



**AUDIT**

**OF**

**UNDP COUNTRY OFFICE**

**IN**

**PANAMA**

**Report No. 2417**  
**Issue Date: 10 January 2022**

## Report on the Audit of UNDP Panama Executive Summary

The UNDP Office of Audit and Investigations (OAI) conducted an audit of UNDP Panama (the Office) from 8 to 19 November 2021. The audit aimed to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of the governance, risk management and control processes relating to the following areas and sub-areas:

- (a) Governance
- (b) Development activities
- (c) Operations – procurement, finance, human resources, administrative services, information communication and technology (ICT)

The audit covered the activities of the Office from 1 January 2020 to 31 July 2021. The Office recorded programme and management expenses of approximately \$52.9 million. The last audit of the Office was conducted by OAI in 2016.

The audit was conducted in conformance with the *International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing*. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the audit was conducted remotely. Scope limitations due to the nature of the remote audit related to the following activities:

- (a) A review of original supporting documentation could not be carried out, and therefore the audit team relied on scanned copies of documents provided by the Office for all audit areas reviewed.
- (b) Meetings with Office staff and personnel were carried out virtually, which limited the audit team’s understanding of the Office’s working environment.
- (c) Project visits (location, site visits, meeting with counterparts/beneficiaries) were not conducted.
- (d) A physical verification of assets was not performed.
- (e) Safe contents and petty cash were not verified.
- (f) The information communication and technology area was not reviewed on-site.

### Overall audit rating

OAI assessed the Office’s performance as **satisfactory/some improvement needed**, which means “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.” This rating was mainly due to weaknesses in procurement planning, project management and inaccurate project budget information in Atlas.

**Key recommendations:** Total = **3**, high priority = **0**

The audit did not result in any high (critical) priority recommendations. There are three medium (important) priority recommendations, which means “Action is required to ensure that UNDP is not exposed to risks. Failure to take action could result in negative consequences for UNDP.”

The three recommendations aim to ensure the following:

Objectives	Recommendation No.	Priority Rating
Reliability and integrity of financial and operational information	1	Medium
Effectiveness and efficiency of operations	3	Medium
Compliance with legislative mandates, regulations and rules, policies and procedures	2	Medium




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**Management comments and action plan**

The Resident Representative accepted all three recommendations and is in the process of implementing them. Comments and/or additional information provided have been incorporated in the report, where appropriate.

Low risk issues (not included in this report) have been discussed directly with management and actions have been initiated to address them.

	Helge Ostveiten 2022.01.10 15:49:06 -05'00'
Helge S. Ostveiten Director Office of Audit and Investigations	