



## INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION

### REPORT 2015/173

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Audit of the Regional Bureau for Middle East and North Africa at the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Overall results relating to effective management of the Regional Bureau for Middle East and North Africa were initially assessed as partially satisfactory. Implementation of five important recommendations remains in progress.

FINAL OVERALL RATING: PARTIALLY SATISFACTORY

16 December 2015  
Assignment No. AR2015/163/01

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# AUDIT REPORT

## Audit of the Regional Bureau for Middle East and North Africa at 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 for Middle East and North Africa (Bureau for MENA or Bureau) at the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).
2. In accordance with its mandate, OIOS provides assurance and advice on the adequacy and effectiveness of the United Nations internal control system, the primary objectives of which are to ensure (a) efficient and effective operations; (b) accurate financial and operational reporting; (c) safeguarding of assets; and (d) compliance with mandates, regulations and rules.
3. The Bureau for MENA provides strategic direction, support and oversight to regional and country offices in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, which comprises 19 countries and one territory, with 13 operations in the Middle East and 7 in North Africa. The Bureau is headed by a Director, at the D-2 level, who reports to the Assistant High Commissioner for Operations. The Director was also appointed by the High Commissioner as the Regional Refugee Coordinator for the Syria Situation in July 2013 and for the Iraq Situation in August 2014, with the responsibility to coordinate the response efforts to populations of concern within UNHCR and at the inter-agency level. The operational scope of the Bureau for MENA has expanded significantly since 2013 due to the complex emergencies related to Syria, Iraq and Yemen, which have brought unprecedented scale and pace of change and deterioration of the political and humanitarian situation in the MENA region. The population of concern in the region reached 19.4 million in December 2014. The Bureau was responsible for monitoring expenditure and managing budget allocation of approximately \$1.1 billion in 2013 and \$1.2 billion in 2014 across the MENA region.
4. At the time of the audit, the Bureau was staffed with 115 posts, of which 83 (72 per cent) were based in Amman, Jordan, and 32 (28 per cent) were based in Geneva, Switzerland. The Bureau spent a total of \$36.5 million in 2013 and 2014 on staff and administrative costs and had an administrative budget of \$24.8 million for 2015 for managing the delivery of its mandate.
5. Comments provided by UNHCR are incorporated in *italics*.

### II. OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE

6. The audit was conducted to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of UNHCR governance, risk management and control processes in providing reasonable assurance regarding the **effective management of the Regional Bureau for Middle East and North Africa**.
7. The audit was included in the OIOS 2015 risk-based internal audit work plan for UNHCR due to risks arising from the span, volume and criticality of activities that the Bureau for MENA is expected to deliver in support of the mandate of UNHCR.
8. The key controls tested for the audit were: (a) strategic planning; and (b) programme management capacity. For the purpose of this audit, OIOS defined these key controls as follows:

(a) **Strategic planning**- controls that provide reasonable assurance that strategic and operational plans for programme and protection activities delivered by the Bureau are developed in alignment with the UNHCR global strategic priorities, and are adequately monitored.

(b) **Programme management capacity** - controls that provide reasonable assurance that the Bureau has sufficient programme management capacity to achieve its mandates, including: (i) sufficient financial resources; (ii) sufficient and competent human resources; and (iii) appropriate management tools and systems.

9. The key controls were assessed for the control objectives shown in Table 1.

10. OIOS conducted the audit from April to September 2015. The audit covered the period from 1 January 2013 to 31 May 2015.

11. OIOS conducted an activity-level risk assessment to identify and assess specific risk exposures, and to confirm the relevance of the selected key controls in mitigating associated risks. Through interviews and analytical reviews, OIOS assessed the existence and adequacy of internal controls and conducted necessary tests to determine their effectiveness.

### III. AUDIT RESULTS

12. The UNHCR governance, risk management and control processes examined were initially assessed as **partially satisfactory**<sup>1</sup> in providing reasonable assurance regarding the **effective management of the Regional Bureau for Middle East and North Africa**. OIOS made five recommendations to address issues identified in the audit.

13. There was a need for the Bureau for MENA to: (a) consolidate its operations plans to ensure consistent and coherent planning and reporting on activities; (b) adopt guidance for the benefit of country operations in the region on the selection and reporting on impact and performance indicators; (c) ensure that the ongoing organizational review of the Bureau examines potential redundancies and synergies in the Bureau structure as well as clarity of roles and responsibilities; (d) reallocate resources to ensure effective discharge of its support and oversight responsibilities and advocate for its participation in working groups entrusted with the drafting of new policies and other guidance; and (e) establish a process for monitoring of oversight recommendations.

14. The initial overall rating was based on the assessment of key controls presented in Table 1 below. The final overall rating is **partially satisfactory** as implementation of five important recommendations remains in progress.

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<sup>1</sup> A rating of “**partially satisfactory**” means that important (but not critical or pervasive) deficiencies exist 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.

Table 1  
Assessment of key controls

Business objective	Key controls	Control objectives			
		Efficient and effective operations	Accurate financial and operational reporting	Safeguarding of assets	Compliance with mandates, regulations and rules
Effective management of the Regional Bureau for Middle East and North Africa	(a) Strategic planning	Partially satisfactory	Partially satisfactory	Not assessed	Partially satisfactory
	(b) Programme management capacity	Partially satisfactory	Partially satisfactory	Not assessed	Partially satisfactory
<b>FINAL OVERALL RATING: PARTIALLY SATISFACTORY</b>					

## A. Strategic planning

### Operations plans required consolidation to ensure consistent and coherent planning and reporting of the Bureau's activities

15. During the Annual Programme Review exercise, the Bureau for MENA is required to plan for its annual activities and budget, and select relevant strategic objectives and outputs from the UNHCR results framework, which should be reflected in the Bureau's annual operations plan.

16. The 2014 and 2015 operations plans of the Bureau were split into two different plans: one for the Bureau structure based in Geneva, and the other for the Bureau structure based in Amman. The strategic objectives and outputs of the two plans differed, even though both structures had similar roles and delivered similar functions, with the exception of Logistics and Supply that was developed only for Amman in connection with the Syria and Iraq Situations. Furthermore, in the case of Geneva, the operations plan did not include certain relevant strategic objectives that would have reflected core responsibilities of the Bureau, while it included less relevant strategic objectives that did not reflect core responsibilities of the Bureau. For example, the plan did not include specific objectives related to provision of strategic direction to the country operations (i.e., "Global strategic direction and management strengthened"), but included security and policy development related objectives (i.e., "Security management reinforced as an organizational culture" and "Policy development strengthened"). Both operations plans included different protection related objectives and outputs, even though to some extent complementary. Since reporting on the achievements was done in two different plans, the extent to which overall results were achieved by the Bureau in the delivery of support on protection matters could therefore not be adequately captured.

17. For 2015, the Bureau prepared a summarized global high level plan of the Bureau, which was discussed with the Executive Office of the High Commissioner, but this plan was still translated formally into two distinct operations plans for Geneva and Amman. The existence of different operations plans was because the structure in Amman was created in July 2013 initially to provide support in the response to the Syria Situation, and it subsequently developed independently from the structure of the Bureau at headquarters, including in terms of planning and reporting on the Bureau's work. This dichotomy prevented the Bureau from: planning its activities coherently and thoroughly; avoiding duplication; ensuring effective use of resources; and reporting consistently on its results.

**(1) The UNHCR Bureau for Middle East and North Africa should consolidate its operations plans and ensure that its strategic objectives and outputs adequately reflect the core responsibilities and priorities of the Bureau.**

*UNHCR accepted recommendation 1 and stated that the Bureau had initiated discussions with relevant Divisions for technical support for consolidation of Bureau operations plans from 2017 in UNHCR's Results Based Management tool, and from 2017 would have a single plan for both Geneva and Amman offices. During this consolidation process, the Bureau would also closely review its strategic objectives and outputs to ensure they reflect its core responsibilities and priorities. As the 2016 operational plans were approved already, in 2016 the Bureau would consolidate its objectives in a single Excel table for ease of tracking progress and achievements. Recommendation 1 remains open pending receipt of evidence that: (i) the Bureau's operations plans have been consolidated; and (ii) the Bureau's strategic objectives and outputs reflect its core responsibilities and priorities.*

There was a need to adopt standard operating procedures on the selection and reporting on impact and performance indicators

18. The UNHCR Manual requires the Bureau to promote and monitor a results-oriented approach for the assessment, design and delivery of regional and country operations. For this purpose, the Bureau is required to monitor and assess UNHCR's performance and impact in the region through regular missions, while utilizing the UNHCR results-based management software, FOCUS, for performance reporting. In line with Administrative Instructions on Detailed Planning and Budgeting for 2015, the Bureau should ensure that country operations reflect key priorities in their result chains and, for this purpose, they select only the most pertinent objectives, outputs and indicators.

19. The Bureau monitored the delivery and implementation of programmes in the country operations by resorting to the following mechanisms: (a) country updates, briefings and fact sheets prepared by its various Desks in Geneva and by the Reporting Unit in Amman; (b) provision of specific guidance on indicators from the UNHCR results framework which could be used by country operations to assess delivery and performance in a consistent way; (c) consolidated budget and expenditure reports prepared by the Resources Management Unit of the Bureau in Geneva, including information per country, sub-region, and situation; (d) review of dashboards available in FOCUS and of key indicator reports used in Amman for the countries under the Syria Situation (Lebanon, Turkey, Syria, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt); and (e) monthly financial monitoring meetings held in Amman. Notwithstanding these monitoring activities carried out by the Bureau and the diverse range of information collected, the following shortcomings were observed in connection with monitoring:

- The Desks in Geneva used different formats, periodicities and dissemination methods for the country updates and briefings. Lists of recipients of the information were also not available across the Bureau or were under development.
- There was an emphasis on financial reporting and monitoring, and the practice of results-oriented approaches was not widespread within the Bureau. Specific guidance on performance indicators and regular monitoring of performance was demonstrated in connection with the countries under the Syria Situation, but was not observed in other MENA situations, sub-regions, and countries.

20. Whilst UNHCR country operations are free to choose the most relevant and applicable impact and performance indicators depending on their priorities and activities, the issues above were explained by: (a) absence of exchange of information and experiences between the Bureau structures in Amman and Geneva regarding reporting and monitoring practices; and (b) lack of standard monitoring and reporting

procedures detailing needs of information, types of reports, periodicity of issuance, lists of recipients, dissemination methods and monitoring procedures to be applied by the Bureau in monitoring the different operational contexts, programme delivery and performance of country operations.

21. Due to these shortcomings, the Bureau was exposed to risks associated with errors in reporting at the situation level, inconsistencies and inaccuracies in performance reporting within the region, as well as inability to monitor performance trends and achievements in the region.

**(2) The UNHCR Bureau for Middle East and North Africa (MENA) should adopt its own standard operating procedures on performance monitoring for the guidance of country operations in the MENA region, covering the selection and reporting on pertinent impact and performance indicators, in order to ensure that the results obtained are meaningful, while giving due consideration to ensuring that results-based monitoring and financial monitoring complement each other.**

*UNHCR accepted recommendation 2 and stated that corporate-wide guidance, instructions and standard operating procedures guided the Bureau's oversight and support role to operations, and that the Bureau's strategic objectives were aligned with the organization's global strategic priorities. Upon issuance of corporate-wide guidance on performance and impact indicators and global strategic priorities, the Bureau would follow up with tailored instructions to all MENA operations which would consolidate planning and indicator guidance and encourage operations to align their plans as much as possible, given their unique contexts, with Bureau objectives and global strategic priorities. Recommendation 2 remains open pending receipt of evidence that: (i) the standard operating procedures on performance monitoring have been implemented in field operations; and (ii) action has been taken by country operations to ensure that financial and performance monitoring complement each other.*

## **B. Programme management capacity**

### The organizational structure of the Bureau required review and clarification of roles and responsibilities

22. According to the UNHCR Manual, the Bureau structure should be determined by the required level of support to the field and headquarters as well as by an adequate combination of efficiency of operational support and cost-effectiveness. The Bureau should ensure that its structure and thematic and geographical coverage are subject to review depending on evolving operational needs. The Bureau is required to clarify and ensure that there is clear understanding within the region of decision-making processes, team roles, responsibilities and reporting lines.

23. In June 2013, the Regional Refugee Coordination structure was created in Amman after the appointment of the Director of the Bureau for MENA as the Regional Refugee Coordinator for the Syria Situation. The structure of the Bureau in Amman subsequently evolved with the growth and complexity of the operations in the region. According to the Bureau, in this evolution due consideration was given to ensuring complementarity with the structure of the Bureau already established in Geneva. In Geneva, support activities were delivered based on the traditionally instituted "Desks" structure established in accordance with a geographical distribution. The Resources Management and Coordination Unit in Geneva was responsible for the Bureau's budget management and for providing financial, human resources and administrative support to the field operations. The Bureau structure in Geneva was responsible for the liaison function (i.e., communication and coordination) with other headquarters departments. The office in Amman was directly responsible for the Syria and Iraq Situations and also managed the MENA Protection Service, which had staffing resources both in Amman and in Geneva and

was responsible for the delivery of protection support activities region-wide. However, OIOS observed the following issues in connection with the organizational structure of the Bureau, and in terms of the definition of roles and responsibilities:

- The structure in Amman was initially referred to as Regional Refugee Coordination, Regional Bureau for the MENA Director's Office in Amman, or Regional Office, leading to some confusion as to its nature and relation with the Bureau. Information in staffing tables, contact lists, operations plans and budgets still did not establish a clear connection between the two structures, and the UNHCR Manual did not reflect the existence of the Amman structure.
- The structure in Amman included resources entirely or partially dedicated to the administration of the office (human resources, finance and procurement), when it could have been more cost-effective to rely on the support services provided by the Divisions at UNHCR headquarters or by the UNHCR Country Office in Jordan.
- The Bureau's Middle East Unit initially based in Geneva for the provision of desk functions to the Middle East countries was apportioned between the Gulf Cooperation Countries/Yemen Desk and the Syria and Iraq Desk. However, functions in connection with the support of the Bureau to the Syria and Iraq Situations were taken over by the office in Amman, leaving four staff in the Syria and Iraq Desk in Geneva dealing only with headquarters liaison functions and external relations. The Bureau had not assessed possible redundancies that this evolution may have resulted in.
- The Supply Unit in Amman provided oversight, coordination and support to the country supply teams dealing with the Syria and Iraq emergencies (i.e., Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Turkey), and also managed the global stockpile as well as dedicated stocks for the operations in Jordan and Syria and the Director's contingency. The Bureau had not given consideration to the possibility of expanding the scope of action of this Unit to the whole MENA region, as a way of capitalizing on the knowledge and experience of this team and addressing a possible skills gap in this area in the Bureau structure in Geneva.
- While the role of the UNHCR Bureaux in general was set out in the UNHCR Manual, there was a need for clearer delineation of roles and responsibilities between the Bureau for MENA and various Divisions to avoid duplication of work. For example, the role of the MENA Protection Service *vis-a-vis* the Division of International Protection and that of the Bureau's Resources Management Unit in Geneva, and the Senior Finance Officer based in Amman, *vis-a-vis* the Division of Financial and Administrative Management required clarification.

24. The issues mentioned above were associated with the rapid development of the structure of the Bureau and its geographical dispersion, and the fact that an organizational structural review of the Bureau had not been undertaken since the establishment of the office in Amman. Further, the Bureau did not document its structure, roles and responsibilities, and reporting lines in a consistent and integrated manner, and did not communicate them to UNHCR Divisions and country operations. As a result, the Bureau was exposed to risk of overlaps and waste of resources, as well as adverse impact on the motivation of its staff. At the time of the audit, the UNHCR Organizational Development and Management Service started an organizational review of the Bureau. OIOS shared its conclusions with the review team.

**(3) The UNHCR Bureau for Middle East and North Africa, in coordination with the Organizational Development and Management Service, should ensure that the ongoing organizational review of the Bureau includes an examination of potential redundancies and synergies, as well as clarity of roles and responsibilities within the Bureau and in relation to field operations and Divisions at headquarters.**



*UNHCR accepted recommendation 3 and stated that the terms of reference for the Organizational Development and Management Service cost-benefit analysis of the partial out-posting of the MENA Bureau to Amman had already been amended to also include a detailed structural and staffing review of the Bureau. Further, the Geneva/Amman structures and roles and responsibilities would be disseminated among field operations, Bureaux and Divisions with the finalization of the ongoing review. Following this review, the Bureau would immediately embark on updating Chapter 2 of the UNHCR Manual in coordination with the Organizational Development and Management Service. Recommendation 3 remains open pending receipt of: (i) evidence of completion of the organizational review of the Bureau, which should cover potential redundancies and synergies and clarification of roles and responsibilities within the Bureau and in relation to the field and headquarters Divisions; and (ii) the updated structure and description of roles and responsibilities of the Bureau in UNHCR Manual, Chapter 2.*

There was a need to reallocate resources for the Bureau to ensure effective discharge of its support and oversight responsibilities

25. As per the UNHCR Manual, the Bureau is responsible for providing support to country operations under its supervision in the areas of protection, programme management, financial management, fundraising, human resources management and administration. The Bureau, through its Director, has line management responsibility and authority for the management and delivery of country operations and is also responsible for ensuring compliance by the field with UNHCR policies and procedures. This includes undertaking missions to the field and updating information on respective areas of coverage. The 2013 policy on the 'Development, Management and Dissemination of UNHCR Internal Guidance Material' requires the Bureau to participate in working groups responsible for new policies or other guidance material when it is likely that it will be directly involved in the implementation of such policies and guidance.

26. The Bureau for MENA conducted several missions (on specific or mixed themes, either by itself or jointly with UNHCR Divisions) in the region to provide technical support and oversight over implementation of UNHCR policies and procedures to country operations. Although mission reports were available and included information on objectives, work conducted and related recommendations, the Bureau could not make an accurate assessment of the exact number and scope of support missions undertaken. This was because the Bureau lacked a reliable method of recording all its activities and respective achievements, except in the records for travel requests. Many activities were conducted on a demand driven basis (i.e., following requests by country operations or senior management at headquarters, or identified by the Bureau itself).

27. In addition, internal audits of UNHCR operations conducted in 2014 and 2015 for the MENA region (Algeria, Lebanon and Jordan) had observed several cases of non-compliance with UNHCR rules and procedures which in certain cases had led to unsatisfactory audit ratings. This suggested that the Bureau lacked capacity to discharge its assigned responsibility for monitoring and enforcing compliance with UNHCR policies and guidance. However, the Bureau had not assessed the extent of the problem and the risks that this created, and had not developed alternative mechanisms to address the issue. At the same time, while the responsibility for enforcing compliance with guidance in country operations fell upon the Bureau, these policies and guidance were generally issued by the functional Divisions at headquarters. Although the Bureau was required to be involved during the process of drafting a new policy, it did not always have the opportunity, as part of the respective working groups, to review new policies and guidance prior to their release.

28. As a result, the Bureau could not assess its specific responsibilities and resource requirements for providing support and oversight in relation to new policies and guidance. Therefore, its capacity for the discharge of these responsibilities was at risk of being diminished.

**(4) The UNHCR Bureau for Middle East and North Africa should: (i) internally reallocate resources to ensure that it possesses adequate staffing capacity to enable it to monitor compliance with UNHCR policies and guidance across operations in the region; and (ii) ensure that it is represented in working groups entrusted with the drafting of new official policies and guidance, in cases where it will be directly involved in their implementation.**

*UNHCR accepted recommendation 4 and stated that following the outcome of the Organizational Development and Management Service cost-benefit analysis and structural review, the Bureau would align/reclassify and/or create new positions depending on availability of funds to ensure that it has the capacity to monitor compliance with UNHCR policies and guidance. Recommendation 4 remains open pending receipt of evidence that: (i) resources have been reallocated to ensure that the Bureau possesses adequate staffing capacity to enable it to monitor compliance with UNHCR policies and guidance across all operations in the region; and (ii) the Bureau has been consistently represented in working groups entrusted with the drafting of new official policies and guidance, in cases where it will be directly involved in their implementation.*

There was a need to establish procedures and enhance tools for monitoring of oversight recommendations

29. The UNHCR Manual requires the Bureau to follow up, monitor and analyze all aspects of the operations of the country offices under its coverage.

30. As at 3 September 2015, there were 16 open OIOS recommendations issued on countries of the MENA region, out of which 13 (or 81 per cent) were past due for implementation. The last update available on the status of implementation of the recommendations from the Board of Auditors, dated 12 February 2015, showed three open recommendations addressed to the Bureau. A review of a sample of 12 mission and workshop reports produced by the Bureau indicated that 141 recommendations or action points had been raised on different areas pertaining to such missions and workshops. While the Bureau had not established a process to follow up on the implementation of these recommendations at the time of reporting, it had started developing databases of recommendations to support its monitoring activities. However, so far the databases: only included OIOS recommendations; were developed separately by the office in Amman and the office in Geneva; and contained different formats and details of information. There were ongoing efforts to also include the recommendations from the Board of Auditors in these databases. However, consideration had not been given to including information on monitoring and oversight conducted by the Bureau itself through missions and other activities, and by other relevant oversight functions such as the UNHCR Inspector General's Office. Further, and only with a few exceptions, the recommendations or action points raised by the Bureau itself did not specify responsibilities and dates of implementation, which made follow-up on them difficult.

31. The above shortcomings occurred because the Bureau: (a) had stipulated in its 2015 operations plan that it would follow up only on the Board of Auditors and OIOS recommendations; and (b) had not defined specific procedures for monitoring the whole range of different oversight recommendations, including the establishment of a comprehensive and standardized tool to assist in the task. The Bureau had also not liaised with the Division of Financial and Administrative Management and the Inspector General's Office to try to capitalize on tools and follow-up processes already in place. As a result, the Bureau was falling behind on its commitment to follow up on the implementation of oversight recommendations in the MENA region, and risked not being able to achieve the full benefits of missions undertaken to the countries in the region.

**(5) The UNHCR Bureau for Middle East and North Africa should define procedures for monitoring of all oversight recommendations issued to the country operations in the region, including those made by the Bureau through its own missions to the field, which should also clarify responsibilities and target dates for implementation.**

*UNHCR accepted recommendation 5 and stated that the Bureau would consolidate all oversight recommendations into a single master database maintained at headquarters by focal points in Geneva and Amman, which would also record focal points and target dates for each recommendation. Also, a mechanism for follow-up with country operations would be identified. Recommendation 5 remains open pending receipt of evidence of implementation of procedures for monitoring of oversight recommendations issued to the country operations in the region, including clarification of responsibilities and target dates for implementation of the recommendations issued by the Bureau.*

#### **IV. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

32. 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) David Kanja  
Assistant Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services

## STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

## Audit of the Regional Bureau for Middle East and North Africa at the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Recom. no.	Recommendation	Critical <sup>2</sup> / Important <sup>3</sup>	C/ O <sup>4</sup>	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date <sup>5</sup>
1	The UNHCR Bureau for Middle East and North Africa should consolidate its operations plans and ensure that its strategic objectives and outputs adequately reflect the core responsibilities and priorities of the Bureau.	Important	O	Submission to OIOS of evidence that: (i) the Bureau's operations plans have been consolidated; and (ii) the Bureau's strategic objectives and outputs reflect its core responsibilities and priorities.	30 September 2016
2	The UNHCR Bureau for Middle East and North Africa (MENA) should adopt its own standard operating procedures on performance monitoring for the guidance of country operations in the MENA region, covering the selection and reporting on pertinent impact and performance indicators, in order to ensure that the results obtained are meaningful, while giving due consideration to ensuring that results-based monitoring and financial monitoring complement each other.	Important	O	Submission to OIOS of evidence that: (i) the standard operating procedures on performance monitoring have been implemented in field operations; and (ii) action has been taken by country operations to ensure that financial and performance monitoring complement each other.	30 June 2017
3	The UNHCR Bureau for Middle East and North Africa, in coordination with the Organizational Development and Management Service, should ensure that the ongoing organizational review of the Bureau includes an examination of potential redundancies and synergies, as well as clarity of roles and responsibilities within the Bureau and in relation to field operations and Divisions at headquarters.	Important	O	Submission to OIOS of: (i) evidence of completion of the organizational review of the Bureau, which should cover potential redundancies and synergies and clarification of roles and responsibilities within the Bureau and in relation to the field and headquarters Divisions; and (ii) the updated structure and description of roles and responsibilities of the Bureau in UNHCR Manual, Chapter 2.	31 December 2017
4	The UNHCR Bureau for Middle East and North Africa should: (i) internally reallocate resources to ensure that it possesses adequate staffing capacity	Important	O	Submission to OIOS of evidence that: (i) resources have been reallocated to ensure that the Bureau possesses adequate staffing capacity	31 December 2017

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> C = closed, O = open

<sup>5</sup> Date provided by UNHCR in response to recommendations.

## STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

## Audit of the Regional Bureau for Middle East and North Africa at the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Recom. no.	Recommendation	Critical <sup>2</sup> / Important <sup>3</sup>	C/ O <sup>4</sup>	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date <sup>5</sup>
	to enable it to monitor compliance with UNHCR policies and guidance across operations in the region; and (ii) ensure that it is represented in working groups entrusted with the drafting of new official policies and guidance, in cases where it will be directly involved in their implementation.			to enable it to monitor compliance with UNHCR policies and guidance across all operations in the region; and (ii) the Bureau has been consistently represented in working groups entrusted with the drafting of new official policies and guidance, in cases where it will be directly involved in their implementation.	
5	The UNHCR Bureau for Middle East and North Africa should define procedures for monitoring of all oversight recommendations issued to the country operations in the region, including those made by the Bureau through its own missions to the field, which should also clarify responsibilities and target dates for implementation.	Important	O	Submission to OIOS of evidence of implementation of procedures for monitoring of oversight recommendations issued to the country operations in the region, including clarification of responsibilities and target dates for implementation of the recommendations issued by the Bureau.	31 December 2016

# **APPENDIX I**

## **Management Response**

## Management Response

## Audit of the Regional Bureau for Middle East and North Africa at the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical <sup>1</sup> / Important <sup>2</sup>	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
1	The UNHCR Bureau for Middle East and North Africa should consolidate its operations plans and ensure that its strategic objectives and outputs adequately reflect the core responsibilities and priorities of the Bureau.	Important	Yes	RMU, Protection/Operations Amman	September 2016	The Bureau has initiated discussions with relevant Divisions for technical support for consolidation of Bureau operations plans from 2017 in UNHCR's RBM tool, and from 2017 will have a single plan for both Geneva and Amman offices. During this consolidation process, the Bureau will also closely review its strategic objectives and outputs to ensure they reflect its core responsibilities and priorities. As the 2016 operational plans are approved already, in 2016, the Bureau will consolidate its objectives in a single Excel table for ease of tracking progress and achievements.
2	The UNHCR Bureau for Middle East and North Africa should adopt its own standard operating procedures on performance monitoring for the guidance of country operations in the MENA region, covering the selection and reporting on pertinent impact and performance indicators, in order to ensure that the results obtained are meaningful, while giving due consideration to	Important	Yes	Programme/Operations, Amman/RMU	June 2017	The Bureau notes that corporate-wide guidance, instructions and Standard Operating Procedures guide its oversight and support role to operations, and the Bureau's strategic objectives are aligned with the organization's Global Strategic Priorities. Upon issuance of corporate-wide guidance on performance and impact indicators and global strategic priorities, the Bureau will follow up with tailored instructions to all MENA operations which consolidate planning, indicator guidance and encourage

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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 Regional Bureau for Middle East and North Africa at the Office of the  
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees**

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical <sup>1</sup> / Important <sup>2</sup>	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
	ensuring that results-based monitoring and financial monitoring complement each other.					operations to align their plans as much as possible, given their unique contexts, with Bureau objectives and Global Strategic Priorities (GSPs).
3	The UNHCR Bureau for Middle East and North Africa, in coordination with the Organizational Development and Management Service, should ensure that the ongoing organizational review of the Bureau includes an examination of potential redundancies and synergies, as well as clarity of roles and responsibilities within the Bureau and in relation to field operations and Divisions at headquarters.	Important	Yes	ODMS/RMU	December 2017	The terms of reference for the ODMS cost-benefit analysis of the partial out-posting of the MENA Bureau to Amman have already been amended to also include a detailed structural and staffing review of the Bureau. The Geneva/Amman structures and roles and responsibilities will be disseminated among field operations, Bureaux and Divisions with the finalization of the ongoing review. Following this review, the Bureau would immediately embark on updating Chapter 2 of the UNHCR Manual in coordination with the Organizational Development and Management Service.
4	The UNHCR Bureau for Middle East and North Africa should: (i) internally reallocate resources to ensure that it possesses adequate staffing capacity to enable it to monitor compliance with UNHCR policies and guidance across operations in the region; and (ii) ensure that it is represented in working groups entrusted with the drafting of new official policies and guidance,	Important	Yes	ODMS/RMU	December 2017	Following the outcome of the ODMS cost-benefit analysis and structural review, the Bureau will align/reclassify and/or create new positions depending on availability of funds to ensure that it has the capacity to monitor compliance with UNHCR policies and guidance.



## Management Response

**Audit of the Regional Bureau for Middle East and North Africa at the Office of the  
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees**

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical <sup>1</sup> / Important <sup>2</sup>	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
	in cases where it will be directly involved in their implementation.					
5	The UNHCR Bureau for Middle East and North Africa should define procedures for monitoring of all oversight recommendations issued to the country operations in the region, including those made by the Bureau through its own missions to the field, which should also clarify responsibilities and target dates for implementation.	Important	Yes	RMU	December 2016	The Bureau will consolidate all oversight recommendations into a single master database maintained at headquarters by focal points in Geneva and Amman, which will also record focal points and target dates for each recommendation. A mechanism for follow-up with country operations will be identified.