
Reports of the Joint Inspection Unit

Report by the Director-General

1. In 2021, the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) of the United Nations system issued six reports, one of which was 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 2022 report by the Secretariat.² The following 2021 reports were of relevance to WHO: Review of the management of implementing partners in United Nations system organizations (document JIU/REP/2021/4); Review of the ethics function in the United Nations system (document JIU/REP/2021/5); and Business continuity management in United Nations system organizations (document JIU/REP/2021/6).
2. By the end of September 2022, JIU had issued one report, which was not of direct relevance to WHO.³
3. The Secretariat provides its initial comments on recently launched JIU reports to the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), which in turn includes them as part of consolidated United Nations agency comments in a document subsequently issued by the CEB, available on the JIU website's reports page under "Comments".⁴

IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS DIRECTED TO THE SECRETARIAT

4. Paragraphs 5–20 below summarize progress made in implementing recommendations directed to executive heads of United Nations Organizations made in JIU reports issued during the period October 2021 to September 2022 that are of direct relevance to the Organization and call for specific action at this stage.

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

² Document EBPBAC36/6 includes the reports entitled 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 Review of management and administration in the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) (document JIU/REP/2022/1).

⁴ See "CEB Comments" for respective JIU Reports, available at unjiu.org/content/reports (accessed 18 March 2023).

Review of the management of implementing partners in United Nations system organizations (document JIU/REP/2021/4)¹

5. *JIU recommendation 1: by the end of 2024, collectively United Nations system organizations should develop, through appropriate inter-agency mechanism consultations, a common system-wide definition and a set of agreed guiding principles and standards for implementing partners (informed by a risk-based and strategic approach to partnerships and results-based management methodology).* The Secretariat considers this recommendation as oriented towards the United Nations, through the High-level Committee on Management, which should take the lead in this effort. The Secretariat notes the importance that any definition and principles should recognize differences across the United Nations system and agencies regarding a common definition for and working arrangements with “implementing partners”.

6. *JIU recommendation 2: by the end of 2023, United Nations system organizations should include in their annual reports on their work a section on the engagement and management of their implementing partners, including important details useful to their governing bodies.* The Secretariat notes that the recommendation is quite broad beyond simply financial reporting and that the JIU’s definition of implementing partners diverges from WHO’s business model. Although this recommendation is less relevant to WHO, it should be noted that the Secretariat routinely reports on financial aspects related to “implementing partners”, as relevant to WHO, for example for direct financial cooperation and various forms of procurement.

7. *JIU recommendation 4: by the end of 2023, United Nations system organizations should update, as necessary, and implement their implementing partner policies and related guidance (including standard operating procedures for the selection, engagement, management, oversight and evaluation of said partners), to sustain a strategic and risk-based approach to implementing partner management, aligned to WHO’s strategic framework.* The Secretariat notes the diversity of what the term “implementing partners” represents. The Secretariat has reviewed and updated relevant policies and guidance, and will continue to do so, including as part of developing WHO’s new enterprise resource planning (ERP) system, inclusive of risk management. The Secretariat is also considering joining the UN Partner Portal group.²

8. *JIU recommendation 5: agencies that have not yet done so should by the end of 2024, on the basis of a cost-benefit analysis, establish an implementing partner unit/designate or a focal point (with terms of reference defining roles and responsibilities) to support coordination of relevant policies and activities within the organization, including by providing policy guidance, backstopping and by facilitating liaison and information-sharing.* The Secretariat has established a global assurance hub dedicated to supporting the Organization on assurance aspects of working with implementing partners. Given the integrated nature of implementing partners in WHO’s work, key business operation departments oversee relevant policies, guidelines and implementation. The Secretariat will further review and enhance coordination across policies and operations as regards implementing partners.

9. *JIU recommendation 6: to incorporate implementing partner risks into the organization’s risk management frameworks by the end of 2023.* The Secretariat notes that it has developed a new risk management strategy, using a new risk appetite statement, which includes risks associated with working with implementing partners (as relevant to WHO). The existing risk register is also being incorporated

¹ Available at https://www.unjiu.org/sites/www.unjiu.org/files/jiu_rep_2021_4_english.pdf (accessed 16 March 2023).

² See <https://www.unpartnerportal.org/landing/> (accessed 3 April 2023).

into the new enterprise resource planning system enhancing the linkage of identification of risks, and their monitoring and mitigation.

10. *JIU recommendation 7: to develop, by the end of 2024, key performance indicators for managing implementing partners and establish systems to collect, monitor and report the performance data.* The Secretariat notes that it has already developed some indicators relevant to WHO's work and mandate. The Secretariat's Global Service Centre also uses a robust set of key performance indicators tracking performance for a number of business operations/services for engaging and contracting with implementing partners relevant to WHO's operating context.

11. *JIU recommendation 8: by the end of 2023, United Nations system organizations should share among themselves, through existing inter-agency mechanisms/forums, a variety of materials related to managing implementing partners, including specialized training materials and modules, due diligence, risk and capacity assessments of partners, results-based and risk-based performance monitoring, fraud prevention, prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, capacity-building, working with local nongovernmental organizations and civil society organizations, harmonized approaches to cash transfers and the UN Partner Portal.* The Secretariat has shared good practices and training materials with United Nations agency colleagues, and will continue to do so, inclusive of due diligence, risk management, results-based management, and preventing and responding to sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment-related systems. The Secretariat is exploring joining the UN Partner Portal, but does not follow the United Nations Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers framework.

12. *JIU recommendation 10: United Nations system organizations by the end of 2024 and with the support of the Development Coordination Office, resident coordinator offices and the United Nations country team mechanisms, should agree upon specific measures to further strengthen inter-agency coordination for improving implementing partner management at the country level and report on the implementation to their respective governing bodies from 2025.* The Secretariat notes that this recommendation is the responsibility of the Development Coordination Office and thus does not lie with WHO or its governing bodies. The Secretariat actively engages with the United Nations development system and the Development Coordination Office on United Nations reform, including at country level, through the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework process. WHO was an early signatory of the "Mutual Recognition" Statement.¹

Review of the ethics function in the United Nations system (document JIU/REP/2021/5)²

13. *JIU recommendation 1: United Nations system organizations that have not yet done so should with immediate effect ensure that the contracts of newly appointed heads of ethics offices are issued for a full term.* The Secretariat notes that WHO has a fixed-term coordinator post responsible for ethics in its Office of Compliance, Risk Management and Ethics. Moreover, in line with the JIU's

¹ See <https://unsceb.org/mutual-recognition#:~:text=The%20%2E2%80%9CMutual%20Recognition%2E2%80%9D%20Statement%20is%20a%20direct%20response,reducing%20transaction%20costs%20for%20Governments%20and%20collaborating%20agencies.%E2%80%9D> (accessed 3 April 2023).

² Available at https://www.unjiu.org/sites/www.unjiu.org/files/jiu_rep_2021_5_english.pdf (accessed 17 March 2023).

recommendations in its 2010 report,¹ the Director-General has approved in respect of the head of the ethics function a non-renewable seven-year term limit,² together with post-employment restrictions.

14. *JIU recommendation 3: United Nations system organizations that have not yet done so should ensure that periodic refresher courses in ethics are introduced as mandatory for all staff and non-staff of their respective organization, irrespective of seniority, category and level, every three years, from 2023 onwards.* The Secretariat notes that the Office of Compliance, Risk Management and Ethics has created a new mandatory training programme on ethics for all staff and is expected to roll it out in the second quarter of 2023.

15. *JIU recommendation 4: agencies that have not yet done so, supported by the ethics function in their organization, should, at the latest by 2025, evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency, including “value for money”, of their financial disclosure and declaration of interest programmes and, on the basis of the findings, propose changes to the relevant policies where appropriate.* The Secretariat is currently considering this recommendation. As is noted in the CEB report,³ there are some conceptual difficulties in judging what is “value for money” and the methodology to assess efficiency. The Secretariat’s work in ethics is conducted in house, and hence the intent of the recommendation regarding judging efficiency and related metrics remain unclear. The Secretariat will pursue a review of its ethics function prior to end 2025.

Business continuity management in United Nations system organizations (document JIU/REP/2021/6)⁴

16. *JIU recommendation 1: on reviewing business continuity management frameworks and, by the end of 2023, ensuring that core elements identified in the JIU report are established and owned by relevant stakeholders (to enable effective coordination of business continuity processes and practices, build coherence in their implementation and promote accountability at all levels).* The Secretariat has drafted a new business continuity management framework to be finalized in the second quarter of 2023. The revision was based on a review and update of the WHO headquarters business continuity management governance framework, 2009 and the WHO Guidance for business continuity planning (2018)⁵ prepared by the WHO Health Emergencies Programme. It adheres to the United Nations Organizational Resilience Management System (ORMS) policy approved by the United Nations Chief Executive Board in January 2021.

17. *JIU recommendation 2: on ensuring the application of maintenance, exercise and review components of business continuity plans by end 2023, through a consistent and disciplined approach to confirm that the plans remain relevant and effective.* The Secretariat notes that it has been applying most of the components as part of the existing business continuity planning and business continuity management frameworks, including during the pandemic of coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

¹ See JIU/REP/2010/3 available at https://www.unjiu.org/sites/www.unjiu.org/files/jiu_document_files/products/en/reports-notes/JIU%20Products/JIU_REP_2010_3_English.pdf (accessed on 17 March 2023).

² As reported to the 152nd session of the Executive Board in document EB152/48 Rev.1, paragraph 9.

³ Available at https://www.unjiu.org/sites/www.unjiu.org/files/a-77-258-add.1_e.pdf (accessed 31 March 2023).

⁴ Available at https://www.unjiu.org/sites/www.unjiu.org/files/jiu_rep_2021_6_english_2.pdf (accessed 16 March 2023).

⁵ WHO Guidance for Business Continuity Planning. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2018. Available at <https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/324850/WHO-WHE-CPI-2018.60-eng.pdf?ua=1> (accessed 31 March 2023).

Moreover, the maintenance, exercise and review components of business continuity plans will be systematically applied once the WHO business continuity management framework is endorsed and implemented.

18. *JIU recommendation 3: on strengthening learning mechanisms by the end of 2023 to contribute to organizational resilience by requiring after-action reviews following disruptive incidents and periodic internal management reviews of business continuity management frameworks.* The Secretariat has been conducting such reviews, notably during the COVID-19 pandemic, and will further strengthen learning mechanisms by requiring after-action reviews once the WHO business continuity management framework is endorsed and implemented.

19. *JIU recommendation 4: on reporting to governing bodies by the end of 2024 on progress towards the implementation of the policy on the organizational resilience management system and its revised performance indicators, and highlighting good practices and lessons learned.* The Secretariat notes that it will report on progress on the seven components of the ORMS policy.

20. *JIU recommendation 5: to conduct in 2023 an internal management assessment of the continuity of business operations during the COVID-19 pandemic to identify gaps, enablers, good practices and lessons learned and adjust policies, processes and procedures, in particular in areas such as human resources, information and communications technology management and occupational safety and health, and indicate necessary measures to better prepare for and respond to future disruptive incidents* The Secretariat had conducted several management assessments across business operations during the pandemic. The Secretariat will further review the lessons learned and identify opportunities to adjust policies and practices where relevant, in part already undertaken to update the revised business continuity management framework.

ACCEPTANCE AND IMPLEMENTATION RATES OF JIU RECOMMENDATIONS

21. JIU reports provide valuable syntheses of best practice and benchmarking across the United Nations on topics covered by their reviews. At its thirty-second and thirty-sixth meetings, the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee requested the Secretariat to add further detail on progress made in implementation of recommendations made in previous JIU reports and to continue to pay close attention to the implementation of recommendations contained in JIU.¹ WHO continues to ensure that it follows up on all relevant JIU recommendations.

22. The Secretariat records its status updates for respective JIU report recommendations in the JIU's web-based tracking system's electronic platform, in the new internal consolidated platform tracking and managing recommendations and related dashboard.² In the past year, WHO has continued to make good progress in implementing recommendations in JIU reports issued between 2017 and 2022 (see graphics in the Annex to this report showing rates of acceptance and implementation for recommendations). WHO implemented 82% of recommendations in the aforementioned time period,³ which exceeds the

¹ See document EB147/2, paragraph 24, available at https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/EB147/B147_2-en.pdf (accessed 16 March 2023), and EB151/2, paragraph 29, available at https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/EB151/B151_2-en.pdf (accessed 16 March 2023).

² The recommendation tracking dashboard is included in the WHO Member States Portal available at <https://www.who.int/about/governance/member-states-portal>.

³ The WHO percentage of fully implemented recommendations from 2017 JIU reports is 100%; from 2018 reports is 84%; from 2019 reports is 81%; from 2020 reports is 71%; and from 2021 reports is 47%. There were no reports issued in 2022 relevant to WHO.

overall implementation rate of 72% 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 84%, compared to the United Nations agency average of 70%. In addition, in the past year, WHO has fully implemented and closed 12 JIU reports, and two JIU letters, issued between 2016 and 2021.

23. Given the broad nature of JIU recommendations addressing all United Nations system organizations, the Secretariat interprets the meaning and relevance of respective recommendations in the context of WHO as well as its implementation. The Secretariat also notes that several JIU recommendations go beyond WHO's remit/managerial control (with the action often under the managerial control of the High-level Committee on Management of the CEB), and thus in these cases the respective recommendation may not be relevant to WHO.

24. A few updates on previously outstanding JIU recommendations are presented, in particular in response to the Committee's recommendation that the "Secretariat should continue to pay close attention to the implementation of recommendations contained in Joint Inspection Unit reports".¹ In its report to the 149th session of the Executive Board, the Committee recommended that the Secretariat "work within the High-level Committee on Management to respond to recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit related to inter-agency mobility, including those on misconduct and rehiring".² 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 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 to the system and has also joined the United Nations OneHR initiative to further enhance cross-United Nations synergies. The reports of the Director-General on prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment to the Seventy-fifth World Health Assembly, and to the 152nd session of the Executive Board,³ provide more detail on institutional changes and capacity-strengthening measures.

25. Similarly, as a follow-up to the Committee's request noted in document EB149/2 concerning implementation of respective JIU recommendations in its investigative functions and enterprise risk management reports,⁴ regarding the investigation function, the Secretariat has reformed the structure of the Office of Internal Oversight Services,⁵ updated its investigation standard operating procedures, and expanded its human resource capacity, and approved term limits for the head of oversight function and for the head of the ethics function (see paragraph 13 for a description) in line with several JIU recommendations and good practice across the United Nations.⁶ In the area of risk management, the

¹ See document EB151/2, paragraph 29, available at https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/EB151/B151_2-en.pdf (accessed 17 March 2023).

² See document EB149/2, paragraph 25(a), available at https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/EB149/B149_2-en.pdf (accessed 17 March 2023).

³ See document A75/39, available at https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/WHA75/A75_29-en.pdf (accessed 16 March 2023), and document EB152/31 available at https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/EB152/B152_31-en.pdf (accessed 16 March 2023).

⁴ See document EB149/2, paragraph 25(b), available at https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/EB149/B149_2-en.pdf (accessed 17 March 2023).

⁵ See document EB152/48 Rev.1, available at https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/EB152/B152_48Rev1-en.pdf (accessed 2 April 2023).

⁶ Recommendation 5 of JIU/REP/2020/1 on the investigation function, and recommendation 3 of JIU/REP/2010/3 on the ethics function in United Nations agencies.

Secretariat is finalizing a new risk management strategy that incorporates a new risk appetite framework. Further details are available in the Director-General's annual report on compliance, risk management and ethics.¹ A new risk assessment and mitigation tool for sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment has been developed and implemented across the Organization.

26. Following on from Member States' requests made at the thirty-fourth and thirty-sixth meetings of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee,² and recognizing the revised mandate of the Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee approved at the 150th session of the Executive Board, the Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee developed a draft process for managing significant potential allegations made against the head of the agency, in other words, the Director-General. The Committee circulated an initial and revised draft concept note to Member States for their review/comment, respectively, in late November 2022 and in early March 2023; held informal Member State consultations on the topic on 15 December 2022 and 17 March 2023; and presented an update to the thirty-seventh meeting of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee³ and 152nd session of the Executive Board.⁴ The Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee will include its revised proposed process in its report to the thirty-eighth Programme, Budget and Administration Committee.

27. At the thirty-sixth meeting of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee, the Committee requested the Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee to also consider a process for managing potential allegations made against the Director of the Office of Internal Oversight Services for submission to the thirty-eighth meeting of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee.⁵ It should be noted that this request directly reflects recommendation 8 of the 2020 JIU report on the investigation function in United Nations system organizations.⁶ The Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee will include its consideration of the process in its report to the thirty-eighth Programme, Budget and Administration Committee.⁷

ACTION BY LEGISLATIVE/GOVERNING BODIES

28. The following recommendations of JIU reports, issued during the period October 2021 to September 2022, are directed at the legislative/governing bodies.

¹ See document EBPBAC38/5, Compliance, risk management and ethics: annual report.

² See document EB149/2, paragraph 25(c), available at https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/EB149/B149_2-en.pdf (accessed 17 March 2023) and document EB151/2, paragraph 26 available at https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/EB151/B151_2-en.pdf (accessed 17 March 2023).

³ See document EBPBAC37/2, paragraphs 38 and 39, available at https://apps.who.int/gb/pbac/pdf_files/pbac37/pbac37_2-en.pdf (accessed 17 March 2023).

⁴ See document EB152/4 available at https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/EB152/B152_4-en.pdf (accessed 17 March 2023).

⁵ See document EB152/4, paragraph 11.

⁶ See JIU/REP/2020/1 "Review of the state of the investigation function: progress made in the United Nations system organizations in strengthening the investigation function" available at https://www.unjiu.org/sites/www.unjiu.org/files/jiu_rep_2020_1_english_0.pdf (accessed 17 March 2023).

⁷ See document EBPBAC38/2.

Review of the management of implementing partners in United Nations system organizations (document JIU/REP/2021/4)

29. *JIU recommendation 3: proposed that the legislative or governing bodies of the United Nations system organizations should, starting in 2024 and on the basis of reports submitted to them annually by their respective executive heads, provide overall strategic guidance and legislative oversight to the management of their implementing partners, including in the framework of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review, especially with regard to capacity-building, inter-agency coordination and information-sharing.* The Secretariat notes that WHO's governing bodies already provide strategic guidance and legislative oversight to the management of the Organization, based upon its priorities and emergent risks.

30. *JIU recommendation 9: proposed that the legislative or governing bodies of the United Nations system organizations should, beginning in 2023, assess their approaches to capacity-building of implementing partners and strengthening national capacities and ownership, in the framework of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review, including the effectiveness of such efforts since 2013, progress made and lessons learned, based on reports prepared by their respective secretariats, and adopt specific measures to strengthen national capacities and ownership and build the capacities of their implementing partners.* The Secretariat notes this recommendation is directed to WHO's governing bodies. It is recognized that governing bodies do not directly assess an agency's approaches to capacity-building of implementing partners and strengthening national capacities and ownership. It should be noted, however, that the latter are included as relevant in independent evaluations and performance audits conducted respectively by the Evaluation Office and the Office of Internal Oversight Services.

Review of the ethics function in the United Nations system (document JIU/REP/2021/5)

31. *JIU recommendation 2: proposed that the governing bodies of United Nations system organizations that have not yet done so should request that organizations update the terms of reference of their respective audit and oversight committees by the end of 2023 to include, where necessary, provisions for ethics, and ethics as a desirable area of expertise for new committee members.* The Secretariat notes that the Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee recently revised its terms of reference¹ whereby the Director of the Office of Compliance, Risk Management and Ethics is to have full access to the Committee and to routinely present on the work of the Office, including ethics. The Secretariat will transmit this recommendation to the Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee for its information, as well as for its consideration as regards recruitment of its future members.

Business continuity management in United Nations system organizations (document JIU/REP/2021/6)

32. *JIU recommendation 6: proposed that the legislative organs and governing bodies of the United Nations system organizations should consider, at the earliest opportunity, the conclusions of the internal management assessment of the continuity of operations during the COVID-19 pandemic prepared by the executive heads of their respective organizations and, on that basis, take appropriate decisions to address the identified gaps and risks and to ensure continuity of business operations.* The Secretariat notes that it has consolidated information from various assessments of business continuity during the

¹ Available at https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/EB150/B150_5-en.pdf#page=16 (accessed 17 March 2023).

COVID-19 pandemic (see also paragraph 20 of this report) and used these to inform the updated business continuity management framework in line with the recommendations of the JIU.

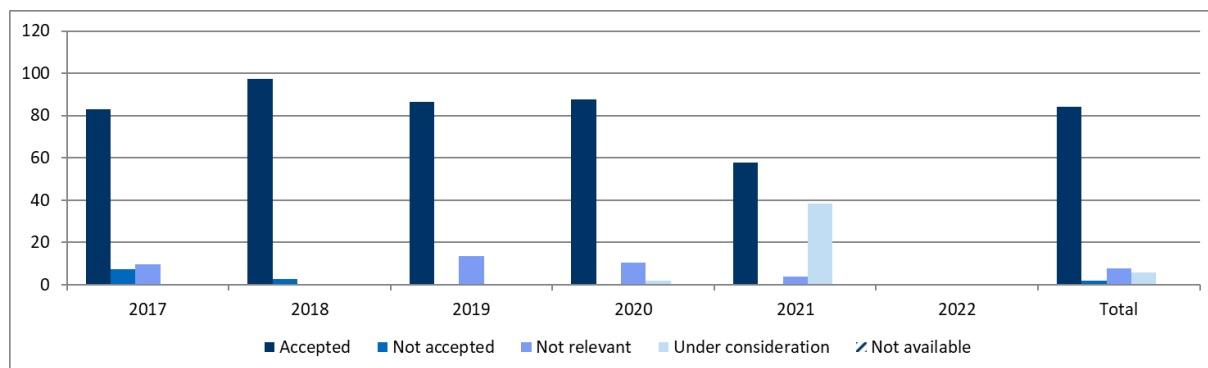
ACTION BY THE PROGRAMME, BUDGET AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

33. The Committee is invited to note the report; it is further invited to consider and to provide guidance on the recommendations contained in the JIU reports requiring action by WHO's legislative/governing bodies.

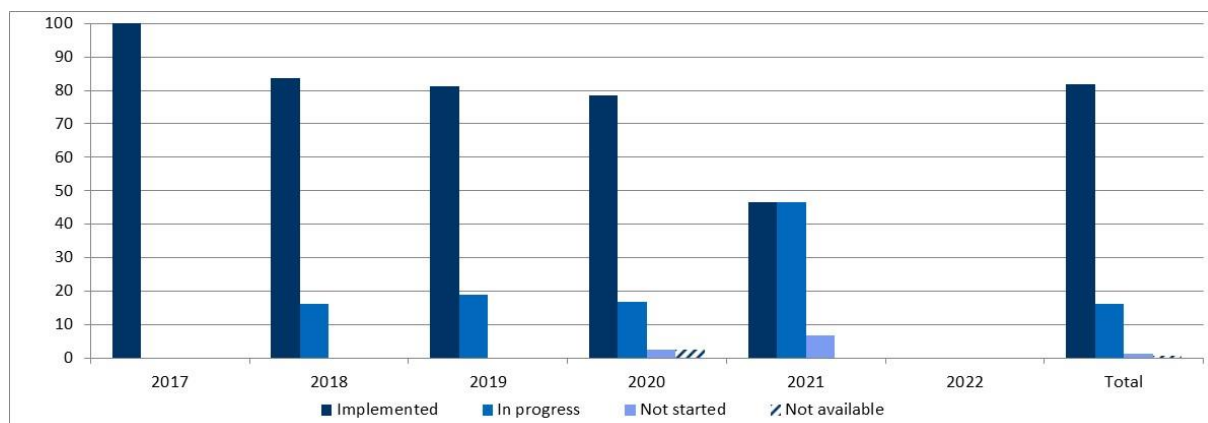
ANNEX

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 15 March 2023).