OIOS

Office of Internal Oversight Services

INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION

REPORT 2019/037

Audit of the operations of the regional office of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Asia and the Pacific

The regional office aligned its organizational structure to the New Operating Model but needed to improve management of surge support requests

22 May 2019
Assignment No. AN2018/590/04

Audit of the operations of the regional office of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Asia and the Pacific

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of the operations of the regional office of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in Asia and the Pacific (ROAP). The objective of the audit was to determine whether the operations of ROAP were effective and efficient in achieving the strategic objectives of OCHA. The audit covered the period from 1 January 2016 to 30 November 2018 and included a review of ROAP's roles and responsibilities, work plan implementation and management of staff and other resources allocated to the operations.

ROAP aligned its organizational structure to the New Operating Model, ensured staff completed mandatory training and performance appraisals and was making efforts to achieve gender parity and geographical representation targets. However, it needed to improve management of surge requests, while OCHA Headquarters needed to review staff reporting lines in the regional office.

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

- Ensure that the levels and reporting lines of staff in ROAP are commensurate with their responsibilities and accountabilities;
- Ensure the timely submission of required reports and financial documentation relating to emergency cash grants, review them to ensure the grants were used for the intended purpose and maintain the documents in a centralized database for ease of retrieval;
- Update the memorandum of understanding with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific for the provision of local administrative services to reflect the current responsibilities and accountabilities of each entity;
- Prioritize the filling of seven ROAP positions that have been encumbered on temporary appointments; and
- Enhance asset control procedures, in collaboration with ROAP.

In addition, ROAP needed to establish and implement mechanisms for recording, tracking and monitoring the progress and outcome of requests for surge or technical support and develop, in collaboration with those requesting technical surge support, detailed terms of reference and deliverables.

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

CONTENTS

Audit of the operations of the regional office of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Asia and the Pacific

I.   BACKGROUND

1.   The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of the operations of the regional office of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in Asia and the Pacific (ROAP).

2.   OCHA was established by General Assembly resolution 46/182 and is responsible for bringing together humanitarian actors to ensure a coherent response to emergencies for countries in need. OCHA's activities are centered around five core functions: (a) coordination; (b) information management; (c) advocacy; (d) policy; and (e) humanitarian financing.

3.   ROAP has been based in Bangkok, Thailand since 2004 and covers 41 countries including five countries where OCHA has country offices. ROAP also comprises three Humanitarian Advisor Teams (HATs) based in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), Japan and Indonesia. The regional office works closely with resident coordinators and humanitarian country teams (HCTs), national and regional organizations, Member States, other United Nations agencies, and non-governmental organizations. ROAP coordinates with regional partners in emergency response including the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

4.   Up to 2017, the overall purpose of OCHA's regional offices was to act as OCHA's first source of staffing for surge response, lead OCHA's work on preparedness and enhance partnerships for humanitarian purposes. Accordingly, in 2016, 2017 and part of 2018, ROAP deployed staff to several missions in response to various disasters and emergencies including earthquakes, tsunamis, floods and cyclones. ROAP also deployed staff on technical support missions and engaged with operational partners in humanitarian assistance. In June 2018, OCHA leadership revised the primary role of regional offices to effective and efficient humanitarian surge missions for emergency response. Regional offices would conduct operational readiness and operational partnership activities when they are not engaged in surge missions.

5.   At the time of the audit, ROAP had 27 authorized posts: 16 Professionals, 2 National Professional Officers, 8 General Service staff, and 1 United Nations Volunteer. Cost plans were $6.6 million, $5 million and $4.9 million for the years 2016, 2017 and 2018, respectively.

6.   Comments provided by OCHA are incorporated in italics.

II.   AUDIT OBJECTIVE, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

7.   The objective of the audit was to determine whether the operations of ROAP were effective and efficient in achieving OCHA's strategic objectives.

8.   This audit was included in the 2018 risk-based work plan of OIOS due to risks associated with: (a) alignment of ROAP's roles and responsibilities, as a regional office, to OCHA's core functions; (b) coordinating the efforts of humanitarian partners in the region; (c) providing timely and updated information; and (d) managing staff and other resources in ROAP.

9.   OIOS conducted this audit from November 2018 to January 2019, and it included a field visit to Bangkok, Thailand from 27 November to 14 December 2018. The audit covered the period from 1 January

2016 to 30 November 2018. Based on an activity-level risk assessment, the audit covered higher and medium risks areas in the operations of OCHA in ROAP, which included: a review of its roles and responsibilities, work plan implementation, and management of staff and other resources allocated to the operations.

10.   The audit methodology included: (a) interviews of key personnel; (b) reviews of relevant documentation; (c) analytical reviews of data; and (d) sample testing of key transactions in procurement and payments.

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

III.   AUDIT RESULTS

A.   Roles and responsibilities

OCHA needed to ensure that post levels in ROAP were commensurate with their job responsibilities

12.   OCHA's 2018-2021 People Strategy recognizes that the definition of roles and responsibilities and managerial hierarchy and leadership structures are essential for OCHA to meet its mandate effectively and efficiently.

13.   ROAP operates with the following organizational structure, which places the Head of Office, Deputy Head of Office and Head of the HAT in Indonesia at the P5 level, even though the positions varied in complexity and accountability. Its three organizational units, two substantive units and one administration and finance unit, are headed at the P4 level, with the two P4 Heads of HATs in Japan and DPRK reporting to the head of one of the substantive units.

Figure 1: ROAP reporting lines
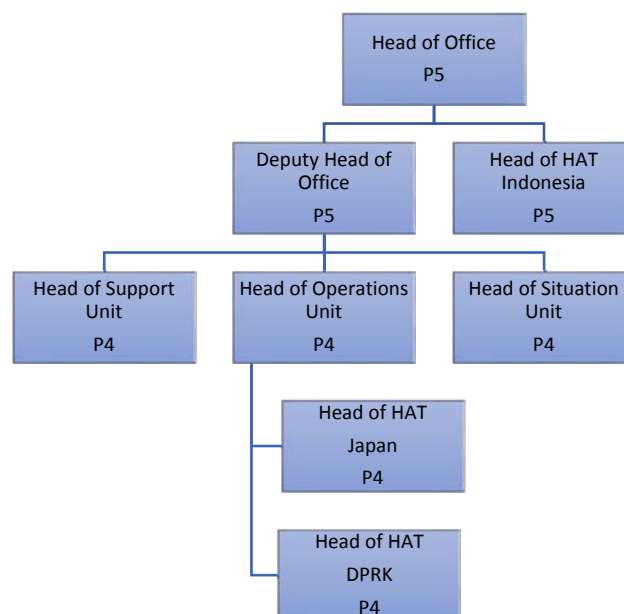
Source: ROAP organization chart dated September 2018

14.   The authorization of ROAP's staffing table with positions at the same level but with significant differences in job responsibilities required proper justification. Also, the current organizational structure could present challenges in managing staff performance as a number of senior staff were reporting to supervisors at the same level.

15.   ROAP informed OIOS that the posts of Head of Office and Deputy Head of Office would become vacant in the first quarter of 2019. In the view of OIOS, this may present an opportunity to review the necessity of having two staff members at the same level as the Head of Office, given the differences in their roles, responsibilities and authority.

> **(1) OCHA should review ROAP's staffing table to ensure that the levels and reporting lines of staff are commensurate with their responsibilities and accountabilities.**
>
> *OCHA accepted recommendation 1 and stated that it was reviewing ROAP's staffing in the context of planning for 2020.* Recommendation 1 remains open pending receipt of results of the review and evidence of their implementation.

OCHA was reviewing lessons learned from the 2019 work planning process

16.   In accordance with the planning and reporting requirements set out by OCHA's Strategic Planning and Guidance Section (SPEGS), activities in ROAP's work plans focused on OCHA's five strategic objectives and included: coordination, information management and public relations (situational analysis), supporting the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and emergency cash grants applications (humanitarian financing); community engagement (humanitarian access and protection) and providing leadership in the humanitarian system. It also acknowledged the need to align priorities with OCHA's New Operating Model to ensure efficient humanitarian surge for emergency response. However, while the work plan included the priority countries that would be covered and tools that may be employed, it did not articulate the rationale for the prioritization of the countries selected, including their relative risks or inadequate prior coverage. In addition, for the HATs, the ROAP work plan included a situation analysis of their scale of operations but did not detail the specific objectives to be achieved and related risks and mitigating factors.

17.   SPEGS stated that the change in requirements in the planning process was to streamline the level of details required to be included in internal documents and ease administrative burden. However, this resulted in the omission of relevant details in the planning process. As SPEGS was in the process of reviewing the 2019 work planning process to identify lessons learned and opportunities for improvement, OIOS did not make a recommendation on this issue.

ROAP needed to establish procedures for recording, tracking and monitoring surge support requests

18.   Up until 2017, the mandate of OCHA's regional offices revolved around the three core responsibilities of surge response, preparedness and partnerships. In June 2018, the OCHA Operations Committee endorsed the prioritization of country-level responses into an inverted pyramid of four categories: (a) surge response; (b) technical support; (c) operational readiness and operational partnerships; and (d) other regional activities.

19.   Requests for surge and technical support were received in writing, by telephone, etc. ROAP maintained a travel log of all surge missions that included name of staff, dates of the trip, destination city and a general description of the travel purpose. The requests for surge capacity were prioritized over those for technical support in accordance with the New Operational Model for regional offices. However, ROAP

had not established mechanisms for recording surge requests and decisions taken on them, and for monitoring the progress and outcome of such requests.

20.   ROAP restructured its functional units, aligning them to the requirements of the New Operating Model for regional offices and optimizing its capacity to deliver on the core team concept, which facilitated rapid deployment of pre-established teams. This meant that those deployed for sudden onset emergencies or surge were aware of their roles and responsibilities, and hence could depend on a predictable reporting hierarchy to provide the emergency response. However, there was a need to develop, in collaboration with those requesting technical support, terms of reference for both sudden onset emergencies and technical support surge requests to clarify the deliverables, timelines and other requirements of the support.

21.   Without an established system to record, track and monitor surge and technical support requests and to clarify deliverables, ROAP risked compromising efficiency and effectiveness in responding to these requests.

> **(2) ROAP should: (i) establish and implement mechanisms for recording, tracking and monitoring the progress and outcome of each request for sudden onset emergency surge or technical support; and (ii) develop, in collaboration with those requesting technical surge support, detailed terms of reference and deliverables for each request.**
>
> *OCHA accepted recommendation 2 and stated that ROAP: (i) was looking to strengthen linkages between existing systems for recording surge requests, decision-making on deployments and mission reporting, including developing a new tracking tool; and (ii) would ensure that detailed terms of reference are regularly developed for technical assistance deployments and non-emergency country-level deployments, while using generic terms of reference for surge deployments.* Recommendation 2 remains open pending receipt of evidence of implementation of these actions.

Coordination and information sharing with other humanitarian assistance partners were adequate

22.   In accordance with the change management framework, when regional offices were not providing surge support, their next priority would be providing technical support to country operations in their regions of coverage. In ROAP, this included providing quality and timely information on major crises in the region to humanitarian partners. ROAP and the regional humanitarian partners had developed several mechanisms for improved coordination and to avoid duplication in preparedness and response efforts for partners working in humanitarian assistance. These comprised multi-partner working groups at the sector/cluster level such as the Asia Pacific Regional Cash Working Group and the Regional Working Group on Gender in Humanitarian Action. In addition, ROAP took a leadership role in protection against sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) forums, whose priority was to establish a common approach to PSEA during emergency response.

23.   ROAP also chaired the regional Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) to facilitate proper coordination of disaster preparedness and response, and co-chaired the Asia-Pacific IASC Regional Network's Emergency Preparedness Working Group, a forum for humanitarian partners to promote effective emergency response preparedness. OCHA also joined governments, humanitarian and development agencies, as well as other partners that committed through global platforms, such as the World Humanitarian Summit, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and Sustainable Development Goals, to better integrate gender equality into humanitarian and development programmes.

24.   In addition, ROAP worked to strengthen collaboration on emergency preparedness and response with regional bodies, such as ASEAN. ASEAN and the United Nations established a Joint Strategic Plan

on Disaster Management for the period 2016-2020 in which OCHA took the lead agency role for knowledge and innovation management and overall coordination.

25.   OIOS concluded that ROAP's coordination and information sharing mechanisms with humanitarian partners were adequate.

B.   Work plan implementation

<u>OCHA was reviewing the role of regional offices in monitoring and reporting on the use of CERF funds</u>

26.   Resident/humanitarian coordinators are responsible for overseeing the monitoring and reporting of CERF allocations with support from OCHA operations in the field.

27.   ROAP assisted in processing 30 CERF applications for the period 1 January 2016 to 30 November 2018 totaling $158.4 million for 12 countries, 3 of which had OCHA country offices. ROAP provided CERF processing support through either primary drafting (40 per cent) or document review (60 per cent) in the country requesting the assistance or remotely.

28.   ROAP, however, did not have any role in monitoring the use of CERF allocations. This was because the CERF accountability policy did not include a requirement for OCHA regional offices to monitor the implementation of CERF projects.

29.   In comments to another audit (Report No. 2018/136), OCHA indicated that it would review the CERF monitoring guidance to determine whether the role of OCHA regional offices in CERF processes needed to be further explained. In view of the materiality of CERF grants disbursed to countries where there is no OCHA presence, OIOS welcomes this review and is therefore not making a recommendation on the issue currently.

<u>OCHA needed to monitor the usage of emergency cash grants and centralize storage of related documentation</u>

30.   Guidelines on OCHA Emergency Cash Grants (ECG) stipulate conditions for the timely and efficient management of emergency cash grants that support relief efforts in the immediate aftermath of natural disasters. The Operations and Advocacy Division as the manager of ECG is responsible for approving the grant requests and resident/humanitarian coordinators are required to submit a narrative report on the use of funds supported by original invoices and/or receipts within four months from the grant approval date.

31.   During the period January 2016 to November 2018, OCHA released four ECGs in the Asia and Pacific region totaling $309,600. OCHA approved and disbursed the grants on time. However, there were no supporting documents on the use of three of the grants that had passed the four-month timeline following their approval. This occurred because OCHA had not established the required monitoring system to ensure submission of supporting documents within established timelines and to review such documents to ensure the grants were used for the intended purpose. Also, OCHA was not maintaining all ECG supporting documents in a centralized database. Consequently, there was no assurance that the ECG conditions were complied with, which may also result in inefficient and ineffective use of ECG.

> **(3) OCHA should: (i) establish a system to ensure the timely submission of required reports, financial documentation and original invoices/receipts relating to emergency cash grants (ECG) within four months of approval of the grant; (ii) review documents to ensure ECGs**

> **were used for the intended purpose; and (iii) maintain supporting documents relating to ECG in a centralized database for ease of retrieval.**
>
> *OCHA accepted recommendation 3 and stated that it was updating the ECG standard operating procedures to ensure timely submission of required reports and supporting documentation relating to ECG and their review.* Recommendation 3 remains open pending receipt of a copy of the updated standard operating procedures and evidence of their implementation.

C.   Management of staff and other resources

<u>There was a need to review and update the memorandum of understanding with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific</u>

32.   The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) has been hosting ROAP since its inception in November 2004. In this regard, the two entities signed two agreements to define the administrative support to be provided by ESCAP and to clarify their respective responsibilities and accountabilities. The first was a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for the provision of local administrative services and the second was a lease for office space in the ESCAP United Nations building in Bangkok. OCHA also signed an MOU with an inter-agency service provider established under the common services initiative for the United Nations offices, programmes and specialized agencies in Indonesia.

33.   The MOU between OCHA and ESCAP set out the range of services (human resources management, financial services and general administrative services such as protocol, shipping, travel and procurement) provided by ESCAP to OCHA. This MOU, signed on 1 February 2005, was last amended on 15 January 2008 and had not been updated to reflect current operations including the use of Umoja. This may result in potential misunderstanding of responsibilities and accountabilities. The MOU with ESCAP for the lease of premises was updated in November 2017 and the MOU with the inter-agency service provider was updated in July 2018.

> **(4) OCHA should establish an updated memorandum of understanding with ESCAP for the provision of local administrative services to reflect the current responsibilities and accountabilities of each entity.**
>
> *OCHA accepted recommendation 4 and stated that it was negotiating a draft MOU with ESCAP.* Recommendation 4 remains open pending receipt of a copy of the final MOU.

<u>There was a need to fill temporarily encumbered posts through regular recruitment and appointment processes</u>

34.   According to administrative instruction ST/AI/2010/4/Rev.1, temporary appointments are to be used to appoint staff for seasonal or peak workloads and specific short-term requirements of less than one year. They could be renewed, on exceptional approval from the Office of Human Resources, formerly the Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM), for up to one additional year when warranted. Thereafter, the staff members shall be required to separate for a period of three months within the same duty station.

35.   Seven of ROAP authorized posts were occupied by staff holding temporary appointments as at 30 November 2018, four of which had been encumbered by the staff for over 729 days. One of the appointments was encumbered for 1,603 days and hence had reached the 729 days mark twice. OHRM approved the extensions for the four temporary appointments and allowed a reduced break-in-service due

to exigencies of service. In February 2018, ROAP sent requests and reminders to OCHA Headquarters to regularize these positions including terms of reference to be used to prepare the job openings. However, as at 12 December 2018, OCHA Headquarters had not yet issued the job openings. These seven posts were also not included in a project initiated by OCHA Headquarters to regularize incumbencies in OCHA globally including moving staff from temporary to fixed term contracts for positions that had longer term requirements.

36.   Temporary contracts do not promote job security and could adversely impact the efficiency and productivity of staff. They also lacked several benefits associated with a fixed term contract and hence were not aligned with OCHA's People Strategy, which aims to promote the well-being of its people.

> **(5) OCHA should prioritize filling through regular recruitment and vacancy management processes the seven ROAP positions that have been encumbered on temporary appointments.**
>
> *OCHA accepted recommendation 5 and stated that, wherever possible, it was prioritizing the filling of vacancies and positions encumbered on temporary appointments, taking into consideration liens on posts and the need for staffing agility as an emergency organization.* Recommendation 5 remains open pending receipt of evidence of recruitment for the seven positions.

ROAP made efforts to complete other recruitments and achieve gender parity and geographical representation targets

37.   In the period under review, ROAP filled seven vacancies within one to four months (average of 57 days) of the posts becoming vacant. This was in line with one of the key outputs in its 2017 work plan to minimize vacancy rates through robust recruitment and outreach strategies. As at 30 November 2018, out of the 16 authorized professional posts, 15 were encumbered (some temporarily) and 1 was vacant. All 10 posts for nationally recruited staff and the United Nations volunteer post were encumbered.

38.   As part of the OCHA People Strategy Action Plan, OCHA management periodically issued guidance to Heads of Offices on the achievement of quarterly targets of: (a) 50 per cent gender parity and (b) a minimum of 50 per cent of staff from all regional groups combined except Western European and Others (WEOG). ROAP did not meet these targets as only 33 per cent of its international staff were female, while representation from non-WEOG countries was 27 per cent as shown in the table. Gender parity for national staff had not been achieved, as 8 of the 10 national staff were women.

International staff post encumbrances by gender and geographical representation as of 29 November 2018

Geographical region	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*	*Percentage*
Western European and others	8	3	11	WEOG 73%
African States	1		1	
Asian States	1	1	2	Non-WEOG
Eastern European States	--	--	--	27%
Latin American	--	1	1	
Caribbean States	--	--	--	
Total	**10**	**5**	**15**	
Percentage	**67%**	**33%**		

39.   Although the gender and geographical representation statistics remain below target, OIOS acknowledges the challenges and efforts ROAP made to improve them. For example, of the eight (including the United Nations Volunteer) recruitments made in the period, six (75 per cent) were female and six were

from non-WEOG countries. Since ROAP had established mechanisms to address the imbalance in gender and geographical representation of staff and OCHA management was closely following the achievement of established targets, OIOS did not make a recommendation.

ROAP complied with the staff performance management and development system

40.   ROAP assessed the performance of all of its staff for the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 performance reporting cycles, in accordance with the administrative instruction on the performance management and development system, ST/AI/2010/5. Similarly, all ROAP staff had completed all the United Nations mandatory trainings courses defined in the information circular on United Nations mandatory programmes (ST/IC/2017/17). OIOS concluded that the level of completion of both performance appraisals and mandatary training courses was satisfactory.

ROAP took adequate action regarding business continuity planning

41.   In accordance with the United Nations Organizational Resilience Management System and 2017 OCHA instructions, ROAP developed a business continuity plan (BCP), which provided policy and guidance to ensure continuation of critical operational services when exposed to a crisis event. The BCP, which covered both ROAP and HATs, articulated, inter alia, critical operational services and functions, roles and responsibilities and designated staff, and the decision-making process during an emergency or crisis event. It also included a ranking of risks by likelihood of occurrence and the impact they could have on ROAP operations. ROAP summarized the BCP in one page, which provided critical information including chain of command, delegation of authority and the emergency task force with their areas of responsibility.

42.   The BCP required quarterly reviews for necessary updates and periodic staff training. These reviews were essential for maintaining the capability to properly and efficiently execute the BCP functions. Periodic staff training would be provided through various mediums including workshops, classrooms and site visits to HATs. However, as at 15 December 2018, the training and mandatory simulation exercises had not been conducted. Consequently, staff directly involved in BCP may not be prepared to take on related roles and responsibilities, which may threaten the safety and security of staff and other resources and lead to non-recovery of critical functions.

43.   In January 2019, OCHA conducted simulation exercises for the BCP and developed a schedule for replicating the simulations periodically. In addition, ROAP stated that the outcomes from the simulation would be reviewed and addressed by ROAP's management team. OIOS concluded that ROAP had taken adequate action regarding business continuity planning and did not make a recommendation.

Controls over procurement management were adequate

44.   United Nations Secretariat policies and procedures require adequate controls over low-value local procurement activities.

45.   During the audit period, ROAP's low-value local procurement activities totaled $156,164 from 50 vendors. A review of 28 vendor files accounting for $67,600 showed that the low-value local procurement activities complied with applicable procurement guidelines. Three quotations were obtained, and payments were made based on certification that goods and services were received. OIOS, therefore, concluded that controls over procurement management in ROAP were satisfactory.

Controls around property management needed improvement

46.   According to the administrative instruction on property management, OCHA is responsible for maintaining up-to-date inventory records and recommending the disposal of obsolete and unserviceable property through annual physical verification.

47.   ROAP's assets and their movements including acquisitions, disposals, donations or sales were recorded in Umoja by OCHA Headquarters, based on information received from ROAP. They were valued at $198,769 as at 30 September 2018. ROAP was also monitoring assets valued at $50,354 outside Umoja, as they did not meet the capitalization threshold.

48.   OIOS review of property records and physical verification of assets identified the following:

- Twelve assets transferred to ROAP from OCHA Headquarters were recorded as Equipment in Transit in Umoja records.
- OCHA Headquarters did not update Umoja records with five serialized assets (three printers and two desktop computers) identified in the 2017 annual physical verification exercise as physically in existence.
- ROAP had not bar-coded some assets including two monitors and three laptops that were physically in existence, even though they met the capitalization threshold.

49.   The above anomalies occurred because ROAP had not established proper asset management controls. Inadequate asset management may result in inefficiencies in use of organization resources including asset loss.

> **(6) OCHA should, in collaboration with ROAP, enhance asset control procedures including ensuring that all assets and equipment are: (i) recorded and timely updated in Umoja; and (ii) properly labelled for ease of identification.**
>
> *OCHA accepted recommendation 6 and stated that the equipment had been fully recorded in Umoja.* Recommendation 6 remains open pending receipt of evidence of implementation of enhanced asset control procedures and of updating of unrecorded equipment in Umoja.

IV.   ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

50.   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 the operations of the regional office of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Asia and the Pacific

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical[1]/ Important[2]	C/ O[3]	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date[4]
1	OCHA should review ROAP's staffing table to ensure that the levels and reporting lines of staff are commensurate with their responsibilities and accountabilities.	Important	O	Submission of results of the review and evidence of their implementation.	31 December 2019
2	ROAP should: (i) establish and implement mechanisms for recording, tracking and monitoring the progress and outcome of each request for sudden onset emergency surge or technical support; and (ii) develop, in collaboration with those requesting technical surge support, detailed terms of reference and deliverables for each request.	Important	O	Submission of evidence of implementation of: (i) mechanisms established to record, track and monitor requests for sudden onset emergency surge or technical support; and (ii) detailed terms of reference for technical surge deployments.	30 June 2019
3	OCHA should: (i) establish a system to ensure the timely submission of required reports, financial documentation and original invoices/receipts relating to emergency cash grants (ECG) within four months of approval of the grant; (ii) review documents to ensure ECGs were used for the intended purpose; and (iii) maintain supporting documents relating to ECG in a centralized database for ease of retrieval.	Important	O	Submission of a copy of the updated standard operating procedures and evidence of their implementation.	31 December 2019
4	OCHA should establish an updated memorandum of understanding with ESCAP for the provision of local administrative services to reflect the current responsibilities and accountabilities of each entity.	Important	O	Submission of a copy of the final MOU.	31 December 2019

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[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 the operations of the regional office of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Asia and the Pacific

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical[1]/ Important[2]	C/ O[3]	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date[4]
5	OCHA should prioritize filling through regular recruitment and vacancy management processes the seven ROAP positions that have been encumbered on temporary appointments.	Important	O	Submission of evidence of recruitment for the seven positions.	31 December 2019
6	OCHA should, in collaboration with ROAP, enhance asset control procedures including ensuring that all assets and equipment are: (i) recorded and timely updated in Umoja; and (ii) properly labelled for ease of identification.	Important	O	Submission of evidence of implementation of enhanced asset control procedures and of updating of unrecorded equipment in Umoja.	30 June 2019

APPENDIX I

Management Response

TO: A:	Ms. Muriette Lawrence-Hume, Chief New York Audit Service, Internal Audit Division, OIOS	DATE: 13 May 2019
		REFERENCE:

THROUGH:
S/C DE:

FROM: Mark Lowcock, Under-Secretary-General for
DE: Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief
Coordinator

SUBJECT: **Draft report on an audit of the operations of the Regional**
OBJET: **Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Asia**
and the Pacific (AN2018/590/04)

      In reference to your memorandum dated 5 April 2019, I am
enclosing herewith OCHA's management response to the draft
report and the recommendations issued.

Copy to: Ms. Menada Wind-Andersen, Executive Officer, OCHA

Management Response

Audit of the operations of the regional office of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Asia and the Pacific

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical[1]/ Important[2]	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
1	OCHA should review ROAP's staffing table to ensure that the levels and reporting lines of staff are commensurate with their responsibilities and accountabilities.	Important	Yes	Operations and Advocacy Division	31 December 2019	ROAP staffing is being reviewed in the context of planning for 2020.
2	ROAP should: (i) establish and implement mechanisms for recording, tracking and monitoring the progress and outcome of each request for sudden onset emergency surge or technical support; and (ii) develop, in collaboration with those requesting technical surge support, detailed terms of reference and deliverables for each request.	Important	Yes	ROAP	30 June 2019	On sub-point (i): • ROAP has existing systems for recording surge requests, decision-making on deployments and mission reporting. • ROAP is looking at how to strengthen linkages between these systems, including through development of a new tracking tool. On sub-point (ii): • ROAP uses generic TORs for emergency surge deployments (sudden-onset) and HR gap-filling surge. • ROAP will ensure that detailed TORs are regularly developed for technical assistance deployments and non-emergency country-level deployments.
3	OCHA should: (i) establish a system to ensure the timely submission of required reports, financial documentation and original invoices/receipts relating to	Important	Yes	Operations and Advocacy Division;	31 December 2019	The Standard Operating Procedures on Emergency Cash Grant is being updated to enforce audit recommendations.

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[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 the operations of the regional office of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Asia and the Pacific

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical[1]/ Important[2]	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
	emergency cash grants (ECG) within four months of approval of the grant; (ii) review documents to ensure ECGs were used for the intended purpose; and (iii) maintain supporting documents relating to ECG in a centralized database for ease of retrieval.			Executive Office		
4	OCHA should establish an updated memorandum of understanding with ESCAP for the provision of local administrative services to reflect the current responsibilities and accountabilities of each entity.	Important	Yes	ROAP	31 December 2019	A draft MoU is being negotiated with ESCAP.
5	OCHA should prioritize filling through regular recruitment and vacancy management processes the seven ROAP positions that have been encumbered on temporary appointments.	Important	Yes	Operations and Advocacy Division	31 December 2020	Wherever possible, OCHA is prioritizing filling vacancies and positions encumbered on temporary appointments through regular recruitment and vacancy management processes. This takes into consideration, however, liens on posts and the need for staffing flexibility and agility as an emergency organization.
6	OCHA should, in collaboration with ROAP, enhance asset control procedures including ensuring that all assets and equipment are: (i) recorded and timely updated in Umoja; and (ii) properly labelled for ease of identification.	Important	Yes	ROAP with the support of the Executive Office	30 June 2019	Equipment has been fully recorded in Umoja and ROAP got access to OCHA's maintenance plant to do the maintenance of equipment on a timely manner.