

INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION

REPORT 2018/069

Audit of business continuity management in the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan

The Mission needed to update its business continuity plan based on key parameters, ensuring that it covers regional offices and is consistent with other emergency preparedness plans

29 June 2018 Assignment No. AP2017/630/02

Audit of business continuity management in the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of business continuity management in the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). The objective of the audit was to determine whether UNAMA developed, implemented and maintained an appropriate business continuity plan (BCP) to enable continuity of critical business processes following a disruptive event. The audit covered the period from 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2017 and included a review of: (a) the governance structure for crisis management; (b) implementation of the Organization Resilience Management System (ORMS); and (c) maintenance, exercise and review of emergency plans.

UNAMA had established a governance structure for crisis management, conducted security drills and tested its information and communication equipment. However, the Mission needed to update its BCP, ensuring that it covers regional offices and is consistent with other emergency preparedness plans.

OIOS made seven recommendations. To address the issues identified in the audit, UNAMA needed to:

- Harmonize the governance structure for crisis management;
- Update its BCP based on key parameters and ensure it covers regional offices;
- Develop an action plan to fully implement ORMS and regularly submit annual status reports on its implementation to the Departments of Peacekeeping Operations and Field Support;
- Appoint and train ORMS and business continuity focal points in all UNAMA sections and indicate related responsibilities in their performance documents;
- Periodically train critical staff with business continuity responsibilities, raise awareness of ORMS and business continuity planning, and implement a feedback mechanism on various emergency preparedness exercises;
- Implement the maintenance, exercise, review programme and test the BCP regularly; and
- Identify, preserve, and manage vital records to facilitate recovery of critical business operations in the event of a disaster.

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

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APPENDIX I Management response

Audit of business continuity management in the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan

I. BACKGROUND

1. The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of business continuity management (BCM) in the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA).

2. BCM is a holistic management process intended to strengthen an organization's ability to respond to risks and continue important and time-critical processes following a disruptive event. The United Nations business continuity strategy is incorporated in its policy on Organizational Resilience Management System (ORMS) promulgated for field missions in August 2015, with full implementation expected by June 2016. Other core elements include security, information technology and disaster recovery, mass casualty incident response, crisis communication and support to staff families.

3. Under the overall supervision of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG), the Mission's Chief of Staff is responsible to establish the ORMS framework and develop policies and procedures on business continuity and crisis management in UNAMA.

4. The Chief of Staff is also responsible to implement and coordinate BCM activities with the Crisis Management Team (CMT) comprising senior management, the Security Management Team, the Crisis Management Working Group, and various other support and substantive sections of the Mission.

5. Comments provided by UNAMA are incorporated in italics.

II. AUDIT OBJECTIVE, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

6. The objective of the audit was to determine whether UNAMA developed, implemented and maintained an appropriate business continuity plan (BCP) to enable continuity of critical business processes following a disruptive event.

7. This audit was included in the 2017 risk-based work plan of OIOS due to operational and reputational risks related to inability to continue operations at defined levels following a disruptive event in UNAMA. Malicious acts, violence and natural disasters can cause serious disruption in operations and impede the Mission's ability to deliver time-critical services.

8. OIOS conducted this audit from September 2017 to April 2018. The audit covered the period from 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2017. Based on an activity-level risk assessment, the audit covered higher and medium risks areas in BCM, which included: (a) governance structure for crisis management; (b) implementation of ORMS; and (c) maintenance, exercise and review of emergency plans.

9. The audit methodology included: (a) interviews with key personnel; and (b) review of relevant documentation including ORMS and business continuity policies, guidelines, the Secretary-General's reports, staff criticality lists, business continuity and emergency preparedness plans and after-exercise reports.

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

III. AUDIT RESULTS

A. Governance structure for crisis management

UNAMA had established a governance structure for BCM but needed to clarify the role of the CMT

11. The Secretary-General's report on ORMS (A/67/266) requires UNAMA to establish a two-tier governance structure comprising the CMT and the Crisis Management Working Group. Additionally, the Secretary-General's Decision No. 1016/3 on United Nations Crisis Management Policy dated 18 July 2016 requires harmonization of the BCP with other emergency plans in the ORMS framework for consistency.

12. UNAMA had established a two-tier governance structure in the Crisis and Emergency Management Response Plan annexed to the Country Security Plan. The BCP also established a CMT comprising 11 members headed by the SRSG for streamlined decision-making on the activation and deactivation of a crisis response and operational coordination thereof. At the operational level, the CMT was to be assisted by the Crisis Management Working Group comprising 10 members headed by the Chief, Joint Operation Centre to support routine operations at the onset of a crisis.

13. However, there were inconsistencies in the roles and responsibilities of the CMT in responding to crises as outlined in the BCP and the Crisis and Emergency Management Response Plan. In the latter Plan the CMT is only convened by the Designated Official/SRSG after the activation of the Crisis Coordination Centre by the Principal Security Adviser and appointment of a crisis manager; whereas in the BCP, the CMT is briefed by the Chief of Staff immediately following a crisis event and leads subsequent activities. These inconsistencies could lead to confusion and ineffectiveness in the Mission's response to crises.

(1) UNAMA should harmonize the governance structure for crisis management in accordance with the United Nations Crisis Management Policy.

UNAMA accepted recommendation 1 and stated that it will review the BCP and harmonize the roles and responsibilities of the CMT with those stated in the Crisis and Emergency Management Response Plan. Recommendation 1 remains open pending receipt of evidence that the governance structure for BCM has been harmonized with other emergency plans.

B. Implementation of Organizational Resilience Management System

The Mission did not fully implement ORMS and update its BCP

14. The ORMS Policy promulgated in August 2015 requires field missions to fully implement it by June 2016 to ensure a coordinated emergency management system that links business continuity with other elements of the ORMS framework. The Policy requires: (a) development and implementation of resilience plans for the seven core elements of ORMS; and (b) implementation of a maintenance, exercise and review regime to test, evaluate and improve the Organization's resilience. Missions are also required to submit an annual status report to the Organizational Resilience Programme Officer covering the Departments of Peacekeeping and Operations and Field Support (DPKO/DFS).

15. UNAMA had developed a BCP in 2014, which was reviewed in 2017 but had not been finalized at the time of the audit. UNAMA also appointed an ORMS focal point and lead business continuity focal point in 2017 and developed emergency resilience plans on four of the core elements of ORMS: Security, Geospatial Information and Telecommunication Technology Section (GITTS) Disaster Recovery Plan,

Crisis Management, and Mass Casualty Incident Response. However, UNAMA had not fully implemented the other aspects of ORMS as follows:

- The BCP, Support to Staff, Survivors and Families and Crisis Communication Plans had not been finalized. A comprehensive risk assessment that included business continuity risks was not done;
- The ORMS implementation group made of units assuming responsibility in emergency management was not established;
- The ORMS maintenance, exercise and review regime was not implemented, as discussed later in the report; and
- Annual organizational resilience status reports were not submitted to the Organizational Resilience Programme Officer in compliance with DPKO/DFS reporting requirements.

16. General Assembly resolution 67/254 on the ORMS framework, the BCM Policy, guidelines, and templates issued by the High-Level Committee on Management (HLCM) and the Department of Management require UNAMA to develop a BCP based on a business impact analysis considering critical business processes, risks that could cause business interruptions, and identification of mitigating strategies.

17. OIOS review of the draft BCP indicated that further revisions and updates were needed to ensure that the plan was fully aligned with the ORMS framework and was sufficiently detailed to guide recovery of critical business functions. For instance:

- The BCP only covered the Mission's headquarters in Kabul and did not include its 11 regional field offices. A previous security incident in September 2015 that resulted in the Mission's evacuation from a regional compound highlighted the need for a BCP that includes all regional offices to ensure safeguarding of information and prompt resumption of operations following an incident. In that incident, some sensitive documents that were not adequately safeguarded fell into the hands of the anti-Government elements, potentially compromising the safety of witnesses who had reported human rights abuses;
- The BCP was not based on an updated risk assessment and time-critical business services, and relevant processes and tolerable periods of disruption had not been identified; and
- Essential staff required to recover time-critical functions had not been identified.

18. The above occurred because the Mission did not prioritize full implementation of the ORMS policy. UNAMA did not submit its BCP to the ORMS Programme Officer for review and missed the opportunity to obtain requisite knowledge on the implementation of ORMS, as the Mission did not nominate candidates to attend any of the DPKO/DFS-organized training courses on implementation of ORMS in field operations. In the absence of a fully implemented ORMS policy and BCP that links BCM with other components of the emergency management system, there is a risk that UNAMA may not be fully prepared to respond to and recover from a disruptive event.

(2) UNAMA should update its business continuity plan to ensure that it: (a) includes timecritical business services and related tolerable periods of disruption and critical business processes to be restored; (b) is based on an updated risk assessment and business impact

analysis; (c) clearly identifies all staff with time-critical functions; and (d) covers regional offices.

UNAMA accepted recommendation 2 and stated that it is intending to seek the assistance of an ORMS specialist who will assist in implementing the ORMS package for the Mission. As part of this activity, the Mission would update the core elements of ORMS. Recommendation 2 remains open pending receipt of the updated BCP.

(3) UNAMA should: (a) develop an action plan to fully implement the Organizational Resilience Management System; and (b) regularly submit annual status reports on its implementation to DPKO/DFS.

UNAMA accepted recommendation 3 and stated that upon implementation of ORMS, the Mission will be able to provide a status report to DPKO/DFS. Recommendation 3 remains open pending receipt of the first annual status report submitted to DPKO/DFS on the implementation of ORMS.

Need to define roles and responsibilities, train staff and raise staff awareness on ORMS and BCM

19. HLCM guidelines require that roles and responsibilities of individuals managing business continuity be included in their job descriptions and performance evaluated in the appraisal process. The ORMS Policy also requires that: training be provided to staff responsible for time-critical functions; focal points be appointed and trained on an ongoing basis; and all staff be provided with a general awareness of business continuity.

20. UNAMA had not identified and trained focal points in various substantive and support sections and included relevant responsibilities in their individual performance work plans to ensure effective implementation of BCP. Business continuity roles and responsibilities of emergency-related sections like Security, Medical and GITTS had also not been defined. Although these sections had developed their respective emergency plans, they were not aware of their roles and responsibilities related to BCM. An OIOS survey of 38 section chiefs and regional heads of offices indicated that none of the 12 respondents was aware of the BCP or their roles and responsibilities in its implementation. Also, staff responsible for critical functions and those with other business continuity was low among all UNAMA staff. Staff were also not provided with feedback on their performance following security and medical emergency exercises to help promote appropriate response and awareness. There was a risk that Mission personnel may not be adequately prepared to ensure continuity of critical business functions in case of a disruption.

(4) UNAMA should: (a) appoint and train Organizational Resilience Management System and business continuity focal points in all substantive and support sections and indicate responsibilities in their individual annual performance work plans; and (b) clearly define roles and responsibilities of all parties including other emergency-related components in implementing the Mission's business continuity plan.

UNAMA accepted recommendation 4 and stated that it had sent a staff member to attend the training on ORMS and BCM held in Brindisi in June 2018. He is the Security ORMS Focal Point. Focal points for other areas will be appointed soon. Recommendation 4 remains open pending receipt of evidence of appointment and training of all focal points for ORMS and business continuity.

(5) UNAMA should: (a) provide periodic training to all critical staff with business continuity responsibilities; (b) take action to raise awareness of Mission personnel on the Organizational Resilience Management System and business continuity management; and

(c) implement a feedback mechanism to share lessons learned with staff from various emergency preparedness exercises.

UNAMA accepted recommendation 5 and stated that the Mission will make provisions for in-house training of all critical staff with business continuity responsibilities. The Mission will also conduct regular ORMS exercises to enhance awareness of its personnel. The exercises would enable personnel to provide feedback on lessons learned. Recommendation 5 remains open pending receipt of evidence of provision of relevant training to all staff with critical business continuity responsibilities and implementation of a feedback mechanism on emergency preparedness exercises.

C. Maintenance exercise and review of emergency plans

The BCP needed to be regularly maintained, exercised and reviewed

21. The Secretary-General's report on ORMS (A/67/266) requires UNAMA to test its BCP and other emergency preparedness plans at least annually, prepare after-action review reports, and ensure that plans are kept up-to-date.

22. UNAMA conducted annual fail-over tests and simulation exercises, emergency notification system tests, fire evacuation drills and in extremis security and medical mass casualty exercises from January 2016 to December 2017 and used lessons learned to update existing plans of GITTS and the Security Section. However, UNAMA did not conduct tests of the BCP or other procedures and systems related to the recovery of critical business processes in the event of a crisis. As UNAMA had not fully implemented ORMS, the required maintenance, exercise and review framework approved by HLCM to improve the Organization's resilience had not yet been put in place. Therefore, the Mission may not be able to identify deficiencies in its emergency and recovery plans and implement appropriate mitigating measures based on lessons learned.

(6) UNAMA should implement the maintenance, exercise, review programme and conduct regular tests of its business continuity plans and response and recovery actions to improve the Organization's resilience.

UNAMA accepted recommendation 6 and stated that upon the establishment of ORMS, the Mission will conduct regular exercises to test the effectiveness of the plans and highlight areas which need improvement. Recommendation 6 remains open pending receipt of evidence of implementation of the maintenance, exercise and review programme.

Need to identify, preserve, and manage vital records

23. The Secretary-General's bulletin on record-keeping and the management of United Nations archives (ST/SGB/2007/5) requires departments and offices to develop procedures to identify and manage their vital records as part of business continuity and disaster recovery planning.

24. UNAMA generally processed data and information electronically, which were stored on the Mission's networks, regularly backed up and could be recovered or accessed remotely by designated staff in accordance with the GITTS disaster recovery plan. The UNAMA 2017 BCP identified five broad categories of vital records namely: (a) working records; (b) legal, financial and administrative records; (c) personnel files; (d) contracts; and (e) publications. However, the actual list of vital records identified in the BCP only included 10 items mainly related to security operations and were not linked to the five broad categories identified. Without proper identification and archiving of vital records, the Mission may be impeded from achieving a timely recovery and reconstitution of critical operations in the event of a crisis.

(7) UNAMA should establish an effective system to ensure that vital records and databases are properly identified, preserved and managed for the recovery of critical business operations in the event of a disaster.

UNAMA accepted recommendation 7 and stated that the Mission is currently in the process of implementing Unite Docs, which is supported by the business continuity and disaster recovery concept. It was also installing additional data storage capacity for field offices, which will be stored in Brindisi. Recommendation 7 remains open pending receipt of evidence of implementation of Unite Docs and installation of additional data storage capacity for field offices at Kabul and Brindisi.

IV. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

25. OIOS wishes to express its appreciation to the management and staff of UNAMA 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 business continuity management in the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	C/ O ³	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date ⁴
1	UNAMA should harmonize the governance structure for crisis management in accordance with the United Nations Crisis Management Policy.	Important	0	Submission of evidence that the governance structure for BCM has been harmonized with other emergency plans.	31 March 2019
2	UNAMA should update its business continuity plan to ensure that it: (a) includes time-critical business services and related tolerable periods of disruption and critical business processes to be restored; (b) is based on an updated risk assessment and business impact analysis; (c) clearly identifies all staff with time-critical functions; and (d) covers regional offices.	Important	0	Submission of the updated BCP.	31 March 2019
3	UNAMA should: (a) develop an action plan to fully implement the Organizational Resilience Management System; and (b) regularly submit annual status reports on its implementation to DPKO/DFS.	Important	0	Submission of the first annual status report to DPKO/DFS on the implementation of ORMS.	31 March 2019
4	UNAMA should: (a) appoint and train Organizational Resilience Management System and business continuity focal points in all substantive and support sections and indicate responsibilities in their individual annual performance work plans; and (b) clearly define roles and responsibilities of all parties including other emergency-related components in implementing the Mission's business continuity plan.	Important	0	Submission of evidence of appointment and training of all focal points for ORMS and business continuity.	31 March 2019

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.

 3 C = closed, O = open

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.

⁴ Date provided by UNAMA in response to recommendations.

STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Audit of business continuity management in the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	C/ O ³	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date ⁴
5	UNAMA should: (a) provide periodic training to all critical staff with business continuity responsibilities; (b) take action to raise awareness of Mission personnel on the Organizational Resilience Management System and business continuity management; and (c) implement a feedback mechanism to share lessons learned with staff from various emergency preparedness exercises.	Important	0	Submission of evidence of provision of relevant training to all staff with critical business continuity responsibilities and of implementation of a feedback mechanism on emergency preparedness exercises.	31 March 2019
6	UNAMA should implement the maintenance, exercise, review programme and conduct regular tests of its business continuity plans and response and recovery actions to improve the Organization's resilience.	Important	0	Submission of evidence of implementation of the maintenance, exercise and review programme.	31 March 2019
7	UNAMA should establish an effective system to ensure that vital records and databases are properly identified, preserved and managed for the recovery of critical business operations in the event of a disaster.	Important	Ο	Submission of evidence of implementation of Unite Docs and installation of additional data storage capacity for field offices at Kabul and Brindisi.	30 June 2019

Management Response



UNITED NATIONS ASSISTANCE MISSION IN AFGHANISTAN UNAMA

Office of the Chief of Mission Support

26 June 2018

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

NO Jorge Goncalves From : Chief of Mission Support

Subject: Draft report on an audit of business continuity management in the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (Assignment No. AP2017/630/02)

- 1. Reference is made to your memorandum dated 13 June 2018 on the above subject.
- As requested, please find attached UNAMA's response to OIOS recommendations along with action plan with target dates and the titles of the individuals responsible for implementing the recommendations.

Cc. : Ms. Cynthia Avena-Castillo, Professional Practice Section, IAD-OIOS. Mr. Zulfiqar Gill, Chief, Resident Audit Office Kuwait, IAD-OIOS. Ms. Denise Wilman, Chief of Staff, UNAMA. Ms. Danielle Bell, Chief, Human Rights Section, UNAMA. Mr. Adityavikram Pachisia, Audit Focal Point, UNAMA. Ms. Eun Ah Sim, Special Assistant to the Chief of Staff.

Management Response

	Audit of business continuity management in the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan									
Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments				
1	UNAMA should harmonize the governance structure for crisis management in accordance with the United Nations Crisis Management Policy.	Important	Yes	Chief of Staff	31 March 2019	The Mission will carry out a review of the Business Continuity Plan and harmonize the roles and responsibilities of the Crisis Management Team with those stated in the Crisis and Emergency Management Response Plan.				
2	UNAMA should update its business continuity plan to ensure that it: (a) includes time-critical business services and related tolerable periods of disruption and critical business processes to be restored; (b) is based on an updated risk assessment and business impact analysis; (c) clearly identifies all staff with time-critical functions; and (d) covers regional offices.	Important	Yes	Chief of Staff	31 March 2019	The Mission is intending to seek the assistance of an ORMS specialist who will assist in establishing an ORMS package for UNAMA. As a part of this activity, the Mission will update the core elements of ORMS. The Mission will ensure that (a) the updated BCP includes time- critical business services and related tolerable periods of disruption and critical business processes, (b) will be based on risk assessment and business impact analysis, (c) will identify all staff with time critical functions and (d) will cover regional offices.				
3	UNAMA should: (a) develop an action plan to fully implement the Organizational Resilience Management System; and (b) regularly submit annual status reports on its implementation to DPKO/DFS.	Important	Yes	Chief of Staff	31 March 2019	As pointed above and as a part of the Action Plan, the Mission will update all the core elements of the ORMS and implement the System with the assistance of the Specialist. Upon its implementation the Mission will be able to provide a status report to DPKO/DFS.				

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 business continuity management in the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
4	UNAMA should: (a) appoint and train Organizational Resilience Management System and business continuity focal points in all substantive and support sections and indicate responsibilities in their individual annual performance work plans; and (b) clearly define roles and responsibilities of all parties including other emergency-related components in	Important	Yes	Chief of Staff	31 March 2019	UNAMA had sent one staff member to attend the Organizational Resilience Management System and business continuity training held in Brindisi in June 2018. He is the Security ORMS Focal Point of the Mission. Focal points for other areas will be appointed soon.
	implementing the Mission's business continuity plan.					
5	UNAMA should: (a) provide periodic training to all critical staff with business continuity responsibilities; (b) take action to raise awareness of Mission personnel on the Organizational Resilience Management System and business continuity management; and (c) implement a feedback mechanism to share lessons learned with staff from various emergency preparedness exercises.	Important	Yes	Chief of Staff	31 March 2019	The Mission will make provisions for in-house training of all critical staff with their BC responsibilities. The Mission will also conduct regular ORMS exercises with the aim of enhancing awareness and roles and responsibilities of mission personnel. The exercises will enable personnel to provide feedback and the lessons learned.
6	UNAMA should implement the maintenance, exercise, review programme and conduct regular tests of its business continuity plans and response and recovery actions to improve the Organization's resilience.	Important	Yes	Chief of Staff	31 March 2019	Upon the establishment of ORMS, the Mission will conduct regular exercises to test the effectiveness of the Plans. It will also highlight the areas which need to improve upon.

Management Response

Audit of business continuity management in the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan

7	UNAMA should establish an effective system to ensure that vital records and databases are properly identified, preserved and managed for the recovery of critical business operations in the event of a disaster.	important	Yes	Chief of Staff / UNAMA Field Technology Service	30 June 2019	The Mission has been identifying vital records on a continuing basis and storing them in central records center. Records dating back to 2002 have been sorted, digitized and stored on the share drive. The Mission has been conducting business functional classification assessment on file planning and identification of records to preserve and protect for further management of Business Continuity Plan. As an example, the Mission established a system to protect and store the vital records of Governance, Legal, Police and Military advisory offices which are
						and Military advisory offices which are recommended to be closed as of 1 July 2018. FTS is currently in the process of the implementation of the Electronic Records Management system within the Mission, i.e. Unite Docs, through which the identified vital records will be digitalized and uploaded into the system. The system is supported by business continuity and disaster recovery concept. It will be implemented across the mission by June 2019. Furthermore, the Mission is in the process of installing additional data storage capacity for the storage of important data of field offices. The consolidated data of UNAMA locations will be stored in Brindisi thus ensuring no important data is lost. The consolidation of field office data in Kabul and its back-up in Brindisi would facilitate business continuity in unforeseen circumstances. The process of consolidation of data from Kabul to Brindisi is expected to be completed by 31 December 2018.