



INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION

REPORT 2017/059

Audit of operations of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Mali

While the Country Office in Mali established key aspects of the coordination structure to manage the humanitarian response, it needed to strengthen the role of the cluster system

28 June 2017
Assignment No. AN2017/590/01

Audit of operations of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Mali

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The objective of the audit was to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of governance, risk management and control processes over the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) operations in Mali. The audit covered the period from January 2015 to December 2016 and it included a review of the coordination of humanitarian emergency response and management of staff and other resources allocated to the Country Office.

While the Country Office in Mali established key aspects of the coordination structure to manage the humanitarian response, it needed to strengthen the role of the cluster system.

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

- Develop a strategy to reinforce the capacity of the clusters to effectively perform their role;
- Facilitate the development of basic common evaluation criteria and a feedback mechanism for the selection of projects to be included in the humanitarian response plan;
- Review and if necessary, escalate to OCHA headquarters the problems encountered by implementing partners in reporting the status of their respective projects in the Online Reporting System;
- Advocate that cluster coordinators develop a risk-based monitoring plan and report on its implementation to strengthen the monitoring mechanism of projects in the humanitarian response plan; and
- Ensure that all staff members complete United Nations mandatory training courses. This should include reporting language and technology issues to the Department of Management.

OCHA accepted the recommendations and has initiated action to implement them.

CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
I. BACKGROUND	1
II. AUDIT OBJECTIVE, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY	1-2
III. OVERALL CONCLUSION	2
IV. AUDIT RESULTS	2-8
A. Coordination of emergency humanitarian response	2-5
B. Management of staff and other resources in the Country Office	6-8
V. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	8
ANNEX I Status of audit recommendations	
APPENDIX I Management response	

Audit of operations of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Mali

I. BACKGROUND

1. The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of operations of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in Mali.
2. OCHA is responsible for bringing together humanitarian actors to ensure a coherent response to emergencies in accordance with General Assembly resolution 46/182 dated 19 December 1991. OCHA started operations in Mali in 2012 and is involved in coordinating the humanitarian response to disasters triggered by armed conflict and occupation of some northern regions.
3. In 2015, resource requirements of \$377 million were estimated in the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) for Mali, of which \$132 million or 35 per cent was funded. As of December 2016, the HRP resource requirements were \$354 million, of which \$135 million or 38 per cent was funded. There were 118 and 136 projects that were programmed in 2015 and 2016 HRPs, respectively.
4. For its programmatic humanitarian response activities, OCHA drew on the global Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) in Mali. For 2016, CERF allocations amounted to about \$16 million. The Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) in Mali used the HRP in programming the priority areas into humanitarian assistance projects from CERF. The HC consulted the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) in the programming and allocation of funds. The ERC approved CERF projects.
5. The OCHA Country Office in Mali supported the HC in providing a coordinated humanitarian response. The country office prepared an annual work plan to carry out its responsibilities. The Head of Office, at the D-1 level, is responsible for managing the office. The Head of Office reports to the Director of the Coordination Response Division (CRD) in OCHA, and works closely with the Director of Corporate Programme Division and the Executive Officer in OCHA. The Country Office drew resources from two funding sources for its administrative operations in Mali: (i) Trust Fund for Disaster Relief; and (ii) programme support costs (PSC). These amounted to \$11.3 million and \$0.3 million respectively, in the 2015 and 2016 cost plans. The Office had an authorized staffing table of 47 posts - 16 international and 31 national, as of December 2016.
6. With its headquarters in Bamako, the OCHA Country Office in Mali maintained three sub-offices: Gao, Mopti, and Timbuktu.
7. Comments provided by OCHA are incorporated in italics.

II. AUDIT OBJECTIVE, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

8. The objective of the audit was to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of governance, risk management and control processes over OCHA operations in Mali.
9. This audit was included in the 2017 risk-based work plan of OIOS due to the risks related to: (i) coordinating emergency response needs assessment under the HRP; (ii) overseeing the programming and management of CERF projects totalling \$16 million; and (iii) managing staff and other resources in the OCHA Country Office.

10. OIOS conducted this audit in January and February 2017. The audit covered the period from January 2015 to December 2016. Based on an activity-level risk assessment, the audit covered higher and medium risks areas in the OCHA's operations in Mali, which included: coordination of humanitarian emergency response and management of staff and other resources by the Country Office.

11. The audit methodology included: (a) interviews of key personnel, (b) review of relevant documentation, (c) analytical review of data, and (d) statistical sample testing.

III. OVERALL CONCLUSION

12. OCHA Mali was effective in establishing key aspects of the humanitarian response structure in Mali with participation of the humanitarian partners. However, OCHA needed to strengthen the role of the cluster system and ensure that all staff members complete United Nations mandatory training courses.

IV. AUDIT RESULTS

A. Coordination of emergency humanitarian response

The coordination structure of the humanitarian response in Mali was adequate

13. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Transformative Agenda Principles require the establishment of an adequate humanitarian response framework including, among others, coordination as one of the essential enablers for a successful emergency humanitarian response. OCHA supports the HC's leadership, and ensures effective coordination, including strengthening information management and reporting.

14. The HC led the Coordination Structure in Mali, which included the Government and humanitarian community in key coordination mechanisms such as clusters/sectors. OCHA Mali supported the HC in liaising with key members in the Humanitarian Coordination Structure. It also chaired the Inter-Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG), which liaised with Mali's Ministry of Social Affairs in facilitating the development of the HRP and ensuring a coherent and coordinated approach to planning and operationalizing shared strategic objectives. Within the Coordination Structure, OCHA Mali aggregated the data collected by the clusters for the Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO), the HRP and the Online Reporting System (ORS), and synthesized them into reports to the humanitarian partners. It also liaised with the Malian Government, at the technical level, and humanitarian partners including donors to ensure a common approach to provide an adequate response to the humanitarian needs.

15. At the national level, OCHA Mali ensured that the clusters were linked to the relevant sectoral national technical directors. Each cluster lead United Nations agency held ad-hoc meetings with their respective Government focal points. Similarly at the regional level, the ICCG worked closely with the regional government and technical directors with whom they held monthly meetings. Some clusters performed annual self-evaluations as well as cluster coordination performance monitoring self-assessments. Therefore, OIOS concluded that OCHA had established key aspects of the humanitarian coordination structure in Mali to effectively coordinate the emergency response with the United Nations agencies and other humanitarian partners.

OCHA's role in the cluster coordination system needed to be strengthened

16. The cluster system plays an integral role in the humanitarian response through: (i) development of the HNO and HRP to plan the response; (ii) implementation of projects by its members; (iii) monitoring

of projects by cluster coordinators; and (iv) participation of cluster leads in the HCT. OCHA's role in the cluster coordination system is to establish and maintain appropriate inter-cluster coordination mechanisms and support clusters in resource mobilization, advocacy, information management, evaluation, reporting, and capacity building.

17. There were seven national clusters and 16 sub-clusters in three different regions in Mali. However, only 50 per cent of clusters at the national level had dedicated cluster coordinators. The remaining cluster coordinators had responsibilities with their respective agencies in addition to their coordination duties. As a result, those clusters did not perform well. The participation of their members was low and the information they provided on the HNO, HRP and ORS was incomplete. There were also no dedicated coordinators in the sub-clusters and most cluster coordinators were not able to visit their sub-clusters due to lack of resources and security concerns.

18. At the operational level, there was no systematic information sharing from the field to the national level as United Nations agencies and international NGOs present in the field did not receive adequate support from their offices at the national level. The ICCG retreat in January 2017 identified the following areas of concern: (i) lack of communication between sub-clusters and national clusters with regard to information sharing; (ii) lack of follow-up on ICCG and sub-clusters recommendations at the HCT level; (iii) lack of multi-cluster evaluations; and (iv) weak participation/presence of local government technical services at sub-cluster meetings. In addition, cluster coordinators have expressed a crucial need for information management assistance at the national and regional levels.

19. OCHA Mali was limited in its coordination role as it could not provide the necessary support to the clusters due to lack of resources. OCHA's operations in Mali were not supported with a country-based pool fund (CBPF) which could: (i) enhance coordination and bring about complementarity among humanitarian financing mechanisms; (ii) promote diversity and partnership by supporting a variety of humanitarian actors; and (iii) provide improved monitoring and reporting mechanisms. OCHA Mali informed OIOS that there had been consultations with stakeholders on this subject in the past years but there was no donor appetite for a CBPF in light of an overall critical funding environment.

20. The lack of capacity in the clusters, as well as limited information sharing between the national and regional clusters, made it more difficult for humanitarian partners to adequately identify/prioritize needs and respond to the needs.

(1) OCHA Mali should, in collaboration with the Humanitarian Coordinator and cluster lead agencies, develop a strategy to reinforce the capacity of the clusters to effectively perform their role.

OCHA accepted recommendation 1. Recommendation 1 remains open pending receipt of a strategy to reinforce the capacity of the clusters to effectively perform their role.

HRP development process needed basic common evaluation criteria for selection of projects

21. The HRP serves as the basis for the humanitarian response strategy. The document is a result of a joint exercise managed through the Mali Humanitarian Coordination Structure with participation of the humanitarian partners. Based on guidelines received from OCHA Mali, cluster members developed projects proposals to address the needs in their respective clusters and uploaded them in the Online Projects System. Cluster technical teams reviewed and selected projects for their clusters, and cluster coordinators validated selected projects and sent them to OCHA Mali for review. OCHA Mali ensures that the projects address the needs identified in the HNO and are in line with the HRP's strategic objectives and present them to the HCT for review and approval. Budgets of projects approved by the

HCT are finalized and included in the HRP, which the HC reviews and approves. The HRP is officially launched in a workshop with the Government.

22. During discussions with implementing partners, they indicated that there were no basic common evaluation criteria for the selection of the projects at the cluster level. Each cluster technical team used its own criteria to select projects. They also stated that these criteria were not always clear and in some instances only oral instructions were provided in the clusters. Additionally, cluster members who submitted projects for review were often not informed of the reasons why their projects were not selected for inclusion in the HRP.

23. The lack of basic common evaluation criteria at the cluster level led to a lack of consistency and transparency in the selection of projects, which had a negative impact on the adequacy of the HRP development process. Consequently, the identification and prioritization of needs in the HRP needed to be streamlined with a feedback mechanism in place.

(2) OCHA Mali should, in coordination with the Humanitarian Coordinator and cluster lead agencies, facilitate the development of basic common evaluation criteria and a feedback mechanism on the selection of projects to be included in the humanitarian response plan.

OCHA accepted recommendation 2 stating that OCHA would facilitate the development of basic common agreed criteria, although it is normally up to each cluster ultimately to decide on which project should be included in the HRP. Recommendation 2 remains open pending establishment of commonly agreed evaluation criteria and feedback mechanism on the selection of projects in the HRP.

Monitoring of HRP projects needed to be strengthened

24. The Mali humanitarian response monitoring framework clearly defines the activities to be monitored, the methodology and frequency, parties responsible for monitoring and analysis, and timetable for producing the reports. OCHA's role in the process is to regularly inform the HC and HCT on the implementation of the humanitarian response monitoring framework, including the allocation of necessary resources, preparation and publication of periodic monitoring reports and humanitarian dashboards reports, and coordination of all inter-cluster activities. Cluster members report the implementation rate of their projects in the OCHA ORS, while cluster coordinators are responsible for the monitoring of their members' activities.

25. However, monitoring and reporting on project implementation were inadequate. During discussions with cluster coordinators, implementing partners and OCHA Mali, they indicated that the reporting in ORS was not effective. The main reasons were: (i) poor internet connectivity in the country; (ii) lengthy and time-consuming reporting requirements; (iii) delays in uploading information in ORS by some clusters; and (iv) some NGOs did not see the added value of the reporting when they already reported internally and to the donors.

26. OIOS also noted that cluster coordinators did not have plans to conduct monitoring visits in 2016, and only one out of seven cluster coordinators conducted field monitoring visits. That cluster coordinator conducted four field missions; however, there was no detailed information on the specific projects that were visited.

27. Although OCHA Mali prepared two periodic monitoring reports and one quarterly humanitarian dashboard in 2016, the reports relied on data compiled from ORS and through discussions with the clusters. However, the data from ORS was not complete and therefore not reliable.

The incomplete reporting on project implementation has had a negative impact of the humanitarian community's perception of the added value of the HRP. In addition, inadequate monitoring could have a negative impact on the humanitarian response due to the risk that projects would not be implemented as envisaged. These deficiencies could have a negative impact on the reputation of OCHA.

(3) OCHA Mali should review, and if necessary, escalate to OCHA Headquarters the problems encountered by implementing partners in reporting the status of their respective projects in the Online Reporting System.

OCHA accepted recommendations 3. Recommendation 3 remains open pending receipt of evidence that OCHA Mali has reviewed and addressed the problems encountered by implementing partners in reporting the status of their respective projects in the ORS.

(4) OCHA Mali should, in collaboration with the Humanitarian Coordinator and the Humanitarian Country Team, advocate that cluster coordinators develop a risk-based monitoring plan and report on its implementation to strengthen the monitoring mechanism of projects in the humanitarian response plan.

OCHA accepted recommendation 4 stating that OCHA agreed to advocate and raise the matter with the HC and the HCT, although the responsibility for developing a risk-based monitoring plan and reporting on its implementation lies primarily with cluster lead organizations. Recommendation 4 remains open pending receipt of evidence of advocacy efforts aimed at developing a risk-based monitoring mechanism for projects in the HRP.

CERF allocations were appropriately prioritized and project status reported to the HC

28. CERF guidelines require HCs to ensure that grant requests are made based on priorities highlighted for the humanitarian response. The HC should request updates on the implementation of CERF-funded humanitarian action from agencies or clusters to provide assurance that CERF activities are implemented as intended and to enable timely corrective action if required.

29. Following meetings of cluster leads and the HCT, United Nations agencies applying for CERF grants jointly discussed priority requirements of each sector at their specific coordination fora. Priorities were identified according to the analyses included in the HRP prioritization statement and the mid-year humanitarian needs review. Cluster leads ensured alignment and coherence of proposed projects with the HRP requirements, particularly focusing on lifesaving projects and interventions targeting the most critical unmet needs. About \$16 million were allocated to United Nations agencies in Mali during the audit period, funding 16 projects.

30. The responsibility for monitoring CERF-funded projects lies with the recipient agencies. OCHA Mali prepared the CERF implementation interim update report based on information provided by recipient agencies on the progress in implementing activities funded with 2016 CERF grants. A status update was provided for all 2016 CERF projects, highlighting completed activities and challenges faced or expected. OIOS concluded that CERF allocations were appropriately prioritized and project status reported to the HC.

B. Management of staff and other resources in the Country Office

Office work and cost plans were adequately developed, monitored and reported on

31. OCHA established a two-year planning cycle to strengthen country strategies and to establish a standard results framework for field offices. The OCHA policy instruction on the roles and responsibilities of country offices requires them to review their work plans at least once a year to account for lessons learned and changes in the operating environment.

32. The Country Office in Mali developed annual work plans for 2015 and 2016 in line with its strategy and the specific country objectives. OIOS observed that the 2016 plan took into consideration the priorities defined by OCHA, the HCT and the objectives of the Coordination Structure. The Country Office's work plans were associated with its annual cost plans. The expenditures for the same period were \$4.9 million or 80 per cent, and \$4.5 million in 2016 or 88 per cent, respectively.

33. Goods procured locally were processed predominantly through Umoja. The local service provider provided services such as recruitment of national staff, security and communication services under its universal price list for services. Transactions were initiated in Umoja either by the Country Office or at OCHA Geneva and approved by the authorized staff members. They were later reflected in inter-office vouchers. Financial authorizations were sent to the local service provider. The Administrative and Finance Unit monitored the expenditures on a daily basis in Umoja to ensure funds availability for consumption and projection of funds required for the following months' expenditures. OIOS therefore concluded that controls over the implementation of work and cost plans were adequate.

Mandatory training needed to be monitored to ensure higher rate of completion by staff members

34. The information circular on United Nations mandatory programmes (ST/IC/2016/15) defined the current mandatory programmes for staff members of the United Nations Secretariat.

35. The three mandatory security trainings had been completed by all staff. However, other mandatory training including gender, information security awareness and prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse trainings had an average completion rate of 27 per cent. The reasons cited for the low completion rate were: (i) lack of access of drivers to computers; (ii) some of the courses not available in French; and (iii) connectivity issues in remote areas, which require staff to repeat the courses before the system issues the certificate. Inadequate training of staff could lead to insufficient knowledge of the requirements and principles of the United Nations, thereby adversely affecting the ability of the Country Office to fulfill its mandate.

(5) OCHA Mali should take action to ensure that all staff members complete United Nations mandatory training courses. This should include reporting language and technology issues to the Department of Management.

OCHA accepted recommendation 5 stating that the Country Office in Mali would continue its efforts to ensure that all staff members complete mandatory training. Recommendation 5 remains open pending receipt of evidence that all staff members have completed mandatory training courses.

Controls over general administrative processes were adequate

36. United Nations Secretariat policies and procedures require adequate controls over administrative processes concerning procurement, recruitment, travel management and expenditure monitoring.

37. In 2016, OCHA Mali's administrative and financial transactions were processed in Umoja. Low value procurement amounted to \$248,259 during the period under audit. OIOS selected 30 procurement transactions for review. All transactions were properly invoiced, verified and approved by the authorized staff members in the Country Office, within their delegated authority.

38. There were eight contracts with total expenditures amounting to \$278,348. The majority of the contracts were entered in Umoja, except for older contracts related to landlines and mobile services and repairs and maintenance of vehicles. The Country Office was negotiating with the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali to be included in new bidding processes for goods and services required locally. The delegation of procurement authority to the OCHA Executive Officer was increased to \$40,000 in December 2016, which will further improve OCHA Mali's ability to facilitate and set up contracts with its business partners.

39. OCHA Mali used the services of one consultant for the sub-office in Kidal, who was recruited with the help of the local service provider. OIOS reviewed the recruitment process and noted it was done in accordance with the guidelines of the local service provider. With regard to travel of staff, OCHA Mali processed travel using the Umoja travel portal cost plan. For 2016, the travel budget for staff and participants to meetings was \$199,199 while the actual expenditure amounted to \$121,099 or 60 per cent of the travel budget. Staff travel was approved by the administration officer locally and thereafter reviewed and certified by the travel processing officer based in Geneva. OIOS concluded that the processes over procurement, recruitment, travel and expenditure monitoring processes were generally adequate.

Controls related to the protection against sexual exploitation and abuse were strengthened

40. According to the 2013 bulletin of the Secretary-General on the protection against sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA), heads of departments, offices or missions shall be responsible for creating and maintaining an environment that prevents sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, and shall take appropriate measures for this purpose.

41. The HCT in its May 2016 meeting discussed the existing prevention mechanisms and the need to train and sensitize staff of humanitarian organizations on the concept. As a result, the United Nations Population Fund was designated as the lead for the focal points network to report to the HCT. A meeting of the focal points took place in August 2016 where they conducted a mapping of PSEA related mechanisms to develop a strategy. Some of the recommendations from the December 2016 HCT meeting included the development of internal mechanisms by each United Nations agency and NGO, training of network members and focal points, development of a code of conduct for all humanitarian workers in Mali and support to the functioning of the national network and focal points by implementing the road map developed. As a result, terms of reference for focal points were prepared and sent for review by the HCT. A training workshop for the focal points will be scheduled once the terms of reference are approved.

42. PSEA was also discussed during the field office retreat in January 2017 and the OCHA focal point also shared OCHA standard operating procedures on PSEA to all the OCHA staff in Mali. In light of the actions taken, OIOS concluded that controls related to protection against sexual exploitation and abuse were strengthened. The effectiveness of the controls will be assessed in future audits.

Controls over managing security risks relating to programme implementation were adequate

43. The guiding principles of the Programme Criticality Framework requires conducting programme assessments for all activities that involved United Nations personnel to ensure that programme activities were balanced against security risks.

44. In order to safeguard the safety and security of United Nations personnel in Mali, a programme criticality assessment was conducted in 2016 under the authority of the Designated Official. The programme criticality assessment was correlated with the security risk assessments and business continuity planning for the locations where the activities were implemented.

45. The United Nations Department of Safety and Security in Mali conducted a Security Risk Assessment (SRA) for the zones of Bamako, Kidal, Gao, Mopti and Timbuktu in 2014 and 2015 due to the different risks identified in each zone. The SRAs were in the process of being updated during the audit. The assessment included: (i) programmes assessment; (ii) threat assessment; (iii) vulnerability assessment; (iv) security risk analysis; and (v) security risk management measures. The effectiveness of security controls and compliance with the SRA were tested and observed during the audit team's fieldwork in Mali.

46. OIOS concluded that controls over managing security risks relating to programme implementation and safeguarding of assets were adequate.

V. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

47. 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.

(Signed) Eleanor T. Burns
Director, Internal Audit Division
Office of Internal Oversight Services

STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Audit of operations of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Mali

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	C/ O ³	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date ⁴
1	OCHA Mali should, in collaboration with the Humanitarian Coordinator and cluster lead agencies, develop a strategy to reinforce the capacity of the clusters to effectively perform their role.	Important	O	Submission of a strategy to reinforce the capacity of the clusters to effectively perform their role.	31 December 2018
2	OCHA Mali should, in coordination with the Humanitarian Coordinator and cluster lead agencies, facilitate the development of basic common evaluation criteria and a feedback mechanism on the selection of projects to be included in the humanitarian response plan.	Important	O	Submission of commonly agreed evaluation criteria and feedback mechanism on the selection of projects in the HRP.	31 December 2017
3	OCHA Mali should review, and if necessary, escalate to OCHA Headquarters the problems encountered by implementing partners in reporting the status of their respective projects in the Online Reporting System.	Important	O	Submission of evidence that OCHA Mali has reviewed and addressed problems encountered by implementing partners in reporting the status of their respective projects in the ORS.	31 December 2017
4	OCHA Mali should, in collaboration with the Humanitarian Coordinator and the Humanitarian Country Team, advocate that cluster coordinators develop a risk based monitoring plan and report on its implementation to strengthen the monitoring mechanism of projects in the humanitarian response plan.	Important	O	Submission of evidence of advocacy efforts aimed at developing a risk-based monitoring mechanism for projects in the HRP.	31 December 2018
5	OCHA Mali should take action to ensure that all staff members complete United Nations mandatory training courses. This should include reporting	Important	O	Submission of evidence that all staff members have completed mandatory training courses.	31 December 2017

¹ Critical recommendations address critical and/or pervasive deficiencies in governance, risk management or control processes, such that reasonable assurance cannot be provided with regard to the achievement of control and/or business objectives under review.

² Important recommendations address important (but not critical or pervasive) deficiencies in governance, risk management or control processes, such that reasonable assurance may be at risk regarding the achievement of control and/or business objectives under review.

³ C = closed, O = open

⁴ Date provided by OCHA in response to recommendations.

STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Audit of operations of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Mali

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	C/ O ³	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date ⁴
	language and technology issues to the Department of Management.				

APPENDIX I

Management Response

United Nations  Nations Unies
INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM MEMORANDUM INTERIEUR

TO: Ms. Muriette Lawrence-Hume, Chief,
A: New York Audit Service,
Internal Audit Division, OIOS

DATE: 14 June 2017

REFERENCE: IAD:17-00215

THROUGH:

S/C DE:

FROM: Stephen O'Brien, Under-Secretary-General for
DE: Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief
Coordinator

SUBJECT: **Management Response to an Audit of the Operations of the**
OBJET: **Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Mali**
(AN2017/590/01)

1. In reference to your memorandum dated 18 May 2017, I am enclosing OCHA's management response to the recommendations issued.
2. Thank you.

cc: B. Jones

Management Response

Audit of operations of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Mali

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
1	OCHA Mali should, in collaboration with the Humanitarian Coordinator and cluster lead agencies, develop a strategy to reinforce the capacity of the clusters to effectively perform their role.	Important	Yes	CO Mali	31 December 2018	
2	OCHA Mali should, in coordination with the Humanitarian Coordinator and cluster lead agencies, facilitate the development of basic common evaluation criteria and a feedback mechanism on the selection of projects to be included in the humanitarian response plan.	Important	Yes	CO Mali	31 December 2017	OCHA will facilitate the development of basic common agreed criteria but does highlight that it is normally up to each cluster ultimately to decide on which project should be included in the HRP.
3	OCHA Mali should review, and if necessary, escalate to OCHA Headquarters the problems encountered by implementing partners in reporting the status of their respective projects in the Online Reporting System.	Important	Yes	CO Mali	31 December 2017	
4	OCHA Mali should, in collaboration with the Humanitarian Coordinator and the Humanitarian Country Team, advocate that cluster coordinators develop a risk based monitoring plan and report on its implementation to strengthen the monitoring mechanism of projects in the humanitarian response plan.	Important	Yes	CO Mali	31 December 2018	OCHA agrees to advocate but highlights that it cannot dictate actions as the responsibility lies with the cluster lead organizations first. OCHA can raise with the HC and HCT as issues to address.
5	OCHA Mali should take action to ensure that all staff members complete United	Important	Yes	CO Mali	31 December 2017	OCHA continues its efforts to ensure that all staff members complete

¹ Critical recommendations address critical and/or pervasive deficiencies in governance, risk management or control processes, such that reasonable assurance cannot be provided with regard to the achievement of control and/or business objectives under review.

² Important recommendations address important (but not critical or pervasive) deficiencies in governance, risk management or control processes, such that reasonable assurance may be at risk regarding the achievement of control and/or business objectives under review.

Management Response

Audit of operations of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Mali

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
	Nations mandatory training courses. This should include reporting language and technology issues to the Department of Management.					mandatory trainings and stresses in this regard the impeding effect of trainings not being made available in both UN working languages.