMEN

4 February 2025

IEAIS/IAS/2024/007

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	I
ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS	III
I. BACKGROUND	1
II. AUDIT RESULTS	3
A. STRATEGIC PRIORITIES, PROGRAMME PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION	3
B. GOVERNANCE, RISK MANAGEMENT AND INTERNAL CONTROLS	9
C. OPERATIONS	12
III. RECOMMENDATIONS AND MANAGEMENT ACTION PLAN	15
ANNEX 1. DEFINITIONS OF AUDIT TERMS RATINGS AND PRIORITIES	16

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Audit objective and scope

The UN Women Internal Audit Service (IAS) of the Independent Evaluation, Audit and Investigation Services (IEAIS) conducted an internal audit of the UN Women Country Office in Ukraine from September to November 2024.

This audit built upon a risk assessment of the Country Office that IAS conducted from December 2023 to January 2024. The risk assessment discussed lessons learned and ongoing challenges at corporate, regional and country level in terms of UN Women's level of preparedness, operational readiness, early warning and early action that contributes to effective crisis management in varying emergency situations.

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 led to an extremely complex and unique operational environment where the Country Office had to reprioritize its ongoing development portfolio to humanitarian and Women, Peace and Security interventions in support of the UN Humanitarian Country Team and its clusters. At the time, corporate processes were not fully ready to undertake such crisis management, which affected the Country Office's capacity to fully meet Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) protocols.

UN Women management is responsible for adequately designing and effectively maintaining governance, risk management and control processes to ensure that UN Women's objectives are achieved. IAS is responsible for independently assessing the adequacy and effectiveness of these systems and processes.

The audit aimed to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of the governance arrangements, risk management practices and control processes relating to the following areas and subareas:

- **Strategic priorities, programmes and project management:** strategic positioning, priorities setting, coordination of gender mainstreaming, advocacy and resource mobilization, programme and project management, management of programme partners.

- **Governance, risk management and internal control system:** office structure and delegations of authority, control environment, risk management, data quality and implementation of recommendations from prior oversight reports.
- **Operations:** management of procurement, human resources (HR), finance and budget, information and communication technology (ICT), travel, assets, and safety and security.

The audit covered the state of governance, risk management and internal controls based on a sample of Country Office activities related to strategic priorities and Programme and Operations controls from 1 January 2023 to 30 November 2024. Expenditure for the Country Office totalled US\$ 13.8 million in 2023 and US\$ 19.5 million for 2024, as of 8 December (as per Quantum). IAS also received relevant feedback from earlier periods, which has been included in this report, for institutional memory and learning.

The audit was conducted in conformance with the *International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing* of The Institute of Internal Auditors. The audit included an anonymous survey of personnel for which there were 35 respondents.

Audit opinion and overall audit rating

IAS acknowledges the following achievements and good practices:

- The Country Office has a dedicated, professional and diverse workforce who are committed to achieving together the organization's objectives, while working in adverse conditions where supporting staff well-being and security has been prioritized.
- The Country Office has a well-structured draft Strategic Note for 2025-2029 with clear outcomes, outputs and activities.
- The Country Office developed a robust Resource Mobilization Strategy to support the new Strategic Note, and has achieved strong non-core resource mobilization results with limited core allocations.

IAS assessed the overall state of governance, risk management and internal controls in the Country Office as **Satisfactory** meaning that “the assessed governance arrangements, risk management practices and controls were adequately established and functioning well. Issues identified by the audit, if any, are unlikely to affect the achievement of the objectives of the audited entity/area.” IAS noted there was some need for improvement in the monitoring and reporting framework, organizational structure and reporting lines, human resources management and cybersecurity compliance.

Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 led to an extremely complex and unique operational environment where the Country Office had to reprioritize its ongoing development portfolio to humanitarian and Women, Peace and Security interventions in support of the UN Humanitarian Country Team and its clusters. At the time, corporate processes were not fully ready to undertake such crisis management, which affected the Country Office’s capacity to fully meet Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) protocols.

IAS identified the following areas for enhancement to consolidate good practices and lessons learned, and advance the Country Office’s mandate and priorities:

- The Country Office should continue to support the Resident Coordinator Office and the United Nations Country Team to complete the UNCT-SWAP scorecard in 2025. The Country Office could also strengthen its Monitoring and Reporting functions, and make small improvements to project design and partner selection processes. When using waivers within the allocation of Women Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF) grants, the Country Office should clarify at a corporate level the timeline within which the waivers apply.
- As a large and growing office, the Country Office should clarify reporting lines and authority in its complex organizational chart. The Country Office should also continue to apply the Consultants Contract policy, being aware of perceived and actual conflicts of interest and consider the sustainability of reliance on expert consultants for deployment to governmental institutions.
- At the corporate level, UN Women could also establish and monitor swift timelines for review and approval of Country Office requests to headquarters.

IAS made five recommendations to address the areas for improvement, all of which are ranked as medium priority.

The medium (Important) priority recommendations mean that *“action is required to ensure that UN Women is not exposed to risks. Failure to take action could result in negative consequences for UN Women”*. These recommendations are focused on: enhancing the Monitoring and Evaluation function and framework; identify a time limit on the current WPHF waivers (and future requests) and clearly document the circumstances for use and non/use of the waivers for programme partners; clarifying reporting lines in the organizational chart; reflecting and better determining the sustainability of the use of Consultant Contracts in support of governmental institutions.

Management comments and action plan

The Country Representative accepted the above recommendations and provided action plans which are included in this report. Implementation of some of the recommendations has already begun. Management comments and additional information provided have been taken into account in this report, where appropriate.

Low priority issues are not included in this report but were discussed directly with management, and actions have been initiated to address them.

Lisa Sutton

Lisa Sutton, Director

Independent Evaluation, Audit and Investigation Services

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

DRF	Development Results Framework
IAS	Internal Audit Service
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IEAIS	Independent Evaluation, Audit and Investigation Services
RMS	Results Management System
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
WPHF	Women, Peace and Humanitarian Fund

I. BACKGROUND

UN Women has worked in Ukraine since 2015. The Country Office reports to the Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia. The main office in the country is located in Kyiv, with a sub-office in Dnipro.

The Country Office has mainly focused on the following key thematic areas: women, peace and security and gender-responsive governance at all levels, including gender-sensitive recovery, European integration and humanitarian aid. UN Women offers technical support for the development and implementation of laws, policies, and budgets across a wide range of sectors. The Country Office also engages in advocacy, social mobilization and capacity-building activities, working with government authorities at all levels, human rights institutions, women's groups, civil society organizations, the private sector, and other UN agencies / donor countries.

As a result of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, the Country Office has increased its focus on humanitarian action and crisis response. The Country Office has also been expanding women's economic empowerment and livelihoods activities, partly in response to the invasion. Since 2022 it has become a major grant maker to mainly women's rights organizations, thanks to the support provided by the Women, Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF).

In 2023, UN Women's activities included a variety of programmes aimed at empowering and mobilizing women and their organizations; supporting government structures meet their global commitments to gender equality and women's empowerment; and encouraging economic recovery. The Country Office adapted its strategies to focus on the most urgent needs of the population, highlighting the disproportionate impact the conflict has on women and girls, and to build on opportunities for further women empowerment in the eventual post war period.

The Country Office's 2024 Strategic Note for Ukraine aligns with the 2024 priorities outlined in the UN Transitional Framework. It focuses on addressing the profound impacts the ongoing conflict have had on women and girls, acknowledging their

disproportionate suffering and the heightened vulnerabilities they face. The Country Office has a draft Strategic Note for 2025 to 2029 that is currently under development.

According to the OneApp HR dashboard, as of 30 November 2024, the Country Office employed 48 personnel with staff contracts (P, GS, NO); engaged 27 consultants on Special Service Agreements; and 16 individuals on other contract types. This includes personnel based in the sub-office in Dnipro.

The Country Office's budget and expenditure are summarized in Table 1.¹

Table 1. Office target and actual budget, total expenditure and delivery rate

Total resource requirements	2022	2023	2024	Total
Total budget target, US\$	7,960,341	19,805,945	21,495,938	49,262,224
Total actual budget, US\$	10,527,572	15,568,268	23,002,566	49,098,406
Resource mobilization	132%	79%	107%	99%
Total expenditure, US\$	6,592,974	13,792,913	20,225,897	40,611,784
Financial implementation	63%	89%	88%	83%

Source: Budget target used RMS Plan; Actual budget 2022 used the Project Delivery Dashboard from Legacy data on OneAPP; Actual budget 2023-2024 used the Project Utilization Dashboard on OneAPP; Total expenditure 2022 used the Project Delivery Dashboard from Legacy data on OneAPP; and Total expenditure 2023-2024 used the Project Utilization Dashboard on OneAPP but only the expenses, not "total utilization".

In 2023 and 2024, the country field programme comprised 26 non-core funded projects with a total budget of US\$ 36.9 million, funded by a range of donors (some projects attracting multiple funding sources), including:

- Multi-Partner Trust Fund funding for seven projects (US\$ 19.6 million).
- Donor government or organization funding for 16 projects (US\$ 14.4 million).
- United Nations funding for five projects, sourced from multi and bilateral donors (US\$ 2.9 million).

Quantum-recorded expenditure for the Country Office totalled US\$ 13.8 million in 2023 and US\$ 15.5 million as of 8 December 2024. Overall, this consisted of staff costs (41 per cent); learning and recruitment costs (9 per cent); non-staff personnel costs

¹ OneAPP RMS as of December 2024 (planned budget), as of December 2024 (actual budget).

(8 per cent); consumables (8 per cent); support costs (6 per cent); grant-making costs (5 per cent); travel costs (3 per cent); rent and maintenance costs (3 per cent); communication costs (3 per cent); and other costs (14 per cent).

II. AUDIT RESULTS

A. Strategic priorities, programme planning and implementation

See Background section for information on the Country Office's strategic focus. The Country Office had a Strategic Note for 2018–2022, which was interrupted by Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. The Country Office then developed a separate Strategic Note for 2023 which was extended to 2024. The Country Office has developed a new Strategic Note for 2025–2029, which aims to establish new priorities and focus based on the significantly changed country context and lessons learned in 2023 and 2024.

Overall, there was a reasonable link between the Country Office's Strategic Note impacts, outcomes and outputs, and activities were coherent. The Country Office has a small Partnerships Function consisting of a Resource Mobilization and Partnerships Specialist (P3) supported by an Associate (UN Volunteer). Partnership functions are also undertaken by the Country Representative, Deputy Country Representative, Head of Programs and Communications personnel, with support from personnel in their teams and other personnel as needed. Stakeholders confirmed that UN Women was a relevant and visible actor on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in Ukraine. The Country Office participates fully in the UNCT and HCT; chairs the Gender Theme Group and co-chairs the Gender in Humanitarian Action working group; and serves as the Secretariat of the Sectoral Working Group on Gender in support of donor coordination and performs the function of the management entity and Secretariat for Women, Peace and Humanitarian Fund in Ukraine.

KEY OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Observation 1: Stakeholder feedback

The stakeholders interviewed by IAS recognized the valuable role of UN Women in Ukraine in terms of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. UN Women was acknowledged for its contributions and strategic priorities towards women, peace and security; conflict related sexual violence; and gender-responsive governance, as well as the growing areas of humanitarian response and women's economic empowerment.

The Country Office was praised for its effective management and collaboration with various partners, contributing to significant policy changes and emergency response activities. It has strong visibility and advocacy efforts, actively participating in donor platforms and gender-inclusive recovery initiatives. The Country Office is recognized for

its commitment to gender mainstreaming and capacity-building, providing extensive training and support for legislative and policy development. Its collaboration with government agencies and programme partners is strong, with effective capacity-building and training initiatives, regular feedback sessions and high visibility through events and advocacy campaigns.

Stakeholders also provided constructive feedback on how the Country Office might improve. Stakeholders felt that the Country Office's response to the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in early 2022 could have been faster in terms of UN Women participating in and coordinating gender issues in the initial humanitarian response. There were perceived gaps in resources and capacity at this time that impacted UN Women's ability to respond to the crisis quickly. Furthermore, UN Women became a full member of the Inter Agency

Standing Committee² in November 2022, which provided an opportunity for UN Women to join prominent humanitarian affairs stakeholders. At the time of the invasion corporate processes were not fully ready to undertake such crisis management, which affected the Country Office's capacity to meet Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) protocols. Stakeholders acknowledged improvement since 2022 and expressed confidence in UN Women's ability to operate effectively in the humanitarian space.

Some stakeholders also highlighted the need to focus on the longer-term and sustainability when planning and carrying out interventions. Some stakeholders commented on the relatively short-term nature of interventions and that this, together with delays in the receipt and disbursement of funding, could impact the efficacy of project results.

The Country Office was also perceived to be actively coordinating on gender mainstreaming among UN and other partners in Ukraine. At the time of audit, the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) had not completed the UNCT-SWAP scorecard for Ukraine. The reason provided was the ongoing emergency resulting from Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. The Gender Theme Group (GTG) chaired by UN Women included in its Annual Work Plan 2025 the completion of the scorecard in Q1-Q2 and advocated with the RCO to prepare accordingly.

IAS advises the Country Office to advocate for, and support the RCO in, the completion of the UNCT-SWAP scorecard in 2025.

Observation 2: Humanitarian response

Stakeholders provided feedback that there was a lack of speed and efficacy in UN Women's initial response to the humanitarian and crisis situation caused by the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by Russia. This feedback was corroborated by IAS as part of its 2023 risk assessment and internal audit.

As an Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) member since November 2022, upon scale-up activation UN Women is committed to prioritize the response, ensure speed and the timeliness of putting in place the required systems and capacities and mobilize the necessary resources to contribute to an effective response as per their mandated areas.

This includes carrying out several actions within 72 hours of activation, which UN Women was not able to do.

IAS' risk assessment highlighted that several key steps were not taken. For example, surge capacity was not provided within 72 hours and not on a longer-term basis, and funding availability for immediate needs was limited. In addition, the audit and risk assessment noted that there was unequal treatment between local and international staff, contract challenges, and psychological stress among local personnel risk dissatisfaction and harm workforce well-being. National staff requested more time off, compensation, and ongoing psychological support. However, some elements, like R&R and danger pay, are managed by the ICSC/UN Secretariat, not the Country Office or UN Women.

Some challenges appeared to be partly due to Country Office leadership gaps immediately after the invasion, and until a new Representative was appointed in February 2023. In addition, no plan to redeploy staff to Kyiv after initial relocations was put in place until Fall 2022. This meant that UN Women's presence at key humanitarian planning and response meetings was impacted in 2022.

Importantly, UN Women as an organization is relatively less experienced in humanitarian and crisis situations than other members of the UNCT. At the same time, UN Women established a Humanitarian Unit in 2012 and released a Humanitarian Strategy for 2022-2025. UN Women also releases an annual report on Humanitarian Action and Disaster Risk Reduction. In addition, the Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia has had a humanitarian specialist in place since 2022.

In addition to addressing intra-office challenges, the Country Office may have benefited from faster organization-wide action and support at the corporate level. Many lessons learned can be gleaned from the challenges experienced by the Ukraine Country Office. One idea mentioned by several stakeholders was the need to establish a formal crisis board at the onset of the crisis to oversee the organizational response and facilitate quick, informed decision-making. In addition, UN Women does not have internal policies,

² Inter-Agency Standing Committee, link <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/>

procedures and guidance on crisis response that have been tested, subject to end-to-end risk assessment and are specific to UN Women's programmatic and operational context.

Despite these challenges, the Country Office personnel and other UN Women support personnel addressed some of the gaps and scaled up UN Women's response, primarily from 2023 onwards. The Country Office established a Humanitarian team consisting of 6 positions based in the Dnipro Sub-Office led by a Programme Specialist and Head of Sub-Office (P3). The Country Office also has 4 more Humanitarian positions based in Kyiv, led by the Head of Humanitarian Programme (Expert on Mission).

There were also useful learnings about responses humanitarian crises from IAS' 2023 internal audit report for the Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia, as well as IAS' meta-synthesis on humanitarian crisis response which has synthesized the response in Ukraine as well as other crises.

IAS advises the headquarters Humanitarian Section to incorporate lessons learned from the Ukraine crisis response (with reference to other IAS reports mentioned above) into the existing policy, procedures and guidance framework, developing (to the extent possible) a standardized approach to crisis response in the organization. This would necessarily include assignment of roles and responsibilities at all levels in the organization and end-to-end risk assessment of the crisis response process in the organization.

Observation 3: Monitoring and reporting

The Country Office has a Monitoring and Reporting Specialist (P3, TA, Non-core funded) in Kyiv as well as two Monitoring and Reporting Analyst positions which are vacant. This unit is tasked with supporting programming units in conducting monitoring work through reviewing and overseeing their work schedules and organizing and reviewing the reporting process.

The draft Strategic Note 2025–2029 has a brief and high-level section on monitoring and evaluation, noting that the Country Office will monitor and report on Strategic Note implementation using an adaptive Results-Based Management strategy, focusing on Integrated Results and Resources Framework indicators and risk management. Monitoring will be semi-annual with annual reporting, with a total budget for these

activities of US\$ 3,600,000. The Country Office has planned several evaluations for 2025–2029, adhering to the UN Women Evaluation Policy, including a Country Portfolio Evaluation, thematic evaluations and joint evaluations with other UN agencies. The evaluation budget is at least US\$ 300,000, and all evaluations will be publicly available on the UN Women Global Accountability and Tracking of Evaluation Use system.

The Country Office has recognized the need for a structured approach to monitoring and reporting, particularly as the office grows. IAS observed that more clarity on roles and responsibilities for monitoring and reporting is needed. The information included in the Strategic Note is useful, but the Monitoring and Reporting functions would benefit from work plans with key activities and deliverables assigned each year, as well as clear roles and responsibilities for those involved. The Monitoring and Reporting Function is involved in monitoring work at the programmatic and project level, as well as coordinated reporting at Country Office level, and this way of working should be maintained with sufficient human resources allocated and greater efforts made to do higher level reporting.

The Country Office has a clear monitoring and evaluation framework for the Women, Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF), which clearly links the work of programme partners to the project's overall objectives. Projects in other thematic areas also adopted a similar framework at lesser magnitude to adapt to individual project needs. Many of the projects that IAS sampled were still ongoing and evaluations had not yet been completed: one evaluation (WPHF) was ongoing.

Project teams undertook several monitoring trips to project sites, visited project partners, target populations, etc. and prepared well documented mission reports. IAS noted that while the mission reports had actions to be undertaken after the trips, there was no follow-up mechanism to ensure that programme teams duly undertook the actions and to ensure effective monitoring efforts.

The IAS risk assessment advised the Country Office to regularly identify programme management and monitoring bottlenecks and challenges, and, if needed, revisit its workflows, implementation plans and ensure solid monitoring frameworks.

Recommendation 1 (Medium):

The Country Office to enhance the Monitoring and Reporting (M&R) Function and framework by continuing to plan and resource adequate M&R capacity and developing and training key personnel (programme teams and partners) in results-focused M&R methodology (including indicators, workplan and budget).

Observation 4: Resource mobilization

The IAS risk assessment of UN Women operations in Ukraine proposed that the Country Office develop a new resource mobilization strategy.

The Country Office has experienced recent positive results in resource mobilization that it aims to sustain into the future. The Country Office has a dedicated Resource Mobilization and Partnerships Specialist (P3, TA, Non-core funded) and resource mobilization activities are also performed by the Country Representative, Deputy Country Representative, Head of Programs, and various programme specialists in the office, as well as being supported by a range of other personnel.

One key challenge faced by the Country Office is that, due to the country context, the non-core funding is not multi-year. This poses challenges for the Country Office's planning and human resources management. In previous years, the Country Office received additional core resources allocations, totalling US\$ 641,432 in 2023, US\$ 1,458,784 in 2024 and US\$ 1,149,236 in 2025. These allocations are expected to discontinue in 2026. So, while resource mobilization has been successful to date, the limitations posed by the short funding timelines and expected reduction of core resources mean that the Country Office needs to ensure that their resource mobilization strategy is adaptable.

To accompany the new Strategic Note 2025–2029, the Country Office developed a formal Partnerships, Communications and Visibility Annex. This is a robust document that links substantive stakeholder mapping in Ukraine with UN Women's strategic objectives and communication and resource mobilization opportunities. In the corporate Risk Management System, the Country Office has designated "funding and resource

mobilization" as high risk (12 of 25 score), scoring it as moderately likely (3 of 5) and having a potentially severe impact (4 of 5).

The Resource Mobilization Strategy set a five-year target budget of US\$ 148 million. The document includes specific strategies for mobilizing resources, including specific steps for approaching and engaging donors. It also establishes key performance indicators to measure success and risk management considerations. If the Country Office can implement the Resource Mobilization Strategy and continue the results achieved in 2023 and 2024, the key risks to resource mobilization should be well addressed.

IAS advises the Country Office to develop a resource mobilization workplan and task force based on the Resource Mobilization Strategy to ensure that the specific aspects of the strategy are implemented proactively. This includes maintaining existing capacities to implement the Resource Mobilization Strategy and operationalizing a plan to access multi-year donor funding.

Observation 5: Project design

From the projects sampled, IAS noted that while donor agreements were reviewed by headquarters for clearance, when needed, the related ProDocs and contribution letters were not because there was no requirement for their review unless projects are submitted to the global Project Appraisal Committee. Projects were consistently reviewed by the local or regional Project Appraisal Committee.

IAS observed two instances whereby the Country Office included certain activities in donor agreements, contribution letters or ProDocs but did not always undertake them, although IAS noted that this was not a pervasive pattern. In one example, the ProDoc indicated that the Country Office would develop a comprehensive and thorough communications and visibility plan with key milestones, and a monitoring framework with detailed methodological notes outlining how each indicator would be measured. It also indicated that the project would undergo a final project review to systematically compile key results, reflect on lessons learned and provide recommendations for the next steps. However, IAS observed that the Country Office did not undertake the three requirements it had committed to in the ProDoc. The Country Office agreed with IAS that it should have notified the donor when there was a change in circumstances, and it was no longer feasible to undertake these requirements. The Country Office further

explained that it noted in 2022-2023 that several donors selected to waive the Steering Committees and meetings largely due to lack of capacity in the fast-moving Ukrainian environment. In the absence of formal in-person Steering Committees meetings, the Country Office in some instances exchanged in writing with the donor regarding updates and challenges to project implementation. This should have been systematized across all donor relationships. In 2024 the Country Office recognized the need to further strengthen formal information exchange with several donors.

For all future projects, IAS advises the Country Office to continue to communicate challenges with donors regarding any unfeasible requirements; obtain donor agreement or consent to remove or update the requirements; and ensure that cost recovery is fully integrated in program budgets as per UN Women corporate policies.

IAS also noted that the Country Office had significant Strategic Note direct funding, where donors provide funding to the whole office as an institution rather than earmarked funding for specific non-core projects. The Country Office was in the process of increasing funds through this modality and was in discussions with several key donors. IAS observed that due to the usual flexibility of Strategic Note funding, there might be misaligned expectations between the Country Office and some donors. Some of the donors IAS interviewed had expectations of annual project steering committee meetings and consultations, specific reports dedicated to the activities accomplished through their Strategic Note funding, etc. However, sometimes, it was not clear whether the Country Office would be able to meet the requirements for reporting and annual meetings. In Quantum, the Strategic Note direct funding was created using the same template/format as non-core projects. Although the Strategic Note direct funding projects had workplans, it was not clear whether they should be reviewed by the local/regional Project Appraisal Committees, or what the requirements for monitoring and evaluation, exit and sustainability strategies, and clear identification of target populations, etc. should be in place. IAS is aware that UN Women is intensifying the use of the Strategic Note direct funding modality as part of the Entity's resource mobilization efforts, and the Country Office was also increasing its outreach in this regard. The Country Office informed IAS that one of the challenges was the lack of clarity from Headquarters the Strategic Note direct funding modality and requirements for financial and narrative Strategic Note reporting. IAS highly encourages the Country Office to refer to sections 8.4 and 9.19 of the Strategic Note Direct Funding Guidance available on the PPG that became effective

from 25 April 2024. This will help clarify reporting expectations with donors.

IAS advises the Country Office to continue to clarify the expectations and approvals for Strategic Note direct funding projects with the Regional Office and headquarters PSMU/PPID and have regular discussions with key donors to understand their expectations and develop measures to address reasonable expectations.

The projects sampled by IAS had well-established and concrete sustainability and exit strategies. Only one project did not have sustainability and exit strategies, and the Country Office informed IAS that this occurred because the ProDoc was developed in 2021 and the donor had not requested a sustainability and exit strategy. Given that sustainability and exit strategies are not yet mandatory elements of ProDocs, this could result in inconsistent/disorganized handover of projects, although this was not pervasive as only one project of the six sampled had this exception.

Some donors IAS interviewed had mixed views on sustainability and exit strategies because the war was still ongoing; however, they suggested that the Country Office could continue its efforts for gender-responsive recovery in Ukraine as one of UN Women's niche areas going forward. Some stakeholders were of the view that it is not yet time to consider sustainability within projects as the focus should be on the immediate needs of women and girls in war-prone areas; while others indicated that UN Women needs to gradually include these elements in its projects and foster good practices for future transition.

As an advisory note, the Country Office to continue prioritizing the consistent design and monitoring of sustainability and exit strategies for projects to align with project objectives.

Observation 6: Use of waivers and fast-tracking procedure

The Country Office had two ongoing waivers in use. In the first example, IAS observed that for one key project under the WPHF, on 13 April 2022, the Regional Director submitted a request for an urgent blanket waiver to the UN Women Executive Office to specifically waive three requirements under the new procedure for programme partners, i.e. (1) grant-making threshold (which limits the value of an individual grant not exceeding 25 per cent of the value of the Partner Agreement and cumulative value of all grants to 50 per cent of the value of the Partner Agreement; (2) undertaking risk-based

capacity assessments, including additional capacity assessment for grant-making work; and (3) inclusion of Annex 7 to the Partner Agreement which relates to external audit reports of programme partners. The waiver was requested because the WPHF Calls for Proposal had been launched before promulgation of the new procedures in question; therefore, it would not have been feasible for the WPHF civil society organizations to comply.

On 13 April 2022, the WPHF waiver for the Ukraine Country Office was granted by the Executive Office. However, IAS noted that the duration of the waiver was not specified, therefore it appeared open-ended. This resulted in application of the waiver since 2022 and during the time of the audit in 2024. The Country Office informed IAS that it had stopped using the waiver for some partners while still applying it for others. Although no major risks were raised to IAS's attention since application of the waiver, IAS is of the view that indefinite waivers are not a good practice for risk management. The Regional Office, however, informed IAS that given the context of the ongoing war in Ukraine, the waiver is still necessary. Upon enquiry, the Executive Office informed IAS there was an understanding that the waiver was only applicable to the initial WPHF budget of US\$ 10 million. Furthermore, the Executive Office indicated that UN Women is undergoing a process of examining whether UN Women's rules are fit for the function of the WPHF – which aims to be a flexible and responsive fund for women's organizations in times of crisis, and whether UN Women can adapt some of the rules for the fund, while ensuring the needed levels of fiduciary responsibility, etc. Since this is an ongoing discussion/exercise, there might be a possibility in the future that UN Women enables the fund to be more flexible, and as a result, potentially might no longer need waivers like these. The aim of the review is to ensure UN Women can be the best home for feminist funds, in terms of rules and regulations.

In another example, on 29 December 2023, the Regional Office submitted a request for the second extension of the fast-tracking procedure for Europe and Central Asia offices engaged in the Ukraine response. The first request which was approved by Headquarters was for 9 January to 8 July 2023 and extended to December 2023. The second extension was approved from 1 January to 30 June 2024. PPID approved a third extension of the waiver up to 30 January 2025 and IAS recommends that the Country Office consider carefully if it should be further extended.

Recommendation 2 (Medium):

The Country Office in consultation with the Executive Office and PPID to identify a time limit on the current waivers (and future requests) related to WPHF; reassess the risks associated with the waivers; and clearly document the circumstances for use and non/use of the waivers for WPHF programme partners. The Country Office should also continue to reassess whether use of other waivers is still applicable when resubmitting requests to the Regional Office and Headquarters in 2025.

Observation 7: Programme partner selection

UN Women policies require that programme partners are selected on a competitive basis, although direct or sole sourcing is also allowed in some circumstances specified in the policies. IAS sampled seven programme partners for detailed tests: three partners were selected competitively, while four were selected through direct or sole sourcing, some following the waivers discussed in observation 6 above.

While the rationale for direct or sole sourcing was always documented, IAS noted one Partner Agreement for an equivalent of approximately US\$ 1,217,500 related to women's participation in peace processes, where the partner was selected by direct or sole sourcing, which was approved by the regional Project Appraisal Committee and followed the partner selection policies. The Partner Agreement was extended with costs. However, for an agreement of such high magnitude, it could be considered risky to offer a contract directly to one programme partner without giving other potential partners an opportunity to demonstrate their ideas or suggestions on implementation of project activities. The solicitation of more proposals could have enabled the Country Office to obtain greater value for money, demonstrated transparency in the solicitation process and the office could even have considered diversifying the risk from one programme partner due to the high financial value attached to the agreement.

As an advisory note, the Country Office to explore competitive selection for all high-value programme partnerships to ensure value for money, even in the context of the ongoing war. In cases where insufficient applications are received, this should be clearly documented in the rationale for direct or sole sourcing.

B. Governance, risk management and internal controls

See Background section for key Country Office data. According to the latest organization chart, the Country Office comprised 84 positions (including 28 vacancies at the time of the audit). Sixteen of the 84 positions are part of Operations, which represents 19 per cent of the workforce. Fifty of the 84 positions are part of the Programme team (60 per cent of the workforce); three positions are part of the Executive Function (4 per cent) and the remaining 15 are part of the Coordination, Communications and Partnerships and Security functions (18 per cent of the workforce). The office management structure includes the Country Representative, the Deputy Country Representative, the Programme Management Specialist (or Head of Programme, the Head of Sub-Office for Dnipro, and the Operations Manager. IAS assessed that the Country Office appears to have an appropriate structure and the resources and authority to fulfil its mandate, with some need to clarify reporting lines and authority.

KEY OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Observation 8: Organizational structure

The Country Office's organizational structure has grown and changed substantially since the onset of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine. The Country Office is classified as a large-sized office in the Enterprise Data Management system (November 2024). The UN Women Presence Governance Guidance classifies a large-sized office as having US\$ 5 million+ of Development Results Framework (DRF) delivery per year (excluding Core); a US\$ 6 million+ resource mobilization target per year; and more than 20 personnel (staff, Service Contracts and UN Volunteers). The Guidance states that large-sized offices will have three–four Strategic Plan outcomes or thematic areas, as well as cross-cutting areas.

The Ukraine Country Office has a resource mobilization target in the Results Management System (RMS) system of US\$ 21.5 million for 2024 and US\$ 27.7 million for 2025, with DRF components of US\$ 19.1 million and US\$ 24.1 million respectively (of which US\$ 155,000 and US\$ 0 are core, respectively)³. This is significantly higher than the target for a large-sized office in 2024 and 2025. The actual DRF budget was approximately US\$ 15 million in 2023 and US\$ 21 million in 2024, which is also well above the target for a large-sized office. As of October 2024, the Country Office's personnel directory lists 86

personnel of which 45 are UN staff, this also well exceeds the standard for a large-sized office.

At the time of the audit, the Ukraine Country Office was one of the largest UN Women offices by headcount, and its organizational structure reflects this complexity. The office's structure and reporting lines appear intricate, with some programme teams reporting to the Head of Programmes, while others report to the Deputy Country Representative or the Country Representative. There are also numerous dotted reporting lines, adding to the complexity.

The Operations Manager reports to the Deputy Country Representative, who then reports to the Country Representative. As the Deputy Country Representative has responsibility for delivery of several programmes, and as one of the Operations Manager's roles is to perform oversight on the programmes, there is a potential conflict of interest and segregation of duties issue with the current reporting lines. Also, the Security team and the Dnipro sub-office have their own direct reporting lines in the organigram to both the Country Representative and Deputy Representative. This was corroborated by personnel and stakeholder interviews, indicating different understandings of the structure among staff.

The Country Office's rapid growth and its evolving structure pose challenges, including varying levels of access to senior management and support for different Programme teams. Good practices sometimes suggest a simpler approach, where a Head of

³ RMS data as of 31 December 2024

Programmes leads the entire programme and reports to the Country or Deputy Country Representative. The current office structure, with Operations Manager reporting to those managing programmatic functions, is not ideal for operational independence. The Country Office Senior Management Team meets weekly to provide strategic decision-making and accountability, which helps mitigate some of these challenges. However, as the Country Office stabilizes and adopts the new Strategic Note from 2025, there is a need to clarify and improve the office's organizational structure.

The risk assessment completed by IAS in early 2024 advised the Country Office to, as part of formulation of its new Strategic Note, the Country Office to seek assistance from headquarters and the Regional Office on its functional analysis to ensure that the office's structure is fit-for-purpose to deliver on its strategic priorities. This necessarily includes ensuring that reporting lines and authority of key positions are elevated and clarified, and ensuring proper segregation of duties between positions with oversight functions and delivery positions.

Recommendation 3 (Medium):

The Country Office to revise and clarify the reporting lines depicted in the organizational chart on the basis of the new Strategic Note 2025–2029.

Observation 9: Risk management

As referred to throughout this report, IAS completed a risk assessment of the Country Office that IAS conducted from December 2023 to January 2024. The risk assessment provided advice to management and proposed 14 actions to be considered and addressed by the Country Office. This was in part to address general risks that arise when operating in the, at times, difficult situation in the country; and identify any potential structural weaknesses in organizational readiness to operate in crisis situations, including fit-for-purpose governance, risk management and internal controls.

During the audit, IAS observed actions taken by the Country Office to take steps to address the 14 proposed actions in the risk assessment. In particular, the Country Office: considered stakeholder feedback; developed refined strategic priorities as part of the new Strategic Note for 2025 to 2029; updated its resource mobilization and

communication strategies; took steps to further develop the growing organizational structure; improve monitoring capacity; and maintained security culture and posture.

Not least, the Country Office took strong steps to address personnel morale, stress and psychological trauma, as well as workload and workflow challenges impacting personnel.

IAS has identified in this report areas where the proposed actions of the risk assessment could require additional steps to properly address them.

Observation 10: Personnel

Personnel are working and living in a very challenging personal and professional environment caused by the full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Personnel continue to carry out their professional responsibilities amid air raid alerts and other security challenges that cause risk of personal harm and also delay implementation of work. The Country Office has previously engaged various professionals to provide mental health and well-being services to personnel. The Country Office has also had two retainer consultancy contracts for organizational planning and teamwork advisers to work with personnel to navigate this challenging working environment.

While conducting the audit fieldwork, IAS observed an organized and collegiate workplace in which colleagues appear to cooperate on inter-related projects and tasks. Personnel appeared aware of standards of conduct, ethics and the basics of fraud prevention and reporting. It appeared that the Country office had invested in personnel wellbeing through adjusted contract modalities, counselling, security and winter preparedness planning and training opportunities. There were also efforts to increase the transparency of the management decision-making process.

Management also took the step of converting all Service Contract positions to FTA/TA UN staff positions, providing personnel with more certainty regarding their employment, stability and better benefits and entitlements

The Country Office requested that the HR Division in headquarters to approve additional measures to support personnel in Ukraine consistent with what has been provided within the United Nations system in the country. This included an ad hoc lump sum payment to personnel in the event their property is destroyed and to provide additional support to personnel over the upcoming difficult winter months, as well as five days' special leave

for national personnel to address long travel times. The Country Office advocated for these measures also with the UNCT and obtained memos from the RC/HC approving these measures. Winterization related requests were also supported through business continuity protocols.

The HR Division compared actions taken by other UNCT members in Ukraine, noting that lump sum payments were not approved by some agencies, and that it was recommended personnel were provided with tangible support in the form of generators, heaters and other measures aligned with business continuity.

IAS advises the Country Office to continue the ongoing dialogue with headquarters and Regional Office about potential exceptional measures to Country Office personnel while also aligning with the agreed practices from the UNCT.

C. Operations

The Country Office Operations team is led by the Operations Manager based in Kyiv. The team also includes a Finance Analyst, a Procurement Analyst, a Procurement Associate, a Procurement Clerk, an HR Associate, an HR Assistant, an ICT Associate, an Administrative Associate, two Administrative Assistants and three drivers. The Security team consists of one Security Specialist and one Security Analyst who report directly to the Country Representative and Deputy Country Representative.

KEY OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Observation 11: Recruitment and management of consultants

Recruitment: IAS reviewed nine consultant recruitment processes, noting that four cases had less than the minimum required number of candidates in the short list (two instead of three) and one case involved direct contracting, where one candidate was directly engaged.

The Country Office informed IAS that this was due to difficulties in attracting candidates for consultancy positions in Ukraine, together with the highly specialized nature of the expertise and experience required for the roles. These consultants were hired to work closely with government partners on gender equality and women's empowerment topics, which require skills and knowledge that were said to be not readily available in the Ukrainian labour market. There is also competition from other international organizations. This situation is further exacerbated by the current wartime environment in Ukraine. In these instances, the Country Office decided to advance the recruitment process, sometimes with limited candidates for consideration. The Country Office noted that its usual practice is to extend vacancy announcements to ensure sufficient numbers of qualified candidate applications are received.

Consultant management: The Country Office engages consultants on UN Women contracts who work directly with partners, such as government ministries, to provide advice and support in the achievement of their objectives. The personnel are engaged by UN Women and are considered affiliate personnel over whom UN Women has supervisory capacity.

Some consultants may have other contracts or employment agreements with other entities. UN Women's Consultant Contract Policy states it is permissible for a consultant to be engaged by UN Women if the individual has a contract with another employer, provided there is no actual or perceived conflict of interest and performance of the required services for UN Women is feasible (for example, if both contracts involve a part-time work schedule or if the consultant will be working on a retainer or deliverables basis).

As per the Consultants Contract policy, in 2024 the Country Office vetted candidates before selection for feasibility of having multiple contracts and possible conflicts of interest if selected. An example of a possible conflict of interest would be engaging a candidate as UN Women personnel who also has employment with a government, or a UN Women partner that the candidate would like to continue during their UN Women engagement. The Country Office consulted the Ethics Advisor on how to mitigate and manage conflict of interest risk with respect to consultants.

IAS learned that the Country Office engaged a consultant who was supporting a government entity and was also working for another programme partner with whom UN Women has an agreement. This appeared to be a conflict of interest based on UN Women policy. Neither the audit team nor the Country Office were aware of any actual or suspected potential wrongdoing regarding this matter. However, IAS believes steps should be taken to address the actual or perceived conflict of interest.

The Country Office has also begun reflections on the sustainability of its support to government institutions through the allocation of expert consultants. In the war context, government partners seek human resources to meet their commitments to reform laws and policies. However, the allocation of consultants over several years should also be considered for its sustainability and the Country Office should look into exit strategies.

Recommendation 4 (Medium):

The Country Office continue to observe and comply with the UN Women Consultant Contract Policy, ensuring that consultancy candidates disclose any actual or perceived conflicts of interest and refrain from engaging consultants if conflicts are identified (or release them if they do not comply). Moreover, the Country Office should continue to assess issues of sustainability and possible exit strategies.

Observation 12: Processing timelines for requests to headquarters

Processing payroll errors: When the payroll process is run each month, sometimes the Quantum system raises payroll errors that prevent payments for certain positions from taking place. These errors are often related to mismatches between the original chart of accounts applied to the position and the current chart of accounts from which the current payroll is being paid.

In order to rectify these errors, the Country Office periodically requests that headquarters update the chart of accounts in Quantum for particular positions. IAS is aware of 11 such change requests submitted to headquarters via UN Women's Global Service Tracker.

The Country Office experienced delays in resolving these errors in a timely manner. For 9 of the 11 cases that are closed, the average time taken from raising these requests to closing them in the system was 95 days. The remaining two open cases have each remained open for 83 days. Such delays impact the timeliness of fund disbursement and the timeliness of recording financial delivery. They also require administrative resources to follow-up.

Some of the reasons provided for the delays included high workloads at Headquarters and some poor-quality submissions that required additional follow-up. There were also sometimes technical issues that required time to resolve including reversing payroll against expired awards.

The Budget Unit noted that errors can arise when the chart of accounts information in Quantum is not aligned across the Human Capital Management process and the Project Portfolio Management process. There are three control measures to ensure alignment. Project managers need to monitor for mismatches, using an exception report

downloaded by the 26th of each month (as per the Pre-Payroll Checklist). The payroll dashboard can also be used by the budget owner to proactively validate upcoming payroll charges. Lastly, the headquarters Budget unit conducts final monitoring through regional focal points, monitoring through data uploads.

In addition, the Budget Unit noted recent improvements to the Global Service Tracker for position management and payroll reversal including an ability to detect omissions from the online request form to ensure high quality submissions.

Responsibility for rectifying payroll related issues reported in the Global Service Tracker has been delegated to the Regional Office level in order to share workload, improve response times and familiarity with the submitting Offices.

IAS advises the headquarters Budget Unit to track the average time taken to address requests in the Global Service Tracker under their purview; establish reasonable standard timelines for addressing requests; and monitor performance against the timelines.

IAS advises the Ukraine Country Office to proactively manage payroll through monthly monitoring in line with the Pre-Payroll Checklist and use of the Payroll Dashboard as a tool for validating monthly payroll expenditure.

Fund disbursements and unapplied receipts: The Country Office receives payment tranches from funding sources in accordance with project agreements to deliver agreed interventions. The funds are received by headquarters and then need to be applied to the Country Office to utilize the funds. The funds application process sometimes takes a long time, which can reduce the timeliness of receipt which in turn can delay Country Office activities.

The Country Office maintained that headquarters can take 26 to 30 days to process these unapplied deposits. IAS noted six instances in which the Country Office requested funds deposits to be applied. The average processing time was 23 days.

The delays experienced in receiving funds could in turn delay the delivery of projects. Delayed receipt of funds could slow recruitment processing times and delay the engagement of programme partners. Programme partners may also experience delays in receipt of funds from UN Women which would have a similar impact on their own

delivery timelines. Stakeholder feedback confirmed this as an issue.

Financial Management noted that they monitor unapplied deposit requests of which there were around 900 in 2024. Financial Management has limited resources and has to consider various types of Country Office requests. Improvements are being considered as part of the adoption of updated accounting standards and the pivot to regions and countries. In the meantime, Financial Management are following up with Regional Offices to ensure sufficient capacity is in place to address requests.

IAS advises the headquarters Finance Department to continue implementation of the planned improvements to the revenue function and measure the impact on response times to Global Service Tracker requests.

IAS advises the Country Office to continue timely submission of requests related to unapplied deposits, giving as much advance notice to Financial Management as possible.

Observation 13: Cybersecurity compliance

In the Quarterly Business Review for Q3, 2024, the Country Office was listed as compliant in 10 of 12 dimensions of cybersecurity. The Country Office was listed as not compliant in terms of the completeness of the app and website inventory and use of a firewall. The Country Office also has a low level of compliance for completion of mandatory cybersecurity awareness training. Of 55 users (less than the 84 positions in the Country Office due to vacancies and part time consultants), only 65 per cent have passed the training course, with 32 per cent of users not having started the training as of October 2024.

The Country Office noted that there were some technical glitches affecting compliance certification submissions, which may explain the less than full compliance rates reported. The Country Office also noted that the Quantum system is not properly reflecting the cyber security training completion rate, which may be incorrectly recorded in the Quarterly Business Review.

The Country Office should continue to address the missing cybersecurity compliance requirements and/or report the updated compliance rates to the Regional Office for inclusion in the latest Quarterly Business Review.

Recommendation 5 (Medium):

III. RECOMMENDATIONS AND MANAGEMENT ACTION PLAN

Observation	Recommendation	Responsible Unit	Priority	Action Plan	Implementation date
Observation 3. Monitoring and reporting	Recommendation 1. The Country Office to enhance the Monitoring and Reporting (M&R) Function and framework by continuing to plan and resource adequate M&R capacity and developing and training key personnel (programme teams and partners) in results-focused M&R methodology (including indicators, workplan and budget).	UN Women Ukraine	Medium	The country office will continue to strengthen the Monitoring and Reporting function to make it more structured, robust and responsive to better manage for impact, while enhancing accountability to results more efficiently and effectively. In line with the operationalization of the new Strategic note for 2025-2026, the CO will develop an elaborate performance monitoring framework for the SN aligned to the corporate Monitoring and Reporting policy and procedures. The performance monitoring framework will further outline MER roles and responsibilities for the responsible staff and provide more clarity on MER functions at the project level and strategic SN level including managing donor specifications and expectations. An internal assessment of capacities of the staff to implement and operationalize the SN MER framework at different levels will be undertaken to ensure that the staff have the requisite skills, through trainings and including mentorship from the regional office. At the project level the corporate partner management procedures will be adopted to improve MER function and capacities of the partners.	31 December 2025
Observation 6. Use of waivers and fast-tracking procedure	Recommendation 2. The Country Office in consultation with the Executive Office and PPID to identify a time limit on the current waivers (and future requests) related to WPHF; reassess the risks associated with the waivers; and clearly document the circumstances for use and non/use of the waivers for WPHF programme partners. The Country Office should also continue to reassess whether use of other waivers is still applicable when resubmitting requests to the Regional Office and Headquarters in 2025.	UN Women Ukraine	Medium	The Country Office will continue working in consultation with the Regional Office, Executive Office, and PPID to establish clear time limits for current and future waivers and document the criteria for their use or non-use where applicable. Regular reviews will be conducted to determine the continued applicability of waivers, with justifications submitted to the Regional Office and Headquarters as needed. Additionally, the CO will maintain a monitoring mechanism to ensure ongoing oversight, compliance, and risk mitigation, aligning waiver use with organizational policies and best practices.	31 December 2025
Observation 8. Organizational structure	Recommendation 3. The Country Office to revise and clarify the reporting lines depicted in the organizational chart on the basis of the new Strategic Note 2025–2029.	UN Women Ukraine	Medium	The Country Office will consult internally and, based on the audit findings, revise and clarify the reporting lines in our organizational chart for the new SN 2025-29.	30 June 2025
Observation 11. Recruitment and management of consultants	Recommendation 4. The Country Office continue to observe and comply with the UN Women Consultant Contract Policy, ensuring that consultancy candidates disclose any actual or perceived conflicts of interest and refrain from engaging consultants if conflicts are identified (or release them if they do not comply). Moreover, the Country Office should continue to assess issues of sustainability and possible exit strategies.	UN Women Ukraine	Medium	The Country Office will continue to ensure full compliance with the UN Women Consultant Contract Policy by strengthening its review and due diligence processes for consultancy engagements. All candidates will be required to disclose any actual or perceived conflicts of interest during the selection process, with mandatory conflict of interest declarations integrated into recruitment procedures. The CO will enhance oversight by conducting periodic audits of consultant contracts and reinforcing accountability measures to prevent conflicts. Additionally, staff involved in hiring consultants will receive training on conflict-of-interest policies to ensure adherence, and any identified conflicts will be documented and addressed before contract issuance.	31 December 2025
Observation 13. Cybersecurity compliance	Recommendation 5. The Country Office should continue to address the missing cybersecurity compliance requirements and/or report the updated compliance rates to the Regional Office for inclusion in the latest Quarterly Business Review.	UN Women Ukraine	Medium	The Country Office complied with the relevant cybersecurity procedures and submitted the required information in a timely manner, as duly confirmed by the Regional Office ICT Security in his email previously shared with the auditors. Due to a technical glitch in the system, as detailed in the email from the Regional Office ICT Consultant, the issue was initially reported as a cybersecurity compliance concern. However, it has been clarified by the RO ICT Consultant that this was not the case. Moving forward, the CO will continue to ensure adherence to cybersecurity compliance requirements by maintaining regular communication with the Regional Office, conducting periodic security reviews, and updating internal processes as needed to align with UN Women’s ICT security policies.	31 January 2025 31 December 2025

Annex 1: DEFINITIONS OF AUDIT TERMS, RATINGS AND PRIORITIES

A. AUDIT RATINGS

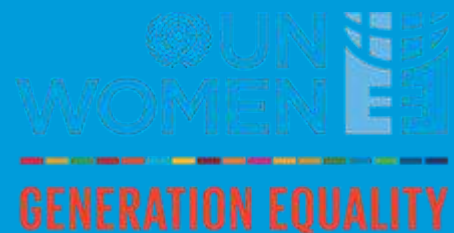
Satisfactory	The assessed governance arrangements, risk management practices and controls were adequately established and functioning well. Issues identified by the audit, if any, are unlikely to affect the achievement of the objectives of the audited entity/area.
Some Improvement Needed	The assessed governance arrangements, risk management practices and controls were generally established and functioning but need some improvement. Issues identified by the audit do not significantly affect the achievement of the objectives of the audited entity/area.
Major Improvement Needed	The assessed governance arrangements, risk management practices and controls were established and functioning, but need major improvement. Issues identified by the audit could significantly affect the achievement of the objectives of the audited entity/area.
Unsatisfactory	The assessed governance arrangements, risk management practices and controls were either not adequately established or not functioning well. Issues identified by the audit could seriously compromise the achievement of the objectives of the audited entity/area.

B. PRIORITIES OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

High (Critical)	Prompt action is required to ensure that UN Women is not exposed to high risks. Failure to take action could result in major negative consequences for UN Women.
Medium (Important)	Action is required to ensure that UN Women is not exposed to risks. Failure to take action could result in negative consequences for UN Women.
Low	Action is desirable and should result in enhanced control or better value for money. Low priority recommendations, if any, are dealt with by the audit team directly with the management of the audited entity/area, either during the exit meeting or through a separate memo subsequent to the fieldwork. Therefore, low priority recommendations are not included in this report.

UN WOMEN IS THE UN ORGANIZATION
DEDICATED TO GENDER EQUALITY AND THE
EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN. A GLOBAL
CHAMPION FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS, UN
WOMEN WAS ESTABLISHED TO ACCELERATE
PROGRESS ON MEETING THEIR NEEDS
WORLDWIDE.

UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to implement these standards. It stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on five priority areas: increasing women's leadership and participation; ending violence against women; engaging women in all aspects of peace and security processes; enhancing women's economic empowerment; and making gender equality central to national development planning and budgeting. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality.



220 East 42nd Street
New York, New York 10017, USA
Tel: 212-906-6400
Fax: 212-906-6705

www.unwomen.org
www.facebook.com/unwomen
www.twitter.com/un_women
www.youtube.com/unwomen
www.flickr.com/unwomen