OIOS
Office of Internal Oversight Services

INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION

REPORT 2016/024

Audit of information and communications technology support provided to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees field operations

Overall results relating to the effective provision of information and communications technology support to field operations were initially assessed as partially satisfactory. Implementation of seven important recommendations remains in progress.

FINAL OVERALL RATING: PARTIALLY SATISFACTORY

23 March 2016
Assignment No. AR2015/166/03

CONTENTS

AUDIT REPORT

Audit of information and communications technology support provided to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees field operations

I.   BACKGROUND

1.   The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of information and communications technology (ICT) support provided to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) field operations.

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 UNHCR 2012 ICT Strategy prepared by the UNHCR Division of Information Systems and Telecommunications (DIST) aimed to ensure that the potential benefits of modern ICT systems are fully utilized through the development of a service portfolio, organization and management procedures. In line with this strategy, DIST has published a service management handbook aimed at providing efficient and cost-effective ICT services. DIST has also published a service catalogue on the UNHCR intranet listing its services. Its service delivery model consists of: service request; incident management; problem management; change management; and release management.

4.   The Customer Support Service headed by a Deputy Director has overall responsibility for the provision of quality ICT services to the UNHCR user community. Functioning under the Customer Support Service, the ICT Field Operations Section is responsible for providing global on-site ICT support services through a combination of service providers, regionally based ICT officers and field-based ICT staff. Under the ICT Field Operations Section, the Global Service Desk (GSD) is the single point of contact for service requests at DIST and is responsible for registering and ensuring the resolution of all ICT incidents and service requests raised by the end-users of ICT services across UNHCR. During emergencies, GSD takes the lead in ensuring that the operations have adequate ICT resources (i.e., equipment and staff) and leads the deployment of short-term ICT staff resources.

5.   The ICT Field Operations Section has 14 staff members, including 9 professionals. The budget for ICT field support in 2015 was $750,000, primarily for staff travel and equipment. Three Regional ICT Officers (based in Kuala Lumpur, Amman and Panama) and a Senior ICT Officer (based in Geneva for the Headquarters and other European locations) report directly to the Chief, ICT Field Operations Section. Four other Regional ICT Officers (based in Kinshasa, Nairobi, Pretoria and Dakar) have functional reporting lines to the Chief, ICT Field Operations Section. ICT staff in the country offices report to the local managers in the respective representations.

6.   At the field level, the ICT teams provide support for: (a) radio communication; (b) network infrastructure; (c) locally developed applications; and (d) provisioning of equipment, telephony and video conferencing. With the implementation of the new ICT infrastructure in field offices (over 100 offices completed so far), the support requirements are in the midst of major changes. The new technology has resulted in the shifting of some functions (for example, administration of network devices, email and servers) performed by ICT staff in field offices to a service provider based in an off-shore location. This entity provides support remotely and has no employees based in the UNHCR field offices.

7.   Comments provided by UNHCR are incorporated in *italics*.

II.   OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE

8.   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 provision of information and communications technology support to UNHCR field operations.**

9.   The audit was included in the OIOS 2015 risk-based internal audit work plan for UNHCR because of the risk of disruption to UNHCR programmes if ICT support provided to the field operations is interrupted.

10.   The key control tested for the audit was ICT support systems. For the purpose of this audit, OIOS defined this key control as the controls that provide reasonable assurance that UNHCR field operations are effectively supported in their use of information and communications technology.

11.   The key control was assessed for the control objectives shown in Table 1.

12.   OIOS conducted the audit from July to December 2015. The audit covered the period from 1 January 2015 to 31 August 2015. The audit was mainly conducted at the UNHCR Headquarters in Geneva. OIOS also visited the UNHCR Regional Representation in Dakar, Senegal. Inputs were also obtained from the UNHCR representations in Tunisia, South Sudan, Ghana, Pakistan and Djibouti through surveys/internal control questionnaires. In addition, teleconferences were held with DIST staff members based in the Regional Support Hub in Nairobi, and those in Amman and Budapest.

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

III.   AUDIT RESULTS

14.   The UNHCR governance, risk management and control processes examined were initially assessed as **partially satisfactory**[1] in providing reasonable assurance regarding the **effective provision of information and communications technology support to UNHCR field operations**. OIOS made seven recommendations to address issues identified.

15.   There was a need for UNHCR to: (a) ensure that ICT services are recognized as a key support function and appropriate staffing benchmarks developed in this regard; (b) strengthen monitoring of the support provided by the service provider; (c) ensure availability of sufficient level of critical ICT equipment for emergencies; (d) remind and guide field operations regarding their responsibilities for maintaining and supporting non-standard ICT applications; (e) put in place monitoring procedures to ensure that field operations have secondary Internet connectivity; (f) define service level objectives for ICT support services rendered to Regional Bureaux and Divisions; and (g) ensure that inventory of ICT assets and resources is completed so that support requirements could be better assessed.

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[1] 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.

16.   The initial overall rating was based on the assessment of the key control presented in Table 1. The final overall rating is **partially satisfactory** as implementation of seven important recommendations remains in progress.

Table 1
Assessment of key control

Business objective	Key control	Control objectives			
		Efficient and effective operations	**Accurate financial and operational reporting**	**Safeguarding of assets**	**Compliance with mandates, regulations and rules**
Effective provision of ITC support to UNHCR field operations	ICT support systems	Partially satisfactory	Partially satisfactory	Partially satisfactory	Partially satisfactory
FINAL OVERALL RATING: PARTIALLY SATISFACTORY					

Information and communications technology support systems

<u>Information and communications technology services needed to be recognized as a key support function and appropriate staffing benchmarks developed in this regard</u>

17.   According to the UNHCR 2012 ICT Strategy, there is a need to ensure an adequate number of ICT staff are assigned to specific locations and that their roles are clearly identified to meet the demands for ICT systems and services in field operations a timely and efficient manner. The UNHCR Operational Guidelines for Budgeting and Procurement of ICT Equipment and Services require field operations to budget for technical staff to support their ICT systems and equipment. These guidelines require that large field operations, particularly in conjunction with an ongoing operational emergency, have at least one professional staff (at P-2 or P-3 level) dedicated for ICT support.

18.   UNHCR stipulated staffing benchmarks for many functions; however, there were no specific staffing benchmarks for ICT as this function was considered to be part of administration and not a distinct function. A review of 20 UNHCR higher risk field operations with a total operating budget of $2 billion (or 50 per cent of the total UNHCR budget) indicated that only 13 of them employed a professional staff member at P-2 or P-3 level to provide ICT support. The remaining seven operations had not provided for professional technical staff in their budgets to support their ICT systems and equipment. These seven operations relied on either national staff, or non-regular workforce such as temporary assistance staff, United Nations volunteers or other affiliated staff, even though these operations had budgets ranging from $21 to $159 million in 2015.

19.   Additionally, 30 UNHCR Europe-based offices, with a total budget of $75 million for 2015 either had no ICT staff or their functions were combined with other assigned tasks and were being performed in some cases by drivers and finance assistants. Similarly, there was a lack of dedicated staffing at the regional level. For example, the Regional Support Hub in Nairobi had no budgetary provision for the regional ICT team to undertake missions in the region, with the representations requesting their services having to meet the related costs. The Regional Representation in Dakar had the requisite budgetary provisions (including for travel funds and equipment) to provide ICT support to 8 of the 13 countries in the region that reported to it. The remaining five representations (that reported directly to the Regional

Bureau for Africa in Geneva) had to pay for the ICT services provided by the Regional Representation in Dakar when they needed them.

20.	Overall, existing ICT staffing resources deployed were not commensurate with the operational requirements increasing the risk of sub-optimal delivery and increased user dissatisfaction. For example, in June 2015 two ICT positions were discontinued in an emergency situation in Western Tanzania and, as a result, ICT infrastructure was left without appropriate maintenance. This occurred because UNHCR did not have benchmarks, such as number of operational locations in a country, number of beneficiaries and their geographical proximity, or number of staff and partners, to determine the minimum or the optimal number of ICT staffing requirements in each office. More importantly, the UNHCR 2008 Guidance for Designing UNHCR Field Presence, issued by the Organizational Development and Management Service (ODMS), did not explicitly recognize ICT as a key enabler for UNHCR without which UNHCR operations would suffer considerably. Instead, the 2008 Guidance recognized that protection, programme, administration, finance and human resources were the main functions required for UNHCR to meet its core responsibilities, and staffing benchmarks were accordingly stipulated for those functional areas. In the opinion of OIOS, the 2008 Guidance was outdated as it did not consider the growing importance of UNHCR's steady advancement in and reliance on the use of technology.

> **(1) The UNHCR Division of Information Systems and Telecommunications should submit a proposal to the Organizational Development and Management Service to: (i) revise the 2008 Guidance for Designing UNHCR Field Presence to recognize information and communications technology (ICT) as a key support function required to meet UNHCR core accountabilities and responsibilities; and (ii) suggest staffing benchmarks for ICT taking into consideration the number of operational locations, size of infrastructure to be supported, persons of concern and their geographical proximity, and/or the number of staff members and partners.**
>
> *UNHCR accepted recommendation 1 and stated that DIST would submit a proposal to ODMS requesting a revision of the 2008 Guidance for Designing UNHCR Field Presence and inclusion of ICT as a key support function. DIST would also provide, as part of the same proposal, staffing benchmarks for ICT.* Recommendation 1 remains open pending submission of the proposal to ODMS for: (a) revision of the 2008 guidance recognizing ICT as a key function at UNHCR; and (b) development of ICT staffing benchmarks.

Controls over the Global Service Desk's provision of support in registering and resolving incidents were satisfactory

21.	GSD, designated as the first point of contact for users, is responsible for logging and ensuring the resolution of all ICT incidents and service requests raised by the UNHCR users of ICT services. GSD is also required to manage the day-to-day provision and maintenance of access to the corporate ICT systems such as the Managing for Systems, Resources and People system - MSRP - and email).

22.	GSD recorded the interruptions to ICT services reported by UNHCR users in LanDesk, its service management tool. Incidents reported were either resolved by the GSD team (first-level resolution) or assigned to different resolution groups, including service providers in accordance with the respective contracts and service level agreements. GSD produced daily and monthly monitoring reports for DIST management on its performance. OIOS reviewed the data on incidents from January to August 2015 logged into the GSD system. The review confirmed that the GSD team provided the first-level support in a timely manner. OIOS observed that over 53,000 incidents were recorded and resolved during this period (average of 6,600 per month). For the incidents resolved, GSD requested feedback from the users.

OIOS concluded that controls over the support provided by GSD in registering and resolving incidents and service requests were satisfactory.

<u>Monitoring of support provided by the service provider needed to be strengthened</u>

23.   The UNHCR 2012 ICT Strategy specifies a progressive introduction of service providers to improve ICT service levels and to control overall costs. In line with this approach, UNHCR engaged an external entity to provide infrastructure support. ICT good practices recommended by Control Objectives for Information and Related Technology requires DIST to establish a process to monitor service delivery to ensure that the service providers meet the current business requirements and adheres to contract terms and service level agreements.

24.   Inputs obtained by OIOS from four UNHCR country offices (the Regional Support Hub in Nairobi and the representations in Pakistan, Djibouti and the Republic of South Sudan) rated services provided by the service provider as unsatisfactory or partially satisfactory. The Regional Support Hub explained that due to the poor quality of services provided, it had to utilize UNHCR staff to resolve incidents. The Representation in the Republic of South Sudan reported that the service provider was only able to satisfactorily resolve 14 of the 27 cases reported in a timely manner, resulting in the Representation's own ICT staff independently resolving many incidents. For the UNHCR operations in Kenya, the service provider only resolved 32 of the 82 cases in accordance with the service level agreement, with the resolution of the 50 other cases taking far longer than the agreed timeline. In Pakistan, 30 of the 52 cases reported took longer than the agreed time limits.

25.   As a result, ICT related problems and complaints registered by the UNHCR offices did not receive adequate attention and remained unresolved for long periods which impacted operational efficiency and delivery of assistance. This situation occurred because of inadequate monitoring by DIST of the ICT infrastructure support services provided by the service provider to the country offices.

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(2) The UNHCR Division of Information Systems and Telecommunications should put in place controls to monitor adherence by the service provider to the service level agreement in delivering information and communications technology infrastructure support services to the country offices.

UNHCR accepted recommendation 2 and stated that DIST would strengthen the existing controls and put in place new controls when and where required with a focus on the field operations. Recommendation 2 remains open pending receipt of evidence that DIST has put in place controls to monitor adherence by the service provider to the service level agreement and that the provider systematically complies with the timeline specified in the service level agreement for resolving incidents relating to the country offices.

<u>There was a need to ensure availability of sufficient level of critical information and communications technology equipment for emergencies</u>

26.   As part of UNHCR emergency preparedness procedures, DIST and field operations are required to assess if adequate arrangements for ICT are in place for emergency operations, including data and voice connectivity, bandwidth, ICT equipment and technical expertise. The availability of critical ICT equipment (computers, communication devices, etc.) should be assessed as part of preparing for an emergency. The UNHCR Guidance on Reinforcement of Emergency ICT Response Capacity requires DIST to maintain an ICT stockpile at its warehouses in Geneva and Amman, based on the assumption that 10 new offices would need to be established within two weeks for emergency operations.

27.   DIST did not maintain the required stockpile levels to support emergencies. OIOS assessed that there was a gap between the actual and the minimum levels of equipment to support ICT services in emergencies. For instance, at the end of August 2015, OIOS assessed that DIST still needed $1.3 million to buy the necessary ICT equipment to comply with the minimum level of stockholdings to support emergency operations. OIOS calculated, taking into account the purchase orders in the pipeline and agreements with some vendors, that this shortfall could be reduced by about 50 per cent to about $600,000. However, the remaining shortfall of $700,000 in the emergency stockpile of ICT equipment could adversely affect the capacity of DIST to adequately support and equip UNHCR emergency responses.

28.   The main reason for the inadequate emergency stock levels for critical ICT equipment was that DIST had not put in place the required monitoring procedures to ensure that stockholdings were maintained at sufficient levels to respond to emergencies.

> **(3) The UNHCR Division of Information Systems and Telecommunications should: (i) establish procedures to periodically monitor the emergency stock levels for critical information and communications technology (ICT) equipment and assess any shortfalls in this regard; and (ii) develop an action plan to ensure that the ICT equipment stock holdings are increased to sufficient levels to respond to emergencies.**
>
> *UNHCR accepted recommendation 3 and stated that: (i) DIST would formalize the monitoring and procurement of emergency stock to ensure that minimum levels were retained; and (ii) once critical thresholds were established, DIST would initiate a procurement plan to bring any deficiencies to the minimum levels.* Recommendation 3 remains open pending receipt of evidence confirming that DIST has: (i) established procedures to monitor stock levels for critical ICT equipment; and (ii) developed an action plan to ensure that the ICT equipment stock holding is raised to sufficient levels to respond to emergencies.

Field operations needed to be reminded of and guided on their responsibilities for maintaining and supporting non-standard applications

29.   The 2015 Operational Guidelines for Budgeting and Procurement of ICT Equipment and Services requires that maintenance of and support to non-standard software or software that is specific to a particular application in use in one or a limited number of field operations should be budgeted for by the concerned offices. DIST is not required to provide support to locally developed or procured applications or software but, in case of incompatibility with the standard software distribution, it is responsible for removing the non-standard software and restoring the standard software to an operational state. To ensure that risks associated with locally developed and procured applications are managed UNHCR-wide, DIST is required to ensure that field operations are aware of their responsibilities for maintaining and supporting non-standard applications.

30.   Several UNHCR field operations used locally procured or developed software solutions or solutions brought in from other UNHCR offices to meet their specific operational requirements. The software varied from systems for tracking assistance to persons of concern to protecting victims of gender-based violence and managing resettlement applications. The solutions ranged from a simple database application sitting on a local hard drive or in a shared folder to an externally hosted one. For example, the ICT team in the Regional Support Hub in Nairobi supported eight such applications. The Regional Representation in Dakar relied on an application for managing resettlement submissions, which was one of its primary activities. However, the Regional Representation in Dakar had not made adequate arrangements for its maintenance and support locally, and following upgrades to the operating system and

other standard software, it was unable to obtain the necessary outputs to meet its resettlement reporting requirements to UNHCR headquarters. These deficiencies forced it to use spreadsheets for recording resettlement cases and/or to manually re-register the resettlement case details to comply with UNHCR and external requirements, involving additional work.

31.   Although DIST held the field operations responsible for the maintenance of these applications, it had not sufficiently communicated with managers in country offices to ensure that they understood their responsibilities in this regard, realized the impact on their operations of non-availability of the applications and secured the necessary resources for their upkeep. The country offices were thus exposed to the risk of disruption to operations in the absence of adequate arrangements to maintain and support locally developed applications.

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(4) The UNHCR Division of Information Systems and Telecommunications should formally reiterate to UNHCR representations their responsibilities for supporting and maintaining locally developed or procured non-standard software applications and guide them in discharging these responsibilities.

UNHCR accepted recommendation 4 and stated that DIST would formally remind UNHCR representations of their responsibilities for supporting and maintaining locally developed or procured non-standard software applications in line with the Operational Guidelines for Budgeting and Procurement of ICT Equipment and Services. Recommendation 4 remains open pending confirmation that DIST has formally reiterated to the UNHCR representations their responsibilities for supporting and maintaining locally developed or procured non-standard software applications.

There was a need to put in place monitoring procedures to ensure that field operations have secondary Internet connectivity

32.   The 2015 Operational Guidelines for Budgeting and Procurement of ICT Equipment and Services required UNHCR offices to have multiple Internet connections. In locations where the infrastructure is developed, this may consist of primary and secondary connections from two local Internet service providers. Very small aperture terminal (VSAT) satellite connectivity should be used in locations that do not have reliable Internet service providers. The DIST Customer Support Service, in cooperation with the Regional ICT Officer, is responsible for monitoring compliance with these instructions.

33.   DIST did not monitor the representations' compliance with the requirement for dual connectivity. For example, the UNHCR Representation in Djibouti relied only on VSAT connectivity and did not have a secondary connection. The Representation terminated the services of the only Internet service provider in the country over a year ago despite the Regional ICT Officer's recommendation to keep the services. The UNHCR Representation in Ghana used a local Internet service provider for secondary connectivity. However, the Representation assessed the quality of its service as poor and that it could not be relied upon for contingency purposes in case of failure of the primary VSAT connection. In both cases, the representations were exposed to the risk of disruption to their operations. A random review of information on secondary connectivity obtained from the Central ICT Management Tool maintained by DIST showed that UNHCR offices in Chad (Farchana, Gore and Iriba), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Goma), the Republic of South Sudan (Maban), Cameroon (Bertoua) and the Central African Republic (Kagabandoro) also lacked secondary connectivity, which increased the risk of disruption to services if the primary connection failed.

34.   This deficiency was primarily due to lack of understanding in field operations of the need to have a reliable secondary connectivity. Moreover, DIST had not put in place appropriate procedures to monitor the status of secondary connectivity in the field operations.

> **(5) The UNHCR Division of Information Systems and Telecommunications should put in place procedures to monitor that UNHCR representations have secondary Internet connectivity and, when that is not the case, formally remind the representations in question that they are responsible for establishing reliable secondary Internet connectivity in consultation with the Regional Information and Communications Technology Officer.**
>
> *UNHCR accepted recommendation 5 and stated DIST would: (i) put in place procedures to monitor the status of secondary Internet connectivity in UNHCR field offices; and (ii) formally remind the UNHCR representations of the requirement and the responsibility of having a reliable secondary connection.* Recommendation 5 remains open pending confirmation that DIST has taken action to put in place procedures to monitor the status of secondary Internet connectivity in UNHCR representations.

<u>There was a need to define service level objectives for support services rendered to Regional Bureaux and Divisions</u>

35.	The UNHCR 2012 ICT Strategy requires DIST to establish, within a three year timeframe, a comprehensive set of service level objectives with each of the UNHCR Divisions and Regional Bureaux.

36.	While DIST had entered into contracts and service level agreements with its service providers, it had not established formal service level objectives with UNHCR Divisions and Regional Bureaux.

37.	In the absence of defined service level objectives with Divisions and Bureaux, DIST did not have metrics and baselines for measuring performance of its ICT service delivery. Therefore, it was unable to fully assess the quality, effectiveness and efficiency of the support services it was providing. This happened because DIST, due to resource limitations and other priorities resulting from its management restructuring process, had not prioritized defining such service level objectives and had not developed a time-bound action plan in this regard.

> **(6) The UNHCR Division of Information Systems and Telecommunications should develop an action plan for defining service level objectives for its support services rendered to UNHCR Divisions and Regional Bureaux.**
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> *UNHCR accepted recommendation 6 and stated that DIST would establish service level objectives for the major services provided.* Recommendation 6 remains open pending establishment of a time-bound action plan by DIST defining service level objectives for support provided to the UNHCR Divisions and Regional Bureaux.

<u>Inventory of information and communication technology assets and resources needed to be completed to better assess support requirements</u>

38.	UNHCR ICT Security Operational Guidelines specify that responsible UNHCR managers should ensure that all ICT assets, such as software, information files, ICT equipment and ICT services are clearly identified and their inventory drawn up and maintained. The Operational Guidelines for Budgeting and Procurement of ICT Equipment and Services specify that applications developed by field operations along with their functionality should be recorded in the Central ICT Management Tool maintained by DIST.

39.   The Central ICT Management Tool provided: (a) the UNHCR ICT community with an online portal to share information pertaining to site/office ICT services to avoid the use of cumbersome excel sheets for collecting such information; and (b) DIST with an online portal to provide field ICT staff with the necessary information to maintain ICT services in line with the standards. The Central ICT Management Tool was used as a tracking and reporting platform for the infrastructure upgrade work in field offices and for ICT services design and troubleshooting. The Tool stored the ICT profile of each office which included details such as the applications that were exclusively used by the field operations, ICT focal points and their contact information, VSAT installation details and documentation, as well as the infrastructure upgrades and their configuration details and whether the site was handed over to the services provider for support.

40.   However, DIST was challenged in keeping the Central ICT Management Tool updated. For instance, the profiles for over 40 locations had not been updated in the Tool for over a year. The Central ICT Management Tool also reported that the number of UNHCR sites that the service provider supported for the new infrastructure aggregated to over 58 while the actual number exceeded 100. There was no assurance that field operations had registered their locally used applications. For instance, the applications used by the Regional Representation in Dakar were not recorded in the Tool.

41.   As the development of the Tool had evolved in the last five years based on operational demands, lack of oversight, absence of user guidance and lack of a formal process in place at DIST to keep the system updated had contributed to the above-mentioned deficiencies. Since there was no reliable global inventory of ICT assets, DIST could not assess and establish the required levels of ICT support and maintenance world-wide based on the criticality of assets.

> **(7) The UNHCR Division of Information Systems and Telecommunications should put in place formal processes to ensure that gaps and deficiencies in the current data capturing process relating to information and communication technology (ICT) resources are identified and corrected and the information recorded in the Central ICT Management Tool is complete and reliable.**
>
> *UNHCR accepted recommendation 7 and stated that DIST would put in place formal processes to ensure that gaps and deficiencies in the current data capturing process relating to ICT resources were identified and corrected and that the information recorded in the Central ICT Management Tool was sufficiently complete.* Recommendation 7 remains open pending receipt of evidence of the establishment of procedures to ensure that gaps and deficiencies in the current data capturing process relating to ICT resources are identified and corrected and the information recorded in the Central ICT Management Tool is complete and reliable.

IV.   ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

42.   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*) Eleanor T. Burns
Director, Internal Audit Division
Office of Internal Oversight Services

STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

**Audit of information and communications technology support provided to the Office of the United Nations
High Commissioner for Refugees field operations**

Recom. no.	Recommendation	Critical[2]/ Important[3]	C/ O[4]	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date[5]
1	The UNHCR Division of Information Systems and Telecommunications should submit a proposal to the Organizational Development and Management Service to: (a) revise the 2008 Guidance for Designing UNHCR's Field Presence to recognize information and communications technology (ICT) as a key support function required to meet UNHCR's core accountabilities and responsibilities; and (b) suggest staffing benchmarks for ICT taking into consideration the number of operational locations, size of infrastructure to be supported, persons of concern and their geographical proximity, and/or the number of staff members and partners.	Important	O	Submission to OIOS of the proposal sent to ODMS for: (a) revision of the 2008 guidance recognizing ICT as a key function at UNHCR; and (b) development of ICT staffing benchmarks.	30 June 2016
2	The UNHCR Division of Information Systems and Telecommunications should put in place controls to monitor adherence by the service provider to the service level agreement in delivering information and communications technology infrastructure support services to the country offices.	Important	O	Submission to OIOS of evidence that DIST has put in place controls to monitor adherence by the service provider to the service level agreement and that the provider systematically complies with the timeline established for resolving incidents relating to the country offices.	30 June 2016
3	The UNHCR Division of Information Systems and Telecommunications should: (i) establish procedures to periodically monitor the emergency stock levels for critical information and communications technology (ICT) equipment and assess any shortfalls in this regard; and (ii) develop	Important	O	Submission to OIOS of evidence confirming that DIST has: (i) established procedures to monitor stock levels for critical ICT equipment; and (ii) developed an action plan to ensure that the ICT equipment stock holding is raised to sufficient levels to respond to emergencies.	31 December 2016

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[2] 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] 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] C = closed, O = open
[5] Date provided by UNHCR in response to recommendations.

STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

**Audit of information and communications technology support provided to the Office of the United Nations
High Commissioner for Refugees field operations**

Recom. no.	Recommendation	Critical[2]/ Important[3]	C/ O[4]	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date[5]
	an action plan to ensure that the ICT equipment stock holdings are increased to sufficient levels to respond to emergencies.				
4	The UNHCR Division of Information Systems and Telecommunications should formally reiterate to the UNHCR representations their responsibilities for supporting and maintaining locally developed or procured non-standard software applications and guide them in discharging these responsibilities.	Important	O	Submission to OIOS of evidence confirming that DIST has formally reiterated to the UNHCR representations their responsibilities for supporting and maintaining locally developed or procured non-standard software applications.	30 June 2016
5	The UNHCR Division of Information Systems and Telecommunications should put in place procedures to monitor that UNHCR representations have secondary Internet connectivity and, when that is not the case, formally remind the representations in question that they are responsible for establishing reliable secondary Internet connectivity in consultation with the Regional Information and Communications Technology Officer.	Important	O	Submission to OIOS of evidence that DIST has taken action to put in place procedures to monitor the status of secondary Internet connectivity in UNHCR representations.	30 June 2016
6	The UNHCR Division of Information Systems and Telecommunications should develop an action plan for defining service level objectives for its support services rendered to UNHCR Divisions and Regional Bureaux.	Important	O	Submission to OIOS of evidence of the establishment of a time-bound action plan defining service level objectives for support provided by DIST to the UNHCR Divisions and Regional Bureaux.	31 December 2016
7	The UNHCR Division of Information Systems and Telecommunications should put in place formal processes to ensure that gaps and deficiencies in the current data capturing process relating to information and communication technology (ICT) resources are identified and corrected and the information recorded in the Central ICT Management Tool is complete and reliable.	Important	O	Submission to OIOS of evidence of the establishment of procedures to ensure that gaps and deficiencies in the current data capturing process relating to ICT resources are identified and corrected and the information recorded in the Central ICT Management Tool is complete and reliable.	30 September 2016

APPENDIX I

Management Response

Management Response

Audit of information and communications technology support provided to UNHCR field operations

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical[6]/ Important[7]	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
1	The UNHCR Division of Information Systems and Telecommunications should submit a proposal to the Organizational Development and Management Service to: (a) revise the 2008 Guidance for Designing UNHCR's Field Presence to recognize information and communications technology (ICT) as a key support function required to meet UNHCR's core accountabilities and responsibilities; (b) suggest staffing benchmarks for ICT taking into consideration the number of operational locations, size of infrastructure to be supported, persons of concern and their geographical proximity, and/or the number of staff members and partners.	Important	Yes	Dep. Director Customer Support	30.06.2016	(a) The Division of Information Systems and Telecommunications (DIST) will submit a proposal to Organizational Development and Management Service (ODMS) requesting the revision of the "2008 Guidance for Designing UNHCR's Field Presence" and inclusion of information and communication technology as a key support function required by UNHCR.

(b) As part of the proposal to ODMS to revise the "2008 Guidance for Designing UNHCR's Field Presence", DIST will also provide staffing benchmarks for information and communications technology taking into account the number of operational locations, size of the supported infrastructure, persons of concern and their proximity, and/or the number of staff members and partners. |
| 2 | The UNHCR Division of Information Systems and Telecommunications should put in place controls to monitor adherence | Important | Yes | Dep. Director Customer Support | 30.06.2016 | DIST will strengthen the existing controls and put in place new controls when and where required |

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[6] 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.

[7] 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 information and communications technology support provided to UNHCR field operations

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical[6]/ Important[7]	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
	by the service provider to the service level agreement in delivering information and communications technology infrastructure support services to the country offices.					with a focus on the field operations.
3	The UNHCR Division of Information Systems and Telecommunications should: (i) establish procedures to periodically monitor the emergency stock levels for critical information and communications technology (ICT) equipment and assess any shortfalls in this regard; and (ii) develop an action plan to ensure that the ICT equipment stock holdings are increased to sufficient levels to respond to emergencies.	Important	Yes	Dep. Director Customer Support	(i) 30.06.2016 (ii) 31.12.2016	(i) DIST will formalize the monitoring and procurement of emergency stock to ensure that minimum levels are retained. (ii) Once critical thresholds have been established, DIST will initiate a procurement plan to bring any deficiencies to the minimum levels.
4	The UNHCR Division of Information Systems and Telecommunications should formally reiterate to the UNHCR representations their responsibilities for supporting and maintaining locally developed or procured non-standard software applications and guide them in discharging these responsibilities.	Important	Yes	Dep. Director Customer Support Chief ICT Field Operations	30.06.2016	DIST will formally remind to the UNHCR Representations their responsibilities for supporting and maintaining locally developed or procured non-standard software applications in line with the Operational Guidelines for Budgeting and Procurement of ICT Equipment and Services.
5	The UNHCR Division of Information Systems and Telecommunications should put in place procedures to monitor that UNHCR representations have secondary Internet connectivity and, when that is not the case, formally remind the representations in question that they are responsible for establishing reliable	Important	Yes	Chief Network/Telecoms Chief ICT Field Operations	30.06.2016	DIST will put in place procedures to monitor the status of secondary internet connectivity in UNHCR Field Offices. DIST will formally remind UNHCR Representations the requirement and the responsibility of having a reliable secondary connection as per

Management Response

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	secondary Internet connectivity in consultation with the Regional Information and Communications Technology Officer.					the Operational Guidelines for Budgeting and Procurement of ICT Equipment and Services.
6	The UNHCR Division of Information Systems and Telecommunications should develop an action plan for defining service level objectives for its support services rendered to UNHCR Divisions and Regional Bureaux.	Important	Yes	Dep. Director Customer Support Head Service Desk	31.12.2016	DIST will develop an action plan to establish Service Level Objectives for the major service offerings.
7	The UNHCR Division of Information Systems and Telecommunications should put in place formal processes to ensure that gaps and deficiencies in the current data capturing process relating to information and communication technology (ICT) resources are identified and corrected and the information recorded in the Central ICT Management Tool is complete and reliable.	Important	Yes	Chief ICT Field Operations	30.09.2016	DIST will put in place formal processes to ensure that gaps and deficiencies in the current data capturing process relating to information and communication technology (ICT) resources are identified and corrected and that the information recorded in the Central ICT Management Tool is sufficiently complete.