The Office of the Inspector General (OIG) conducted an audit of the Fisheries Division between June and August 2020. The audit covered the period from 2018 to 2019 but reflected also some subsequent developments which occurred in 2020.

The original objective of the audit was to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of the governance, risk management and control processes in the Fisheries and Aquaculture Department; however, the Department was abolished as a result of the organizational restructuring that took place in FAO in mid-2020. Consequently, OIG narrowed the audit scope to the areas where there was continuity between the work and responsibilities of the old department and that of the new Fisheries Division. OIG excluded from its review those governance areas for which corporate arrangements were still being defined at the time of the audit, in particular programming and work planning activities. At the time of the audit, the Fisheries Division was finalizing its new structure, including the redistribution of functions managed by the units that had been disbanded.

The Fisheries Division (NFI) is responsible for the development of policies, strategies and guidelines, data collection, analysis and reporting as well as the provision of technical services to FAO Member States concerning fisheries management, economics and policy; information and statistics; products and industry; conservation and sustainability; operations and technology; and emergency and rehabilitation activities in the field of fisheries and aquaculture.

Main findings

The audit concluded that, in general: internal controls were working as intended, projects were adequately managed, and the Division adhered to established policies and procedures. OIG therefore rated NFI’s governance, risk management and control processes as satisfactory.

Notwithstanding the above, the audit also identified a number of areas where further improvement was desirable:

- risk management activities required strengthening;
- the Division lacked a communication plan with clear targets and indicators;
- procurement plans were incomplete;
- open purchase orders and Letters of Agreement were not closely monitored;
- monitoring of project expenditure needed to be enhanced;
- completion of mandatory training was not being monitored;
- the Field Programme Management Information System (FPMIS) was not updated on a regular basis with relevant documentation; and
- a gender stocktaking exercise had not been conducted since 2013

The report includes eight Agreed Actions aimed at addressing these issues. The division has committed to fully implement all actions by December 2021.

Mika Tapio
Inspector General

28 January 2021