
Reports of the Joint Inspection Unit

Report by the Director-General

1. In 2018, the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) of the United Nations system issued seven reports, two of which were not of direct relevance to or did not call for any specific action from WHO,¹ and two of which had already been included in the 2018 report by the Secretariat.² The following 2018 reports were of relevance to WHO: Opportunities to improve efficiency and effectiveness in administrative support services by enhancing inter-agency cooperation (document JIU/REP/2018/5); Enhancing accessibility for persons with disabilities to conferences and meetings of the United Nations system (document JIU/REP/2018/6); and Strengthening policy research uptake in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (document JIU/REP/2018/7).

2. By September 2019, JIU had issued five reports, one of which was not of direct relevance to WHO.³ Of relevance are the Review of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (document JIU/REP/2019/2); Review of the integration of disaster risk reduction in the work of United Nations system in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (document JIU/REP/2019/3); Review of change management in United Nations system organizations (document JIU/REP/2019/4); and Review of audit and oversight committees in the United Nations system (document JIU/REP/2019/6).

3. The Secretariat's comments to the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) on the JIU reports are summarized in reports available on the JIU website (www.unjiu.org).

IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS IN PREVIOUS REPORTS

4. Paragraphs 5–27 below summarize progress made in implementing the recommendations to executive heads of United Nations Organizations made in JIU reports issued during the period

¹ Progress report on the recommendations contained in the review of South–South and triangular cooperation in the United Nations system (document JIU/REP/2018/2); and Review of management and administration in the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) (document JIU/REP/2018/3).

² Document EBPBAC30/4 includes the reports entitled Review of internship programmes in the United Nations system (document JIU/REP/2018/1); and Review of whistle-blower policies and practices in United Nations system organizations (document JIU/REP/2018/4).

³ Review of management and administration in the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) (document JIU/REP/2019/1).

October 2018 to September 2019 that are of direct relevance to the Organization and call for specific action at this stage.

Opportunities to improve efficiency and effectiveness in administrative support services by enhancing inter-agency cooperation (document JIU/REP/2018/5)¹

5. With regard to JIU's recommendation 1 on enhancing existing systems or implementing new ones to accurately identify resources devoted to administrative support services, WHO has been using the United Nations system data cube standards since 2019. It reported on 2018 data as requested by the CEB and is in the process of enhancing its current reporting for 2019 data.

6. JIU's recommendation 6 on refocusing the common business operations of United Nations country teams is superseded by United Nations General Assembly resolution 72/279. As a member of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group, WHO contributes to the implementation of the United Nations development system reform, including with respect to common premises and common back-offices.

7. As regards JIU's recommendation 7 on the development of a specific proposal that defines how to apply mutual recognition as a vehicle for capacity consolidation, so as to reduce redundancy and rationalize physical presence, WHO signed the Mutual Recognition Statement in December 2018. WHO also contributes to further work in this regard through participation in the Business Innovations Strategic Results Group of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group.

8. Lastly, as regards JIU's recommendation 10 on the constitution of a shared services board to develop the business case for and operational design of global shared services, WHO continues to be engaged in the United Nations reform initiatives at various levels and in various forums, including the Business Innovations Strategic Results Group of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group.

Enhancing accessibility for persons with disabilities to conferences and meetings of the United Nations system (document JIU/REP/2018/6)²

9. WHO has started to work on a disability policy to implement the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy at all three levels of the Organization. This policy will address the recommendations of the above JIU report and is scheduled to be launched on the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, 3 December 2020. In addition, a first report on the implementation of the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy will be submitted to the office of the United Nations Under-Secretary-General in April 2020.

10. With particular regard to JIU's recommendation 5 on accessibility requirements, WHO has already implemented a mechanism whereby visitors to meetings can specify if they would need special assistance in the event of an evacuation.

¹ Available at https://www.unjiu.org/sites/www.unjiu.org/files/jiu_rep_2018_5_english_0.pdf (accessed 21 February 2020).

² Available at https://www.unjiu.org/sites/www.unjiu.org/files/jiu_rep_2018_6_english_0.pdf (accessed 21 February 2020).

11. In respect of JIU's recommendation 9 on the development of a common system-wide training module on disability inclusion and accessibility for personnel involved directly or indirectly in the servicing of conferences and meetings, WHO would be happy to support this initiative.

Strengthening policy research uptake in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (document JIU/REP/2018/7)¹

12. Concerning JIU's recommendation 2 on the establishment of a means to report on the cost of research activities, starting in 2020 WHO's workplans include a classification for research activities which enables a costing of such activities at the three levels of the Organization.

13. In respect of JIU's recommendation 4 concerning periodic assessments of specific research needs and potential suppliers of research products and associated costs, WHO's Programme budget 2020–2021 includes an output (4.1.3) that specifies improving research capacities, promoting and coordinating research priorities, and ensuring that quality evidence informs policy and practice. WHO's newly established Science Division includes a Department of Research for Health, which has units explicitly tasked with providing research support, guiding research prioritization and promoting evidence to policy. In addition, the Department of Quality Assurance of Norms and Standards within the Science Division provides quality assurance of normative guidelines issued by WHO, including best-in-class requirements for systematic reviews to inform those guidelines.

14. On JIU's recommendation 6 with regard to the establishment of a system-wide policy on open data access, WHO is ready to participate in a system-wide data-sharing policy.

15. With regard to JIU's recommendation 7 on the involvement of researchers from the South and the adoption of policies and frameworks to stimulate capacity-building for all dimensions of the policy research functions, the UNICEF/UNDP/World Bank/WHO Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases has an explicit mandate to strengthen capacities of low- and middle-income countries to conduct research and use research evidence while setting policies and strategies. It tracks the adoption of the research it funds by country as well as the proportion of funding that goes to low- and middle-income countries. In addition, the Special Programme tracks all research from its Structured Operational Research Training initiative after 18 months to assess the level of adoption by countries to change practice. The UNDP/UNFPA/UNICEF/WHO/World Bank Special Programme of Research, Development and Research Training in Human Reproduction supports and coordinates research on a global scale, synthesizes research through systematic reviews of literature, builds research capacity in low-income countries and develops dissemination tools to make efficient use of ever-increasing research information.

16. As regards JIU's recommendation 8 on migration-related research projects, the UNICEF/UNDP/World Bank/WHO Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases, the UNDP/UNFPA/UNICEF/WHO/World Bank Special Programme of Research, Development and Research Training in Human Reproduction and the Alliance for Health Policy and Systems Research have funded 12 research projects on sexual and reproductive health and rights, infectious diseases of poverty and the health systems response linked to the current mass migration in the Americas. As a member of the United Nations Network on Migration, WHO participated in health-related workstreams of the Network and co-leads the workstream on access to services for

¹ Available at https://www.unjiu.org/sites/www.unjiu.org/files/jiu_rep_2018_7_english_0.pdf (accessed 21 February 2020).

migrants, developed with the aim of collecting good practices, identifying gaps and priority areas and developing operational guidance by July 2020.

17. Lastly, as regards JIU's recommendation 12 on partnerships with academic communities at the global, regional and national levels, WHO collaborating centres are institutions, such as research institutes, parts of universities or academies, designated by the Director-General, that have a formal mechanism of collaboration with WHO. Currently there are more than 800 WHO collaborating centres in more than 90 countries, of which 361 are conducting research with and for WHO.

Review of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (document JIU/REP/2019/2)¹

18. With regard to JIU's recommendation 1 on the regular assessment of quality assurance mechanisms to ensure the accuracy of ratings by indicator under the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, this work is in progress. For the 2019 report, in an effort to improve the quality of reporting, WHO recruited an external expert to build staff capacity for reporting on indicators, appropriately supported by evidence, by conducting clinics with the staff responsible for reporting on the 17 performance indicators.

19. Concerning JIU's recommendation 2 on a comprehensive review by the members of the CEB of the results achieved following the implementation of the first phase of the Action Plan, WHO coordinates with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) to provide, at their request, input on gender-related issues for the agenda of meetings of the CEB.

20. Lastly, as regards JIU's recommendation 5 on an independent assessment of effective progress towards gender mainstreaming to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women within their organization, the Organization-wide evaluation workplan for 2020–2021, approved by the 146th session of the Executive Board in February 2020,² includes an evaluation of the integration of gender, equity and human rights in the work of the Organization.³

Review of the integration of disaster risk reduction in the work of United Nations system in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (document JIU/REP/2019/3)⁴

21. With regard to JIU's recommendation 2 on the systematic inclusion of disaster risk reduction as part of the common strategic plans of the country teams in the new generation of United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks, WHO welcomes this recommendation. Protection from health emergencies is one of three key pillars of WHO's Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2023 and WHO is incorporating a stronger focus on risk assessments in its country support plans and operational planning, as well in joint approaches across health emergency, health systems, environmental health and other programmes in countries at high risk of emergencies, fragility and/or conflict. WHO's reporting to its governing bodies on operational activities to reduce risks and

¹ Available at https://www.unjiu.org/sites/www.unjiu.org/files/jiu_rep_2019_2_english_0.pdf (accessed 21 February 2020).

² See the summary records of the Executive Board at its 146th session, third meeting, section 3.

³ See also document EB146/3, paragraph 59.

⁴ Available at https://www.unjiu.org/sites/www.unjiu.org/files/jiu_rep_2019_3_en.pdf (accessed 21 February 2019).

consequences of emergencies has increased the visibility of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the United Nations Plan of Action on Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience with the aim of demonstrating and expanding their relevance to many programmes in WHO.

22. Concerning JIU's recommendation 3 on ensuring dedicated capacity to implement risk-informed development activities in United Nations country teams, this recommendation is aligned with the main thrust of the Thirteenth General Programme of Work to focus on improved results at country level. The Thirteenth General Programme of Work is also designed to increase investment in WHO programmes to protect people's health from emergencies. Through a stronger focus on research, innovation and analytics (for example, through the WHO Thematic Platform for Health Emergency and Disaster Risk Management Research Network, the research and development blueprint, the Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Framework, and the establishment of the Office of the Chief Scientist and Science Division) WHO is strengthening the evidence base for the investment in health emergency and disaster risk management as part of wider scientific enterprise.

Review of change management in United Nations system organizations (document JIU/REP/2019/4)¹

23. With regard to JIU's recommendation 2 on embedding structured and comprehensive change management approaches in ongoing and future organizational reforms and reporting thereon to the governing/legislative bodies, the Secretariat recognizes the central importance of change management to organizational reforms and has integrated it into all aspects of its transformation agenda. Member States are regularly provided with transformation updates, including as part of governing bodies meetings. During the 146th session of the Executive Board, specific attention was given to change management topics in multiple agenda items, including the report by the Director-General, the human resources update, the report of the Ombudsman and the statement by the representative of the WHO staff associations.

24. As regards JIU's recommendation 3 on the development and standardization of organizational staff surveys across the United Nations system, WHO has employed staff surveys as both pre-engagement/diagnostic and monitoring/learning tools in its reform and transformation efforts. WHO will consider the use of common United Nations staff surveys where applicable and relevant to its transformation needs and context and is ready to share its experiences with other agencies.

25. On JIU's recommendation 4 with regard to ensuring that resources allocated to change management are clearly earmarked and the intended results are measured, tracked and evaluated, WHO's approach has been to integrate and embed change management support into its transformation projects and initiatives in order to ensure that change management activities are fully mainstreamed into implementation efforts. Implementation monitoring is ongoing and the Organization-wide evaluation workplan for 2020–2021, approved by the Executive Board at its 146th session in February 2020,² includes an evaluation of the WHO transformation agenda.

26. With regard to JIU's recommendation 5 on giving greater prominence to the role that strategic human resources management functions play in organizational change management, the Secretariat notes that shifting the human resources function from a transactional to a strategic, asset management focus requires further investment in human resources, including to build change management expertise

¹ Available at https://www.unjiu.org/sites/www.unjiu.org/files/jiu_rep_2019_4_english.pdf (accessed 21 February 2019).

² See the summary records of the Executive Board at its 146th session, third meeting, section 3.

into this function for the purposes outlined in the recommendation. Over the course of 2019, WHO realigned its headquarters office with its new Organization-wide operating model. As part of this effort, WHO substantially redesigned, reconfigured and recapacitated its corporate Human Resources function to increase this strategic capacity.

27. As regards JIU's recommendation 6 on including an item on the agenda of the next meeting of the High-level Committee on Management of the CEB to consider how to support the United Nations Laboratory for Organizational Change and Knowledge to play a greater role in United Nations system reforms, WHO recognizes the value of having a shared resource and community of practice on change management within the United Nations system and continues to engage informally with the United Nations Laboratory for Organizational Change and Knowledge. Further experience and evidence of the effectiveness of the network's change model would be required in order to endorse a proposal that the network play a greater role in United Nations system reforms.

ACCEPTANCE AND IMPLEMENTATION RATES OF JIU RECOMMENDATIONS

28. 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 2016 and 2019.

ACTION BY LEGISLATIVE/GOVERNING BODIES

29. The following recommendations of JIU reports, issued during the period October 2018 to September 2019, are directed at the legislative/governing bodies.

Opportunities to improve efficiency and effectiveness in administrative support services by enhancing inter-agency cooperation (document JIU/REP/2018/5)

30. JIU's recommendation 2 proposed that legislative bodies should request executive heads to develop performance indicators and targets to drive improvements in the delivery of administrative support services, and to post performance publicly. The Secretariat notes that WHO's Global Service Centre regularly provides status reports to senior management on administrative support services targets. In addition, through its International Aid Transparency Initiative web portal, WHO regularly provides information on its programme of work, available and projected funds, financial flows and results achieved. However, a proper comparison among organizations is dependent on standardized performance indicators and targets among all agencies of the United Nations system, as well as harmonized measurement of performance.

Enhancing accessibility for persons with disabilities to conferences and meetings of the United Nations system (document JIU/REP/2018/6)

31. JIU's recommendation 10 proposed that the legislative bodies of United Nations system organizations should include in their agendas the review of periodic reports submitted to them on the state of accessibility of conference and meeting facilities and services for persons with disabilities, including the state of progress of actions to address accessibility deficits. The Secretariat notes that this is current practice in WHO.

Strengthening policy research uptake in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (document JIU/REP/2018/7)

32. JIU's recommendation 9 proposed that the governing bodies of United Nations system organizations should take measures to ensure that commitments to interagency collaboration, including through the establishment of a global data knowledge platform and the facilitation of academic exchanges, as stipulated in the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, are implemented by the end of 2020. WHO is actively engaged in the core Workstream 1.2 of the UN Network on Migration, which aims to establish a Connection Hub and Global Knowledge Platform, two critical components of the capacity building mechanism in the United Nations that supports efforts of Member States to implement the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

Review of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (document JIU/REP/2019/2)

33. JIU's recommendation 4 proposed that the legislative and governing bodies of the United Nations system organizations should review the UN-Women annual letter addressed to the executive management, accompanied by indications of strategies and measures envisioned by the executive heads to be undertaken to improve compliance with the indicators included in the System-wide Action Plan and their expected contribution to gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Review of the integration of disaster risk reduction in the work of United Nations system in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (document JIU/REP/2019/3)

34. JIU's recommendation 1 proposed that the governing bodies of the organizations of the United Nations system should request the secretariats of their organizations to present a map of interlinkages between the core mandate of their organizations and disaster risk reduction and report on the progress made on disaster risk reduction accordingly, using the specific guidance provided by the "Results Framework of the United Nations Plan of Action on Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience – guidance for monitoring and reporting on the progress of the implementation of the United Nations Plan for Action on disaster risk reduction". The Secretariat notes that it is developing tools that will enable more systematic mapping of activities in WHO (and the health sector) to implement disaster risk reduction as described in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the United Nations Plan of Action on Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience, the International Health Regulations (2005) and other related frameworks. WHO supports the decision of the United Nations Senior Leadership Group on Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience meeting in July 2019 to review the Results Framework; a simpler and more systematic approach to reporting across WHO and the United Nations system as a whole is required to improve the coverage and quality of response, especially at country level.

Review of change management in United Nations system organizations (document JIU/REP/2019/4)

35. JIU's recommendation 1 encouraged governing/legislative bodies to ensure that executive heads embed change management approaches and methods in their organizational reforms and report on the results. The Secretariat notes that change management has been integrated into all aspects of its transformation agenda and that Member States are regularly provided with transformation updates, including as part of governing bodies meetings.

Review of audit/oversight committees in the United Nations system (document JIU/REP/2019/6)¹

36. JIU's recommendation 2 proposed that legislative and/or governing bodies of the United Nations system organizations that have not already done so should ensure that the terms of reference or charter of the audit and oversight committees of their respective organizations are revised to reflect all the internal oversight functions that are part of the responsibilities and activities of the committee, where applicable, by the end of 2021. The Secretariat notes that this is already part of the terms of reference of the Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee.

37. JIU's recommendation 3 proposed that the legislative and/or governing bodies of the United Nations system organizations that have not already done so should ensure that provisions regarding the internal control framework and risk management are included in the terms of reference or charter of their respective audit and oversight committees by the end of 2021 in order to ensure that due attention is paid to addressing internal control weaknesses and emerging risks. The Secretariat notes that this is already part of the terms of reference of the Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee.

38. JIU's recommendation 4 proposed that the legislative and/or governing bodies of the United Nations system organizations that have not already done so should give due consideration to including the oversight of ethics and anti-fraud activities in the revised terms of reference or charter of their audit and oversight committees in order to strengthen the accountability frameworks of their respective organizations by the end of 2021, provided that these audit and oversight committees meet the independence criteria. The Secretariat notes that this will be included in the revised terms of reference of the Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee, which will be presented to the Executive Board in January 2021.

39. JIU's recommendation 5 proposed that, in order to meet the needs of the organizations, the legislative and/or governing bodies of the United Nations system organizations that have not already done so should consider revising and updating the terms of reference or charter of their audit and oversight committees to contain provisions related to the relevant skills and professional expertise of members, including a balanced mix of public and private sector experience at the senior level. In addition, a strong understanding of the structure and functioning of the United Nations system and/or intergovernmental and international organizations is desirable. The Secretariat notes that this is already part of the terms of reference of the Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee.

40. JIU's recommendation 6 proposed that the legislative and/or governing bodies of the United Nations system organizations that have not already done so should request their audit and oversight committees to undertake a self-assessment every year and an independent performance evaluation every three years and report to them on the results. The Secretariat notes that this is already part of the terms of reference of the Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee. The most recent self-assessment was conducted by the Committee during its 28th session in July 2019, the results of which will be included in the annual report of the Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee to the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board in May 2020.

41. JIU's recommendation 7 proposed that the legislative and/or governing bodies of the United Nations system organizations that have not already done so should ensure that the terms of reference or charter of their audit and oversight committees are periodically revised and updated with a view to

¹ Available at https://www.unjiu.org/sites/www.unjiu.org/files/jiu_rep_2019_6_english_0.pdf (accessed 21 February 2020).

including emerging priorities of, and new challenges to, their respective organizations. The Secretariat notes that the Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee is reviewing its terms of reference with a view to including emerging priorities and new challenges faced by WHO and that the revised terms of reference will be presented to the Executive Board in January 2021.

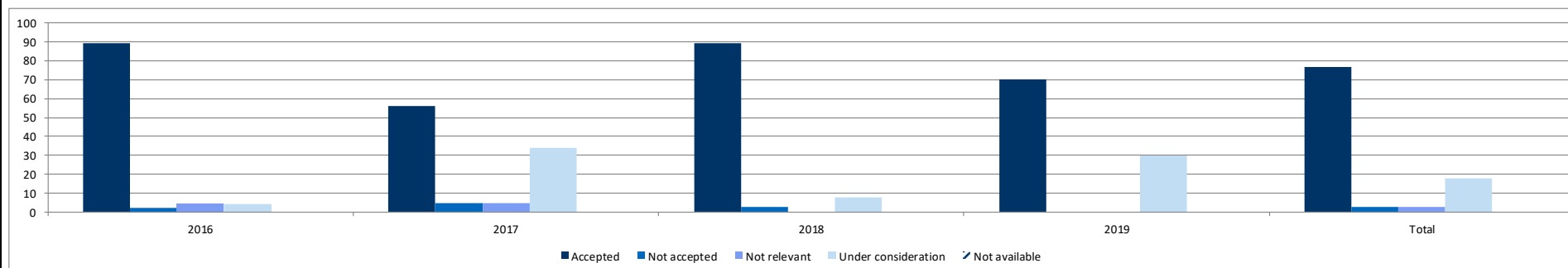
ACTION BY THE PROGRAMME, BUDGET AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

42. 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.

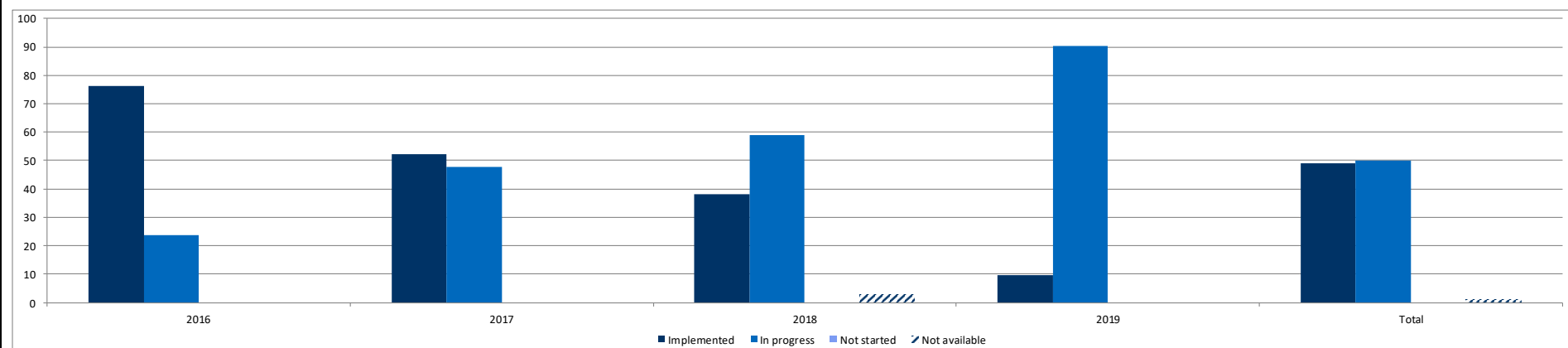
ANNEX

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

Acceptance



Implementation



¹ Information extracted from the JIU web-based tracking system (21 February 2020).