

Ref. 2018.08

GUIDE FOR SENIOR LEADERSHIP ON FIELD ENTITY CLOSURE



DEPARTMENT OF
**OPERATIONAL
SUPPORT**

Ref. 2018.08

GUIDE FOR SENIOR LEADERSHIP ON FIELD ENTITY CLOSURE



DEPARTMENT OF
**OPERATIONAL
SUPPORT**

Effective date: 1 January 2019

Review date: 1 January 2022

Published by the United Nations

Copyright © United Nations, 2019

All rights reserved

Contents

	page
A. Introduction	1
B. Pre-closure	3
C. Mandate completion	11
D. Liquidation and closure	13
E. Post-liquidation	15
F. References	19
G. Contact	20
H. History	20
Annexes	
A. Environmental considerations in mission/field entity closure	21
B. Detailed Working guides on asset disposal, site closure, administration, records and archives, human resources.	27





A. INTRODUCTION

1. Field entities should always be prepared to liquidate on short notice. A decision by the Security Council or host Government to abruptly discontinue a field entity mandate is not without precedent, and field entities have been thrown into some degree of disarray as they rush to prepare liquidation plans and undertake activities.

2. A field entity¹ closure is a complex, high-volume and time-sensitive activity. The period approved by the Security Council to undertake a final field entity closure is becoming shorter, down from six to three months. As a result, the shorter closure period intensifies the activities and requires the field entity and all stakeholders to plan and diligently complete the lean, clean and responsible resource-management activities well in advance.

3. Realistic and well-structured closure plans are required to ensure a successful closure. A field entity facing closure must identify the full scope, level of effort and activities to be completed, as early as possible. As each field entity is unique in its scope and activities, each closure will differ. However, there are good practices developed by previous field entity closings to refer to.

4. Missions should seek to conduct downsizing and closure as effectively and efficiently as possible, as per the maxim “Lean, Clean and Responsible”. “Lean” refers to the need to minimize resources throughout closure and liquidation; “Clean” refers to the need to ensure that administrative issues, both before and during closure and liquidation, are fully addressed and not allowed to build up in a backlog; and “Responsible” refers to the importance of the closure and liquidation to the legacy of the United Nations, particularly concerning stewardship of the mandate and its environmental impact.

5. This guide was developed to assist the Directors/Chiefs of Mission Support (D/CMS), Chief Administrative Office (CAO) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to prepare and plan for field entity closure, building on established procedures

¹ The term “field entity” used in this guide refers to a peacekeeping field entity, special political field entity, peacebuilding field entity or large field-based office.

and best practices from recent closures in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI), Liberia (UNMIL), and Haiti (MINUSTAH), and the lessons learned as identified by the Secretariat. In addition to this guide, the annexes provide more detailed technical guidance, as well as applicable checklists concerning key activities for each phase of the liquidation process, including environmental clean-up and site closure.

6. This guide highlights issues and practices captured from various liquidation activities that are commonly faced by closing field entities. It contains a checklist of issues, challenges and risks that have been encountered in previous liquidation efforts so that a closing field entity can address them. This guide should be read in conjunction with the detailed technical guides on key activities and other guidance on technical areas, such as the Procurement Manual, Property Management Manual, DPKO/DFS Environmental Policy, DPKO/DFS Waste Management Policy, and Annex A on Environmental considerations in mission/field entity closure. The technical guides and other guidance will be available on the Peace Operations Policy and Practice Database (<https://ppdb.un.org/>). This guide replaces the 2013 DPKO/DFS Liquidation Manual (Ref. 2012.18).

7. This guide advocates four phases for field entity closure, arranged in sequential order:

- ▶ Pre-closure: starting when there is a strong indication that the field entity will close, usually when there is a proposed reduction in the size, scope or mandate of the field entity;
- ▶ Mandate completion: starting when the field entity receives formal notification from the Security Council of the end of its mandate;
- ▶ Liquidation and closure: the post-mandate period, when the field entity undertakes activities necessary for closure;
- ▶ Post-liquidation: the period after the field entity has closed its field presence and United Nations Headquarters (UNHQ), United Nations Global Service Centre (UNGSC) and the Regional Service Centre in Entebbe (RSCE) are finalizing transactions and reports.



B. PRE-CLOSURE

8. Pre-closure involves the preparatory activities undertaken by the field entity to reduce work during the final closure of the field entity. Experience from previous field entity closures has shown that the sooner a field entity proactively starts addressing liquidation matters, the higher the probability of a successful closure. During this period, the field entity can lighten its footprint by disposing of excess assets and inventory, obsolete documents and records, consolidating sites and bringing all administrative transactions up to date.

9. The field entity should closely assess the sequencing and human resources capacity required to undertake the closure. D/CMS-CAO-CEO should seek to ensure that the senior leadership team of the field entity, together with the United Nations country team (UNCT) and other key actors on the ground, develop a transition strategy that (1) prioritizes critical remaining peacebuilding needs where continued international support is required beyond field entity withdrawal; (2) identifies which actors are best placed to provide such support; and (3) capacitates those actors to play a more prominent role as the field entity draws down and closes. That strategy needs to be closely linked to and inform the closing plan. D/CMS-CAO-CEO should also seek to ensure that the senior leadership team prepares a downsizing plan for the repatriation of uniformed personnel and the separation or transfer of substantive personnel. Special attention should be paid to the planning and timing of the repatriation and the work of the relevant enabling units (medical, air, transport, engineering) as their capacity, departure and final work can be paramount. Most importantly, the scope and timing of the activities to be completed during the final closure must be realistic and achievable within the planned support capacity of the field entity.

10. Mission Support must deliver the closure, therefore it is critical that the D/CMS-CAO-CEO be fully engaged in the planning and preparations for transition and closure. The closure process is deadline driven and requires intensive work by the support component. Strong support from senior leadership and the managers of the field entity would greatly assist by preparing exit

strategies, reducing the field entity footprint and activities as early as possible. Establishing senior leadership and working-level field entity closure teams can facilitate implementation, support and cross functions.

11. **UNHQ, UNGSC and RSCE.** Early engagement with UNHQ is critical to ensure the field entity receives coordinated, cross-cutting support to successfully transition and close. UNGSC has a central role in liquidation and can provide detailed advice on environmental issues, asset management and disposal, and Umoja processing. As the back office for many field entities, RSCE will be involved in the planning process during pre-closure in order to better understand the mission processes and associated risks. RSCE will also process transactions during the closure period and continue to process residual transactions after the field entity closure. RSCE can review, provide guidance and assist with processing. UNHQ, UNGSC and RSCE have all assisted with closing field entities in the past, and can provide guidance on many issues.

12. In instances where there is a follow-on presence (i.e. political, peacekeeping or peacebuilding), field entity closure and handover must be carried out without transferring any residual administrative backlogs. Early engagement with the planning team for the follow-on presence is crucial to achieving a smooth transition.

Key activities checklist

- ❑ Contact HQ to initiate collaboration and working sessions on transition and liquidation [DOS/DSA].
- ❑ Contact UNGSC to initiate support for transition and liquidation.
- ❑ Contact RSCE to initiate support and to undertake an assessment.
- ❑ Contact the Policy, Evaluation and Training Division (DPET) for reports on lessons learned and best practices in field entity closure and training.



13. **Within the field entity.** Raising awareness within the field entity about the closure, likely challenges and timelines of the transition and closure activities is important to keeping all personnel informed and mitigating problems. D/ CMS-CAO-CEO should seek to ensure that senior leadership of the field entity agrees on the drawdown and the timelines, and that all the personnel of the field entity are informed of the pending closure process and key dates. An internal human resources (HR) communications strategy that is supported by the head of the field entity² is important for establishing legitimacy and delivering the message that the field entity will close, through regular and timely engagement with all field entity personnel categories, staff union representatives, and other relevant stakeholders. D/CMS-CAO-CEO should champion a field entity-wide approach to transition by raising awareness of timelines about such issues as staff separation, repatriation of uniformed personnel, closure and handover of sites and transfer or cessation of mandated tasks. As the D/CMS-CAO-CEO will be primarily responsible for the final liquidation, outlining the need for preparation, field entity-wide planning, broad stakeholder engagement, development of internal and external strategic communications and formulation of an operational withdrawal plan and the field entity closure and liquidation plan are important as the failure of those steps could impact the closure.

² Such as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG), Special Envoy of the Secretary-General (SESG), High Representative of the Secretary-General (HRSG), Special Adviser to the Secretary-General (SASG), Special Coordinator, Envoy, or other officer.

Key activities checklist

- ❑ Assist the head of the field entity and senior leadership of the field entity in the development of timelines for liquidation activities, including staff drawdown, uniformed repatriation, cessation of mandated tasks and projects (e.g., quick impact projects (QIPs) and programmatic funding), property disposal, environmental clean-up and return of sites.
- ❑ Establish senior leadership and a working level cross-functional team for the field entity closure to discuss, review, prepare and assist with plans and activities.
- ❑ Develop an internal human resources communications strategy and begin advising all personnel of the closure.
- ❑ Initiate the field entity closure plan.
- ❑ Prepare the downsizing and resource plan for the final budget subfield entity.

14. **UNCT.** In peace operation settings, early engagement with the United Nations country team (UNCT) through the D/SRSG or Resident Coordinator (RC) is important to identify sites and assets they may require support that they can provide during the final months of closure. While it is likely that the primary interest of UNCT will be the transfer and cessation of mandated tasks, many stakeholders will also be interested in the impact of the withdrawal of the infrastructure of the field entity on their operations and the opportunities presented by the departing field entity, including the transfer of skilled and knowledgeable staff, national and United Nations volunteers (UNVs).

Key activities checklist

- ❑ Regularly engage with D/SRSG/RC and UNCT to brief them on the potential impact and opportunities of the field entity or its closure.
- ❑ Work with UNCT on potential activities, assets or site transfer to UNCT staff and to prepare them for the field entity closure.



15. **With the Government.** The dynamics with host country authorities shift as the key field entity interlocutors depart. Therefore, D/CMS-CAO-CEO should seek to address any support-related issues with the Government before the departure of the head and senior staff of the field entity. D/CMS-CAO-CEO should seek to ensure that senior leadership fully briefs the Government on the field entity transition and closure, as Government will be concerned about the impact of the transition and closure of mandated tasks, asset disposal and key timelines. The Mission Support components will also need to closely engage with the Government on a wide range of issues, such as asset disposal, site closure, environmental issues, customs issues, documents and audio-visual records that may be envisaged, and the impact of any other government regulatory regime on the closure of the field entity. Establishing a good relationship with the Government and having field entity personnel who understand and can work with the Government through the closure process is critical to resolving any issues that may arise. Having a government-appointed focal point for the issues related to the liquidation is highly desirable.


Key activities checklist

- ❑ Ensure that Government is engaged in transition planning, appoints a focal point and is aware of the field entity changes.
- ❑ Identify key government interlocutors/partners for asset disposal, site handover (including environmental clearance for properties provided by the Government and not leased) and customs clearance, particularly for assets to be disposed of by sale.
- ❑ Resolve any matters, such as site ownership and reimbursement of costs, with Government before the departure of the head of the field entity.
- ❑ Identify specialized substantive field entity personnel (political affairs, legal, conduct, public information) who can work through to the final closure.

16. **Within Mission Support.** The Mission Support component will experience the largest impact with regard to preparation for drawdown and liquidation. Planning should start as early as possible and be based on a sound and accurate picture of the status of the field entity's situation. Once a field entity enters the final liquidation phase it will be too late to establish an accurate picture of outstanding issues as the tempo of work during liquidation will make "catching up" extremely challenging. The pre-closure period is when there is sufficient capacity and time to address issues such as archiving, accuracy of staffing table, level of inventory, accuracy of inventory records, environmental clean-up requirements (including treatment and disposal of hazardous materials and waste) and accuracy/comprehensiveness of site records. Also, as the field entity moves toward closure, staff will depart increasingly, and that will seriously reduce the expertise, institutional knowledge and capacity in the field entity.

Key activities checklist

- ❑ Establish a Mission Support planning team, incorporating all major components of field entity support, and examining the field entity's preparation for drawdown or closure.
- ❑ Ensure that staff are trained and briefed on liquidation best practices and unique tasks.
- ❑ Assess the state of readiness of the field entity for transition and liquidation, with focus on staffing tables, asset records, site records (including any potential environmental or explosive remnants of war (ERW) issues), administrative backlog (e.g., audit observations, finance, procurement, claims, board of inquiry (BOI) issues, administration of justice, investigations, etc.) and the current state of the paper records in field entity offices and in all records storage facilities, and of digital records stored online and offline.
- ❑ Consult with the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) on their audit programme, in the pre-closure period, focusing on key risk areas, such as fuel and contract management, safety and security, assets disposal, wastewater and waste management, environmental clean-up and site closures, human resources, liquidation planning, accounts receivable and payable, archiving and record management (e.g., sensitive information, transfer of records by separating staff), so as to assist in mitigating risk.

- 
- ❑ Establish accurate and comprehensive records of field entity sites, including assessment of environmental risks and action required to resolve them before liquidation. Ensure UNHQ Environment Section, UNGSC/Environmental Technical Support Unit (ETSU) and United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) are engaged to advise and assist. Resolve any site ownership matters. Ensure full documentation for every site and photographs of the site condition before it was occupied by the United Nations, if available.
 - ❑ Commence asset disposal, making sure to engage Government and UNCT, informing acquisition planning, minimizing inventory to be disposed of during the formal liquidation period.
 - ❑ Identify and address potential issues with asset holdings (i.e., excessive inventory, disposal of assets with end-user restrictions, and assets that may be difficult to dispose of due to safety and environmental concerns, such as explosives and protective equipment) before liquidation. Seek to dispose of all assets and inventory that are not in use as soon as possible.
 - ❑ Develop and implement a risk-based plan for digital and paper records and the archives of the field entity, with support from UNHQ Archives and Records Management Section (ARMS).
 - ❑ Put in place training by the Integrated Mission Training Centre (IMTC) for national/local staff, deliver skills certificates, organize job fairs and/or entrepreneur fairs to facilitate their career development.
 - ❑ Plan structure and staffing of liquidation team to ensure their retention throughout the liquidation period (including engineering, public information, legal, political affairs, quick impact projects (QIPs), environment, archives, conduct and discipline).
 - ❑ Ensure HR staff are familiar with managing a large-scale staff draw-down and separation exercise and deliver briefing sessions to inform staff about separation processes and entitlements.

- ❑ Engage and brief staff unions to ensure they know what will take place and solicit their support.
- ❑ Review all contracts and memorandums of understanding (MOUs) for time frames and closure.
- ❑ Ensure procurement staff are familiar with procurement during liquidation and commercial sales.
- ❑ Clear all outstanding audit observations, claims and BOI matters.
- ❑ Ensure RSCE/UNGSC/UNHQ have the required access rights to the various accounts of the mission in order to facilitate the processing of transactions, including residual transactional activities after mission closure.
- ❑ Clear all long-standing transactions (such as accounts payable and receivable, pension payments, write-offs).



C. MANDATE COMPLETION

17. Completion of the mandate is an extremely challenging time for missions. In addition to the normal operations, mission staff are asked to cope with managing drawdown and closure while dealing with the uncertainty surrounding their future, which inevitably causes increased stress levels, lack of motivation and absenteeism. Mission closures often take place around the same time as major events, such as national elections, and therefore in an environment of heightened security concerns.

18. Mandate completion will have an impact on the legacy of the mission and can damage the standing of the organization in the country or region, if not handled well. Fully integrated and detailed field entity-wide planning with close supervision of implementation is critical. Mandate completion is a field entity-wide responsibility and D/CMS-CAO-CEO should seek to ensure that it is led and championed by the head of mission/office. A clearly defined transition and exit strategy is needed from each function of the field entity. This strategy should include the closing and, where required, handover of mandated responsibilities, drawdown of personnel and site withdrawal. The timelines of these activities are critical to the sequencing and timing of mission-support activities.

19. The field entity should engage with ARMS/UNHQ about the archiving and shipping of records. ARMS can send staff to assist with the surge requirements and assess the archives of the field entity. The shipment of records to UNHQ can be staggered over the period of field entity drawdown and closure. Shipment must be in freight-forwarding company-owned sea containers as UNHQ does not keep sea containers. Any records at UNGSC or RSCE must be sent to ARMS once completed. For more in-depth guidance, refer to SOP: Field Entity Closure—Paper and Digital Records and Archives (Ref. 2019.07).

Key activities checklist

- ❑ Prepare exit strategies for all field entity functions – closure and, where required, handover of mandated responsibilities, downsizing of personnel and site departures.
- ❑ Conduct briefings and send notifications to field entity personnel, Government, embassies and other key actors about the planned field entity closure and activities.
- ❑ Begin drafting key reports (end-of-mission report (EMR), budget performance report, Secretary-General's report to the Security Council, final disposition of assets report, etc.).
- ❑ Ensure all substantive records are handed over to archives and records management (ARM) staff in the field entity.
- ❑ Review capacity, volume and process for mass checkout and establish a suitable framework, such as centralized or regional checkout.
- ❑ Forward plan and book movement of uniformed and civilian personnel well in advance of travel (within field entity and airline tickets).
- ❑ Review the internal (UNDSS and field entity) security framework to ensure maximum protection of personnel, sites and assets, and to deter theft.



D. LIQUIDATION AND CLOSURE

20. The final liquidation and closure period is likely to be short (2-3 months) and extremely high tempo for remaining field entity staff on the liquidation team. Most of the issues that were identified in pre-closure through mandate completion will continue into the formal liquidation period. All possible in-field entity liquidation activities should be completed by the end of the liquidation period, aiming to reduce the residual workload to the extent possible. The field entity should seek to complete all administrative matters, such as outstanding claims or payments, before the end of the liquidation period so that only a small volume of transactions that cannot be processed by the field entity (e.g., invoices not received) is transferred to UNHQ or RSCE for conclusion.

21. Mission Support is often, but not always, the only part of the field entity remaining, although some other staff, such as the Legal Officer and a few other substantive staff (political affairs, public information (PIO), QIPs) may remain to resolve residual substantive activities, provide specialist support or facilitate transition with UNCT and/or Government. At this stage, D/CMS-CAO-CEO is likely to become the primary point of contact between the mission and the Government.

Key activities checklist

- ❑ Finalize all in-country field entity activities, except those to be undertaken by UNHQ, UNGSC or RSCE.
- ❑ Coordinate final date and final withdrawal of the field entity with Government.
- ❑ Plan in detail the final two months of field entity support activities and cease of operations (i.e. last working day, site departure date, systems shutdown, closing of finance and HR, personnel transport, etc.).
- ❑ Complete and submit to UNHQ the EMR on the field entity closure in accordance with the Guidelines on the Completion of End-of-Mission Report (Ref. 2018.09).
- ❑ Conduct after action reviews (AAR) on the following closure activities: staff checkout and separation; assets disposal; site closures; and archive and record management.



E. POST-LIQUIDATION

22. The liquidation of the field entity is not complete until all the assets are accounted for and physically disposed of, all claims are settled, and a final budget performance report is submitted to the General Assembly. Depending on the field entity support structure, those activities can be carried out by a combination of RSCE, UNGSC and UNHQ, after the physical in-country field entity closure is complete. Those offices prepare the closing accounts, finalize transactions, reimburse all troop- and police-contributing countries (T/PCCs), prepare budget performance and other reports for submission to the Security Council and the General Assembly. For this phase to be successful, the offices finalizing the field entity activities must be engaged as early as possible and must clearly understand the work that they will be required to complete.

23. **RSCE.** RSCE will take over residual transactional functions post-liquidation for follow-up and resolution of the items. However, once items are handed over to RSCE, particularly older ones, the chances of resolution in a way that is favourable to the organization are reduced. To the extent possible, open items should not be left for RSCE to address and clear.

24. **Vendors.** It is important that the field entity contact all key vendors to obtain clearance or a confirmation letter for any pending invoices. It is also important to ensure liquidation of any obligations that are not required and to maintain current obligations at a sufficient level to cover unpaid obligations. If goods are received but payments are not made, RSCE will take this over. RSCE will need to advise D/CMS-CAO-CEO of the records that they will require for this purpose. It is good practice for the field entity to notify local vendors, through the local press, of the closure of the field entity and the requirement for them to submit all outstanding invoices so that all obligations are settled before the closure of the field entity.

25. **Past periods.** The mission should finalize payments for periods that are already closed, (e.g., past financial years) prior to final liquidation. That may inflate the requirement for the current budget and should be part of pre-closure budget planning and activities.

26. **Payment of pension entitlements.** The field entity HR and RSCE should closely coordinate with UNHQ payroll to ensure the timely processing of final payments and field entity pension documents to the pension fund. Where mutually acceptable, RSCE and UNCT should establish points of contact for post-liquidation. For example, staff must be provided with contact information in the pre-closure and liquidation communication strategies. UNHQ can provide support for pension form processing and an officer should visit the field entity to advise staff and review forms.

27. **Non-insured third party claims.** This item will likely have to be resolved by UNHQ. The D/CMS-CAO-CEO should discuss this with RSCE and UNHQ prior to final liquidation. Special arrangements may need to be made to send relevant information to UNHQ at final liquidation.

28. **Asset disposal.** UNGSC will require an in-depth understanding of the completion status of assets disposal records at final liquidation and progressively post-liquidation. D/CMS-CAO-CEO and UNGSC should establish mechanisms for the post-liquidation period. The UNGSC team will take back to UNGSC any records not finalized during liquidation. This finalization will not include physical assets, except in the case mentioned under “Shipping” below. Assets should be recorded in Umoja and funds should be received and recorded.

29. **Focal point and project leadership in RSCE.** RSCE must appoint a focal point and project leader in the initial discussions with the mission in the pre-closure and liquidation phases. This appointee must ensure that the RSCE team understands the deliverables and time frames. The field entity must develop a simple framework of tasks to be handed over at final liquidation, which will form the basis of RSCE work in post-liquidation. The package of activities should be under one project leader at RSCE, although RSCE may not need to carry out all of the tasks. Some tasks might be the responsibility of UNGSC or UNHQ. This must be determined before final liquidation of the field entity. RSCE needs to identify, as early as possible, how they will complete transactions and deal with the issues. This will focus both the field entity and RSCE in ensuring that the correct records are transferred to RSCE at final liquidation.

30. **HR issues.** HR issues will revolve around payments to former staff members. Annual leave audits should be completed at least two months prior to separation of staff. It is also important that outstanding transactions in Umoja self-service travel portals and pending actions in other systems (e.g., Field



Support Suite (FSS)) are closely monitored for timely completion. Points of contact should have been identified during the pre-closure phase and promulgated as part of the field entity's internal communication process. The need for general temporary assistance (GTA) posts (e.g. to cover maternity leave, leave on medical grounds) should also be identified. GTA posts should also be included in the planning for RSCE to continue to handle residual transactions for up to six months after field entity closure.

31. **UNCT.** UNCT will continue to operate in accordance with their plans and procedures after the closure of the field entity. There are three possible areas in which their involvement with the field entity may continue: post-liquidation final shipping (see "Shipping" below); acting as point of contact for former field entity staff members, claimants or contractors; and ensuring payments owing to or by them for services rendered, including asset sales. Similarly, when there is a follow-on presence (political, peacekeeping or peacebuilding) such arrangements can also be put in place, keeping in mind that the majority of the administrative transactions/processes need to be closed by the field entity exiting the area of responsibility.

32. **Shipping.** Ideally, no shipping should be done post-liquidation. It is common, however, for final shipments out of a field entity, often during the last week of the liquidation, to run into difficulties. This can be due to a range of factors, including delayed shipment, equipment breakdown, customs clearance issues (for weapons, in particular), or some other problem. It is best for the field entity to clear such shipping issues during liquidation, if possible. However, in case that is not possible, the field entity should have an alternate plan in place. The field entity could discuss the taking over of this responsibility with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), against pre-paid contracts with a reliable shipping agent. Thus, if a significant shipping delay occurs, there will be a United Nations mechanism in place to deal with it. D/CMS-CAO-CEO will also need to comment on this in the EMR and may designate an office—perhaps UNGSC, since the items to be shipped will be assets—to check with the local UNCT office when this has all been completed.

33. **Audits.** The field entity should expect pre-closure, liquidation and closure, and post-liquidation audits. These audits will review many aspects of the liquidation procedure. To create a better outcome, it is important that the field entity finalize as many liquidation activities as possible, and implement the audit observations. Doing that will reduce the number of outstanding observations or activities to be completed by other actors, such as RSCE, UNGSC and UNHQ, and enable the United Nations to respond accurately to further inquiries by Member States about the field entity liquidation and closure.

34. **Budget/Finance.** Budget and finance are key actors in the finalization of field entity records. RSCE will take on many of the field entity closure activities post-liquidation, in conjunction with UNHQ. It is important that RSCE send representative(s) to the closing field entity prior to the actual closure so as to develop an understanding of what work will be outstanding, and to ensure that the relevant records are transferred to RSCE.

35. **Umoja.** Umoja activities will continue during the post-liquidation phase until all financial management, disposal of assets, human resources and travel related transactions are fully settled. UNGSC (for assets) and RSCE (for finance, travel and HR) will be the primary users of the field entity records in these areas. It is important that all of these offices be involved in discussions during the last month of the field entity closure, so that any records that they require to complete their work can be provided to them. Additionally, D/CMS-CAO-CEO will need to identify in their EMR, all unfinished administrative activities that have been handed over to these or other entities for completion post-liquidation. The EMR should also include the timelines agreed for completion by these offices. This will allow smoother handover and completion of the administration.

36. **Records and archives management.** The field entity should engage as early as possible, preferably during the pre-closure phase, with ARMS/UNHQ about the archiving and shipping of records. Any records of residual transactions at UNGSC or RSCE processed/generated in the post-liquidation period must be sent to ARMS once completed.

37. **Claims.** There is likely to be a problem with claims that extend past final liquidation and closure. That is the purpose of establishing a point of contact in UNCT, and also with UNDP, during the liquidation phase, and of having someone maintain a website. That would allow former staff members, claimants or contractors to determine which office to contact to resolve claims.



F. REFERENCES

Normative or primary references

- ▶ 2013 United Nations Procurement Manual, Revision 7
- ▶ ST/SGB/2013/4 - Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations (iSeek)

Related procedures or guidelines

- ▶ 2012.18 Property Management Manual
- ▶ 2018.09 Guidelines: D/CMS-CAO-CEO End of Mission/Field Entity Report
- ▶ 2018.10 Guidelines: Transition Process Map in a Closing Mission/Field Entity
- ▶ 2018.11 Guidelines: MSD Map for Planning and Conducting Mission/Field Entity Closure
- ▶ 2018.23 Guidelines: Mission/Field Entity Closure—Task Force Organigram
- ▶ 2018.24 Guidelines: Mission/Field Entity Closure—MSD Team Organigram
- ▶ 2018.25 Guidelines: Handover and Checklist of Mission/Field Entity to DOS/ Finance and Budget Units
- ▶ 2018.26 Guidelines: Development of Mission/Field Entity Support Division Closure Plan
- ▶ 2018.27 Guidelines: Development of Mission/Field Entity Support Division Closure Progress Report
- ▶ 2018.28 Guidelines: Environmental Clearance and Handover of Mission/Field Entity/Field Entity Sites
- ▶ 2019.07 SOP: Field Entity Closure—Paper and Digital Records and Archives

Unless otherwise indicated, these documents are available from the Peace Operations, Policy and Practices Database website (<https://ppdb.un.org/>).

G. CONTACT

The Chief of Operational Planning Service, Division of Special Activities, Department of Operational Support is the primary point of contact for all matters relating to this guide, including its review. Departmental e-mail address: dos-dsa-ops-list@un.org.

H. HISTORY

This document supersedes the 2013 Liquidation Manual (Ref. 2012.18).



Atul Khare
Under-Secretary-General for Operational Support
Department of Operational Support (DOS)



ANNEX A: ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS IN MISSION/FIELD ENTITY CLOSURE

1. Environmental management should be woven throughout the mission's activities from inception, but legacy problems can develop over time. Such problems, particularly soil contamination and hazardous waste disposal, can take many months to resolve. It is therefore critical that missions approaching liquidation conduct an environmental review early in the pre-closure process, especially if existing environmental inspection reports are not sufficient and/or no baseline studies exist. These activities should be fully integrated in the wider mission closure process. Detailed technical guidelines are available at <https://ppdb.un.org/>.

2. The successful management of environmental issues during liquidation depends on the establishment of environmental management during the early stages of the operation. These include the mission-wide environmental action plan (MEAP), linked with the standard operating procedures (SOP) of the mission, and applied throughout the mission's lifecycle. United Nations field missions must take due care of the environment they operate in and remove or properly dispose of all residual waste on an ongoing basis, which is part of their environmental performance management through the MEAP and reported to Member States annually through the budget performance reports, including the indicator on the environmental scorecard.

3. All respective provisions of local laws, and/or United Nations regulations and rules must be observed. For the latter, the DPKO/DFS Environmental Policy, DPKO/DFS Waste Management Policy and draft environmental guidelines are the main reference documents. In those cases where the disposal of certain types of waste is guided by provisions of multilateral environment agreements (MEAs) (e.g. Basel Convention, Montreal Protocol), those provisions apply regardless of whether the host country is a signatory to the respective instrument.

4. The UNCT, especially UNDP, UNEP and UNIDO, may have expertise on relevant local environmental issues that the mission should build on.

5. It is important to work in close cooperation with troop contributing countries (TCCs) and to share with them from the early stages all of the mission's plans regarding environmental management, including its plan for the liquidation phase. Waste from explosive ordinance dumps or sites likely to contain similar waste (e.g. disarmament sites or firing ranges) will be disposed of by qualified military explosive ordinance disposal (EOD) personnel or a properly qualified contractor. Weapons collected during the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) operations also fall under this category.

6. Especially where prior environmental management has faced challenges, the mission may need consider the use of contractors due to the lack of equipment and/or capacity in-house. During the early stages of the liquidation planning process, the Engineering and Facilities Management Sections should develop a statement of work (SOW), to dispose of all solid, hazardous and liquid waste accumulated by the mission, as per the international standards of disposal for particular types of waste and with appropriate monitoring controls to ensure contractor compliance. The Procurement Section will then follow the appropriate process for contracting these services, in accordance with the procurement manual.

7. **Environmental risks.** There are several major risks associated with environmental management. These risks will differ in degree from mission to mission and will vary over time within any one mission. Major risk areas include:

- ▶ **Wastewater management.** Contamination of local groundwater sources or surface water is a major risk vector for various diseases. It is crucial that this is managed as an utmost priority.
- ▶ **Hazardous waste.** Hazardous waste comes in many forms which includes, but is not limited to, medical waste, computer and IT waste, poisonous or corrosive chemicals, fuel, expired pharmaceutical drugs, incinerator ash, bitumen drums. Even non-poisonous materials, such as water cleaning chemicals (e.g. chlorine), can be toxic in large quantities. The mission's Environment Officer, and where available the mission's Waste Management Officer, should be involved in the planning of planning activities and should conduct regular inspections as defined by their priorities with the aim to prevent accumulation of hazardous materials or waste that will have to be dealt with in the final liquidation phase.



- ▶ **Soil and groundwater contamination.** Improper protection below generators and fuel tanks could lead to long-lasting pollution and high environmental remediation costs.
- ▶ **Legacy issues.** Environmental issues can extend to assets left behind. If, for example, a camp is transferred to the host Government but is then not well guarded by said Government, the camp can become unusable and be dangerous to people entering it. Missions must endeavor to get all possible assurances from the host Government that such locations will be properly managed. If this does not occur for such handed over camps, then the mission should re-consider the idea of gifting or donating such camps. Similarly, particular care should be taken with assets such as wastewater treatment plants, incinerators, solar panels or other expensive items. Oxidation ponds and other wastewater treatment facilities should only be handed over to local authorities if there is a demonstrated capacity to properly operate and maintain the facility. If the local government does not have the resources (e.g., trained personnel, support equipment, budget) to look after such assets, then they will become expensive waste and may create hazards. If it is not possible to confidentially handed over assets based on the standards set out in the relevant policy (especially for oxidations ponds), such facilities are to be closed, dismantled and the sites rehabilitated.

8. **Environmental close out assessment (ECO).** This assessment should be performed at all mission sites, with the purpose of evaluating the state of the environment and identifying all environmental issues which will have to be addressed during the liquidation. Ideally, if an environmental baseline study (EBS) was performed when the mission was established, as set out in DPKO/DFS Environmental Policy, the ECOA will document what were the pre-existing environmental conditions and what environmental alterations were caused by the mission during its lifespan. Also, periodic environmental site inspection reports and tracking of the implementation of recommendations will be important documentation for the ECOA process. The findings of the ECOA will guide the development of the wider liquidation plan. The Environmental Officer should coordinate these efforts with all relevant sections, as this assessment and the

recommendations will be cross-cutting. Further details and guidance, including checklists and templates, can be found at <https://ppdb.un.org/>. Environmental aspects to be evaluated during the ECOA include, but are not limited to:

- ▶ Clearing of natural vegetation to prepare the sites for construction;
- ▶ Excavations for defense trenches around the camps;
- ▶ Construction of excreta disposal facilities such as pit latrines, septic tanks, soak away pits and wastewater treatment plants;
- ▶ Construction and operation of vehicle washing, servicing and repair workshops;
- ▶ Installation and operation of health care facilities, such as hospitals and clinics;
- ▶ Disease vector (rodents, mosquitoes and cockroaches) and plant control programs using insecticides, herbicides and poisons;
- ▶ Operation of large food preparation facilities;
- ▶ Operation of chemical-based water purification plants;
- ▶ Hazardous substances (e.g., chemicals, expired pharmaceuticals, used batteries, fluorescent lamps, ozone-depleting substances) storage facilities;
- ▶ Operation of diesel generators and their associated fuel leaks;
- ▶ Petroleum, oil and lubricants (POL) storage and distribution facilities;
- ▶ Waste disposal facilities (ash piles, landfills, incinerators, composting);
- ▶ Information and Communications Technology (ICT) equipment installations and operation;
- ▶ Destruction of ammunition and closure of firing ranges.



9. **Handover Certificate.** All missions must coordinate with the host country authorities (or private landowner) the handover of the sites occupied by the mission, noting that for each camp or site closed, a handover certificate must be obtained from the relevant entity to be co-signed by both the United Nations and the entities. Further details and guidance, including a sample handover certificate, can be found online at <https://ppdb.un.org/>. In essence, the following procedure should be undertaken:

- ▶ Inform, well in advance, the host government authorities of the dates scheduled for vacating these sites;
- ▶ Ensure that the vacated sites are clean. This can be done through the ECOA process outlined above;
- ▶ Carry out a joint inspection of the sites with the owner/host government officials for any observations, with the government representative ideally being from the Ministry of Environment;
- ▶ Obtain a signed handover certificate for each vacated site, countersigned by the UN;
- ▶ The original handover certificates, with the ECOA documentation, should be archived for records and copies attached with the EMR and any other overall archiving.

10. **Assistance Mechanisms.** Various mechanisms exist for providing technical assistance to liquidating missions. Missions should contact³ UNGSC Environmental Technical Support Unit, which will coordinate with UNHQ (OUSG Environment Section and Logistics Division) and deploy assistance, including expertise from partners such as United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

³ Request for support to be made to Iscustomerservice@un.org, and in accordance with GSC/SOP/165.00.





ANNEX B: DETAILED WORKING GUIDES ON ASSET DISPOSAL, SITE CLOSURE, ADMINISTRATION, RECORDS AND ARCHIVES, HUMAN RESOURCES

Asset disposal

1. Asset disposal, together with site closures are the key activities of liquidation and both are time consuming and time sensitive. The order of priorities and sequencing for site closure and asset disposal need to be closely coordinated and linked with the drawing down of mission support/forces/police/substantive units.
2. ST/SGB/2013/4, Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations, Regulation 5.14 and Rules 105.23 and 105.24 govern disposal of property.

Key activities checklist

- ❑ Review and adjust the mission's supply-chain activities (purchase vs. utilization rates/disposal) to ensure minimal inventory holdings for the remainder of the mission, and to avoid purchasing additional/unnecessary stocks of assets/expendables.
- ❑ Identify potential issues with asset holdings (i.e., excessive holdings of inventory, disposal of assets with end-user restrictions; assets that may be difficult to dispose of due to environmental concerns, such as explosives; derecognised assets backlog in Property Disposal Unit holding, etc.) that should be addressed before liquidation.
- ❑ Have a dedicated team to work on derecognising assets, preparing them for the chosen disposal method (scrap, sale as is, donation, etc.), noting that it involves technical sections, integrated warehouse, property management, local property survey board, engineering and facilities management, environment, procurement and disposal unit.

- ❑ Commence asset disposal, guided by the prior engagement with Government and UNCT, which should in turn guide asset holdings, to minimize inventory to be disposed of during the formal liquidation period.
- ❑ Ensure adequate security measures are in place for the assets pending disposal to prevent theft and pilferage. Similarly, ensure security of the sites pending handover to lessors or UNCT.
- ❑ Completion of all asset sales, including the final disposal of assets sold, but not yet picked up by the new owner.
- ❑ Handover of any assets to be donated or that were gifted and held under temporary ownership provisions pending final disposal.
- ❑ Complete handover of assets purchased by UNCT.
- ❑ Transfer of any assets identified for other missions under the asset disposal plan, including ensuring the condition of those assets.
- ❑ Ensure retention of staff with applicable Umoja skillsets during this period, or support from UNGSC in the final disposal of assets.

Site closure

3. The liquidation team will assess the office (and accommodations, where applicable) space requirements in consideration of the personnel phase-out plan and ensure that suitable office/accommodation sites are retained for the duration of the liquidation process. Engineering and Facilities Management Sections with the Environmental Management Unit (EMU), in cooperation with the liquidation team, must establish a schedule for dismantling, cleaning, sorting and packing major equipment (generators, water treatment plants, wastewater treatment plants) and prefabricated facilities and installations, in accordance with the asset disposal and site drawdown plan.



4. Continually consolidate staff in conjunction with the drawdown plan and the number of occupied premises is to be progressively limited to the absolute minimum. Written notice will be issued to lessors advising them of the termination of the lease contract, in accordance with the termination clause of the lease contract.
5. In instances where the premises are being handed over to UNCT, notification will be issued to lessors and UNCT, and a joint inspection of premises will be carried out with the aim of ascertaining the conditions and any repairs, clean-up or refurbishment necessary prior to handing over the premises to UNCT.
6. EMU will conduct periodic pre-closure environmental inspections/assessments and follow up on recommendations to monitor the progress after submitting the reports to the concerned parties. Engineering, environmental and procurement staff of the mission must arrange a joint inspection of the premises with the landlord before hand over, and agree on any repairs, clean-up, remediation or refurbishment necessary, taking into consideration any upgrades to the premises carried out by the United Nations. Repairs/refurbishment and cleaning, as appropriate, will be executed on a self-help basis, where applicable. Alternatively, the work should be contracted out or payment in lieu of contractual repair should be considered.
7. Engineering staff of the mission should ensure the collection and destruction of mission identification signs or insignia and related paraphernalia. The supply of utility services will be terminated. Members of the team must arrange joint final reading of meters and ensure that all utility bills are paid. Following that, a handover inspection with the landlord must be arranged, and a release certificate indemnifying the United Nations against future claims must be obtained.
8. Environmental issues are central to the site closure task. See Annex A for detailed guidance on the management of environmental issues, and review in full.

Key activities checklist

- ❑ Establish timelines for phased drawdown of military, police and civilian staff of all mission components, and the timetable for joint inspection, repairs, clean-up and refurbishments.
- ❑ Progressively consolidate UN presence with a view to minimizing the footprint to an absolute minimum.
- ❑ Ensure accuracy of site and property management data in advance: perform full verification and adjustments of all assets and inventory to establish the volume of drawdown operations.
- ❑ Issue notification of the termination of the lease, in accordance with termination clause in lease contracts.
- ❑ Liaise and coordinate with the lessors and/or UNCT, where applicable, and implement joint inspections of all premises to establish repair, clean-up, refurbishment requirements prior to the handover.
- ❑ In conjunction with technical sections, refurbish, clean up or repair the premises, and withdraw all assets that are not earmarked for possible handover to the lessor or UNCT.
- ❑ Ensure all UN insignia are removed from sites or assets earmarked for handover to lessors.
- ❑ Ensure utilities service meters are recorded, service contracts are cancelled, as necessary, and all invoices are paid prior to handover of the premises to the lessor or UNCT.
- ❑ Ensure adequate security is in place pending the handover of the premises.
- ❑ Endeavour to keep the number of potential disputes and claims to a minimum.
- ❑ Remember to obtain a signed handover certificate for the site that will be handed over, including the environmental certificate indemnifying the UN against all future claims.
- ❑ Transfer all pending claims files to UNHQ for further processing.
- ❑ Finalize handover of all remaining sites to owner or Government, with signed handover certificates.
- ❑ Resolution of any outstanding environmental issues or ERW issues including any required remediation, as part of the handover process, and record it in the handover certificate.
- ❑ Ensure complete and signed handover certificates, including environmental certificate, are retained.



Administration, records and archives

9. UNHQ will pay critical attention to the mission's records, so as to safeguard the storage of mission records of archival value, and to the transfer of records (electronic and hard copy) to the custody of UNHQ Archives and Records Management Section (ARMS). It will take an inordinate amount of time to safely, expeditiously and definitively destroy those records that are not deemed of value in-situ.

10. Contact UNHQ/ARMS as soon as the drawdown or closure is evident to arrange for a comprehensive on-site assessment of the mission's records and archives management and for the development of a risk-based liquidation workplan for the mission to complete all tasks relating to records and archives. ARMS will also train the Information Management Unit (IMU) and the records management focal points on all procedures for identifying, disposing and transferring paper and digital records and archives to UNHQ, in accordance with the SOP: Field Entity Closure—Paper and Digital Records and Archives (Ref. 2019.07).

11. As final liquidation draws close, staff numbers will decrease, focal points will leave the mission at various drawdown dates, and workload will increase for those remaining. Information management, records and archives (IMRA) will most likely not be given priority, if mission staff have not already been sensitized to its importance in past years. Workforce planning needs to include a P (professional) or senior FS (field support)-level to lead all records management and archiving processes; independent contractors (ICs) can be recruited for the physical handling of boxes for transfer or disposal. All activities in areas of the mission which tend to create sensitive content, such as human rights, rule of law, human resources, must be led by the Chief of IMU/ Archives Unit.

12. The Chief of IMU/ Archives Unit will develop a plan which will provide a framework for training business unit focal points to identify and mitigate risk to sensitive records in their custody, identify records for secure disposal and/or transfer to UNHQ, and prepare the adequate documentation before packing the boxes.

13. Ensure that vital records, which will be needed in an unforeseen crisis or disaster scenario during a drawdown, are readily accessible to you.


14. Consider requesting that an audit of record management be undertaken once mandate changes indicate mission closure, and the liquidation count-down is set in motion. This could be part of an overall audit on Mission Support or a stand-alone audit. In this vein, it is advisable that accountability for record-keeping, in any medium, be tied to individual work plans. If that can be implemented from the head of mission down, that would be even better for accountability purposes.

15. Archiving completion during liquidation will rely on the Procurement Section to ensure certain goods and services contracts are not terminated, such as purchase of cardboard boxes and the shipping contract. Also, the Communications and Information Technology Section (CITS) must work closely with the Chief of IMU/Archives Unit to complete the digital records inventory and ensure that all repositories are identified, and that provisions can be made for the deletion of obsolete information and the transfer of the records to UNHQ.

16. As mission locations are vacated and the cleaning process begins, it is critical to identify, in advance, in the liquidation plan, where the records will be stored while awaiting shipment to UNHQ. The Facilities/Site Management Unit must identify a secure, monitored room for that purpose. Access to secure archive storage areas should be limited to the IMU team (or equivalent), the head of the liquidation team, and designated/named individuals from security and facilities, who should only access the room during emergencies. ICs need to be accompanied by UN staff.

Key activities checklist

- ❑ Identify a lead person for all records management and archiving activities (Chief of IMU/Archives Unit); ensure that the archiving plan for the mission closure is submitted to ARMS for review and coordinated with the liquidation team.
- ❑ In consultation with the mission's transition lead, develop and implement a plan to ensure that information required by the host country and other stakeholders to sustain the mission's programmes and achievements is identified and, if appropriate, duplicated and provided to the entities

- 
- ❑ Assign budget for ARMS risk-based records and information management. Assign budget for surge capacity temporary duty staff (TDYs) (i.e., SME, P-3 or P-4) if records activities are not completed at the beginning of the liquidation phase.
 - ❑ Procure boxes, shredders and freight/shipping contract.
 - ❑ Nominate focal points for records and archives in each Office (mission site and team sites); Schedule a series of video-telecommunication conferences (VTCs) with ARMS for training on records transfer and other records management guidance.
 - ❑ Identify records to be shipped to UNHQ, records most at risk (e.g. human rights records, personnel records); identify a secure bulk records disposal site and storage site to be used throughout the closure.
 - ❑ Pack boxes and prepare transfer documentation for all boxes, in accordance with the SOP: Field Entity Closure—Paper and Digital Records and Archives (Ref. 2019.07)
 - ❑ Conduct a digital records inventory (IMU/CITS/ARMS/OICT) to identify valuable and unique digital records to be transferred to UNHQ, and plan for shared-drive clean-up in the Mandate Completion phase.
 - ❑ Ensure RSCE also nominates, early on, a focal point for records which will be transferred to Entebbe (RSCE) to be used for the closing of accounts during the liquidation phase and inform UNHQ finance in the Department of Management, Strategy and Policy Compliance (DMSPC) for follow-up post-liquidation and closure.
 - ❑ Missions which use local vendors to destroy/recycle should aim to follow sound environmental policies and, where possible, recycle the mission's paper files into daily local supplies (e.g. UNOCI (Côte d'Ivoire) vendor recycled non-sensitive paper waste from the archiving liquidation exercise into egg cartons). Same applies to cases where United Nations-owned equipment (UNOE) is used, such as incinerators.
 - ❑ Finalize all claims, BOI, audit observations and residual legal matters to the maximum extent possible, including records of all handover certificates, including environmental clearance.

- Ensure contracts are terminated appropriately, including ensuring that final payments are made.
- Ensure archiving plan is fully completed, including ensuring that the archiving of sensitive documents is completed in accordance with current guidance.
- Arrange visit of RSCE team to the mission one month prior to closure, to ensure handover of all issues, including institutional knowledge and relevant historical documentation related to residual HR and financial transactions that cannot be resolved by the time of mission closure.

Human resources

17. The mission's senior leadership may need to be convinced about the merits of a progressive and sustained reduction of staff during the phases before liquidation. D/CMS may face resistance from senior leadership of the mission to initiate drawdown early on. Nonetheless, the drawdown approach must be an integrated approach from the outset and not led by Mission Support.

18. Administrative tasks related to separation of staff are data intensive and time consuming. There should be a systematic and controlled drawdown of staff that allows time for correct notification of end of contract or related notifications, compilation of outstanding claims, payroll adjustments, pension issues, leave and entitlement record updating. The myriad of HR tasks will benefit from a staggered departure schedule. Pushback should be anticipated from mission leadership to keep large numbers of substantive civilian and military personnel as close to the end of operations date as possible.

19. Workforce planning for the drawdown phases and a civilian comparative review process (CRP) should be carried out closely with input from the mission's senior management team and national and field staff unions; a steering committee or similar joint forum is beneficial with the Human Resources Services (HRS/DOS) or Division of Special Activities (DSA/DOS) as UNHQ participants. "Buy-in" by staff who feel included in the process, who understand the realities of mission closure and the potential end of their employment with the UN, can facilitate a smoother operation when jointly tackled. The sensitivities of this exercise require that UNHQ guidance be sought at all stages of the CRP process.



20. The Division of Special Activities, Department of Operational Support (DSA/DOS) will reach out to the field entity/mission early on and establish a coordinated information-sharing forum with UNHQ focal points through regular VTCs. Engage early with UNHQ to find solutions to staff departures; think outside the box, such as hiring retired staff on a temporary basis; and solicit sustained formal/informal efforts on the part of UNHQ to identify vacancies in other missions early on. The USG-DMSPC's authority to move staff laterally should be an option that is readily available to the mission during liquidation.

21. In theory, it is less challenging to find placements for staff on continuing and permanent contracts as they have priority for placement by UNHQ. During the liquidation period, the best staff will begin to look for work in other missions as soon as the notice of mission closure becomes common knowledge. Therefore, a staffing challenge will be to maintain the requisite capabilities and capacities to execute the established timelines of the liquidation plan. A common solution for local capacity is to use independent contractors (ICs). However, their contractual terms can lead to administrative complications if they are used as a flexible stop-gap solution for surge requirements; the practice should be to use ICs stringently in the final months as they may require training in technical areas, which would take up scarce time and resources from an already skeleton staff.

22. National and international staff need to be sensitized so that they feel that they are well informed and are being fairly considered for future opportunities. For national staff, local engagement can assist their employment prospects with United Nations partners or implementing partners and the host Government. This should be part of the communications strategy supported by the mission's senior leadership.

23. Staff support and moral are important. Investing through engagement will address their concerns and contribute to keeping them motivated. Mission Support should participate in country-level integrated forums, which exist between the mission and UNCT, such as the operational management team, to address issues and seek employment opportunities for staff. Many local staff issues can be mitigated if staff feel that their concerns have been addressed

and the Organization has invested in their training and enabled them to develop skills that they can take to the local or international employment market.

24. When planning entrepreneurial skills training and job fairs, work with substantive components, such as Civil Affairs and PIO, to reach out to the maximum potential employers. Approach international financial institutions, if any are present, to identify more specific business-orientated workshops. It is critical for HRS/DOS and DSA/DOS to regularly visit the mission, especially HRS/DOS careers team. Those visits have a marked difference on staff morale. Just as useful and critical is arranging for a visit by the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund (UNJSPF) to speak with mission staff so as to de-mystify perceived complex rules and regulations upon separation.

25. RSCE will have tasks to undertake in support of closure and post-liquidation. Scarce RSCE resources for handling the liquidation activities of client and non-client missions remain a reality. This must be mitigated to the extent possible by engaging with RSCE counterparts early in the drawdown timeline. OPS/DSA/DOS will ensure that partners such as RSCE and UNGSC participate in the coordination VTCs with the mission. Ensure that one of the first agenda items to discuss with RSCE is identifying the focal points for HR in RSCE and include them in establishing timelines to achieve milestones in your liquidation plan.

26. Above all, a critical review of the support processes in the pre-closure phase will allow for time to address and correct inefficient and time-consuming check out processes. Consider requesting an audit of Mission Support at least one year prior to liquidation as a “health check” of the readiness of the components to prepare for liquidation. Such attention can, for example, lead to a streamlined checkout process, with creative solutions using your ICT capacity and physical locations to ensure that information is readily available and user friendly. Informal lunchtime HR briefings and regular, scheduled thematic presentations, for example, are simple ways to open communication channels with staff during this sensitive period of the mission’s life. Efforts to implement an effective communication strategy will provide dividends in more than one area, and promote a smoother departure process for all affected staff.



Key activities checklist

- ❑ Actively manage timely communication to staff to address stress, lack of motivation, absenteeism.
- ❑ Time and attendance records are up to date; data consolidation needs to be regularly reported as part of the maintenance phase of the mission so as to avoid out-of-date personnel records when the mission drawdown is announced through a Security Council mandate.
- ❑ Pension claims are up to date, and all recent claimants are paid.
- ❑ Medical board claims are up to date and resolved.
- ❑ Payroll discrepancies and timelines addressed.
- ❑ Conduct a comparative review with dedicated UNHQ support; also, invite representatives of the administration of justice, such as the Office of Staff Legal Assistance (OSLA) and the Ombudsman Office, to minimize the risk of potential complaints citing downsizing.
- ❑ Engage with national and field staff unions when preparing the comparative civilian review.
- ❑ Request a visit by HRS/DOS career team and DSA/DOS.
- ❑ Review training gaps for all staff remaining on site for the liquidation.
- ❑ Organize job or entrepreneurial fairs (liaise with Procurement for local vendor lists, PIO and Civil Affairs for national organizations as prospective employers) and language courses for national staff.
- ❑ Verify contract duration of all relevant travel and shipment vendors.
- ❑ Initiate UNHQ support for the lateral transfer of staff to vacant posts in other missions.
- ❑ Engage with DOS divisions early, so as to identify staff in the field who have experience with liquidation, in order to anticipate surge requirements as critical staff depart.

- ❑ Establish a working relationship with UNCT; use the operational management team to advocate recruitment of the mission's national staff.
- ❑ Establish a one-stop checkout process and location with other units.
- ❑ Invite the Regional Ombudsman and Staff Counsellor (if the mission doesn't have its own) to visit.
- ❑ Finalize the processing of separation paperwork for all staff to be separated from the United Nations, including members of the liquidation team.
- ❑ Continue to follow up on pension entitlements, particularly for national staff.
- ❑ Consider using welfare funds to organize farewell and social events for staff.
- ❑ Address outstanding administration of justice issues, where possible, or prepare them for handover to RSCE.
- ❑ Finalize the archiving of all HR records.