



INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION

REPORT 2023/025

Audit of the Regional Bureau of East and Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Enhancements in the operationalization of the Regional Bureau's mandate and the completion of ongoing transformation processes should improve the quality, speed and responsiveness of service delivery to displaced persons of operations in the region

6 July 2023
Assignment No. AR2022-112-02

Audit of the Regional Bureau of East and Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of an audit of the Regional Bureau of East and Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes for the Office (Bureau) of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The objective of the audit was to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of the Bureau in implementing its mandate and programme of work in accordance with UNHCR's policy requirements. The audit covered the period from January 2020 to June 2022 and included the following areas: (a) conformity with mandate as defined in the resource allocation framework (RAF) and supported by the Roles, Accountabilities and Authorities (RAA); (b) strategic planning and resource allocation; (c) resource mobilization; (d) coordination with key stakeholders involved in and/or supporting the delivery of services to displaced persons; (e) oversight and support of country operations in implementing their programmes; and (f) structure and staffing.

The Bureau was established in 2020 under UNHCR's decentralization and regionalization (D&R) process to improve the speed and responsiveness of service delivery to forcibly displaced persons (displaced persons). The UNHCR High Commissioner defined the Bureau mandate as setting regional strategies, managing resources, and ensuring compliance with UNHCR's rules and regulations of country offices in its region. The COVID-19 pandemic impacted the Bureau's initial operationalization, while the UNHCR transformation processes that were still ongoing, including simplification of processes and the Headquarters reform under the decentralization and regionalization processes and the Business Transformation Programme, impacted the execution of its mandate. The Bureau had a role in ensuring that the ongoing transformation was impactful in improving the speed and responsiveness of service delivery to displaced persons by providing feedback on the effectiveness of rolled out policies and systems.

OIOS made six recommendations. To address issues identified in the audit, UNHCR needed to:

- Reinforce the implementation of the Resource Allocation and Roles, Accountabilities and Authorities frameworks across country operations in the region;
- Strengthen strategic planning and resource allocation processes as well as management of risks within the region;
- Seek to widen its donor base at regional and country level;
- Support coordination of the inclusion of displaced persons in national, humanitarian and development frameworks and the fulfilment of the Global Compact on Refugees pledges;
- Strengthen its oversight and support to country operations in the region; and
- Ensure country operations are adequately resourced to deliver services to displaced persons.

UNHCR accepted all recommendations and initiated action to implement them. Actions required to close the recommendations are indicated in Annex I.

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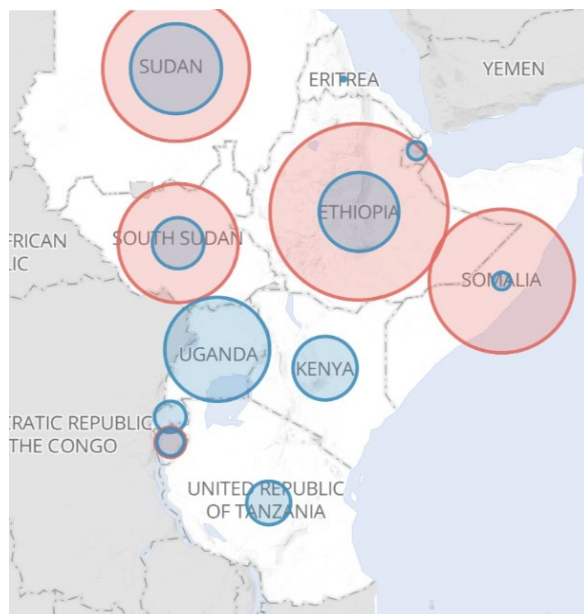
Audit of the Regional Bureau of East and Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

I. BACKGROUND

1. The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of the Regional Bureau of East, Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes (EHAGL) of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

2. The Regional Bureau for East, Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes (hereinafter referred to as the Bureau) was one of the seven regional bureaux established in 2020 under UNHCR's decentralization and regionalization (D&R) process. As reflected in Map 1, the Bureau covers 11 countries in the region with a total of 17.6 million refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons, comprising over 25 per cent of global forcibly displaced persons (displaced persons). The Bureau's establishment and effective functioning were significantly constrained by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Map 1: Refugees and Asylum-Seekers (in Blue) and internally displaced persons (in Red) across the 11 Countries in the East and Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes Region



Source: UNHCR.

3. The Bureau was headed by a Bureau Director at the D-2 level who reports to the Assistant High Commissioner for Operations. As of July 2022, the Bureau had 114 regular staff posts (67 internationals and 47 nationals) and one affiliate. The Representation to the African Union and Economic Commission for Africa also reports to the Regional Director. The Bureau's expenditure for 2020 and 2021 was \$18 million and \$19 million, respectively. The Bureau oversaw a regional operating level budget¹ of \$1.9 billion of the 11 countries for 2020 and 2021 with implementation rates of 96 per cent and 94 per cent, respectively.

4. Comments provided by UNHCR are incorporated in italics.

II. AUDIT OBJECTIVE, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

5. The objective of the audit was to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of the Bureau in implementing its mandate in accordance with UNHCR's policy requirements.

6. This audit was included in the 2020-2022 risk-based work plan because the Regional Bureau for East, Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes was one of the larger newly established regional bureaux and due to its strategic importance in delivering UNHCR's mandate in Africa.

7. OIOS conducted this audit from June to September 2022. The audit covered the period from January 2020 to June 2022. Based on an activity-level risk assessment, the audit covered higher risk areas,

¹ The operating level is the spending authority granted against operations, administrative and staff budget categories.

which included assessing the adequacy and effectiveness of the Bureau in executing its role in the following areas: (a) conformity with mandate as defined in the resource allocation framework (RAF) and supported by the Roles, Accountabilities and Authorities (RAA); (b) strategic planning and resource allocation; (c) resource mobilization; (d) coordination with key stakeholders involved in and/or supporting the delivery of services to displaced persons; (e) oversight and support of country operations in implementing their programmes; and (f) structure and staffing.

8. The audit methodology included: (a) interviews of key personnel; (b) review of relevant documentation; (c) analytical review of financial and performance data² and (d) sample testing of controls. OIOS also conducted a survey across the 11 countries overseen by the Bureau, of which six responses were received, and benchmarked its structure, staffing and processes against two United Nations agencies in the region.

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

III. AUDIT RESULTS

A. Mandate of the Regional Bureau

The EHAGL Bureau mandate is clear, but challenges remain in its execution

10. The D&R process is part of UNHCR's transformation that saw regional bureaux move from UNHCR Headquarters in Geneva to regions. It is intended to improve the speed and responsiveness of service delivery by shifting personnel and decision-making authorities closer to the field. The High Commissioner, when establishing the regional bureaux, defined their mandate as setting regional strategies, managing resources, and ensuring compliance with UNHCR's rules and regulations of country offices in its region. UNHCR, through the resource allocation framework (RAF) issued in August 2019 and revised in October 2022, delegated authorities to regional bureau directors and country representatives in managing budgets and human resources. The Regional Bureau for East, Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes mandate was also supported by the Roles, Accountabilities and Authorities (RAA), which was initially disseminated in October 2019 and updated in November 2022.

11. The Bureau's effectiveness in achieving its mandate was constrained by the transformation processes that remained in progress. Core D&R objectives that underpinned the increased speed and responsiveness of service delivery to displaced persons were yet to be completed. For instance, under the D&R, the simplification of processes, movement of staff positions nearer to points of service delivery and reforms to make the Headquarters lean, dynamic and forward looking were still on-going. There were also interdependencies with other transformation streams that were incomplete, e.g., the simplification of processes was dependent on business reengineering that was expected to be delivered under the Business Transformation Process (BTP)³. If undelivered, this would impact the Bureau's ability to effectively deliver core D&R objectives.

12. Additionally, the setup of regional bureaux under the D&R preceded other transformation streams, yet some of them underpinned the execution of their mandate. For instance, the BTP was aimed at leveraging technology, improving efficiency in country operations, optimizing human capital, and operationalizing a results-based management model. However, only two of its six components had been

² Financial data from MSRP and performance data from its results-based management systems, FOCUS and COMPASS

³ BTP is the programme initiated by UNHCR in 2019 aimed at implementing new ways of working and leveraging modern tools and cloud-based technologies to support back-office processes.

rolled out at the time of the audit. It was still early to determine whether these systems delivered on the objectives. Thus, the Bureau was discharging its functions against a backdrop of continuously changing systems and processes otherwise meant to support the execution of its mandate. Also, the limited staff resources in the region had to accommodate the many changes that came with the different transformations (including of the IT systems).

13. The newly published RAAs brought clarity on the Bureau mandate and delineated its roles from those of headquarters divisions and country operations. However, it was a reference framework at a high level that needed further interpretation in the region's context as well as tools to support its implementation. For instance, the roles in the RAA defined team functions that needed to be conducted to deliver the Bureau's mandate, but these had not been translated into specific responsibilities for staff. The two United Nations agencies used to benchmark the Bureau defined the specific roles and responsibilities in staff job descriptions, and this enhanced individual performance and accountability. Additionally, the RAA did not provide sufficient clarity in cases with shared responsibility between regional bureaux and headquarters divisions, e.g., during emergencies as was highlighted by survey respondents.

14. The Bureau mechanisms for ensuring countries' compliance with UNHCR rules and regulations had not been operationalized at the time of the audit. The Bureau informed that technical guidance and support to countries was pending clarification and thus tended to be informal and consultative. This was primarily because UNHCR had defined its management authority line (blue line⁴) during the D&R process but was yet to do the same for functional reporting for technical experts (green line⁵) in line with UNHCR's revised Financial Rules (effective 1 January 2022). Thus, the Bureau needed the support of UNHCR headquarters to clarify the green line function, to ensure the quality of services delivered as well as drive compliance and reinforce the effectiveness of controls.

15. UNHCR's empowerment of country operations and increased delegation of authority from headquarters came through the revised RAF, which sets out the accountabilities and authorities for managing structures as well as financial and staffing resources during programme implementation. However, the RAF presented some gaps: for instance, it made a blanket delegation of authorities and accountabilities to all regional bureaux and country operations without considering their capacity to implement the delegations responsibly and effectively. This was exacerbated by the lack of a defined risk appetite to guide staff in making risk-based decisions and, where necessary, escalating matters to minimize UNHCR's exposure.

16. Furthermore, the delegations through the RAF did not have mechanisms to hold managers accountable for their use of resources, achievement of results, compliance with policy and support, and decision-making around the withdrawal, suspension or amendment of delegated authority. After the audit field work, UNHCR indicated that plans were underway to develop an accountability framework that would formalize the functional reporting lines.

17. The Bureau was set up in an environment where the organization was transforming, which was a risk but also presented an opportunity to affect changes. In this environment, the Bureau should: (i) develop region specific guidance and systems to support the implementation of its mandate; and (ii) use regional experiences to make recommendations for policy and system changes.

⁴ The blue line represents the line of management authority and reporting that flows from the High Commissioner, Assistant High Commissioner (Operations) and the Bureau Directors to the Representatives and heads of sub-offices.

⁵ The green line represents the line of functional authoritative guidance and support. This line flows from the High Commissioner, Deputy High Commissioner and Assistant High Commissioners to Headquarter Directors and then to the specialist managers in the regional bureaux and country operations

- (1) The UNHCR Regional Bureau of East and Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes should interpret the Roles, Accountabilities and Authorities framework in the regional context to facilitate its implementation and reinforce operationalization of the Resource Allocation Framework across country operations.**

UNHCR accepted recommendation 1 and stated that the interpretation of the Roles, Accountabilities and Authorities (RAA) will be achieved in EHAGL through establishment of RAA-based workplans at the unit level in all Bureau pillars. UNHCR further stated that while the Resource Allocation Framework (RAF) was an instruction and not a policy direction that requires regional or country level interpretation, the Bureau would seek better ways to operationalize the RAF, including through re-circulation of its existing guidance to country operations. Recommendation 1 remains open pending receipt of evidence that the recommendation has been implemented.

B. Strategic planning and resource allocation

Need to reinforce strategic planning and risk management processes

18. The Bureau was responsible for setting regional strategies that align with UNHCR’s overall strategic direction, allocating resources effectively, and addressing key risks that hinder country operations from achieving their objectives. The Bureau was also expected to review and, where necessary, adjust its direction in response to changes in the environment.

19. The Bureau initially prepared a one-year interim strategy that was quality assured and approved by the Senior Executive Team. It then developed a two-year plan (2023/24) and expected to move to a four-year cycle in 2025. While the Bureau explained that it followed UNHCR guidance and planning cycles, some of the issues present in the region were complex and could not be addressed effectively with short-term strategies. Instead, such issues required more comprehensive plans that looked at medium to longer-term timeframes. The audit also noted that: (a) some units (e.g., the health unit) had not developed strategies to drive identified regional priorities; (b) there was incoherence between the planning periods at Bureau, unit and country level (e.g., the Bureau prepared a one-year plan while the nutrition and food security unit had a five-year strategy); and (c) output indicators and targets were not defined in COMPASS⁶ for measurement of performance.

20. The Bureau reviewed country strategies for alignment with regional and global strategic directions and monitored their implementation. It however lacked documentation to evidence the disposition of comments raised with the country operations in this regard. The Bureau was yet to analyze and use results from the implementation of country strategies to inform regional and global strategic planning processes and improve policies and procedures as required in the RAAs. Additionally, the Bureau did not have performance results of country operations in COMPASS against which to adjust resources in line with the results-based management modality.

Availability of data for strategic planning

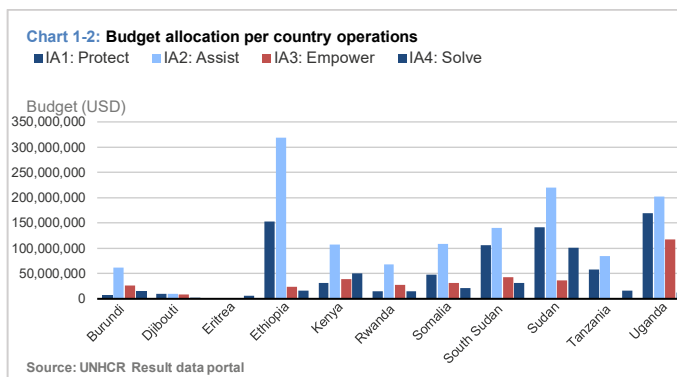
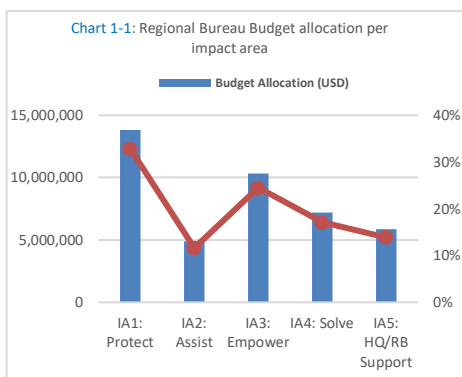
21. The Bureau faced challenges in accessing data for decision making, which affected its ability to effectively fulfill its strategic planning and oversight role across the region. This was due to significant variances in the quality and breadth of reported data across country operations. Thus, the Bureau did not have access to reliable data for its strategic planning and decision-making as well as a balanced and consistent reflection of practices and activities.

⁶ System that supports strategic planning, reporting and resource allocation under the results-based approach

22. The Bureau expected to leverage new global systems, such as Workday⁷ and COMPASS to provide users within the region with better data for decision making, planning and oversight. However, in addition to this, as required in the RAA, the Bureau needed to develop a regional data strategy and support countries in developing their own data strategies to: (a) address capacity gaps in management of data; (b) institute mechanisms to compile, validate, analyze and share country operations data; and (c) protect personal data. The Bureau position of the chief information management officer, which was vacant for over a year, was filled following the audit fieldwork. The Bureau expected this would improve the availability of accurate and reliable data for its decision making, planning, oversight and support functions.

Focusing resources

23. The Bureau’s operations plan budget was \$3,804 million for 2020 and 2021. However, the corresponding operating level budgets were \$886 million and \$992 million, representing a funding gap of 50 per cent for both financial periods. The budget allocation per PoC across the countries was also not equitable, primarily due to earmarked funds from specific donors. Furthermore, the allocation of resources was not aligned with the priorities of the 11 country operations. As reflected in Charts 1-1 and 1-2, protection and empowerment are the regional priorities, yet the Bureau spent most of its funding on assistance to displaced persons. While the Bureau attributed the 42 per cent allocation of funds to assistance provided during emergencies, the audit noted that even the countries with no emergencies had significant spending in this regard. It thus reflected the need for the Bureau to align its allocation of resources to priorities in accordance with the regional context.



Risk management

24. The Bureau established a Risk Management and Compliance Service to oversee the implementation of Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) within the region. The Bureau and all 11 countries had risk registers in place in compliance with corporate requirements. The Bureau reviewed the quality of country operations’ risk registers and followed up countries’ implementation of actions to mitigate identified risks. Despite this, well known risks were not listed in the register or were inadequately ranked as was noted in Sudan and Tanzania. In other instances, the actions proposed by countries were inadequate in mitigating identified risks and others remained outstanding past their due dates. This called for the Bureau to reinforce its oversight role and continue building the capacity of staff and partners to reinforce a culture of risk management.

⁷ System that integrates human resources management and related financial processes such as recruitment, benefits processing, payroll administration and financial reporting.

25. At the time of the audit, the Bureau did not analyze risk registers and provide country operations with feedback and/or elevate significant emerging risks as required by the RAA. Following the audit, the Bureau with support from the ERM Service in Headquarters reviewed all the country-level risk registers. OIOS is of the view that the risk review and analysis should include identifying root causes of recurring second and third-line oversight findings and promoting collaboration among units in addressing crosscutting issues. The analyses would also support the identification of risk matters for consideration in decision making, planning, resource allocation, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting.

(2) The UNHCR Regional Bureau of East and Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes should strengthen its strategic planning processes by: (a) documenting its monitoring of countries' development and implementation of strategies; (b) implementing a regional data strategy to ensure quality information is available for decision making; and (c) reinforcing the identification and mitigation of key risks at country and regional level.

UNHCR accepted recommendation 2 and stated that: (i) documentation of monitoring processes will be reinforced; (iv) it was in the process of developing a regional data strategy; and (iii) it will reinforce identification, mitigation, and prioritization of key risks. Recommendation pending receipt of evidence that the recommendation has been implemented.

C. Resource mobilization

Need to widen the donor base

26. Resource mobilization is a shared responsibility at Headquarters, Bureau and country levels. UNHCR's global resource mobilization goal is to: (a) secure sufficient, predictable, flexible and multi-year funding for UNHCR operations; (b) sustain and safeguard funding from the top and major donors; (c) diversify the donor base to keep pace with needs; (d) demonstrate the impact of UNHCR's work; and (e) ensure transparency and accountability to donors and affected populations. The Bureau's Resource Mobilization Unit had two professionals and one general service staff that prepared strategic plans, developed regional appeals, and quality assured related country work and ensured adherence to laid down policies.

27. A review of the trends of funding during the period under review showed that key donor funding remained at relatively similar levels and in line with the 2022 Bureau strategy that expected the regional resource base to remain stable. As was the case with UNHCR globally, the Bureau:

- Over relied on a few top donors within the region, with about 57 per cent of total contributions coming from four donors and 47 per cent of this amount being from one donor. This increased the Bureau's vulnerability, as was noted when one major donor cut 81 per cent of their funding between 2020 and 2021.
- Had limited flexible (unearmarked and softly earmarked) funding, i.e., only \$567 million (25 per cent) of the \$2.3 billion received in the period under audit. Earmarking reflected donor preferences, and this sometimes impacted the use of resources on regional priorities.
- Had limited success in raising funding for 5 of the 11 countries in the region that had protracted caseloads, which were less attractive to traditional donors. It primarily raised funding for emergencies and emerging situations, although this too was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine.

28. The increased number of players in a resource-constrained environment called for a more focused resource mobilization strategy to raise the Bureau's visibility and ability to raise funds. The Bureau needed

to be innovative and targeted in its resource mobilization to raise funds for the operating level budget, mainly by diversifying sources of funding including from private donors. The Bureau had a one-year resource mobilization strategy as well as frameworks for specific refugee situations, e.g., for Sudan and Somalia. However, the Bureau's strategy:

- (a) Defined the role of the Bureau in resource mobilization without fully articulating how it would achieve its goals. The Bureau needed to research donor priorities, trends, budget cycles, and other factors vital to developing effective strategies at country and regional level.
- (b) Did not identify countries in the region, entities and/or funders to prioritize and focus on in its resource mobilization drives. The Bureau noted that it needed support from the Division of External Relations to identify ways in which to diversify from traditional ways of mobilizing resources.
- (c) Did not have a defined framework against which its performance would be assessed at country and regional level. Instead, the Bureau's aim was to raise funds to bridge the gap between the operating plan and operating level budgets, which it admitted was unattainable.

29. The Bureau supported country operations in preparing funding concept notes and provided them with technical support, quality assurance, training and oversight of their fundraising efforts. Country operations were responsible for ensuring full compliance with donor requirements, but the Bureau also had an oversight role over these processes. However, apart from the tables for tracking donor requirements and report due dates that were distributed periodically to country operations, the Bureau was yet to establish mechanisms for identifying and escalating cases of non-compliance. For example, one Representation encountered difficulties in its fund-raising efforts due to delays in submitting progress reports.

30. Regarding partnerships, the Bureau established memoranda of understanding with other United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations to support its resource mobilization in the region. For instance, it had a joint outreach with another agency to address food shortages in a refugee community and secured EUR 85 million towards solutions and inclusion of refugees in various countries within the region. However, refugees were often not included in the development and operational plans of agencies, development banks and non-governmental organizations in the region and so could not access services, e.g., from health funds. In line with the RAA and as part of its strategic planning, the Bureau needed to foster and nurture partnership opportunities early enough, so displaced persons are included in donor funding plans. Additionally, in accordance with the RAA, the Bureau needed to keep track of global memoranda of understanding and support their implementation at country level.

31. The Bureau was yet to develop guidance, processes and tools to strengthen controls over the resource mobilization processes within the region. It needed to work with Headquarters to: (a) define the required due diligence for new donors to ensure they do not present a reputational risk to UNHCR; (b) implement a communication strategy to foster lasting relationships with regional donors and potential funders on matters such as the global compact on refugees; (c) strengthen its oversight over the use of resources especially earmarked funds; (d) ensure that fundraising efforts remained reasonable and did not adversely affect other resource mobilization processes; and (e) institute processes for receiving resources, e.g., by sending appreciation messages.

32. While resource mobilization became a regional bureau function from 2020, its roles, authorities and accountabilities were only clarified in the RAA issued in November 2022. This and the limited available staff resources called for reinforced strategic planning to direct resource mobilization processes, so they are effective in securing funding.

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| <p>(3) The UNHCR Regional Bureau of East and Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes should:
(a) reinforce its resource mobilization strategy as informed by relevant research; and (b) obtain support from the Division of External Relations on initiatives to widen the donor</p> |
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base and develop guidance and tools to support resource mobilization at country and regional level.

UNHCR accepted recommendation 3 and stated that: (i) the Regional Bureau's resource mobilization strategy would be further reinforced with findings from mapping initiatives and research on available pooled fund sources; and (ii) it was, with the support of the Division of External Relations, building the capacity of country operations to develop fundraising strategies to widen the donor base. Recommendation 3 remains open pending receipt of evidence that the recommendation has been implemented.

D. Coordination

Need to support country operations to align their strategies to key humanitarian and development frameworks

33. The Bureau had a role in ensuring effective coordination of international and national frameworks within and across other regions. The role also included coordinating emergencies, especially those that spanned over more than one country.

34. Alongside the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, country operations were also implementing the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework/ Global Compact on Refugees (GCR), Regional Refugee Response Plans (where applicable) and Humanitarian Response Plans. The different frameworks were largely complementary, but not identical. Thus, considering the limited available resources, they created coordination challenges with humanitarian/United Nations mechanisms and frameworks and needed to be better aligned to the strategic priorities of country operations. The Bureau needed to support the mapping and prioritization of different frameworks for implementation at country and regional level. Additionally, the Bureau needed to ensure that country operation strategies were aligned with government, inter-agency and cooperation frameworks to mitigate against the risk of duplications and/or gaps and ensure sustainability in assistance to displaced persons.

35. The 11 country operations in the region received 86 pledges from host governments, 36 from other entities within the region and 158 pledges from entities outside the region. Out of the 280 pledges, 30 had been fulfilled by July 2022, 150 were in progress and there was no information on the remaining 100 pledges. The Bureau's monitoring of pledges alongside Headquarters and country focal points yielded limited success with 90 per cent of the pledges remaining outstanding. Since the pledge monitoring and follow-up was seen to be a shared responsibility, there was a need to delineate the relevant activities at country, bureau and headquarters level to avoid duplications and/or gaps in related processes. It also called for increased Bureau oversight and support to country operations, so they realize outstanding pledges.

36. At the heart of the coordination was the need to work more effectively with host governments towards including refugees and displaced persons within their services. Commitments by host governments within the region to mainstream displaced persons in their systems, e.g., in Ethiopia, Sudan, Uganda and Djibouti had been documented. However, UNHCR continued to fully fund the Government partner's programmes, including staff and operational costs. Additionally, as identified in the risk register, programme implementation by some government partners remained a challenge in the region. The Bureau needed to, as part of its planning, support country operations' development of plans for mainstreaming displaced persons into national plans.

37. The Bureau was overseeing and supporting responses to massive displacements in the region. As already mentioned in this report, country operations in the survey requested clarity on the respective roles

of regional bureaux and headquarters divisions, especially in emergencies that impacted more than one country. In response to this, the Bureau identified an emergency officer and country focal points to coordinate with headquarters divisions on the preparedness for and response to emergencies in the region. It also launched an emergency dashboard in 2023 to support monitoring of early warning and ongoing emergencies. It was still early to determine the effectiveness of these measures in ensuring that country operations were supported in planning for and responding to emerging situations.

38. The issues above reflected the need for a reinforced coordination mechanism within the region. A robust coordination mechanism would help the Bureau better understand regional dynamics and support a harmonized approach towards timely and efficient delivery of services to displaced persons in the region.

(4) The UNHCR Regional Bureau of East and Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes should support country operations in their: (a) mapping and prioritizing key humanitarian and development frameworks as part of their strategy development process, including the mainstreaming of forcibly displaced persons into national systems; and (b) implementing an action plan for following up outstanding Global Compact on Refugees pledges.

UNHCR accepted recommendation 4 and stated that the Regional Bureau, as part of its review, encourages the alignment of country operation strategies to international and national frameworks, including through the review of country operations multi-year strategies and COMPASS indicators, which it would enhance through documentation of the review process. UNHCR also stated that the Bureau supports country operations with the implementation of host country and partner pledges and monitors and reports to Headquarters on the status of pledges. OIOS acknowledges the actions taken, but the low pledge fulfilment reflects that gaps remain in this regard. Recommendation 4 remains open pending receipt of evidence that the recommendation has been implemented.

E. Oversight and support

Need to strengthen oversight and support of country operations and programmes

39. As the primary second line of defense, the Bureau is responsible for: (i) facilitating the quality assurance and risk management; (ii) monitoring the first line's compliance with laid down procedures; (iii) providing technical support to country operations to improve impact, relevance and efficiency of programmes, and facilitate functional communities of practice; and (iv) addressing strategic, operational and managerial issues and concerns. The Bureau's dual oversight and support role was not unique to UNHCR, as the two benchmarked agencies in the region had similar structures. The Bureau provided its support and oversight through its technical experts and operations coordinators.

40. The Bureau support and oversight to country operations was impacted by staff inability to travel during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Bureau also had limited guidance and tools to support monitoring the first line's compliance with UNHCR guidance. This was because legacy Information Technology systems lacked automated compliance checks and did not provide the Bureau with the necessary visibility on what was happening in country offices. The Bureau used PowerBI to review the utilization of funds and programme implementation rates, reallocate resources in the region where necessary and ensure earmarked funds were used for the intended purposes at the country level. It had, however, not established effective mechanisms to monitor other areas, e.g., programme performance (results). The Bureau expected that UNHCR's BTP would provide greater visibility and opportunities for automating compliance checks.

41. Included in the Bureau's oversight role was the need to effectively monitor country operations' implementation of internal controls, including having them address gaps identified in country annual

internal control self-assessments. Although expressly provided in the job description of the Bureau's chief of Risk Management and Compliance Service, the service did not conduct the required compliance checks. Instead, this responsibility fell with the functional specialists at the Bureau and country level. However, as already noted in this report, the green line of reporting needed to be defined so there is clear accountability regarding the setting of policy and the monitoring of compliance by specialists at the headquarters division and Bureau levels. To operationalize the compliance role in the region, the Bureau needed to define who would check what, using what tools and how often, including clarifying the role of the Risk Management and Compliance Service in this regard.

42. Many Bureau staff interviewed noted that they did not have proper clarity on what their oversight and support roles entailed. They attributed this to: (i) their job descriptions not clearly articulating their second-line roles and responsibilities; (ii) limited relevant training and experience prior to joining the Bureau; (iii) staff having to oversee people that were previously colleagues and/or some of whom were at the same or even higher grades; and (iv) lack of clarity on whether operations coordinators or technical staff were country operations' first point of contact. At the time of the audit, the Bureau was establishing a multi-functional oversight committee to reinforce its financial, performance (results) and human resource monitoring. This committee was also expected to moderate factors that were impacting its oversight, such as independence and/or staff having to oversee colleagues' work at the same grades.

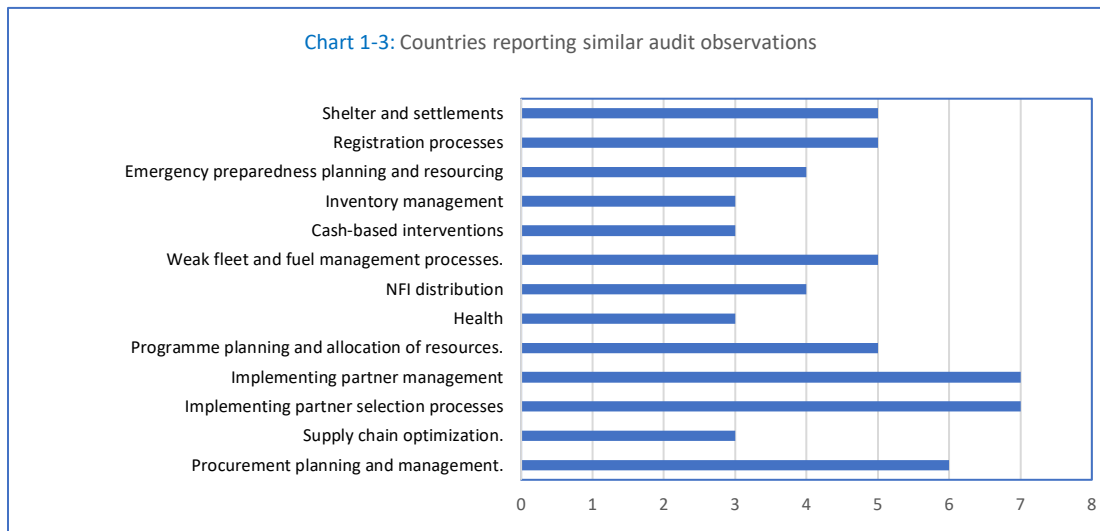
43. Considering the resource constraints, it was not feasible nor cost-effective to provide the same level of support and oversight over risks in all the 11 countries. However, the Bureau did not have a region-wide work plan to facilitate its management of the number and scope of oversight and support reviews/missions by the second and third lines of defense. Additionally, the Bureau was yet to develop criteria to guide its functional units on their selection of countries to prioritize for support and oversight, especially considering their varied sizes, capacities and risks. That said, the food and nutrition and water, sanitation and hygiene units had developed a heat map to identify countries to prioritize for their support activities. A risk-based work plan would support the coordination of oversight providers across the three lines, thereby addressing gaps and/or overlaps in oversight and support and addressing related fatigue and controlling related costs.

44. The Bureau support to countries was mainly reactive, as it was primarily driven by requests initiated by telephone or emails to subject matter experts or operations coordinators. Additionally, apart from the mission reports, the Bureau lacked documentation to evidence the quality and timeliness of support provided. For instance, at the time of the audit, one senior manager indicated he had over 17,000 unopened emails, among which there were likely to be requests for support and there was no mechanism to follow up on implementation of mission recommendations. This called for the Bureau to define the services provided, and what was acceptable regarding timeliness and adequacy of responses. These would form a basis for measuring the Bureau's performance and identifying areas for improvement.

45. Furthermore, surveyed country operations also indicated that headquarters divisions tended to be more responsive to their requests for support than the Bureau, with the latter often forwarding their requests to the former. The Bureau attributed this to: (a) it not having the technical expertise required; (b) the matters being strategy and/or policy related thereby requiring a headquarters response; and (c) global projects that were coordinated at headquarters and only supported at the regional level. However, even in these circumstances, the RAAs stated that the Bureau had the primary responsibility for supporting countries in the second line of defense.

46. The Bureau was yet to establish a mechanism for collating, analyzing and sharing reports from regional oversight activities. As part of its oversight, the Bureau needed to reinforce its monitoring of recommendation implementation, including by country operations under its purview. For instance, since its establishment in 2020, the region has had the largest number of outstanding and oldest OIOS audit recommendations, with some dating as far back as 2017. Additionally, there was no evidence that the

Bureau analyzed the country reports to find solutions to cross-cutting issues and/or determine which issues to escalate to Headquarters, as reflected in Chart 1-3. While the Bureau’s senior management indicated that it considered matters escalated to them, no documentation was available to support this. The Bureau should consider including these roles under the multi-functional oversight committee.



47. OIOS attributed the issues above to: (i) gaps in the definition of oversight and support in staff job descriptions; (ii) inadequate training of staff; and (iii) lack of tools to support the execution of the dual roles. This impacted the Bureau’s ability to meet the objective of improving the impact and efficiency of programmes and facilitating functional communities of practice.

- (5) The UNHCR Regional Bureau of East and Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes should: (a) implement a risk-based oversight and support plan; (b) clarify related roles and responsibilities and build the capacity involved in these activities; and (c) formalize the multi-functional committee to oversee performance, ensure timely implementation of recommendations, and address root causes to pervasive issues in the region.**

UNHCR accepted recommendation 5 and stated that the Regional Bureau will ensure that risk-based support and oversight plans will be developed for all units in 2024 and was in the process of developing a new recommendation tracking tool. The already operational Multi-Functional Team (MFT) was responsible for identifying and collating issues and root causes for remediation across the region. The Regional Bureau Oversight Committee will also be relaunched in 2023 with updated terms of reference that vest it with responsibility for oversight and monitoring of the implementation of recommendations from the MFT. Recommendation 5 remains open pending receipt of evidence that the recommendation has been implemented.

F. Structure and staffing

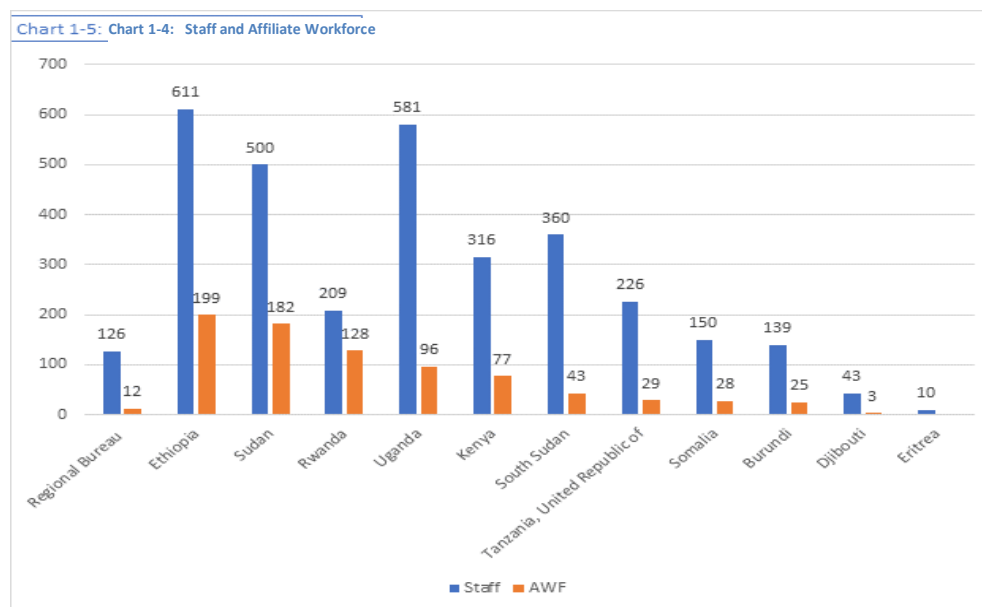
Need to assess structure, capacity and competence to deliver mandate

48. The Bureau’s strategic priorities related to human resources included to: (i) conduct a staff review at Bureau and country level; (ii) work with UNHCR Headquarters to promote people management and contribute to the development/update of human resources policies; (iii) facilitate implementation of the new

human resources management system ‘Workday’; (iv) foster an inclusive and diversified workspace; and (v) provide support to operations in the region regarding recruitment, oversight and monitoring activities.

49. The Bureau’s human resources unit is comprised of three staff at the professional level and five national level staff. It had a one-year human resources strategy (2022) that did not cover key elements such as the acquisition, retention of staff capacity required and succession planning in the region. It also lacked metrics against which its performance would be measured over time.

50. The region’s workforce as of 22 June 2022 was 4,093, comprising 3,271 staff and 822 affiliate workforce (AWF). The Bureau had 114 personnel (113 staff and 1 AWF), with the rest, i.e., 3,979 (3,271 staff and 821 AWF) distributed across the country operations, as shown in Chart 1-4.



51. UNHCR set up all seven regional bureaux in the same way and they were not allowed to adapt their structures to fit regional contexts in the first two years of operation. The EHAGL Bureau increased its staff by seven in the two years and this was possible through the hiring of less costly general service staff in the place of national officers included in the budget.

52. The Bureau reviewed staff plans in the region during the annual budget preparation processes, with structures and staffing levels adjusted primarily based on available resources and not informed by needs. Except in two countries with emergencies, the Bureau did not conduct formal assessments to determine the optimal staffing structure and capacity (skills and numbers) required to deliver services to displaced persons. The Bureau noted that it had supported major restructurings in Uganda, Burundi and South Sudan but lacked documentation to evidence that these exercises were informed by a needs assessment. Such assessments would also have ensured, in line with the D&R, that staff resources were moved nearest to points of service delivery. With over two years of experience in this role, now was a good time for the Bureau to conduct such reviews.

53. The Bureau structure had technical experts that mirrored the functional areas at headquarters division and country levels. This was in line with UNHCR’s move from having generalists to technical specialists to improve the quality of services delivered. It however resulted in an increased number of staff, with UNHCR having technical experts at headquarters, bureau and country levels. If not well managed, this raises a risk of inefficiency. Consideration also needed to be given to the decentralization objective and

UNHCR senior management recommendations in 2019 that technical experts are placed at the country level as a priority. Survey respondents supported the position taken by other regional bureaux to have technical experts in-country as they viewed this as being more beneficial in the longer term than periodic technical missions from Bureau staff. Considering the resource constraints, the Bureau needed to assess and determine the most cost-effective model to adopt for locating its technical experts.

54. Twenty per cent of the staff resources in the region were AFWs, with 9 of 11 countries in the region having over 10 per cent of their workforce as affiliates. In line with the two benchmarked United Nations agencies, affiliates were brought on board to fill staffing gaps in the short term. However, OIOS was of the view that it also reflected gaps in human resources planning and masked staff shortages in critical roles because affiliates were performing core functions in contravention of UNHCR rules as was noted in Ethiopia. This reinforced the need for an assessment of staffing requirements for critical functions at the Bureau and country levels. The Bureau also needed through its monitoring to ensure that affiliates are not involved in core activities and, if so, that they are working under the supervision of UNHCR staff.

55. At the time of the audit, there were 1,425 local and 174 international vacancies across the region as of 29 June 2022, with 93 of these being open since 2020. However, the reported numbers were not reliable since included therein were some posts that had been cancelled or filled/closed. Additionally, 48 per cent of the vacant international posts lacked key information like the date on which the position was posted and/or the status of recruitment. The Bureau attributed the unreliable data to a failure by hiring managers to update the relevant records. It also reflected the need for the Bureau to better manage and oversee recruitment processes and, more generally, staff matters. The Bureau's expectation that these deficiencies would be addressed under Workday would only be realized if the system roll-out went hand in hand with behavior change by managers.

56. The countries with the highest vacancies, i.e., Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan and Uganda also had the most significant number of displaced persons, budgets and operations, which, if unaddressed, would affect the delivery of services. They also had the shortest Standard Assignment Length (SAL) of 18 months, which implied that they were always in the recruitment cycle. The Bureau was aware of the impact that short SALs had on the delivery of services to displaced persons. It however needed to determine the extent of the impact to inform its decisions on recruitment and other human resources management actions at regional and organizational levels. The Bureau's Excel worksheet that tracked when staff SALs would end also needed to be translated into a planning tool to better manage recruitments.

57. As part of its mandate, the Bureau was required to ensure gender and diversity equity. Data maintained as part of UNHCR diversity dashboard included distribution by grade, hardship location, age, geographical region and by country of nationality. As of 31 October 2022, 2,355 (70 per cent) of the region's workforce was male and 1,021 (30 per cent) female personnel. On the other hand, the workforce for the Bureau comprised 52 (43 per cent) and 69 (57 per cent) male and female personnel respectively. There was a need for the Bureau to consider developing a targeted strategy to achieve gender parity in the region.

58. It was expected that Workday would help alleviate the mundane tasks the team conducted and free up their time to take on more strategic matters. While it is still too early to assess its effectiveness in creating more efficient ways of working, OIOS was of the view that amongst other things, its success was dependent on the simplification of processes which was a core objective of the D&R process and changes in staff behavior. The Bureau also had a role in ensuring that country operations were structured right for cost-effective service delivery.

(6) The UNHCR Regional Bureau of East and Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes should conduct strategic workforce planning informed by: (a) assessing adequacy of countries

structures and staff capacity to deliver their mandates, taking into account availability of resources; (b) determining the most cost-effective positioning of technical experts; (c) analyzing vacancies and standard assignment lengths and determining the optimal number of affiliated workforce at country and regional levels; and (d) developing a plan to improve gender parity within the region.

UNHCR accepted recommendation 6 and stated that the Regional Bureau would reinforce its regional strategic workforce planning process, which started in 2022, including determining the most effective positioning of technical experts. The Bureau further stated that it was in the process of generating human resources analysis proposed and was developing a plan for improving gender parity within the region. Recommendation 6 remains open pending receipt of evidence that the recommendation has been implemented.

IV. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

59. OIOS wishes to express its appreciation to the management and staff of UNHCR for the assistance and cooperation extended to the auditors during this assignment.

(Signed) Anne Rwego
Chief, UNHCR Audit Service
Internal Audit Division
Office of Internal Oversight Services

STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Audit of the Regional Bureau of East and Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ⁸ / Important ⁹	C/ O ¹⁰	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date ¹¹
1	The UNHCR Regional Bureau of East and Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes should interpret the Roles, Accountabilities and Authorities framework in the regional context to facilitate its implementation and reinforce operationalization of the Resource Allocation framework across country operations.	Important	O	Receipt of documentary evidence of: (a) work plans for all Bureau pillars that interpret the RAA in the regional context; and (b) implementation of a work plan to operationalization the Resource Allocation Framework	31 March 2024
2	The UNHCR Regional Bureau of East and Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes should strengthen its strategic planning processes by: (a) documenting its monitoring of countries' development and implementation of strategies; (b) implementing a regional data strategy to ensure quality information is available for decision making; and (c) reinforcing the identification and mitigation of key risks at country and regional level.	Important	O	Receipt of documentary evidence of: (a) the Bureau's monitoring of countries operations' development and implementation of strategies; (b) a finalized regional data strategy; and (c) implementation of an action plan to reinforce the identification, mitigation, and prioritization of key risks at country and regional level.	2(a): 31/03/2024 2(b): 31/03/2024 2(c): 31/12/2023
3	The UNHCR Regional Bureau of East and Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes should: (a) reinforce its resource mobilization strategy as informed by relevant research; and (b) obtain support from the Division of External Relations on initiatives to widen the donor base and develop guidance and tools to support resource mobilization at country and regional level.	Important	O	Receipt of documentary evidence of: (a) updated regional resource mobilization strategy; and (b) implementation of a work plan to help country operations widen their donor base.	3(a): 30/06/2024 3(b): 31/12/2023
4	The UNHCR Regional Bureau of East and Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes should support country	Important	O	Receipt of documentary evidence of: (a) mapping and prioritization of key humanitarian	31/12/2023

⁸ 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.

⁹ 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.

¹⁰ Please note the value C denotes closed recommendations whereas O refers to open recommendations.

¹¹ Date provided by UNHCR in response to recommendations.

STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Audit of the Regional Bureau of East and Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ⁸ / Important ⁹	C/ O ¹⁰	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date ¹¹
	operations to: (a) map and prioritize key humanitarian and development frameworks as part of their strategy development process, including the mainstreaming of forcibly displaced persons into national systems; and (b) implement an action plan for following up outstanding Global Compact on Refugees pledges.			and development frameworks as part of the strategic development process; and (b) reduction in outstanding Global Compact of Refugee pledges.	
5	The UNHCR Regional Bureau of East and Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes should: (a) implement a risk-based oversight and support plan; (b) clarify related roles and responsibilities and build the capacity involved in these activities; and (c) formalize the multi-functional committee to oversee performance, ensure timely implementation of recommendations, and address root causes to pervasive issues in the region.	Important	O	Receipt of documentary evidence of: a) implementation of a Bureau regional risk-based support and oversight monitoring plan; (b) defined roles and responsibilities and building of their capacity to effectively undertake their support and oversight responsibilities; and (c) formalized Regional Bureau Multi-Functional Oversight Committee tasked to oversee performance and ensure implementation of recommendations on pervasive issues in the region.	5(a): 31/03/2024 5(b): 31/03/2024 5(c): 31/12/2023
6	The UNHCR Regional Bureau of East and Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes should conduct strategic workforce planning informed by: (a) assessing adequacy of countries structures and staff capacity to deliver their mandates, taking into account availability of resources; (b) determining the most cost-effective positioning of technical experts; (c) analyzing vacancies and standard assignment lengths and determining the optimal number of affiliated workforce at country and regional levels; and (e) developing a plan to improve gender parity within the region.	Important	O	Receipt of documentary evidence that the Bureau has conducted strategic workforce planning encompassing: (a) adequacy of country operations structure and capacity to deliver their mandates, within available resources; (b) determination of the most cost-effective positioning of technical experts; (c) analysis of vacancies and standard assignment lengths in determining the optimal number of affiliate work force; and (d) measures to improve gender parity within the region.	6(a): 31/12/2023 6(b): 31/12/2023 6(c): 31/12/2023 6(d): 31/12/2023

APPENDIX I

Management Response

Management Response

Audit of the Regional Bureau of East and Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹² / Important ¹³	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	UNHCR comments
1	The UNHCR Regional Bureau of East and Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes should interpret the Roles, Accountabilities and Authorities framework in the regional context to facilitate its implementation and reinforce operationalization of the Resource Allocation Framework across country operations.	Important	Yes	RB EHAGL Senior Programme Coordinator	31/03/2024	<p>Regional interpretation of the Roles, Accountabilities and Authorities (RAA) will be achieved in EHAGL through establishment of unit-level RAA-based workplans. In 2023, units within EHAGL's SPM pillar established RAA-based workplans, evidence of which was provided to the auditors. RAA-based workplans will be expanded to all RB pillars for the 2024 workplan cycle.</p> <p>For the Resource Allocation Framework (RAF), the bureau consulted with Headquarters who confirmed that the Resource Allocation Framework is an instruction not a policy direction or a soft guidance that requires regional or country level interpretation. It was expanded that the Fundamental premise of this framework is the delegation of decision-making to the appropriate level within the organization – in the context of this audit to a country office or a regional bureau. The authority to take a</p>

¹² 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.

¹³ 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.

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹² / Important ¹³	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	UNHCR comments
						decision is de-linked from the ability to record/process the decision (e.g., revise a budget, revise a PPA, change a position, etc.). The head of sub-office can decide on structural changes or make budget revisions within her/his authority, but relevant analysis and actual processing can be done at country or central level (this is system-dependent). The RB can however still support the aims of the recommendation by seeking to better operationalize the RAF through re-circulation of its existing guidance to country operations.
2	(The UNHCR Regional Bureau of East and Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes should strengthen its strategic planning processes by: (a) documenting its monitoring of countries' development and implementation of strategies; (b) implementing a regional data strategy to ensure quality information is available for decision making; and (c) reinforcing the identification and mitigation of key risks at country and regional level.	Important	Yes	2(a) RB EHAGL Senior Advisor Programme Coordinator 2(b) RB EHAGL Senior DIMA Coordinator 2(c) RB EHAGL Principal Risk Management and Compliance	2(a): 31/03/2024 2(b): 31/03/2024 2(c): 31/12/2023	Part 2(a): The RB concurs with the recommendation and notes that monitoring of strategies is already ongoing; documentation of monitoring processes will be reinforced and provided as evidence. Part 2(b): The RB is in agreement with the recommendation and notes that the regional data strategy is under development. Part 2(c): RB accepts the recommendation and will reinforce identification, mitigation and prioritization of key risks.
3	The UNHCR Regional Bureau of East and Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes should: (a) reinforce its resource mobilization strategy as informed by relevant research; and (b) obtain support	Important	Yes	RB EHAGL Head of External Engagement Service	3(a): 30/06/2024 3(b): 31/12/2023	Part 3(a): The Regional Bureau has developed a Regional Resource Mobilization Strategy which will further be reinforced with the integration of findings from

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹² / Important ¹³	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	UNHCR comments
	from the Division of External Relations on initiatives to widen the donor base and develop guidance and tools to support resource mobilization at country and regional level.					<p>completed and planned mapping initiatives. Research on available pooled fund sources has already been undertaken, and mapping of funding opportunities in the Gulf region is being undertaken in coordination with PSP and MENA Bureau. The updated Regional Resource Mobilization Strategy with supporting documents from the mapping initiatives will be provided as evidence.</p> <p>Part 3(b): Support and training to country operations to develop fundraising strategies is underway, with the support of the Division of External Relations in capacity building and research to widen the donor base.</p>
4	The UNHCR Regional Bureau of East and Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes should support country operations in their: (a) mapping and prioritizing key humanitarian and development frameworks as part of their strategy development process, including the mainstreaming of forcibly displaced persons into national systems; and (b) implementing an action plan for following up outstanding Global Compact on Refugees pledges	Important	Yes	<p>4(a) RB EHAGL Senior Programme Coordinator</p> <p>4(b) RB EHAGL Durable Solutions Officer</p>	<p>4(a) 31/12/2023</p> <p>4(b) 31/12/2023</p>	Part 4(a) The RB guides and encourages the alignment of country operation strategies to international and national frameworks and strategies including government (national development plans), inter-agency (HRP) and cooperation frameworks (UNSCDF), through the review of country operation (CO) Multi-Year Strategies (MYS) and COMPASS indicators. The RB will continue to support this alignment and will strengthen documentation of the review processes that will be provided as evidence.

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹² / Important ¹³	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	UNHCR comments
						<p>Part 4(b): The RB notes that the actions required to satisfy the recommendation have been implemented. The RB already works with country operations to support the implementation of host country and partner pledges; on monitoring GRF pledge implementation, the RB works in close collaboration with the HQ GCR Coordination Team, and through the established network of GCR/GRF Focal Points at the Regional Bureau and Country Operations, to hold regular bilateral and regional sessions to support GCR activities on advocacy, pledge follow-up and cultivation, convening and facilitating GRF related-events, partnership building, and data collection for GCR indicators. Reporting on pledge implementation progress by stakeholders from the region is done through the official GRF Pledges and Contributions Dashboard (the established mechanism for tracking the implementation of pledges made at the Global Refugee Forum), the Global GCR Indicator Report 2021, and publication of internal and external Regional and Country Stocktaking reports: East and Horn of Africa, and the Great Lakes - GRF Implementation Update 2021; Ethiopia GRF Update Report on</p>

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹² / Important ¹³	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	UNHCR comments
						government pledges - December 2021 ; East and Horn of Africa, and the Great Lakes region - GRF pledge implementation - 2020 Progress Report . On the basis of these actions, the RB considers this part of the recommendation implemented.
5	<p>The UNHCR Regional Bureau of East and Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes should: (a) implement a risk-based oversight and support plan; (b) clarify related roles and responsibilities and build the capacity involved in these activities; and (c) formalize the multi-functional committee to oversee performance, ensure timely implementation of recommendations, and address root causes to pervasive issues in the region.</p>	Important	Yes	RB EHAGL Principal Risk Management and Compliance Advisor	5(a): 31/03/2024 5(b): 31/03/2024 5(c): 31/12/2023	<p>Part 5(a): The RB has developed risk-based support and oversight plans for some of its units in 2023 and will ensure these are developed for all units in 2024. A new recommendations tracking tool is also being developed to satisfy part (a) of the recommendation.</p> <p>Part 5(b): The roles and responsibilities, and capacity building required to discharge, them are addressed in the risk-based support and oversight plans developed to address part (a) of the recommendation.</p> <p>Part 5(c): The RB accepts the recommendation and can elaborate that the envisaged structure for the RB will be for the already operational RB Multi-Functional Team (MFT) to be the principal organ responsible for identification and collation of issues and root causes across the region, and that will issue remedial recommendations to address those issues as per its TOR. The Regional Bureau Oversight Committee</p>

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹² / Important ¹³	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	UNHCR comments
						(RBOC) will be relaunched in 2023 with an updated TOR that vests it with responsibility for monitoring and follow up of implementation of recommendations arising from the MFT, as well as internal and external and oversight bodies.
6	The UNHCR Regional Bureau of East and Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes should conduct strategic workforce planning informed by: (a) assessing adequacy of countries structures and staff capacity to deliver their mandates, taking into account availability of resources; (b) determining the most cost-effective positioning of technical experts; (c) analyzing vacancies and standard assignment lengths and determining the optimal number of affiliated workforce at country and regional levels; and (d) developing a plan to improve gender parity within the region	Important	Yes	RB EHAGL Senior HR Partner	31/12/2023	<p>6(a) The RB is in agreement with the ambition of the recommendation and will reinforce Strategic Workforce planning across the region, as per the calendar developed. The process had already started in 2022 and will continue in 2023. The manual under development by DHR will assist to that effect.</p> <p>6(b) Determination of the most effective positioning of technical experts will be conducted as part of the exercises planned to address part (a) of the recommendation.</p> <p>6(c) The RB accepts the recommendation and notes that work is ongoing to generate the HR analysis proposed.</p> <p>6(d) The RB accepts the recommendation and notes that work is ongoing to establish a plan for improving gender parity within the region.</p>