OIOS

Office of Internal Oversight Services

INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION

REPORT 2024/032

Audit of the Grant Management System at the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

Implementation of "OneGMS" needed to be completed to fully leverage its benefits

28 June 2024
Assignment No. AT2023-590-01

Audit of the Grant Management System at the
Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of the Grant Management System (GMS) at the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). The objective of the audit was to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of governance, risk management and control processes in ensuring effective implementation of GMS at OCHA. The audit covered the period from January 2021 to March 2024 and included a review of risk areas relating to GMS which included: (a) system design and development; (b) data governance and management; (c) information and communications technology (ICT) governance mechanisms and project management capacity; and (d) ICT support systems.

The audit showed that implementation of OneGMS needed to be completed to include the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) functionality as well as enhancements required by the new Country Based Pooled Funds (CBPFs) Global Guidelines to fully leverage its benefits.

OIOS made 10 recommendations. To address the issues identified in the audit, OCHA needed to, inter alia:

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- Determine and assign project resources to fully implement the new Global Guidelines in OneGMS;
- Determine the integration requirements with Umoja to synchronize project agreement data, partner data, disbursements, revisions and refunds in a manner that ensures data integrity;
- Publish procedures and implement oversight mechanisms to ensure data completeness and integrity in OneGMS, including consistency in project scoring and comments, documentation of due diligence, capacity assessment, 'operational modality' exceptions and adherence to the Global Guidelines;
- Establish a dedicated reporting team to enhance the utilization of OneGMS data platforms effectively by all users, and implement regular training tailored for various stakeholders and users;
- Strengthen project governance for OneGMS by approving the terms of reference for the project board; approving a project plan with clear deliverables and resources; establishing key performance indicators for monitoring the project's progress; version controlling the user requirements and formalizing the user acceptance test processes for the project's iterations; and documenting comprehensive procedures for configuration, management and troubleshooting of OneGMS;
- Establish a production support model and team for OneGMS to effectively implement application support, user training, tests and incident management; and clarify the responsibilities of the Information Management Branch and GMS team for effective management of changes and incidents;
- Ensure that access to OneGMS with privileged roles is granted only after completion of mandatory training; implement a policy requiring training for all new users; and expedite the roll out of GMS Academy to provide adequate training for users;
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OCHA accepted the recommendations and has initiated action to implement them. Actions required to close the recommendations are indicated in Annex I.

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Audit of the Grant Management System at the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

I.   BACKGROUND

1.   The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of the Grant Management System (GMS) at the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

2.   OCHA manages two important humanitarian pooled funds – the Country Based Pooled Funds (CBPFs) and the global Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF). In 2023, the combined allocations by CBPFs and CERF were $1.7 billion, with $1.1 billion allocated by CBPFs and $663 million by CERF.

3.   Until 2012, all OCHA country offices were using separate local tools to manage CBPFs. To consolidate all CBPFs into one centralized system, OCHA completed the development of GMS in 2016, providing a standard platform and centralized database. Between 2016 and 2021, OCHA continued to expand the capacity of GMS by adding detailed project data submission, due diligence, partner capacity assessment, risk management, financial reporting, narrative reporting and monitoring processes.

4.   Concurrently, OCHA developed a separate, simpler system in 2014 to manage CERF. This legacy system was still in use and solely served the CERF secretariat's users, while field users conducted their workflow steps offline via email communication. The CERF system was designed to collect the project information in Word documents. It lacked the capability to collect processable data, thereby limiting OCHA's ability to manage grants and projects with the same level of automation and detail as CBPF.

5.   In 2021, OCHA made the strategic decision to introduce a new system to streamline CERF and CBPF processes through a unified platform named OneGMS. The initial phase of OneGMS was rolled out into production in January 2023 with only CBPF functionalities available to be used by Headquarters, field offices, implementing partners and cluster coordinators. At the time of the audit, CERF-related processes were still under development and planned to be launched in October 2024.

6.   Following an incremental approach, the OneGMS suite of applications (OneGMS CBPF module, OneGMS CERF module, Data hub, application interfaces, help portal) have continuously evolved to meet the changing needs of OCHA, such as alignment of the system with the new Global Guidelines. The ultimate goal of the project is to: (i) facilitate the management of the entire grant life cycle for all CBPFs and CERF, enhancing OCHA's accountability, transparency and effectiveness; (ii) enhance data analysis and information management capabilities of OCHA; (iii) enable grant recipients (also known as implementing partners) to submit project proposals, financial and narrative reports, as well as project revisions via web forms; and (iv) empower fund managers to oversee and monitor various business processes including due diligence, allocations, fund disbursement, project monitoring and reporting as well as strengthening a risk-based management approach. This system was integrated with other platforms such as the OCHA Contribution Tracking System, OCHA Financial Tracking Service, and the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Multi-partner Trust Fund gateway. By the end of 2023, OneGMS facilitated CBPF allocations totaling $1.1 billion, engaging 759 partners across 1,263 projects spanning 19 countries.

7.   Following a review of the Pooled Fund Management Branch (PFMB) structure, OCHA established the Guidance, Learning and Reporting Section (GLRS) in 2021 to strengthen coherence and complementarity across the OCHA-managed funds. Within GLRS, the Information Management Systems and Data Analytics Unit (IMSDAU) headed by a P-4 staff was responsible for project management and implementation of the OneGMS project in its entirety, as well as managing the legacy CERF application.

As of December 2023, IMSDAU was composed of a P-4 and P-3 staff supported by third party consultants. At the time of the audit, two new P-3 posts were in the process of recruitment. IMSDAU expenditure for 2021 to 2023 and its budget for 2024 are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: IMSDAU expenditure and budget (in $)

	2021 Expenditure	2022 Expenditure	2023 Expenditure	2024 Budget
OCHA staff cost	407,136	411,552	437,328	791,996
Consultancy and licences	689,673	770,015	735,519	800,000
Server hosting	70,000	90,000	60,000	70,000
Total	**1,166,809**	**1,271,567**	**1,232,847**	**1,661,996**

8.   Comments provided by OCHA are incorporated in italics.

II.   AUDIT OBJECTIVE, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

9.   The objective of the audit was to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of governance, risk management and control processes in ensuring effective implementation of GMS at OCHA.

10.   This audit was included in the 2023 risk-based work plan of OIOS due to the risks associated with the implementation of GMS.

11.   OIOS conducted this audit from November 2023 to March 2024. The audit covered the period from January 2021 to March 2024. Based on an activity-level risk assessment, the audit covered risk areas relating to GMS which included: (a) system design and development; (b) data governance and management; (c) information and communications technology (ICT) governance mechanisms and project management capacity; and (d) ICT support systems.

12.   The audit methodology included: interviews with key personnel; review of relevant documentation; analytical review of data; surveys; walkthroughs of systems; and sample testing.

13.   The audit was conducted in accordance with the International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing.

III.   AUDIT RESULTS

A.   System design and development

Implementing partners' user requirements were addressed in OneGMS

14.   OneGMS is a web-based platform that supports the management of the entire grant life cycle, promoting accountability in the humanitarian response. The effectiveness of OneGMS in addressing implementing partners' user requirements was evaluated based on its ability to facilitate the submission of capacity assessment questionnaire responses, project proposals, and financial and narrative reports. OIOS' survey of 20 implementing partners across 12 CBPFs indicated overall satisfaction with the system. Partners appreciated its ease of navigation and documentation clarity. They also recognized OneGMS's capacity to streamline proposal preparation, progress tracking and project management. However, challenges such as word count limitations in some fields and file size limitations for document uploads

were reported. Partners suggested enhancements in risk management features, progress measurement, dynamic issue reporting sections and budgeting process usability. Suggestions were also made to improve training coverage and incorporate notification trays.

<u>Implementation of CERF in OneGMS needs to be expedited</u>

15.   Best practices suggest that teams can mitigate delays, avoid scope creep and ensure that projects are completed on schedule and within budget by adhering to a well-defined plan. Adequate planning involves defining the project scope, setting clear objectives, establishing realistic timelines, allocating resources efficiently, and identifying potential risks and mitigation strategies.

16.   In its 2022 Annual Report, OCHA announced the launch of OneGMS designed to harmonize data management for CERF and CBPF and enhance transparency in their operation, aligning the projects funded through both funds. Even though OCHA announced that CERF information was available in one click, OIOS noted that CERF functionality was not yet deployed into OneGMS production, and CERF continued to be managed using the legacy system. OCHA stated that it has consistently prioritized the rollout of CERF in OneGMS since 2022, allocating all available resources in PFMB to ensure its successful implementation. However, the resourcing of PFMB remains a constraining factor in OCHA's ability to roll out modifications and upgrades in the desired timeframe. The new launch date for CERF OneGMS has been planned for 1 June 2024. At the time of the audit, the CERF transition and data migration plans were in draft and awaited finalization/endorsement by the project board.

17.   OIOS' review showed that there is a need for increased oversight by the project board to effectively address challenges and manage risks in managing OneGMS. The unmitigated risks included: (i) scope creep (including incorporation of additional functionalities like Anticipatory Allocation) during user acceptance testing; and (ii) delayed allocation of resources for training and support for CERF field users. Consequently, all CERF training sessions scheduled for 2023 had to be cancelled and the go-live date was postponed.

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19.   Overall, the current system's limited user base (only Headquarters), its inability to collect comprehensive project data, the existing infrastructure vulnerabilities, and absence of an approved transition and data migration plan from the legacy CERF application to OneGMS posed risks to the efficiency, transparency, security and overall effectiveness of CERF grant management.

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20.   The CBPF Global Guidelines provide a unified framework for governing and operating CBPFs. They establish minimum global standards to ensure effective management while recognizing each fund's unique context. The latest Global Guidelines, launched in December 2022, aim to enhance accountability to stakeholders.

21.   The rollout of the CBPF Global Guidelines in December 2022 coincided with the initial phase rollout of the OneGMS system in early 2023. The iterative nature of the OneGMS project has facilitated ongoing development, including the integration of new modules, enhancements and changes. However, certain requirements outlined in the Global Guidelines were yet to be addressed within OneGMS at the time of the audit. OIOS observed that a comprehensive requirements analysis and implementation plan to ensure alignment with the new Global Guidelines had not been conducted. Instead, some high-level requirements were identified without indicating the deadlines and resources required to fulfill these enhancements. Given the existing resources for OneGMS development (which are fully engaged in implementing CERF and managing a backlog of improvements and change requests for existing modules), implementation of the Global Guidelines' requirements may face delays. OCHA needs to evaluate the current resources for OneGMS to assess the impact of new requirements on overall project completion, including CERF implementation and support.

22.   The absence of alignment with the Global Guidelines may hinder the effectiveness of OneGMS in managing CBPFs, introducing operational complexities and weakening the level of accountability to stakeholders including donors, implementing partners and beneficiaries.

> **(2)   OCHA should determine and assign appropriate project resources to fully implement the new Global Guidelines in OneGMS.**
>
> *OCHA accepted recommendation 2 and stated that it is recruiting a position that will strengthen business analysis, enhancing overall efficiency and effectiveness in meeting the diverse needs of Headquarters and country offices. The position will enhance the response to requests for: (i) new reports; (ii) system enhancements, including those required for alignment with the CBPF Global Guidelines; and (iii) develop documentation to support integration across different systems, including Umoja, for enhanced data flow.*

B.   Data governance and management

23.   The Board of Auditors emphasized the significance of establishing a data bridge between Umoja and GMS in two reports – A/71/5, Vol.1 (2016) and A/75/5, Vol.1 (2020) – specifically addressing concerns related to the management of CBPF and CERF. This bridge was partially implemented in 2020. However, OCHA users encountered challenges with the Umoja-GMS bridge including frequent errors that required manual intervention. These errors stemmed primarily from uncoordinated structural changes (data structure and code) and data inconsistencies arising from partial integration of the two systems, and complex project workflow in GMS (such as delays in recording project revisions and expenditures in Umoja which were already executed in GMS), resulting in additional manual workload for OCHA teams. Consequently, OCHA stopped utilizing the bridge in 2022, leading to a halt in data exchange between Umoja and GMS. The lack of interfaces between Umoja and GMS posed risks and challenges as follows:

(a)   Entering project and partner data manually into Umoja after endorsement and approval in GMS was burdensome and inefficient, particularly considering the high volume of transactions. In 2023, there were 1,263 CBPF projects executed by 759 partners. This duplication of effort not only consumed valuable time and resources but also elevated the risk of errors and inconsistencies in data management, with potential delays in disbursement of project funds. Moreover, this manual input hindered OCHA's efforts to streamline operations and achieve greater efficiency across the Pooled Funds.

(b)   Disbursements in GMS underwent multiple workflow steps and layers of controls for approval. However, after approval, the Finance team manually input all disbursement data into Umoja. Subsequently, the final status of project disbursements was manually entered back into GMS. Given that each project typically involved multiple disbursements in tranches, relying on manual data entry for thousands of disbursements significantly increased the risk of delays and errors.   There were instances where implementing partners received funds but the status in GMS remained inaccurate because of delays in manual updates. Similarly, despite approval in GMS, actual disbursements in Umoja were not executed in a timely manner due to capacity issues in the Finance team.

(c)   Fund managers and field finance officers lacked visibility over real time project financial status and fund balances due to lack of a data interface between Umoja and GMS. Consequently, they relied solely on GMS, which did not provide the latest disbursement and refund information. Only through manual consolidation in Umoja, the OCHA Headquarters Finance Team produced accurate numbers for fund managers and finance officers in field offices. Fund managers' inability to access fund balances in real time led to suboptimal allocations, inadequate planning and inefficient utilization of funds.

(d)   Delays in matching refunds from Umoja to GMS resulted in several consequences, including project closure delays, increased risk of non-refunded funds, inability to allocate refunded funds, and partner grants being withheld despite refunds being processed.

24.   Addressing these linkages is imperative for establishing a unified and integrated system. The Enterprise Resource Planning Solution Division (ERPSD) of the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance advised that OCHA should initiate the request.

> **(3)   OCHA, in coordination with ERPSD, should determine the integration requirements with Umoja to synchronize project agreement data, partner data, disbursements, revisions and refunds in a manner that ensures data integrity.**
>
> *OCHA accepted recommendation 3 and stated that integration requirements will be documented, as per recommendation 2 above, for presentation to ERPSD in an effort to reach a commonly endorsed process for data movement across the two systems. Any subsequent change in management process will be contingent upon a commonly agreed technical solution.*

Need to strengthen oversight of data completeness and integrity in OneGMS

25.   OIOS' review of the grant management cycle in OneGMS showed that some controls were either not working or not fully utilized by the users, as explained below:

(a)   The review committees' decision-making process for project approval operated offline, relying on consensus to establish project scoring criteria encompassing strategic relevance, quality programming, cost effectiveness and monitoring. However, OIOS' review of a sample of projects in OneGMS showed that the scoring did not always match the comments in the scorecards. For example, a project scored high despite comments that the partner did not meet the desired criteria. Besides, there were no documents uploaded into OneGMS to support the reasons for selecting a high score on a non-compliant partner. Additionally,

signed attendance and minutes of the review committee meetings were not uploaded in the system. These discrepancies and missing documents may pose a risk to the effectiveness and credibility of the project approval process in OneGMS.

(b)　　The Global Guidelines determine the 'operational modality', that is, the number of disbursements and percentage of each disbursement, the number of monitoring visits and number of financial spot checks of a project based on the risk level of the partner, project duration and project value. OneGMS is designed to automatically assign the 'operational modality' value to projects based on project and partner information. However, it also provides flexibility to override the system-assigned 'operational modality'. OIOS' review of OneGMS data showed that out of 30 sampled projects, 13 projects had different 'operational modality' values than the system-assigned value, and there was no evidence to justify the override. Also, in two instances, the system-assigned 'operational modality' values were not compliant with the Global Guidelines. The GMS team explained that the proportion of each tranche disbursed was left flexible to cater for situations where there were cost extensions; flexibility in disbursement was required to cater for the cost difference. However, OIOS' review of 20 projects that had adjusted the proportion of the tranches showed that none of them had cost extensions. OCHA explained that as part of the implementation plan for the new Global Guidelines, a new feature will be developed to ensure that disbursement tranches are validated according to the applied operational modalities.

(c)　　There was inadequate utilization of the capacity assessment and due diligence functions in OneGMS. The new Global Guidelines require due diligence and capacity assessment of partners to ascertain their eligibility, risk levels and 'operational modalities'. For this purpose, partners must complete a questionnaire and submit the required documents in OneGMS. Following desk reviews and site visits by Humanitarian Financing Units (HFUs) to verify partner-provided information, verification results must be recorded, and reference documents uploaded in OneGMS by the HFUs. However, OIOS' review of GMS records showed that HFUs were not utilizing the 'upload document' function to store information on verification of implementing partners. Consequently, the information in OneGMS was insufficient to assure the capacity of implementing partners or demonstrate compliance with due diligence requirements.

(d)　　OneGMS flagged implementing partners with performance issues which were escalated to the Compliance Unit for verification. However, partners with programmatic performance issues such as delays in submitting reports and supporting documentation were not flagged in the system.

26.　　Lack of procedures and oversight on the use of OneGMS functionalities and adherence to Global Guidelines resulted in inconsistencies and ineffective utilization of the system's features.

> **(4)　OCHA should publish procedures and implement oversight mechanisms to ensure data completeness and integrity in OneGMS, including consistency in project scoring and comments, documentation of due diligence, capacity assessment, 'operational modality' exceptions and adherence to the Global Guidelines.**
>
> *OCHA accepted recommendation 4 and stated that it will document and publish procedures to ensure data completeness and integrity, to be available to OneGMS users through the online Help Portal. This will be reinforced through training.*

Need to effectively use GMS data to achieve strategic objectives and improve the monitoring of funds

27.　　OCHA's Strategic Plan 2023–2026 defines transformational priorities and emphasizes that analysis and data-driven decision-making will serve as enablers for delivering them. A goal has been set to generate more robust, data-driven analysis to enhance evidence-based decision-making, planning, response design and clearer prioritization. The strategy also underscores the use of data and analysis to strengthen the

capacity and work of OCHA for effective coordinated humanitarian response, advocating increased financing and improving accountability.

28.   The OneGMS system was built to gather extensive data to meet diverse reporting requirements. The dataset included processable data extracted from project proposals, narrative and financial reports including demographic data concerning the populations reached. Although several datasets were made available in a middle layer (OneGMS application interfaces), it was commonly used only by HFUs. The various reports from the GMS internal data hub were not used by users such as fund managers, finance officers, programme officers and cluster coordinators for their day-to-day reporting requirements.

29.   The HFU dashboard reflected annual reports even though quarterly reports were needed at the field level to facilitate continuous engagement with the community. Since the Information Management Unit in the Gaziantep field office did not have direct access to OneGMS, it collected data dumps through HFU which it enriched with the data collected from the field in a separate platform. Similarly, the Communication and Reporting Unit in the field office did not have direct access to OneGMS. These constraints in accessing data directly from OneGMS pointed to the need for a dedicated reporting team that facilitated streamlined access with appropriate user roles, and provided regular training to users in the field.

> **(5)   OCHA should: (a) establish a dedicated reporting team to enhance the utilization of OneGMS data platforms effectively by all users; and (b) document and implement regular training plans tailored for various stakeholders and users of pooled funds data.**
>
> *OCHA accepted recommendation 5 and stated that it will expand OneGMS reporting by strengthening capacity in Regional Offices to provide user support. This includes training and exploration of the establishment of the OneGMS Academy learning platform.*

C.   ICT governance mechanisms and project management capacity

<u>Project governance needed to be strengthened to avoid systemic delays</u>

30.   The United Nations Secretariat's project management framework requires active participation of senior management through a project board for oversight over the project direction, resource allocation and management decisions to ensure the project's overall success. The OneGMS project experienced repeated delays due to weaknesses in project governance. OIOS noted the following:

(a)   The project board did not oversee the expenditures on OneGMS. The absence of monitoring for cost overruns or potential funding shortfalls meant that project resources were not aligned with expectations. Due to lack of documentation, OCHA was unable to ascertain how much it had spent on the project, and how much more would be required for the project.

(b)   There were no approved terms of reference for the project board, along with clearly defined roles for the project executive, business process owners, project manager and technical team. This deficiency resulted in deviations from the original plan, hindering the timely completion of the project and causing miscommunication to stakeholders.

(c)   Project board meetings and decisions concerning actions to address critical project risks (such as delays in finalizing requirements by the CERF secretariat, project resourcing limitations for development, and training and support of CERF activities) were not documented. Unmitigated risks caused a delay of more than two years from the time OCHA announced the readiness of OneGMS in its 2022 Annual Report, although the project was not complete.

(d)   The project plan remained a work in progress with undefined milestones and fluctuating priorities due to limited resource availability. There was no release plan in place determining the dates and deliverables of the remaining iterations and their scope.

(e)   Although OCHA had documented the project justification and requirements, OIOS was not provided an approved business case outlining the project's purpose, scope, cost, expected timelines and expected benefits. OCHA did not regularly review the business case at key project milestones or whenever significant changes occurred.

(f)   Functional specifications did not have version numbers and remained unsigned by business owners, and user acceptance test results lacked proper documentation and sign-off. The requirements documentation did not cover various use case scenarios for different user types. There was no approved test plan and transition document for integrating CERF into OneGMS.

(g)   There were no measurable key performance indicators for monitoring the project's progress.

(h)   While the project manager possessed extensive experience, the current allocation of tasks raised concerns about potential knowledge transfer limitations and a single point of failure. The project manager shouldered crucial aspects such as project management, technical lead duties and application management, as well as overseeing the issue resolution, requirements analysis, tests, training, deployment and user access management mostly supported by contractors. To ensure project continuity and facilitate knowledge transfer, OCHA needs to consider cross-training on critical tasks to alleviate the reliance on a single individual and develop comprehensive documentation outlining the processes, configurations and procedures to ensure smooth knowledge transfer and redundancy.

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(6)   OCHA should strengthen project governance for OneGMS by: (a) approving the terms of reference for the project board; (b) approving a project plan with clear deliverables and resources; (c) establishing key performance indicators for monitoring the project's progress; (d) version controlling the user requirements and formalizing the user acceptance test processes for the project's iterations; and (e) documenting comprehensive procedures for configuration, management and troubleshooting of OneGMS.

OCHA accepted recommendation 6 and stated that the Information Management Steering Group (IMSG) acts as the project board, informing OneGMS user requirements. Terms of reference of the IMSG will be updated, to strengthen the interface with OCHA's ICT Governance Committee.

D.   ICT support systems

<u>GMS production service support model needs to be established</u>

31.   Best practices suggest that an effective production support team operates separately from development teams and is responsible for monitoring the applications and scheduled background processes (such as interfaces), receiving incidents and requests from end-users, and either responding to the end user with a solution or escalating it to the other levels.

32.   The OneGMS system in production requires continuous monitoring, user support and maintenance which is a task that is independent from project implementation. However, the support tasks were handled by the project team which analyzed user requirements, developed the system, managed the databases, trained the users, and coordinated the user acceptance tests and responded to the test results. There was no

documented service support model to facilitate the release of new versions, train the users, and to resolve the issues that could be addressed at different levels (Tier-1, Tier-2, Tier-3).
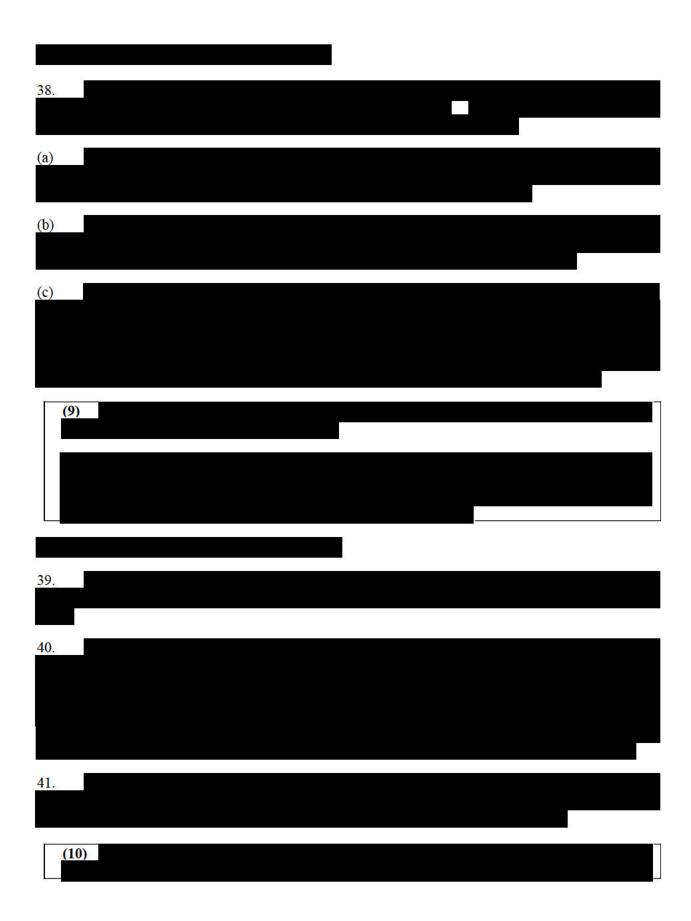
33.   OIOS' assessment based on the feedback received from users in the Gaziantep office and from the sampled partners indicated that important issues were prioritized and resolved quickly. However, this had an impact on the ongoing project development because project resources were continuously shifted to resolve priority issues, thereby impacting the project plan and deliverable dates of future releases. For example, Phase-1 of the CERF development in OneGMS was complete in June 2023, but the tests and training were delayed due to lack of support staff.

34.   The lack of a service support model increases the risk of inefficient incident resolution and inadequate prioritization of support tasks.

> **(7)   OCHA should: (a) establish a production support model and team for OneGMS to effectively implement application support, user training, tests and incident management; and (b) clarify the roles and responsibilities of the Information Management Branch and the Grant Management System team for effective management of changes and incidents.**
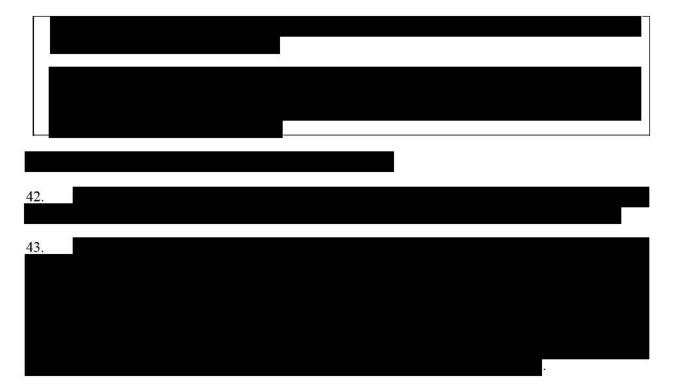>
> *OCHA accepted recommendation 7 and stated that it will consolidate the support model for OneGMS, including incident management and training programmes, by strengthening capacity in Regional Offices complemented by Information Management Branch (IMB) Tier 1 capability across various time zones.*

Need for continuous and systematic user training

35.   User training is essential to maximize the effectiveness and efficiency of OneGMS, optimizing its benefits by promoting adherence to procedures and enhancing data completeness and integrity.

36.   OCHA had developed a comprehensive OneGMS training platform comprising YouTube videos, written materials and diagrams detailing system functionalities and user roles. Additionally, the platform featured monthly blogs highlighting new developments. Global training sessions were conducted for HFUs after each system release, supplemented by quarterly sessions for newly onboarded staff. Of the 18 responding implementing partners surveyed, 72 per cent reported receiving online, in-person or web-based training. However, training on OneGMS for new users (internal or external) was not mandatory, which could impact overall efficiency and effectiveness.

37.   New HFU staff were granted access to the system with the HFU role immediately after onboarding, before receiving training on OneGMS. This role grants extensive access to OneGMS functionalities, and any unintended actions performed under this role could potentially result in data corruption, necessitating resource-intensive rollbacks by the OneGMS project team with limited resources. OCHA mentioned the proposed OneGMS Academy to address the needs of new users according to their roles, but this initiative was pending management approval.

> **(8)   OCHA should: (a) ensure that access to OneGMS with privileged roles is granted only after completion of mandatory training; (b) implement a policy requiring training for all new users; and (c) expedite the roll out of GMS Academy to provide adequate training for users.**
>
> *OCHA accepted recommendation 8 and stated that it will strengthen capacity in Regional Offices to provide OneGMS user support. Implementation of the OneGMS Academy will enhance rollout of OneGMS training for all new users.*

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IV.   ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

44.   OIOS wishes to express its appreciation to the Management and staff of OCHA for the assistance and cooperation extended to the auditors during this assignment.

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Internal Audit Division
Office of Internal Oversight Services
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STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Audit of the Grant Management System at the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical[1]/ Important[2]	C/ O[3]	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date[4]
1	███████	███	█	███████	███
2	OCHA should determine and assign appropriate project resources to fully implement the new Global Guidelines in OneGMS.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that appropriate project resources have been assigned to implement the Global Guidelines in OneGMS.	31/12/2025
3	OCHA, in coordination with ERPSD, should determine the integration requirements with Umoja to synchronize project agreement data, partner data, disbursements, revisions and refunds in a manner that ensures data integrity.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that integration requirements of OneGMS and Umoja related to synchronize project agreement data, partner data, disbursements, revisions and refunds are communicated to the ERPSD.	31/12/2025
4	OCHA should publish procedures and implement oversight mechanisms to ensure data completeness and integrity in OneGMS, including consistency in project scoring and comments, documentation of due diligence, capacity assessment, 'operational modality' exceptions and adherence to the Global Guidelines.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence of published procedures and implementation of oversight mechanisms to ensure data completeness and integrity in OneGMS including consistency in project scoring and comments, documentation of due diligence, capacity assessment, 'operational modality' exceptions and adherence to the Global Guidelines.	31/12/2025
5	OCHA should: (a) establish a dedicated reporting team to enhance the utilization of OneGMS data platforms effectively by all users; and (b) document and implement regular training plans tailored for various stakeholders and users of pooled funds data.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence of: (a) establishment of reporting team ensuring effective utilization of OneGMS data by various user groups for their operational needs and informed decision making;	31/12/2025

[1] Critical recommendations address those risk issues that require immediate management attention. Failure to take action could have a critical or significant adverse impact on the Organization.

[2] Important recommendations address those risk issues that require timely management attention. Failure to take action could have a high or moderate adverse impact on the Organization.

[3] Please note the value C denotes closed recommendations whereas O refers to open recommendations.

[4] Date provided by OCHA in response to recommendations.

STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Audit of the Grant Management System at the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical[1]/ Important[2]	C/ O[3]	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date[4]
				and (b) training plans on reporting tailored to various users and stakeholders	
6	OCHA should strengthen project governance for OneGMS by: (a) approving the terms of reference for the project board; (b) approving a project plan with clear deliverables and resources; (c) establishing key performance indicators for monitoring the project's progress; (d) version controlling the user requirements and formalizing the user acceptance test processes for the project's iterations; and (e) documenting comprehensive procedures for configuration, management and troubleshooting of OneGMS.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence of: (a) approved terms of reference of the OneGMS project board; (b) approved project plan with clear deliverables and resources; (c) key performance indicators for monitoring the project performance; (d) version-controlled user requirements and formalized user acceptance test process; and (e) documented procedures for configuration management and troubleshooting of OneGMS.	30/06/2025
7	OCHA should: (a) establish a production support model and team for OneGMS to effectively implement application support, user training, tests and incident management; and (b) clarify the roles and responsibilities of the Information Management Branch and the Grant Management System team for effective management of changes and incidents.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence of: (a) establishing a production support model including application support, training, tests and incident management; and (b) clarification of roles and responsibilities of OCHA units for effective change and incident management related to the OneGMS system and infrastructure.	31/12/2025
8	OCHA should: (a) ensure that access to OneGMS with privileged roles is granted only after completion of mandatory training; (b) implement a policy requiring training for all new users; and (c) expedite the roll out of GMS Academy to provide adequate training for users.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that: (a) access is granted to privileged roles in OneGMS only after completion of mandatory training; (b) a policy requiring training for all new users has been implemented; and (c) the roll out of GMS Academy has been completed.	31/12/2025
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APPENDIX I

Management Response

то: Mr. Byung-Kun Min, Director   DATE: 21 June 2024
  A: Internal Audit Division, OIOS

REFERENCE:

THROUGH:
  S/C DE:

FROM: Mr. Martin Griffiths,
  DE: Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian
      Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator

SUBJECT: **OCHA comments on the draft report of an audit of the**
OBJET: **Grant Management System at the Office for the**
      Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (AT2023-590-01)

In reference to your memorandum dated 6 June 2024, I am
enclosing herewith OCHA's management response to the draft
report and the recommendations issued.

Attachment:
Appendix I – Management response: audit of the Grant
Management System at the Office for the Coordination of
Humanitarian Affairs

Cc: Menada Wind-Andersen, Ali Buzurukov, Assefa Bahta

Management Response

Audit of the Grant Management System at the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical[1]/ Important[2]	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
1	███████	███	███	███████	███████	███████
2	OCHA should determine and assign appropriate project resources to implement the new Global Guidelines in OneGMS.	Important	Yes	**Chief of PFMB** • SDI/GLRS/PFMB • CBPF/PFMB	31/12/2025	OCHA accepts the recommendation. OCHA is recruiting a position that will strengthen business analysis, enhancing overall efficiency and effectiveness in meeting the diverse needs of HQ and Country Offices. The position will enhance the response to requests for (i) new reports, (ii) system enhancements, including those required for alignment with the CBPF Global Guidelines, and (iii) develop documentation to support integration across different

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[1] Critical recommendations address those risk issues that require immediate management attention. Failure to take action could have a critical or significant adverse impact on the Organization.
[2] Important recommendations address those risk issues that require timely management attention. Failure to take action could have a high or moderate adverse impact on the Organization.

Management Response

Audit of the Grant Management System at the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical[1]/ Important[2]	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
						systems, including Umoja, for enhanced data flows.
3	OCHA, in coordination with ERPSD, should determine the integration requirements with Umoja to synchronize project agreement data, partner data, disbursements, revisions and refunds in a manner that ensures data integrity.	Important	Yes	**Executive Office** • SDI/GLRS/PFMB • ERPSD	31/12/2025	OCHA accepts the recommendation. Integration requirements will be documented, as per recommendation 2 above, for presentation to ERPSD in an effort to reach a commonly endorsed process for data movement across the two systems. Management understands that OIOS will explore the matter with the OICT/UMOJA team during a separate, upcoming review. Any subsequent change in management process will be contingent upon a commonly agreed technical solution.
4	OCHA should publish procedures and implement oversight mechanisms to ensure data completeness and integrity in OneGMS, including consistency in project scoring and comments, documentation of due diligence, capacity assessment, 'operational modality' exceptions and adherence to the Global Guidelines.	Important	Yes	**Chief of PFMB** • SDI/GLRS/PFMB	31/12/2025	OCHA accepts the recommendation. PFMB will document and publish procedures to ensure data completeness and integrity, to be available to OneGMS users through the online Help Portal. This will be reinforced through training.

Management Response

Audit of the Grant Management System at the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical[1]/ Important[2]	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
5	OCHA should: (a) establish a dedicated reporting team to enhance the utilization of OneGMS data platforms effectively by all users; and (b) document and implement regular training plans tailored for various stakeholders and users of pooled funds data.	Important	Yes	**Director of FPD** • SDI/GLRS/PFMB	31/12/2025	OCHA accepts the recommendation. OCHA will expand OneGMS reporting by strengthening capacity in Regional Offices to provide user support. This includes training and exploration of the establishment of the OneGMS Academy learning platform.
6	OCHA should strengthen project governance for OneGMS by: (a) approving the terms of reference for the project board; (b) approving a project plan with clear deliverables and resources; (c) establishing key performance indicators for monitoring the project's progress; (d) version controlling the user requirements and formalizing the user acceptance test processes for the project's iterations; and (e) documenting comprehensive procedures for configuration, management and troubleshooting of OneGMS.	Important	Yes	**Chief of PFMB** • SDI/GLRS/PFMB	30/06/2025	OCHA accepts the recommendation. PFMB manages the Information Management Steering Group (IMSG) as the project board, informing OneGMS user requirements. Terms of Reference of the IMSG will be updated, to strengthen the interface with OCHA's ICT Governance Committee. The revision will reinforce adherence to documentation requirements and reporting against agreed indicators to monitor the project progress.
7	OCHA should: (a) establish a production support model and team for OneGMS to effectively implement application support, user training, tests and incident management; and (b) clarify the	Important	Yes	**Director of FPD** • SDI/GLRS/PFMB • IMB	31/12/2025	OCHA accepts the recommendation. OCHA will consolidate the support model for OneGMS, including incident management and training

Management Response

Audit of the Grant Management System at the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical[1]/ Important[2]	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
	roles and responsibilities of the Information Management Branch and the Grant Management System team for effective management of changes and incidents.					programs, by strengthening capacity in Regional Offices complemented by Information Management Branch (IMB) Tier 1 capability across various time zones.
8	OCHA should: (a) ensure that access to OneGMS with privileged roles is granted only after completion of mandatory training; (b) implement a policy requiring training for all new users; and (c) expedite the roll out of GMS Academy to provide adequate training for users.	Important	Yes	**Chief of PFMB** • SDI/GLRS/PFMB	31/12/2025	OCHA accepts the recommendation. OCHA will strengthen capacity in Regional Offices to provide OneGMS user support. Implementation of the OneGMS Academy will enhance rollout of OneGMS training for all new users.
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Management Response

Audit of the Grant Management System at the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical[1]/ Important[2]	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
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