

The International Atomic Energy Agency

OIOS Charter

The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) was established in April 2001¹ by the Director General to strengthen the Agency's internal oversight services and its ability to ensure management efficiency and programme effectiveness and to enhance accountability.

OIOS consolidates the functions of internal oversight covering internal audit, programme evaluation, management services, and investigations under the authority and responsibility of the Director of OIOS (DIR-OIOS), who reports directly to the Director General.

This Charter - approved by the Director General and communicated to the Board of Governors - defines the functions, authority and responsibilities of OIOS and serves as the framework for all OIOS activities.

FUNCTIONS OF OIOS

1. OIOS assists the Agency in accomplishing its objectives by providing internal oversight services in the following functional areas:

- Internal Audit provides independent and objective assessments of the adequacy and effectiveness of the internal controls, risk management and governance processes. Internal audit recommendations are aimed to add value by enhancing the Agency's operations, promoting transparency and accountability.
- Programme Evaluation consists of an objective, independent and systematic examination of the extent to which a programme has achieved or is achieving, over time, its stated objective and, therefore, is meeting the needs and priorities of Member States. Programme evaluation assesses the efficiency, effectiveness, relevance, impact, and sustainability of programmatic policies, activities, services and functions.
- Management Services provides independent and objective advisory and consulting services to managers to help them to improve the Agency's programme performance and operations. To this end, management services use systematic application of knowledge, expertise and techniques to help managers to identify solutions and best practices and to find ways of adapting them in the areas under review.
- Investigation carries out special inquiries and investigations when there are indications that the Agency's regulations, rules, policies and pertinent administrative instructions may have been violated or where irregularities in activities may have come to light. The results of the preliminary inquiry and investigation are used to draw factual conclusions about the allegations and to help management use the findings to take corrective and remedial action to recover any losses and to prevent recurrence.

INDEPENDENCE AND OBJECTIVITY

2. OIOS reports directly to the Director General and all engagements are to be carried out free from managers' interference in determining the scope, in performing the work, and in reporting the results.

3. To ensure operational independence, DIR-OIOS has managerial responsibility and control over the human and financial resources of the Office while abiding by the Agency's rules and regulations.

4. In addition, in line with international standards and practices, and to foster transparency, the results of the work of OIOS are also shared with the Board of Governors.

5. OIOS shall be independent of the activities that are reviewed and therefore has no direct responsibility for, or authority over, any of the activities reviewed. OIOS shall not be used in the discharge of the Agency's operational or management functions outside its normal internal oversight functions. The reviews and appraisals conducted by OIOS do not in any way substitute or relieve management of the Agency of the responsibilities assigned to them.

6. OIOS should not direct the activities of any Agency staff member or consultant not engaged to work for OIOS, except in cases where such persons have been appropriately assigned to OIOS teams or to otherwise assist OIOS staff.

¹ Established by SEC/NOT/1868, 2001-05-24, effective 2 April 2001

7. The work of OIOS shall be conducted in accordance with relevant internationally accepted professional norms, standards and practices and must comply with the Agency's policies, regulations and rules.

8. The annual work plan shall be subject to the approval of the Director General. In addition to the annual work plan, DIR-OIOS may, either at the request of the Director General or on his/her own initiative, institute special audits, reviews, evaluations and investigations warranted by specific management requests or special circumstances.

AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITIES

9. OIOS shall:

- Discharge its responsibilities without any hindrance, unnecessary delays, and/or need for prior clearance.
- Receive direct and prompt access to all Agency staff, records, documents, premises and be provided with necessary information and explanations, as required.
- Conduct regular audits, reviews, and/or evaluations of programme and operational activities using risk-based criteria and ad hoc audits, reviews, and/or evaluations whenever there are indications that managerial and internal controls are not sufficiently effective and that objectives might not be attained and/or that resources might be wasted.
- Carry out the internal audit, programme evaluation and internal investigations for the whole Agency and conduct the requested management services in accordance with the responsibilities assigned by this Charter. However, to avoid duplication and ensure the efficiency of the audits and programme evaluations, OIOS shall coordinate its work plan with the External Auditor.
- Cooperate with internal audit, programme evaluation, internal investigations and management services of other UN system agencies, international organizations and external auditors with a view to harmonizing and exchanging information on relevant professional norms, standards, policies, procedures and implementation of best practices.

10. DIR-OIOS is responsible for ensuring that:

- Policies, procedures and practices are established and applied for all internal oversight activities.
- Internal oversight activities, carried out by his/her staff, including its consultants, are performed in accordance with this Charter and are consistent with the relevant professional norms, standards, recognized best practices and OIOS policies, practices and procedures.
- Engagement planning is risk based, aimed at achieving potential improvement or added value and is consistent with this Charter.
- OIOS operates efficiently and effectively and its services add value and improve the Agency's operations.
- The annual work plan is prepared and proposed to the Director General to ensure that the resources required for the internal oversight services are sufficient, appropriate, and effectively deployed to meet the expected outcomes.
- An annual report of OIOS activities and the implementation status of OIOS recommendations is prepared and submitted to the Director General.
- The Director General and appropriate senior management are promptly informed if and when substantive evidence indicates:
 - Significant failures and weaknesses in the Agency's internal control systems.
 - Known or suspected cases of a criminal nature involving Agency funds, property and/or staff members.
 - Information concerning potential damage to the Agency's reputation that has been found, including improprieties or misconduct reported and/or found during an engagement or investigation.

- Impairment to the independence or objectivity of OIOS in carrying out its engagement(s).

12. OIOS staff members must:

- Conduct themselves so that their good faith and integrity are not open to question.
- Exercise professional behaviour that is based upon relevant professional codes of ethics.
- Exercise honesty, objectivity, and due diligence in the performance of their duties and responsibilities.
- Refrain from entering into any activity which may impair their independent status in OIOS and/or the interests of the Agency which would prejudice their ability to carry out their duties objectively.
- Decline to accept fees or non-nominal gifts from consultants, suppliers, contractors, Member State counterparts and internal clients.
- Be prudent in the use of information acquired in the course of their duties and not use confidential information for any personal gain or in a manner that knowingly would be detrimental to the welfare of the Agency.
- Use reasonable care to obtain sufficient and factual evidence to support the conclusions drawn and, in reporting, reveal such material facts known to them which, if not revealed, could affect the credibility of the report.
- Continue to strive for improvement in the proficiency and effectiveness of their services.