



## OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL

### Audit of the Language Services in FAO Part 2 – Operational Management (AUD1523)

#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is the second of two reports communicating the results of an audit of language services in FAO conducted by the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) as part of its 2022–2023 workplan. The first report addressed a number of overarching strategic matters which contribute to many of the recurring issues related to the provision of language services in FAO. This second report addresses operational aspects related to the provision of language services in FAO, including workforce planning; use of external language service providers by FAO units other than CSG (in the rest of the report will use the term “FAO units” to refer to all FAO divisions and offices other than CSG); and backcharging mechanisms used by the Language Services branch (CSGL) to reimburse incurred costs.

The audit was conducted between June 2022 and May 2023.

#### Main observations and conclusions

Language services in FAO are provided primarily through affiliate workforce (non-staff personnel - NSHR), who complement the staff positions available in CSGL. An efficient use of NSHR, including finding the optimal balance between staff and non-staff, is therefore essential for the provision of services in an efficient and effective way. Achieving this would require undertaking a workforce planning exercise. But while CSGL has incorporated in its biennial business plans elements of workforce planning, a comprehensive exercise has not been conducted recently.

The audit also found: i) the need to improve the management and monitoring of language-related consultants hired directly by other FAO units, and ii) the need to update the calculations which underpin the backcharging mechanism through which CSGL gets reimbursed for the services it provides to the rest of the Organization.

In summary, OIG is of the opinion that the operational arrangements for language services in FAO **Need Some Improvement** (see annex for the definition of audit ratings).

#### Agreed actions

This report contains four actions that management has agreed to undertake and committed to fully implement by December 2024.





The priority actions are for CSGL to: (i) conduct a workforce planning exercise to identify the right balance in the use of staff and affiliate workforce; (ii) improve oversight of NSHR contracts and promote the use of consistent rates; and (iii) improve the use of the corporate roster of external language providers.

**Mika Tapio**  
**Inspector General**

**27 October 2023**

## ANNEX: DEFINITION OF AUDIT TERMS

## AUDIT RATINGS

Rating System		An audit rating system (defined below) has been used to rank the adequacy of internal controls <sup>1</sup> in each area.
Satisfactory		The assessed controls, governance arrangements, and management of opportunities and risks, are adequate and effective to provide reasonable assurance that objectives are met.
Some Improvement Needed		A few specific weaknesses in the assessed controls, governance arrangements, and management of opportunities and risks were noted; generally however, they are adequate and effective to provide reasonable assurance that objectives are met.
Major Improvement Needed		Numerous specific weaknesses in the assessed controls, governance arrangements, and management of opportunities and risks were noted; they are unlikely to provide reasonable assurance that objectives are met.
Unsatisfactory		The assessed controls, governance arrangements, and management of opportunities and risks, are not adequate or effective to provide reasonable assurance that objectives are met.

<sup>1</sup> FAO's accountability policy, in an extension of the COSO internal control objectives, establishes five critical areas of performance relevant for assessing the adequacy of controls – effectiveness, economy and efficiency, compliance, reporting and protection.