
Reports of the Joint Inspection Unit

Report by the Director-General

1. In 2020, the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) of the United Nations system issued eight reports, one of which was not of direct relevance to, or did not call for any specific action from WHO,¹ and four of which had already been included in the 2020 report by the Secretariat.² The following 2020 reports were of relevance to WHO: Multilingualism in the United Nations system (document JIU/REP/2020/6); Blockchain applications in the United Nations system: towards a state of readiness (document JIU/REP/2020/7); and Review of mainstreaming environmental sustainability across organizations of the United Nations system (document JIU/REP/2020/8).

2. By the end of September 2021, JIU had issued three reports, one of which was not of direct relevance to WHO.³ Of relevance are: Review of United Nations system support for landlocked developing countries to implement the Vienna Programme of Action (document JIU/REP/2021/2); and Cybersecurity in the United Nations system organizations (document JIU/REP/2021/3).

3. The Secretariat's initial comments on recently launched JIU reports are included in consolidated United Nations agency comments in a document issued by the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) and are available on the JIU website's reports page under "comments".⁴

IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS IN PREVIOUS REPORTS

4. Paragraphs 5–22 below summarize progress made in implementing recommendations directed to executive heads of United Nations Organizations made in JIU reports issued during the period October 2020 to September 2021 that are of direct relevance to the Organization and call for specific action at this stage.

¹ Review of management and administration in the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (document JIU/REP/2020/4).

² Document EBPBAC34/5 includes the reports entitled Review of the state of the investigation function: progress made in the United Nations system organizations in strengthening the investigation function (document JIU/REP/2020/1); Policies and platforms in support of learning: towards more coherence, coordination and convergence (document JIU/REP/2020/2); United Nations common premises: current practices and future prospects (JIU/REP/2020/3); and Enterprise risk management: approaches and uses in United Nations system organizations (document JIU/REP/2020/5).

³ Review of management and administration in the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) (document JIU/REP/2021/1).

⁴ Look in the Comments column for "CEB Comments" for respective JIU Reports, available at <https://www.unjiu.org/content/reports> (accessed 11 April 2022).

Multilingualism in the United Nations system (document JIU/REP/2020/6)¹

5. With regard to JIU's recommendation 3 on introducing or enhancing policies for attracting new translators and interpreters and retaining talented and skilled language professionals, including the preparation of succession plans and outreach programmes by the end of 2022, the Secretariat considers this recommendation as oriented towards the United Nations, which has large teams. WHO has no in-house interpreters (except the Chief Interpreter) and only very small teams of translators. Vacant posts come up infrequently and in recent years WHO has experienced no difficulties in attracting new talent, nor have there been issues with talent retention. As such, it would not be cost-effective to put in place additional policies beyond those existing for all staff.

6. As regards JIU's recommendation 5, "The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should request the High-level Committee on Management (HLCM) of the CEB to establish a working group on the preparation for adoption, by the end of 2022, of a United Nations system language framework for language teaching, learning, assessment, and certification in the six official languages of the United Nations, which could be based, inter alia, on the results of the work already undertaken by the United Nations Secretariat in this area", the Secretariat notes that CEB action is beyond its management control. The Secretariat has actively participated in United Nations-wide forums and networks on multilingualism and will continue to do so.

7. Lastly, as regards JIU recommendation 6, "the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, should direct the High-level Committee on Management to develop a system-wide, comprehensive and coordinated approach to multilingualism as a core value of the United Nations system organizations", the Secretariat notes that CEB action is beyond its management control. The Secretariat has actively participated in United Nations-wide forums and networks on multilingualism and will continue to do so. Moreover, a United Nations-wide working group already exists, comprising the United Nations Coordinator for Multilingualism and a network of focal points across agencies, funds and programmes.

Blockchain applications in the United Nations system: towards a state of readiness (document JIU/REP/2020/7)²

8. Concerning JIU's recommendation 2 on ensuring that the examination of possible blockchain use cases will be based on assessments of project risks, including with respect to relevant organizational policies and regulations on privileges and immunities, data protection, confidentiality, cybersecurity, system integrity and reputation, WHO notes that whereas it is currently not using any blockchain applications, the Secretariat will continue to examine possible blockchain use cases in the future, taking into account the types of assessments mentioned in the recommendation.

9. In respect of JIU's recommendation 4 on ensuring that any decision on using blockchain should be based on an appropriate determination of the business case and of the most suitable solution, WHO is currently not using any blockchain applications and thus this recommendation is not relevant to WHO.

10. Regarding JIU's recommendation 8 on the adoption of a non-binding inter-agency blockchain governance framework for use by interested United Nations organizations, with a view to ensuring coherent and consistent blockchain approaches across the system by the end of 2022, WHO notes that

¹ Available at https://www.unjiu.org/sites/www.unjiu.org/files/jiu_rep_2020_6_english.pdf (accessed 11 April 2022).

² Available at https://www.unjiu.org/sites/www.unjiu.org/files/jiu_rep_2020_7_english.pdf (accessed 11 April 2022).

action on this recommendation depends on inter-agency mechanisms beyond its managerial control. WHO fully supports continuous collaboration with other United Nations agencies and the United Nations International Computing Centre to discuss the development and use of an inter-agency blockchain governance framework.

Review of mainstreaming environmental sustainability across organizations of the United Nations System (document JIU/REP/2020/8)¹

11. Regarding JIU's recommendation 1 on the development of an organization-wide policy for environmental sustainability in the areas of internal management functions by the end of 2022, the Secretariat is in the process of finalizing an Organization-wide carbon net zero strategy. The strategy will address environmental sustainability in the area of internal management functions and operations, and will set targets for greenhouse reduction to align with overall United Nations commitments to carbon neutrality.

12. Concerning JIU's recommendation 3 on devoting adequate resources to mainstreaming environmental sustainability in the Organization, including by better utilizing existing available resources, by the end of 2022, and to report on implementation to governing bodies from 2023, the Secretariat is implementing its biennial Programme budget 2022–2023 and will seek to identify required resources (see also recommendation 6) and maximize the use of existing resources.

13. On JIU's recommendation 4 on the incorporation of specific provisions for integrating environmental sustainability considerations into procurement policies, procedures, manuals and guidelines by end of 2022, the Secretariat is making progress. In February 2022, the WHO Procurement Policy was updated to include sustainable procurement as one of the Organization's five main procurement principles, including economic, environmental and social factors. The Organization will be working throughout 2022 to begin incorporating, where possible, sustainability criteria in its tendering processes, commencing with those to establish global long-term agreements, ensuring as a first step that the products on the WHO catalogue will become more sustainable.

14. In respect of JIU's recommendation 5, on ensuring that all recruitment and selection processes, as well as performance appraisal systems, incorporate and give adequate weight to environmental sustainability understanding and behaviours by the end of 2022, the Organization's Department of Human Resources and Talent Management will give consideration to applying these criteria only when relevant for the nature of the position concerned.

15. Concerning JIU's recommendation 6 on strengthening the coordination between headquarters and field agencies, as well as among field agencies, in pursuing measures to reduce the environmental impact of field presences, by the end of 2022, the Secretariat is developing a strategy/road map towards a carbon-neutral WHO by 2030, including environmental sustainability and carbon-reduction measures across the Organization. Resources are being identified to implement the strategy and data has been collected on building management to measure the carbon footprints of buildings, water/waste-water, catering services and fleet management at headquarters, as well as to set baselines and targets for reduction of CO₂.

16. On JIU's recommendation 7, with regard to making all conferences, events and meetings "paper smart", by the end of 2022, the Secretariat has implemented and maintains "paper smart" meetings of

¹ Available at https://www.unjiu.org/sites/www.unjiu.org/files/jiu_rep_2020_8_english.pdf (accessed 11 April 2022).

governing bodies at both headquarters and regional offices. This practice has been further expanded and implemented across the Organization in its day-to-day operations (headquarters and regional offices).

17. With regard to JIU's recommendation 8 on the development of a policy for incorporating provisions relating to environmental sustainability considerations into policies, procedures, manuals and guidelines, including through the relevant inter-agency mechanisms, by the end of 2022, the Secretariat notes that the COVID-19 pandemic provided an opportunity to improve on virtual meetings and hence substantially reduced meeting-related travels and the associated CO₂ emissions. This will continue to be the modus operandi post-pandemic, with new criteria implemented for approving in-person travel for meetings. A comprehensive policy is being developed to include all functional areas that contribute to the Organization's carbon footprint.

18. Concerning JIU's recommendation 9 on ensuring the compliance of information and communications technology services' actions and projects with environmental sustainability considerations, by the end of 2022, the Secretariat notes that this recommendation is similar to recommendation 1 (see paragraph 11 above), under which it is developing an Organization-wide carbon net zero strategy to address environmental sustainability within internal management functions, including information and communication technology services. The carbon-reduction strategy will align with overall United Nations commitments to carbon neutrality and set targets for reducing greenhouse gases across WHO operations.

19. Lastly, as regards JIU's recommendation 10 on making all official documentation, publications, brochures and communication and advocacy materials available online by the end of 2022, the Secretariat already currently makes all official documentation, publications, brochures and communication and advocacy materials available online, while departments responsible for communications and documentation are constantly working on the modernization of our communication and dissemination functions.

Review of United Nations system support for landlocked developing countries to implement the Vienna Programme of Action (document JIU/REP/2021/2)¹

20. With regard to JIU's recommendation 1 on the designation of an organizational focal point on landlocked developing countries with clear terms of reference defining the focal point's role and responsibilities in supporting implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries by the end of 2022, the Secretariat notes that the JIU report has already recognized that WHO has such a focal point in the Department of Country Strategy and Support (CSS) within the Director-General's Office. In addition to ensuring clear strategic direction to strengthen the substantive work of WHO at the country level, including for landlocked developing countries (LLDCs), CSS is the focal point for internal coordination with regional offices and the WHO Office at the United Nations regarding LLDCs.

21. Concerning JIU's recommendation 3 on the development of a clear results framework for support for LLDCs, the Secretariat notes that the core focal points of the Vienna Programme of Action are largely outside of the health sector. However, WHO has an active country office presence in all 32 LLDCs and supports countries in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. WHO's Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2023 provides the overarching results framework guiding the

¹ Available at https://www.unjiu.org/sites/www.unjiu.org/files/jiu_rep_2021_2_english.pdf (accessed 11 April 2022).

Organization and all country offices in all LLDCs. Details are provided in the biennial report on the WHO country presence in LLDCs.¹

Cybersecurity in the United Nations system organizations (document JIU/REP/2021/3)²

22. With regard to JIU's recommendation 1 on the preparation of a comprehensive report on the Organization's cybersecurity framework, the Secretariat notes that it has already submitted a comprehensive report on cybersecurity initiatives to the 148th session of the Executive Board in 2021,³ which included an update on the status of the Organization's cybersecurity initiatives and plans for future improvements. In addition, the report clearly indicated the need for further investment in cybersecurity to lower the current organizational risk.

ACCEPTANCE AND IMPLEMENTATION RATES OF JIU RECOMMENDATIONS

23. WHO continues to ensure that it follows up on all relevant JIU recommendations. The graphics in the Annex to this report show the rates of acceptance and implementation for recommendations made between 2017 and 2021. In addition, WHO annually posts a document on the Organization's Evaluation web page with implementation updates for all JIU reviews issued in the past five years.⁴

24. At its 149th session, the Executive Board recommended that the Secretariat "work within the High-level Committee on Management to respond to recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit related to interagency mobility, including those on misconduct and rehiring".⁵ The Secretariat notes that, as part of WHO's significant work in addressing prevention and response to sexual exploitation abuse and harassment, addressing misconduct and abuse of power, it has applied processes and procedures that are fully aligned with and engages in the United Nations ClearCheck programme to screen all relevant staff, including for inter-agency loans, transfers and secondments. WHO equally contributes information into the system and has also joined the United Nations OneHR initiative to further enhance cross-United Nations synergies. The report of the Director-General to the Seventy-fifth World Health Assembly on prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment provides more detail on institutional changes and capacity strengthening measures. It should be noted that for a number of recommendations included in this JIU report, implementation is beyond WHO's managerial control and rests with the CEB or the HLCM. In such cases, the Secretariat is and will continue to be actively engaged.

25. The Board also requested the Secretariat to "pay special attention to implement the recommendations of reports of the Joint Inspection Unit, including but not limited to, those on investigative functions and enterprise risk management, and ensure that progress is made and reported

¹ WHO Country presence in landlocked developing countries (LLDCs), 2021, available at <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/344423> (accessed 11 April 2022).

² Available at https://www.unjiu.org/sites/www.unjiu.org/files/jiu_rep_2021_3_english.pdf (accessed 11 April 2022).

³ Document EB148/30, available at https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/EB148/B148_30-en.pdf (accessed 11 April 2022) and document EB148/5, paragraphs 7, 9 and 32 to 34, available at https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/EB148/B148_5-en.pdf (accessed 11 April 2022).

⁴ Available at <https://www.who.int/about/what-we-do/evaluation/resources/facilitation-of-external-reviews-and-assessments> (accessed 11 April 2022).

⁵ See document EB 149/2, paragraph 25(a), available at https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/EB149/B149_2-en.pdf (accessed 11 April 2022).

by the next meeting of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board”.¹ Regarding the investigation function, the Secretariat is in the process of updating its investigation policy with the objective of completing it in 2022, which is informed by the current review of the investigations function and the results of the Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee’s deliberations. In the area of risk management, the Secretariat conducted an internal comprehensive review of risk management policies and processes, internal controls and compliance, in the framework of the United Nations Risk Management Maturity Model, which is informing new risk management and compliance strategies and tools to strengthen WHO’s global assurance mechanisms through more integrated monitoring and compliance activities. In addition, the Secretariat is defining and operationalizing a new WHO risk appetite framework that will provide solid ground for greater alignment and coordination in managing risks across WHO programmes, including health emergencies. It has developed a new risk assessment and mitigation tool for sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment that is being implemented now.

26. At the thirtieth meeting of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee,² the Committee requested the Secretariat to implement recommendation 1 of the JIU 2018 report on whistle-blowing³ whereby “all policies related to misconduct/wrongdoing and retaliation specify appropriate channels and modalities, such as independent oversight committees, for reporting and investigating allegations against the executive head of the organization”. At its 149th session, the Executive Board requested the Secretariat to “facilitate any necessary governing body action to ensure that the Organization is on track to implement recommendation 7 of document JIU/REP/2020/1 regarding development and adoption of appropriate formal procedures for the investigation of complaints of misconduct by executive heads within the timeframe requested by the Joint Inspection Unit”.⁴ Subsequently, at its 150th session, the Executive Board adopted⁵ the revised terms of reference of the Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee, including a provision whereby “[t]he specific responsibilities of the Committee include, reviewing ... matters for WHO as a whole, and providing advice on them to the Executive Board through the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee”, including on “(i) Allegations of inappropriate activity: the process for handling and investigating significant allegations, including allegations against the Director-General”.⁶ Accordingly, the Independent Expert Advisory Committee has started discussing, and will advise on, potential means for investigating allegations against the Director-General.⁷

27. At its thirty-second meeting, the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee proposed that the Secretariat should add further detail on progress made in implementation of recommendations

¹ See document EB 149/2, paragraph 25(b), available at https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/EB149/B149_2-en.pdf (accessed 11 April 2022).

² See document EB145/2, available at https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/EB145/B145_2-en.pdf (accessed 11 April 2022) and EB/147/2, available at https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/EB147/B147_2-en.pdf (accessed 11 April 2022).

³ Available at https://www.unjiu.org/sites/www.unjiu.org/files/jiu_rep_2018_4_english_0.pdf (accessed April 2022).

⁴ See document EB149/2, paragraph 25(c), available at https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/EB149/B149_2-en.pdf (accessed 11 April 2022).

⁵ See decision EB150(16), available at [https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/EB150/B150\(16\)-en.pdf](https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/EB150/B150(16)-en.pdf) (accessed 11 April 2022).

⁶ Document EB150/5, Annex, in particular paragraph 4 (i), available at https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/EB150/B150_5-en.pdf (accessed 11 April 2022).

⁷ See document EBPBAC36/2.

made in previous JIU reports.¹ In the past year, WHO has continued to make good progress in implementing recommendations in JIU reports issued between 2017 and 2021, with an overall recommendation “fully implemented” percentage of 62%,² which is near the overall implementation rate of 66% for all United Nations agencies. It should be noted that implementation rates are always lower for recently issued reports. During the same period, WHO’s acceptance of JIU recommendations remained high at 83%, compared to the United Nations agency average of 66%. In addition, WHO has fully implemented and closed nine JIU reports issued between 2014 and 2020.

ACTION BY LEGISLATIVE/GOVERNING BODIES

28. The following recommendations of JIU reports, issued during the period October 2020 to December 2021, are directed at the legislative/governing bodies.

Multilingualism in the United Nations system (document JIU/REP/2020/6)

29. JIU’s recommendation 1 proposed that the legislative or governing bodies of the United Nations system organizations should request the executive heads of their respective organizations that have not yet done so to prepare a strategic policy framework for multilingualism, accompanied by administrative and operational guidelines for its implementation, and to submit this for adoption by the end of 2022. The Secretariat notes that the JIU report had already recognized that WHO had implemented this recommendation.³

30. JIU’s recommendation 2 proposed that the legislative or governing bodies of the United Nations system organizations should request the executive heads of their respective organizations that have not yet done so, to appoint, by the end of 2022, a senior official as a coordinator or focal point for multilingualism, with clearly defined responsibilities and delegated authority, tasked with the coordination of the implementation of the strategic policy framework for multilingualism across their respective organizations. The Secretariat continues to hold this recommendation under consideration.

31. JIU’s recommendation 4 proposed that the legislative or governing bodies of the United Nations system organizations should request the executive heads of their respective organizations that have not yet done so, to introduce, by the end of 2022, learning policies that encourage continuous learning and improvement of the language skills of their staff members in the official languages of the respective organizations as well as in other languages, as appropriate, securing sufficient funding for this. The Secretariat has implemented a broad-based Global Language Learning Programme, which, in addition to contributing to this JIU report, was formally evaluated in 2018⁴ and for which a management response has been completed. In addition to implementing many actions for the six United Nations official languages and the other two recognized languages in WHO (German and Portuguese), activities for other languages are under consideration.

¹ See document EB147/2, paragraph 24, available at https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/EB147/B147_2-en.pdf (accessed April 2022).

² The WHO percentage of fully implemented recommendations from 2016 JIU reports is 95%; from 2017 reports is 92%; from 2018 reports is 62%; from 2019 reports is 61%; and from 2020 reports is 35%.

³ See document JIU/REP/2020/6, paragraph 38, available at https://www.unjiu.org/sites/www.unjiu.org/files/jiu_rep_2020_6_english.pdf (accessed 11 April 2022). See also World Health Assembly resolution WHA71.15, available at https://apps.who.int/gb/or/e/e_wha71r1.html (accessed 11 April 2022).

⁴ Available at <https://www.who.int/about/what-we-do/evaluation/decentralized-evaluations/thematic-evaluations> (accessed 11 April 2022).

Blockchain applications in the United Nations system: towards a state of readiness (document JIU/REP/2020/7)

32. JIU's recommendation 1 proposed that the governing bodies of the United Nations system organizations should ensure that, when applicable, the use of blockchain applications will be integrated, together with other digital technologies, into the innovation strategies and policies adopted by their respective organizations. The Secretariat notes that this is already part of the WHO Global Strategy on Digital Health.

33. JIU's recommendation 6 proposed that the governing bodies of the United Nations system organizations should encourage Member States to engage with the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law in its exploratory and preparatory work on legal issues that relate to blockchain in the broader context of the digital economy and digital trade, including on dispute resolution, which is aimed at reducing legal insecurity in that field. The Secretariat notes that this recommendation is meant for Member States through the governing bodies, not for WHO as a Secretariat.

Review of mainstreaming environmental sustainability across organizations of the United Nations System (document JIU/REP/2020/8)

34. JIU's recommendation 2 proposed that the legislative organs and governing bodies of the United Nations system organizations that have not yet done so should, by the end of 2022, direct the executive heads to embed environmental sustainability considerations into the management of their organizations and request them to include in the annual report on the work of the organization the results of efforts to mainstream environmental sustainability in the internal management functions of the organization. The Secretariat notes that it is finalizing plans to develop an Organization-wide carbon net zero strategy by 2030 that will mainstream environmental sustainability in the organization.

Review of United Nations system support for landlocked developing countries to implement the Vienna Programme of Action (document JIU/REP/2021/2)

35. JIU's recommendation 7 proposed that the legislative organs and governing bodies of United Nations system organizations should issue directives, if they have not already done so, by the end of 2022, for their organizations to mainstream the priorities of the programme of action for landlocked developing countries that are pertinent to their mandated work and request that their organizations report periodically on its implementation. WHO reports biennially to the World Health Assembly on its presence in countries, territories and areas¹ and publishes such reports,² and it also reports on its country presence specifically in LLDCs (see paragraph 21 above).

Cybersecurity in the United Nations system organizations (document JIU/REP/2021/3)

36. JIU's recommendation 2 proposed that the legislative and governing bodies of the United Nations system organizations should consider the reports on the elements contributing to improved cyber-resilience prepared by the executive heads and provide strategic guidance on further

¹ See document A74/INF./3, available at https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/WHA74/A74_INF3-en.pdf (accessed 11 April 2022).

² WHO presence in countries, territories and areas: 2021 Report, available at <https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/341308/9789240026360-eng.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y> (accessed 11 April 2022).

improvements to be implemented in their respective organizations, as necessary. The Secretariat notes that it has developed an information document entitled “Business case for cybersecurity investment”, which describes recommended cybersecurity recurring costs, for submission to the Seventy-fifth World Health Assembly.

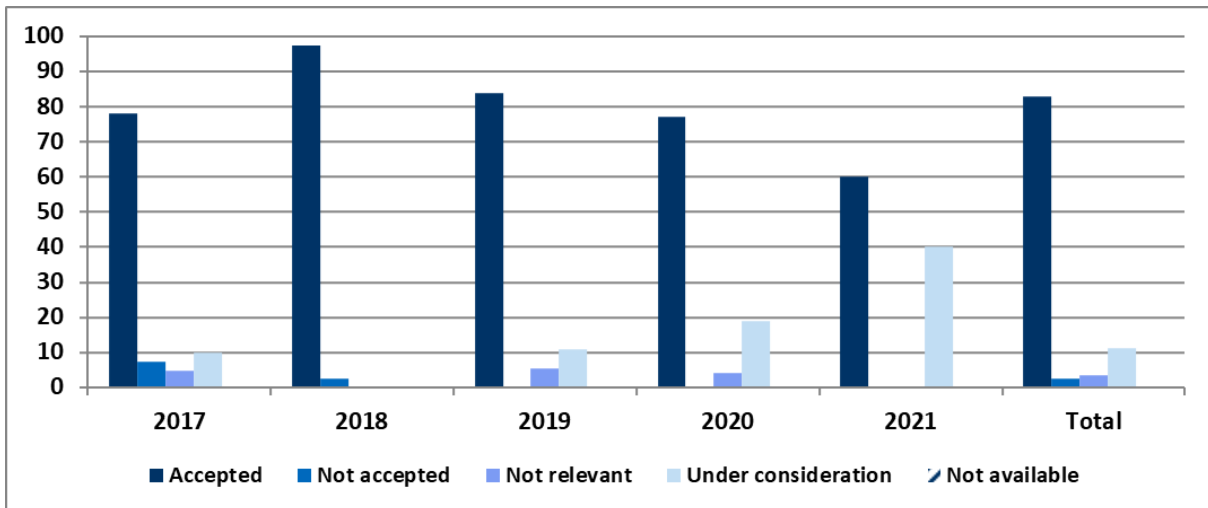
ACTION BY THE PROGRAMME, BUDGET AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

37. The Committee is invited to take note of this report and to consider the recommendations contained in the JIU reports requiring action by WHO’s legislative/governing bodies.

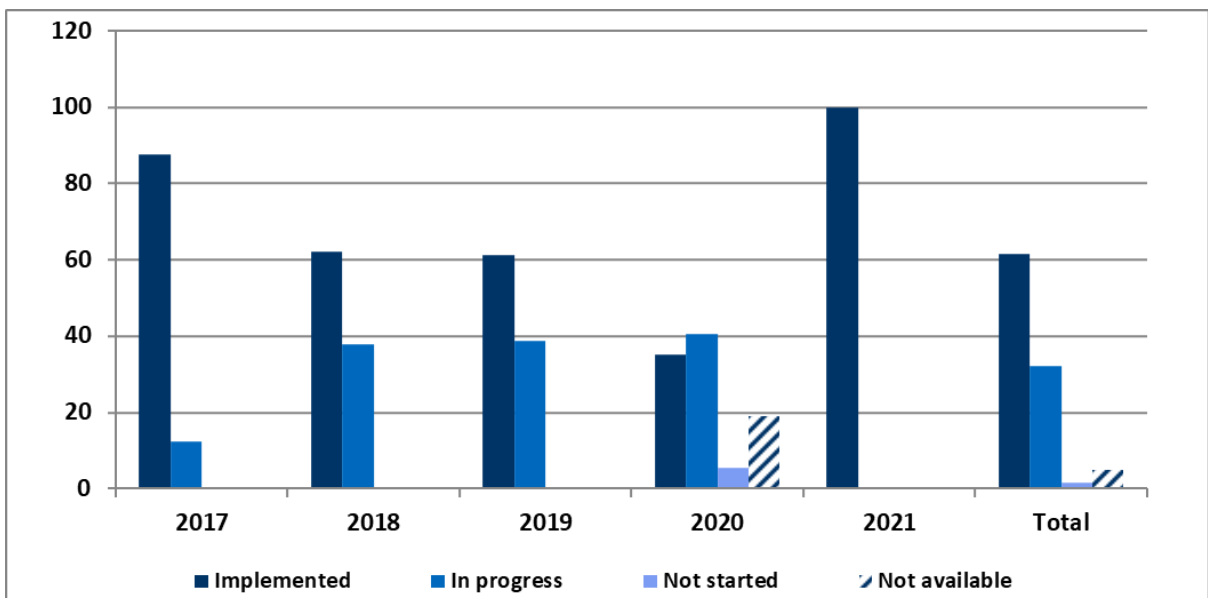
ANNEX

RATES OF ACCEPTANCE AND IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS BY PERIOD (PERCENTAGE)¹

Acceptance



Implementation



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¹ Information extracted from the JIU web-based tracking system (accessed 4 April 2022).