On-Site Operations Coordination Centre (OSOCC) Guidelines 2018

INTRODUCTION

The On-Site Operations Coordination Centre (OSOCC) is a rapid response tool that provides a platform for the coordination of international response activities in the immediate aftermath of a sudden-onset emergency or a rapid change in a complex emergency. It is at the same time both a methodology and a physical location for on-site emergency response coordination. The OSOCC is designed to work in support of the Government of the affected country and is a tool promoted and supported by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) to carry out its mandate of coordination and information management in emergency response, particularly at the field level.

The nature of the OSOCC enables the concept to be utilized by other organizations when responding to emergencies, including Governments, international and regional response organizations. It is a concept that can be internalized entirely by national emergency management structures who are in the lead of coordinating the assistance to populations affected by emergencies in their countries. These OSOCC Guidelines are intended for use by Governments through their Local Emergency Management Authority (LEMA)[1], organizations or response teams who may be establishing and managing an OSOCC, e.g., United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) teams, organizations or teams who may work within an OSOCC, such as regional organizations, sector/cluster coordinators, Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) teams, and Emergency Medical Teams (EMTs).

The OSOCC Guidelines are designed to provide direction on establishing, managing, working within and interacting with an OSOCC. The Guidelines are comprised of three parts. Part I provides the foundation on which the OSOCC concept is built and the humanitarian context in which it operates. Part II presents guidance on how to implement the OSOCC system components, i.e., the Virtual OSOCC (VOSOCC), the Reception Departure Centre (RDC), the OSOCC facility, sub-OSOCCs and other coordination cells, and provides links to other more detailed guidance notes and resources. Part III is an annex of tools for practical use during OSOCC operations.

The OSOCC Guidelines will be maintained electronically to allow for periodic changes to Part II and regular changes to Part III as the supporting tools are improved with experience. It is recommended that Parts II and III are considered field-based tools and taken by staff in hard copy during response operations.

The Guidelines have been developed by OCHA Geneva, which serves as the custodian for future revisions and developments. Content is drawn from the expertise and experience of a broad spectrum of international and regional organizations, response teams and Governments. The OSOCC Guidelines are grounded in the humanitarian context in which they are employed and reflective of the current state of the international response community.

---

[1] LEMA is a generic term used by the international community in referring to organizations that may in reality work at a variety of levels of government and take various forms, e.g., a national disaster management authority, state or provincial emergency management organizations and/or local emergency responders.

PART I: CONTEXT AND FRAMEWORK

A.1 Historical Context

The International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG) was established in 1991 and developed the INSARAG Guidelines, which describe a concept for an On-Site Operations Coordination Centre (OSOCC) intended to improve the coordination of international assistance in support of the Government of an affected country, specifically for coordination of international urban search and rescue (USAR) operations. The United Nations General Assembly, in Resolution 57/150 of 16 December 2002 on "Strengthening the Effectiveness and Coordination of International Urban Search and Rescue Assistance", endorsed the INSARAG Guidelines and stressed the importance of Member States following these Guidelines for coordination of international USAR assistance, thereby also endorsing the OSOCC concept. The Resolution also commended the work of UNDAC teams in facilitating rapid need assessments and assisting Member States to organize the on-site coordination of international USAR operations.

The functional organizational model the OSOCC is built upon can trace its origins back to the Roman Empire through the Napoleonic wars, and numerous emergency management organizations have used variations of the functional approach in their plans and structure throughout history. INSARAG and OCHA originally developed the OSOCC concept to assist affected countries in coordinating international USAR efforts following an earthquake. However, the emergency management principles of the OSOCC concept make it a valuable tool in any sudden-onset disaster or complex emergency requiring the on-site coordination of international relief resources in the absence of other existing and functioning coordination systems. Since its inception, the OSOCC concept has been successfully implemented numerous times in situations ranging from regional emergency events to major international disasters.

Many Governments have integrated the OSOCC concept or components of it into their national emergency management plans, enabling them to establish and resource OSOCC components or related coordination cells, e.g., Reception Departure Centre (RDC), USAR or Emergency Medical Team (EMT) coordination cells, etc., when a disaster strikes and international assistance is requested

The OSOCC Guidelines were last published by OCHA in 2014. Since that time methodologies have moved forward in functional areas such as assessment and analysis, information management, USAR coordination, humanitarian civil-military coordination, environmental emergencies, safety and security, and coordination of EMTs, all of which influence OSOCC operations. In addition, many Governments have shown interest in using and adapting the OSOCC concept for domestic operations, further extending its applicability in humanitarian response and disaster management and securing its place as a valuable coordination tool.

A.2 Humanitarian Context

The OSOCC concept and the value it provides during a disaster are best understood within the humanitarian context in which it operates. The following sections provide an introduction to the humanitarian system as it relates to disaster response and its applicability to the OSOCC.

A.2.1 Humanitarian Principles

Humanitarian assistance is an extension of the desire to help others through a systematic mobilization of resources. Assistance is provided to population groups on the basis of rights and needs in an effort to save lives and alleviate suffering. International humanitarian assistance is provided in accordance with a set of humanitarian principles which have long guided the work of the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, and which were endorsed by United Nations General Assembly Resolutions 46/182 (1991) and 58/114 (2004). The principles are:

Humanity – Human suffering must be addressed wherever it is found. The purpose of humanitarian action is to protect life and health and ensure respect for human beings.

Neutrality – Humanitarian actors must not take sides in hostilities or engage in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

Impartiality – Humanitarian action must be carried out on the basis of need alone, making no distinctions on the basis of nationality, race, gender, religious belief, class or political opinions.

Independence – Humanitarian action must be autonomous from the political, economic, military or other objectives that any actor may hold in relation to areas where humanitarian action is being implemented.

The humanitarian principles are central to the work of OCHA and numerous international response organizations. They are an essential element of coordination activities and are applicable to the OSOCC as a mechanism supporting principled humanitarian assistance to all those in need.

Further information on the humanitarian principles can be found at https://www.unocha.org/sites/unocha/files/OOM-Humanitarianprinciples_eng_28Feb2017_0.pdf

A.2.2 The United Nations

The United Nations was established in 1945 with 51 countries as original Member States committed to preserving peace through international cooperation and collective security. The United Nations works through consensus of its Members and provides means to address matters affecting the whole world. Today, 193 countries are Members of the United Nations

and agree to the obligations of the Charter of the United Nations. The Charter is an international treaty that sets out basic principles of international relations.

Under the Charter (Article 1), the United Nations has four main purposes:

- To maintain international peace and security;
- To develop friendly relations among nations;
- To achieve international co-operation in solving international problems, including those of a humanitarian character, and in promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms; and,
- To be a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations.

The United Nations System consists of six principal organs – the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the Trusteeship Council, the International Court of Justice and the Secretariat. OCHA is part of the United Nations Secretariat and is led by the Under-Secretary-General (USG) for Humanitarian Affairs/Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC).

A.2.3 International Humanitarian Response

The international humanitarian community is guided by United Nations General Assembly Resolution 46/182 of December 1991 on "Strengthening of the Coordination of Humanitarian Emergency Assistance of the United Nations". The Resolution outlines an enhanced framework for humanitarian assistance that includes establishment of the ERC position, the authority of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) and creation of key funding programmes. The IASC is a forum for inter-agency coordination at the global level related to humanitarian assistance. Led by the ERC, it brings together United Nations and non-United Nations partners for policy development, decision-making and coordination.

The ERC is responsible for the oversight of all emergencies requiring United Nations humanitarian assistance and also acts as the central focal point for governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental relief activities. OCHA supports the ERC through its mandate for coordinating the efforts of humanitarian actors to ensure a systematic response to emergencies within a common framework. A key component of OCHA's mission is to mobilize and coordinate effective and principled humanitarian action in partnership with national and international actors to alleviate human suffering in disasters and emergencies. To achieve its mission, OCHA focuses its activities on coordination, information management, humanitarian financing, policy and advocacy.

In countries where the United Nations System is present, the United Nations Resident Coordinator (RC) is responsible for leading the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) which ensures inter-agency coordination and decision-making at the country level to support the development agenda of the Government. Prior to a disaster, the RC and UNCT coordinate preparedness and mitigation activities, monitor and provide early warning of potential emergency situations and lead contingency planning.

When a humanitarian crisis erupts, or a situation of chronic vulnerability sharply deteriorates, the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC), working at the country level, normally leads

humanitarian coordination in support of the Government. The HC leads the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) which brings together United Nations and non-United Nations humanitarian organizations to provide common strategic and policy guidance on issues related to humanitarian action. Often the Resident Coordinator will also perform the role of the Humanitarian Coordinator (RC/HC). In large crises, sudden-onset or complex emergencies, an HC will be specifically appointed.

United Nations General Assembly Resolution 46/182 states that the Government of each Member State is responsible for meeting the needs of its people, including requesting assistance if needed and facilitating the work of humanitarian organizations. Assistance is never forced upon a State, unless the United Nations Security Council deems it necessary to preserve international peace and security. To do so without being invited can be considered a violation of international conventions. Consequently, all international humanitarian assistance is conducted in support of, and at the request of, national authorities.

An OSOCC may operate under one of three general models:

1. Direct coordination of response activities at the request of a Government;
2. Coordination of specific aspects and support of others in cooperation with the Government;
3. In support of the RC/HC.

In most instances, the OSOCC will be established and operated by an UNDAC team on behalf of OCHA in support of the Government and the RC/HC.

The OSOCC concept provides a platform and methodology for operational coordination on-site in a disaster area when other structures for international assistance and coordination, such as clusters or a nationally established structure that incorporates international actors, are not yet functioning.

A.2.4 The Cluster System

In 2005, a major reform of humanitarian coordination, known as the Humanitarian Reform Agenda, introduced a number of new elements to improve the predictability, timeliness, inclusiveness and effectiveness of international humanitarian response. As part of this process, the Cluster Approach was endorsed to strengthen response capacity and effectiveness in the main sectors of response.

Under the system, recognized sectors of humanitarian activity are organized in clusters in which humanitarian organizations collaborate in common areas of work towards agreed humanitarian objectives at both the global and country levels. The Cluster Approach ensures clear leadership, predictability and accountability in the international response to humanitarian emergencies by clarifying the division of labour among organizations and better defining their roles and responsibilities within the different sectors of response.

Cluster partners may include United Nations agencies, national organizations, the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs). At the country level, government ministries/departments will ideally co-lead the respective

cluster along with a globally or locally identified Cluster Lead Agency. Global Cluster Lead Agencies, who report to the ERC, have been designated by the IASC for 11 sectors of humanitarian activity:
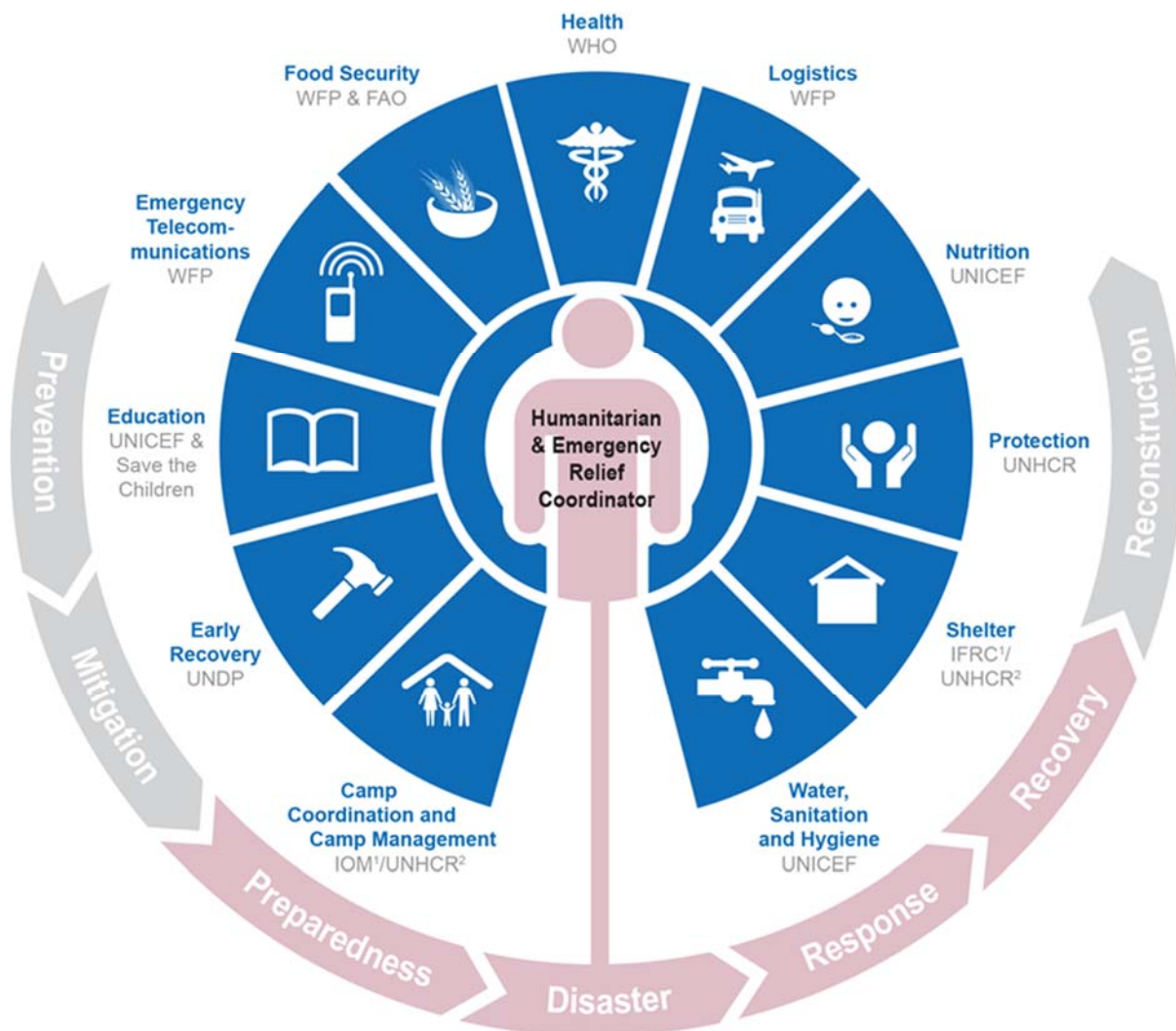
While the cluster system remains active at the global level at all times, the clusters may not be established on the ground in a given country. Following a disaster, the RC/HC, in consultation with the HCT and usually the Government, can recommend activation of clusters as part of the international humanitarian response based on an assessment of need and of the coordination capacities of the responding organizations on the ground. The recommendation is sent for approval through the ERC to the IASC Principals (i.e. heads of agency/organization) and Global Cluster Leads.

As a coordination platform, the OSOCC provides an opportunity for clusters to plug into an established coordination mechanism as soon as they arrive on-site. In some cases, functions that are initially carried out under the umbrella of the OSOCC may transfer to a cluster coordinator once established on-site. Other coordination cells may already be set up under the umbrella of national coordination mechanisms, such as EMT coordination with the Ministry of Health (MoH), and only link up with the OSOCC for information exchange. The specific collaboration between the clusters, national coordination structures, and the

OSOCC will be incident-dependent and reflect the principle of flexibility (see section A.3.3).

A.2.5 Humanitarian Programme Cycle (HPC)

The IASC has agreed that international humanitarian response should be delivered following the concept of the Humanitarian Programme Cycle (HPC). This is a cycle of coordinated actions undertaken to help prepare for, manage and deliver humanitarian assistance. It consists of five elements, coordinated in a seamless manner, with one step logically building on the previous and leading to the next. An overview of the HPC is depicted below:
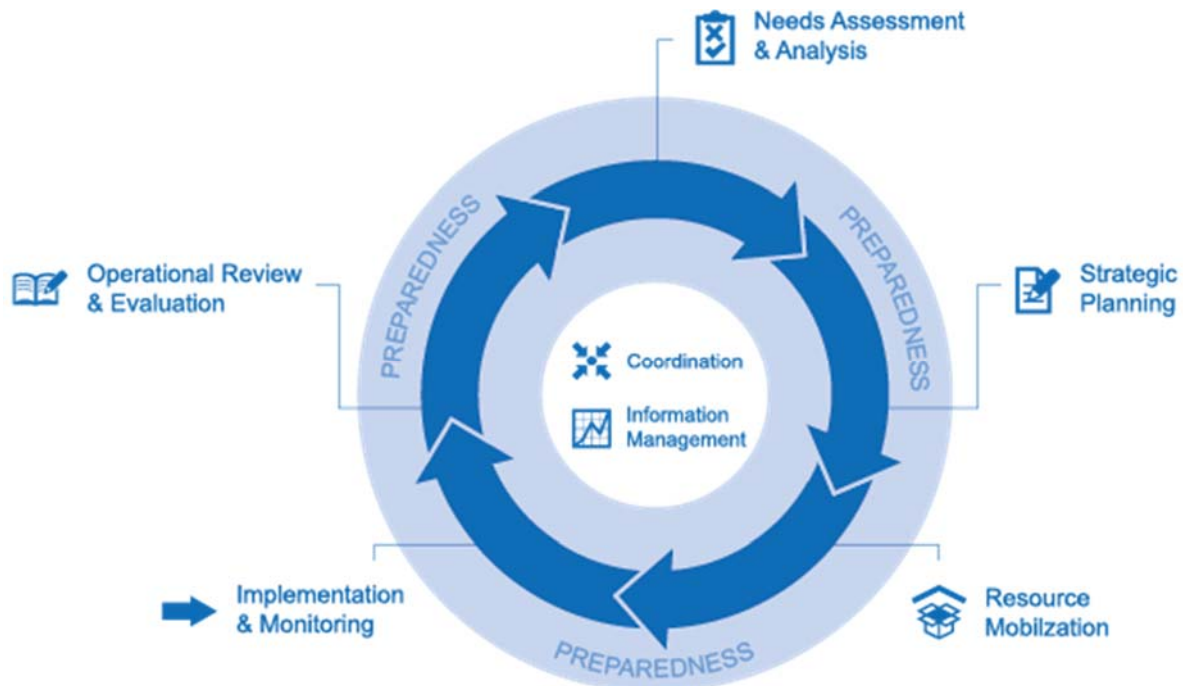
The first two steps of the HPC, i.e. Needs Assessment and Analysis and Strategic Planning, should be closely aligned to the outputs of the OSOCC (see section B.2). The OSOCC, as a rapid deployment tool for on-site coordination, has the ability to collect information quickly within the first days of a disaster and provide this information to the broader humanitarian system. This supports the development of products such as a Flash Appeal or a Humanitarian Response Plan.

Successful implementation of the HPC is dependent upon adequate emergency preparedness, effective coordination with national/local authorities and humanitarian actors, and information management. The latter two factors, in particular, form a part of the foundation on which the OSOCC concept was built.

A.3 OSOCC Concept

The OSOCC concept was developed as a rapid response tool that works in close cooperation with the affected Government to provide a system for coordinating and facilitating the activities of international relief efforts at the site of a disaster. It is primarily used in sudden-onset disasters, and particularly in large-scale emergencies, however is

applicable in other contexts including complex emergencies and in smaller scale emergencies where a mechanism for operational field coordination does not exist or requires enhancement.

A.3.1 OSOCC Purpose

The OSOCC has two core objectives:

- To provide a means to rapidly facilitate on-site cooperation, coordination, and information management between international responders and the Government of the affected country in the absence of an alternate coordination system;
- To establish a physical space and act as a single point of service provision for incoming response teams.

The OSOCC is intended to serve as a conduit for information exchange between the Government and the various relief providers to facilitate cooperation with, and coordination of, international humanitarian assistance; and to provide a platform for coordination amongst actors who do not normally work in close collaboration. The OSOCC supports on-site coordination and information exchange and facilitates a broader coordination platform that extends well beyond the physical OSOCC.

To optimize its effectiveness, the OSOCC should be established in the immediate aftermath of a disaster requiring international assistance or when indicated by a change in situation of an existing emergency. Wherever possible, the OSOCC should be located in close proximity to the disaster site and relevant national government authorities. The timeliness of set-up and the appropriateness of location are both critical in sudden-onset disasters to ensure optimal rescue and relief efforts.

Although an OSOCC is intended as a short-term response tool for the immediate life-saving and relief phases of a disaster, it should be established with enough flexibility and foresight to adjust to the magnitude and complexity of an emergency as it unfolds. When an OSOCC becomes fully engaged in the coordination of international humanitarian response, its role and activities may be extended to meet the changing requirements dictated by an evolving situation. It is expected that an OSOCC in some form would be operational during the relief phase of an emergency until the Government of the affected country, together with United Nations agencies and NGOs if required, can resume the responsibility of coordination of international resources through its own structures and offices.

A.3.2 OSOCC Context

When established, the OSOCC works within the existing humanitarian system both internationally and in the affected country, as illustrated below:
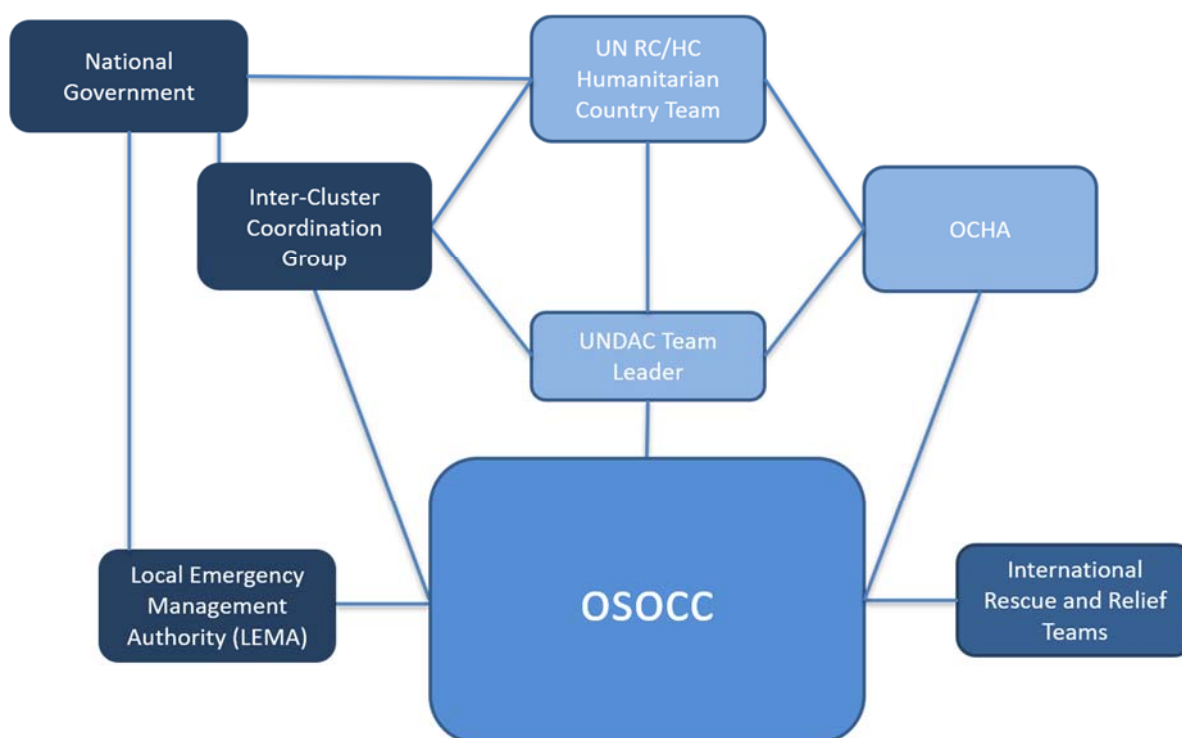
The OSOCC generally reports to the UNDAC Team Leader, who in turn ensures that activities of the OSOCC are aligned with the strategic direction of the RC/HC and the HCT and supported by OCHA. In cases where an UNDAC Team is not deployed, the OSOCC may report directly to the RC/HC and/or the Government. In cases where the OSOCC is established and operated by regional coordination teams, they may also report to their sending organization.

The OSOCC works in support of the affected Government in coordinating the efforts of international response organizations. Within the affected country, the LEMA is responsible for the overall command, coordination and management of the response operation, thus the OSOCC maintains a strong connection to the LEMA throughout operations.

In addition to the entities within OCHA and within the affected country, the OSOCC supports and collaborates with cluster coordinators and responding teams. This can be done through integration into the OSOCC structure, including a physical presence in the OSOCC facility, and/or through formal or informal liaison. Further details can be found in sections B.3.4 and B.3.5.

A.3.3 OSOCC Principles

The OSOCC is an effective response tool that is proven to facilitate coordination amongst international response organizations in support of provision of timely and efficient humanitarian assistance in a disaster. While the impact of a given disaster and the nature of the response will determine the specifics of OSOCC operations, the following principles are consistent with and fundamental to the OSOCC concept.

Respect for existing mandates and structures
The OSOCC operates in a manner that respects the authorities, mandates, capacities and capabilities that exist both within the Government of the affected country and the broader

humanitarian system. The efforts of the OSOCC are intended to provide operational support to a strategic lead, e.g., the national Government, United Nations agencies or other entities, in a disaster situation.

Coordination
The strength of the OSOCC is derived from its ability to encourage agreement and foster trust and cooperation between all parties to advance the provision of humanitarian relief for a disaster-affected population. Coordination is conducted in a cooperative manner that supports facilitation of activities rather than a directive approach. Information management and sharing of information plays a key role in this.

Functional approach
The OSOCC employs a functional approach to its structure whereby responsibilities belong to a function rather than a position or person. This approach allows the OSOCC to carry out the response activities required utilizing the resources available while ensuring functional responsibilities are met.

Flexibility
The functions of an OSOCC may expand and contract throughout its period of existence. Not all functions may be activated during a response, depending on the specific needs of the disaster. The responsibilities of the functions not activated may still need to be considered by the OSOCC to ensure that there are no gaps and to enable the system to adapt to the changing situation.

Scalability
The OSOCC functions are scalable to the needs of the response. Functions can be expanded in terms of staff and structure without compromising their core purpose and scope.

These principles are present in all aspects of OSOCC operations and contribute to its success as a rapid response tool in a period characterized by chaos, uncertainty and lack of information. The practical application of these principles to the operational aspects of the OSOCC system is outlined in Part II of these Guidelines.

A.3.4 OSOCC as a national emergency management tool

Disaster response capacities vary by region and country. Many disaster-prone countries face coordination, communication and information management challenges at national, provincial and field levels, which may be exacerbated by economic and technological factors, as well as human resource limitations. Equally problematic are systemic barriers to effective coordination related to rigid national disaster management structures and their constituent bodies.

Government and other emergency management related organizations tend to be structured in a traditional command and control format with defined, vertical reporting lines. Where they exist, national emergency operations centres are also generally designed using this model, many with provincial- and/or local-level supporting incident command posts. In many ways, command and control is well suited to disaster management as, in theory, it enables swift,

decisive action. However, as the number of actors involved in a larger response grows, the importance of inter-agency coordination increases, and collaboration enabled by systemic flexibility and adaptability becomes imperative for effective action. Organizations with closed, vertical systems are often challenged when having to interact laterally with actors that fall outside their command structure.

In multi-agency emergency responses, 'siloed' organizational activity tends to result in gaps and duplications, while competing mandates and unclear designation of roles and responsibilities in the larger response system aggravate these issues and their consequences. Inter-agency coordination can present significant obstacles, especially in developing-country contexts where communications and reporting links within and between underfunded organizations and across sectors are often weaker.

The OSOCC model, focusing on facilitation of coordination and collaboration through service provision and sharing of information, rather than command and control, offers this option and is sometimes included in national preparedness programmes and response planning.

National authorities in many countries have adopted and implemented (elements of) the OSOCC concept to coordinate domestic disaster relief and humanitarian assistance at the field level. The decision to deploy the OSOCC would come from the National Disaster Management Organization (NDMO) but staffing would strive to be representative of the local context and would include a variety of governmental and non-governmental actors. Regarding structures, only the functions and cells that serve a purpose in specific national contexts would be utilized.

Like the international OSOCC model, the OSOCC for national use is not intended to replace or even parallel pre-existing emergency management structures at local, provincial or national levels, but rather serve in a supplemental capacity, augmenting overall, systemic coordination capacity between the LEMA and non-government response organizations. The purpose of a local OSOCC should provide the NDMO with an instrument to implement policy decisions and facilitate coordination of relief resources at a disaster site.

PART II: OSOCC OPERATIONS

Part II of the OSOCC Guidelines provides specific guidance for those operationalizing the OSOCC concept in the field. It is directly supported by Part III, which contains practical checklists and templates. Links to these resources are provided throughout Part II.

Specific content in Part II includes:

- Descriptions of the components of the OSOCC system, i.e., the VOSOCC, the RDC, the OSOCC facility, sub-OSOCCs, and other coordination cells;
- An overview of the OSOCC operational 'lifecycle' during an emergency, including daily operational cycles;
- Descriptions of the OSOCC's functions and cells;
- Guidance for opening and operating an RDC;
- Processes for establishing, maintaining and demobilizing OSOCC components.

B.1 Components of the OSOCC System

The OSOCC system consists of five main components:

- VOSOCC;
- RDC;
- OSOCC facility;
- Sub-OSOCC;
- Other coordination cells linked to the OSOCC.

Each of these components has a specific purpose and consists of various functional elements.

B.1.1 Virtual OSOCC (VOSOCC)

The Virtual OSOCC (VOSOCC) is a real-time online coordination platform that allows information exchange early in an emergency. It is a component of the Global Disaster Alert and Coordination System (GDACS), a cooperative framework supported by OCHA Geneva. In addition to the VOSOCC, GDACS provides near real-time alerts for earthquakes, hurricanes/typhoons, flooding, etc., impact assessments, mapping, weather forecasting and satellite imagery analysis.

Specific features of the VOSOCC allow responders to exchange information such as baseline country information (including relevant socio-economic and demographic information), entry points and other logistical aspects, relief team status, assessment information, cluster activities, civil-military coordination arrangements, environmental risks and security. In addition to emergencies, the VOSOCC supports training coordination, information sharing and project discussions.

For further information go to http://www.gdacs.org or to request VOSOCC access http://vosocc.unocha.org.

B.1.2 Reception Departure Centre (RDC)

The RDC is generally the first OSOCC component established in-country during a major emergency and thus the first on-site coordination point. It facilitates the arrival of international relief teams and assists in coordinating their deployment to the field. It can also support reception of other resources, such as relief items. RDC operations are focused on:

- Registering teams and passing this information to the OSOCC to facilitate operational planning;
- Briefing arriving teams on the evolving emergency situation;
- Providing arriving teams with available information related to practicalities such as logistical support, airport/port procedures and services, security and OSOCC location;
- Supporting point of entry authorities in coordinating the arrival of international resources, including ground services, storage, procedures and liaison.

The RDC is set up at major entry points for international assistance by the first arriving UNDAC team, INSARAG-trained USAR team or Emergency Medical Team (EMT). As a minimum, two team members should staff the RDC. As the lead in-country component of the OSOCC system, it is vital that the RDC is well-organized, well-informed and facilitating as it sets the tone for the arriving teams.

More than one RDC can be established, if needed. The decision to open additional RDCs is based on practicalities. For example, are there multiple points of entry (airports, seaports, roads, etc.) where a significant number of teams or relief items are arriving? If so, does it make sense to divert additional trained staff to these locations to open an RDC, or are there other, more pressing operational needs? These decisions should be based on operational realities.

The RDC also facilitates demobilization of international relief teams and return to their home bases by ensuring a coordinated and appropriate process of departures. The RDC itself demobilizes when all teams have left the country.

Detailed guidance on RDC operations can be found in section B.4.

B.1.3 OSOCC facility

Closely aligned with the LEMA or other national authorities, the OSOCC facility provides a common platform for the coordination of international response and serves as the centre of the OSOCC system. It is simultaneously a place and a methodology, similar to a Government's national emergency operations centre or local incident command post, but with a distinct mission and approach applicable to its function within the international humanitarian system. It may also be integrated into national facilities if the situation so requires.

As stated in Part I, the two core objectives of the OSOCC are:

- To provide a means to rapidly facilitate on-site cooperation, coordination, and information management between international responders and the Government of the affected country in the absence of an alternate coordination system;
- To establish a physical space and act as a single point of service provision for incoming response teams.

These objectives are achieved through coordinating or supporting a variety of activities, such as the work of international relief teams, inter-cluster coordination, cluster-specific activities (especially early in the emergency), assessment and up-to-date analysis of the situation and overview of humanitarian needs, reporting, information management, media relations and safety and security planning/measures.

More in-depth information on OSOCC activities and functions is contained throughout Part II, in particular in section B.3.

B.1.4 Sub-OSOCC

In some emergencies it will be necessary to establish one or more sub-OSOCCs as a means of achieving the OSOCC's mandate. A sub-OSOCC replicates OSOCC functions, but in support of the primary OSOCC rather than producing duplicate processes. For example, situation reports written at the sub-OSOCC level would inform the situation report of the primary OSOCC. In all cases, the primary OSOCC will provide the sub-OSOCC with terms of reference, a geographically defined area of operations, objectives and/or expected outcomes and clear lines of reporting. The specific functions and staffing levels of the sub-OSOCC will also be agreed to enable it to meet its assigned tasks.

While the criteria for establishing sub-OSOCCs are mission-specific, the following considerations generally contribute to the decision:

- Access and proximity to operational areas, i.e., if operations are spread over a large area, a sub-OSOCC may be needed;
- A desire by national authorities, or the RC/HC and HCT to establish a physical presence in a specific area;
- Logistical requirements or constraints, making a sub-OSOCC more practical than the primary OSOCC, e.g., roads might be blocked, or operations may be taking place in several remote locations;
- Volume and/or complexity, i.e., the capacity of the primary OSOCC is exceeded by one or more aspects of the operations, e.g., the number of international relief teams requiring to be coordinated;
- Duration of operations, i.e., international relief teams are likely to remain in-country long enough to warrant establishment and staffing of sub-OSOCCs.

Once the decision is made to establish a sub-OSOCC, it must be communicated to all the primary OSOCC functions and good working relationships established with officials in the vicinity of the sub-OSOCC. Other established functions will continue to operate within the same reporting structures; for example, any established RDCs would continue to work

through the primary OSOCC, which would liaise with the sub-OSOCC to prioritize and coordinate relief team deployments into the sub-OSOCC's area of operations.

B.1.5 Other coordination cells linked to the OSOCC

What distinguishes the OSOCC methodology from other functional organizational models is that functions and cells are expected to operate with a large degree of autonomy, servicing primarily the OSOCC's clients rather than reporting to the UNDAC Team Leader, RC/HC and HCT. In particular, coordination cells linked to the Operations Function of an OSOCC may, in many cases, be separated from the main OSOCC facility.

Many countries have adopted components from the OSOCC concept and integrated them into their national contingency plans (see also section A.3.4). For example, EMT coordination will, in many cases, be nationally led as part of the Ministry of Health (MoH) emergency planning and may be operational even before the OSOCC is fully functional. Other operational coordination cells normally associated with the OSOCC, like the RDC or the USAR coordination cell (UCC), may also be operationalized and managed by national authorities and be the natural point of contact for international relief teams.

In these cases, the OSOCC may only be supporting these coordination cells with staff, equipment, and information management and analysis capacities. The coordination cells will report directly to the respective Government body, while links with the OSOCC will be maintained and information shared for overall analysis of need and response.

An inherent danger with this structure is that it can lead to 'silo-thinking'. The coordination cells may risk becoming too independent, focusing only on their own output, potentially reaching a situation where there is little or no communication between cells and little understanding of the interdependency of the OSOCC's larger output.

It is important to address this issue and ensure that, while coordination cells understand their primary role, they are also clear on how they should interact with each other, when and for what purpose. This requires regular information exchange between cells and, in particular, with the Assessment & Analysis (A&A) Cell, providing input to needs-based analysis outputs. Procedures need to be developed, implemented and maintained in such a way that good internal coordination is achieved. See also section B.3.6 for more on the A&A Cell.

B.2 The OSOCC Lifecycle

While no emergency response situation is identical, operations (USAR, humanitarian assistance, OSOCC, etc.) tend to follow a general mission cycle or timeline. The figure below illustrates generalized 'phases' of OSOCC activity compared to related response activities.
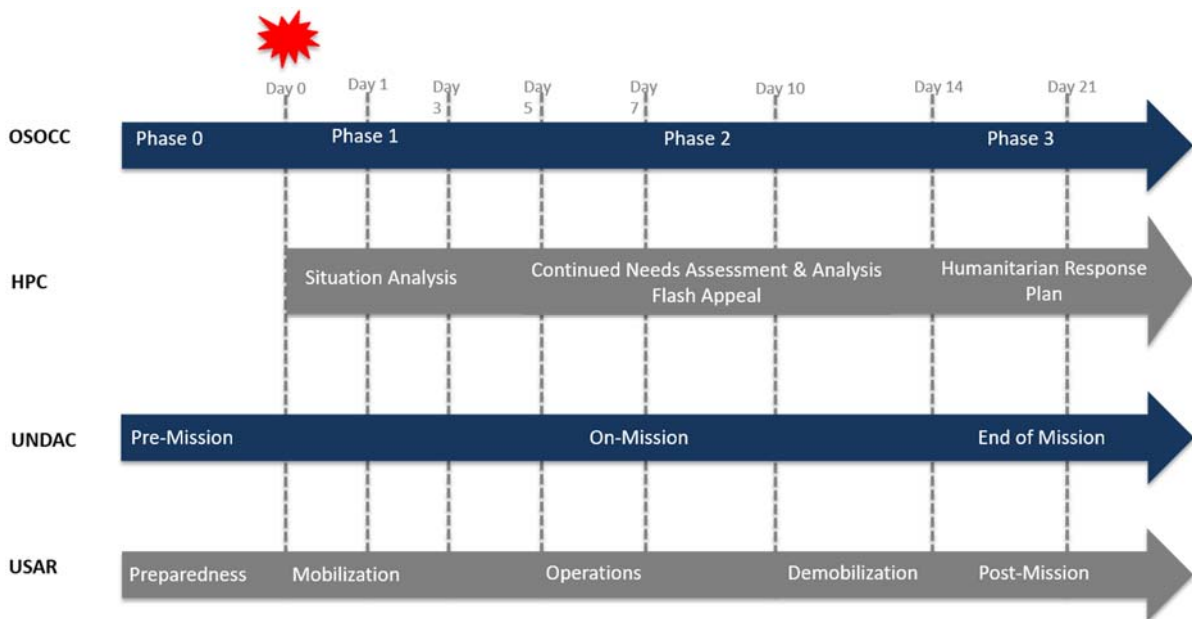
The following sections outline typical OSOCC activities that occur during general phases present in most emergencies.

Phase 0

A typical OSOCC response begins well before any emergency occurs. This phase consists of training, exercises and continuous development of the OSOCC methodology, including new tools and templates for Part III of these Guidelines. Also included in this phase are all preparedness and overall readiness activities undertaken by responders who will usually establish or interact with the OSOCC, whether members of international relief teams, UNDAC, national authorities, etc.

Phase 1

The primary activity of the OSOCC in Phase 1 is to work in close cooperation with the LEMA, or other national officials, to support and coordinate the life-saving activities of incoming international relief teams. In addition, key Humanitarian Programme Cycle (HPC) outcomes are supported by the OSOCC in Phase 1, e.g., situation reports, analyses and possibly a Flash Appeal. These documents are key to establishing the scope, scale and severity of the emergency, including the need for life-sustaining relief activities during Phase 2. The OSOCC may also help establish core coordination tools, such as contact management through Humanitarian ID, and an operational web platform using humanitarianresponse.info.

Phase 1 starts with the onset of the emergency. According to the severity, GDACS will issue an alert that provides basic situational information and an automated impact assessment. Within hours, or even minutes, national authorities and OCHA staff will begin providing situational updates via the VOSOCC. They will also advise as to whether international assistance has been requested. International response teams and other resources will then typically indicate their status on the VOSOCC, particularly if a request for assistance is made or anticipated. Situation reports and other updates will be posted to the applicable sections of the VOSOCC by national authorities, OCHA, regional organizations and others involved in

the response efforts. Once it is clear that relief teams will be deploying, each will provide information on its capacities and arrival time.

With the arrival of the first international OSOCC-trained USAR team, EMT and/or UNDAC members, the RDC is generally established, particularly if other teams are en route. The RDC may also have been established by national authorities or a regional organization in anticipation of incoming international teams. The initial RDC may consist of only one or two people but the functions will remain the same as described in detail in section B.4. The focus is on quickly establishing an orderly arrival and registration process, as well as informing incoming teams of possible priorities. The RDC begins reporting on the VOSOCC as soon as possible so as to share the arrival and situational information required.

As soon as possible, OSOCC-trained USAR, EMT and/or UNDAC members will establish preliminary OSOCC services, particularly those associated with the work of international USAR teams and EMTs. This may consist only of specific Operations Function cells with basic support (see section B.3.5 for more on the Operations Function). As quickly as possible, processes are established to coordinate incoming team assignments to maximize life-saving activities for the trapped and/or injured.

As soon as practical, all OSOCC functions will be staffed. Early on, generalists such as UNDAC members, regional organization response teams and the affected Government will be performing multiple functions to ensure that coordination, assessment, analysis, and early reporting activities are underway. While initial life-saving activities are top priority, assessment and reporting activities will set the pace for the next phase of response. These activities are part of the Situation Function, described in section B.3.6. Within the first days, this function will coordinate or support an initial assessment, publication of regular situation reports and situation analyses.

While initial activities are underway, OSOCC support partners will also be deploying and may set up service packages (see section B.3.7). Basic support will arrive with teams and initial communications infrastructure can generally be established. An early assessment will be made to determine what further support is needed.

Phase 2
Based on a Situation Analysis, a Flash Appeal will generally be developed within five to seven days after the onset of the emergency. In the meantime, updated situation analyses will continue to inform mobilization of the broader international response

During Phase 2, the OSOCC will be brought to full staffing as quickly as possible, supported by appropriate facilities/modules. Operational cells coordinating relief teams will be reinforced with additional operational specialists with expertise in coordination and planning. These coordination cells may also detach themselves from the main OSOCC facility and establish presence with requisite national authorities. They will remain in place as long as their sector[2] is active. Other functions, e.g., Situation, will most likely be performed by generalists in the beginning, with specialist staff deploying as required, usually depending on

---

2 For OSOCC operations, the term 'sector' may refer to both humanitarian sectors of activity, as used in the humanitarian response system, and geographical sectors used by the UCC and EMTCC to establish defined areas in which to conduct operations.

the scale of the emergency. Where necessary, sub-OSOCCs will be established during this phase (see section B.1.4).

Concurrently, cluster staff may arrive and begin to establish operations and coordination functions for their respective clusters. This may trigger the transfer of early OSOCC Operations cell activities to cluster operations, e.g., Logistics. In other cases, cluster staff may be minimal and may work from within the context of the OSOCC. In either case, the OSOCC will ensure an inter-cluster coordination forum is established early on to coordinate activities between clusters and with the affected Government and various international actors. The OSOCC in Phase 2 will also coordinate or support coordinated assessments and inform humanitarian programmes.

The OSOCC also establishes a number of support services for the humanitarian community. These include distribution of information (reports, safety procedures, maps, various analysis products and thematic reports, etc.), providing a venue for meetings, serving as a focal point for operational, logistical and administrative matters and continued support to the VOSOCC.

Phase 2 is generally considered complete when the Flash Appeal is published and international teams either depart or are well-established in their operations. This means that the RDC is generally closed by the end of this phase, following the bulk of team departures. Section B.4.5 describes RDC demobilization.

Phase 3
Phase 3 includes the issuance of the Humanitarian Response Plan, if required; the continuation of Phase 2 response activities and cluster-specific assessments.

The OSOCC may or may not continue to operate in Phase 3. In some cases, where the emergency is of more limited scope and duration, the OSOCC may simply not be needed beyond Phase 2 and its functions absorbed into existing structures. In other cases, the international community may establish a longer-term presence, with a new or enhanced OCHA office performing OSOCC functions. Section B.5.4 describes OSOCC demobilization.

B.2.1 The OSOCC Operational Cycle

The OSOCC, as well as its component parts such as the RDC, needs to establish its operational cycle. In many cases, this will initially be based on a 24-hour schedule, with activities occurring at set intervals, such as a set time to send a daily situation report, briefing times for international relief teams and deadlines for establishing and distributing daily operational priorities/work locations. The operational cycle also includes regular internal information sharing through a schedule of briefings and wrap-up meetings.

As the operation progresses, the cycle may be extended over two or more days depending on the nature of the emergency, the expectations placed on the OSOCC and the external reporting requirements. This may also be reflected in the number and type of internal and external meetings scheduled to accommodate greater numbers of OSOCC staff and other actors.

Further information on the OSOCC's internal operational cycle is referenced in the functional descriptions below and templates/examples are provided in Part III.

B.3 The OSOCC

The fact that an OSOCC can be established rapidly anywhere in the world, by diverse responders, is reliant upon a common understanding of OSOCC methodology and terminology. This section outlines key terms and the core functional elements of the OSOCC, including duties, outputs and linkages for each function.

B.3.1 OSOCC Terminology

Standard terminology is used throughout the OSOCC Guidelines to assist in understanding the concept and operations. The terminology listed below is applicable to all components of the OSOCC system (outlined in section B.1) and is presented in the context of the OSOCC.

- **Function** refers to a broad organizational component of the OSOCC, e.g., Management and Operations. These functions will need to be considered for every OSOCC mission and at every stage of the mission. One or more people may perform each function, and/or one person may perform multiple functions. Each function can be expanded as necessary to include the number and organization of personnel required to fulfil its responsibilities.

- **Cells** are components under functions that can be used to further organize the OSOCC into common sub-groups that reflect key areas of responsibility of that function. The use of cells is particularly beneficial where the OSOCC has a large number of staff and additional layers of reporting are necessary for effective management, or where particular areas of expertise are needed to focus on performing response activities rather than on coordination/leadership, e.g., USAR Coordination Cell, EMT Coordination Cell. A cell is led by a coordinator or manager.

- **A service package** is a pre-determined set of services and/or material resources deployed to support response activities, e.g., light base camp, office equipment, OSOCC information support staff, etc. Service packages are often provided by partner organizations such as the International Humanitarian Partnership (IHP), or Americas Support Team (AST). Service packages provide the basic material and equipment that enable response teams to carry out their activities at the site of a disaster.

Consistent use of common language when describing operational elements of the OSOCC facilitates clear understanding amongst actors working in or interacting with an OSOCC. The concept of functions and cells forms the basis of the OSOCC structure.

B.3.2 OSOCC Structure

As outlined in Part I, the OSOCC concept consists of both the physical OSOCC facility and the broader coordination platform that results from its activities. For the purposes of this section of the Guidelines, the OSOCC structure will focus mainly on activities directly linked

to the OSOCC components, i.e., VOSOCC, RDC, the OSOCC facility, sub-OSOCCs and coordination cells.

The OSOCC is generally structured into four functions, each of which may be composed of multiple cells. The basic OSOCC structure is illustrated below; however, not all functions or cells may be needed in every situation.
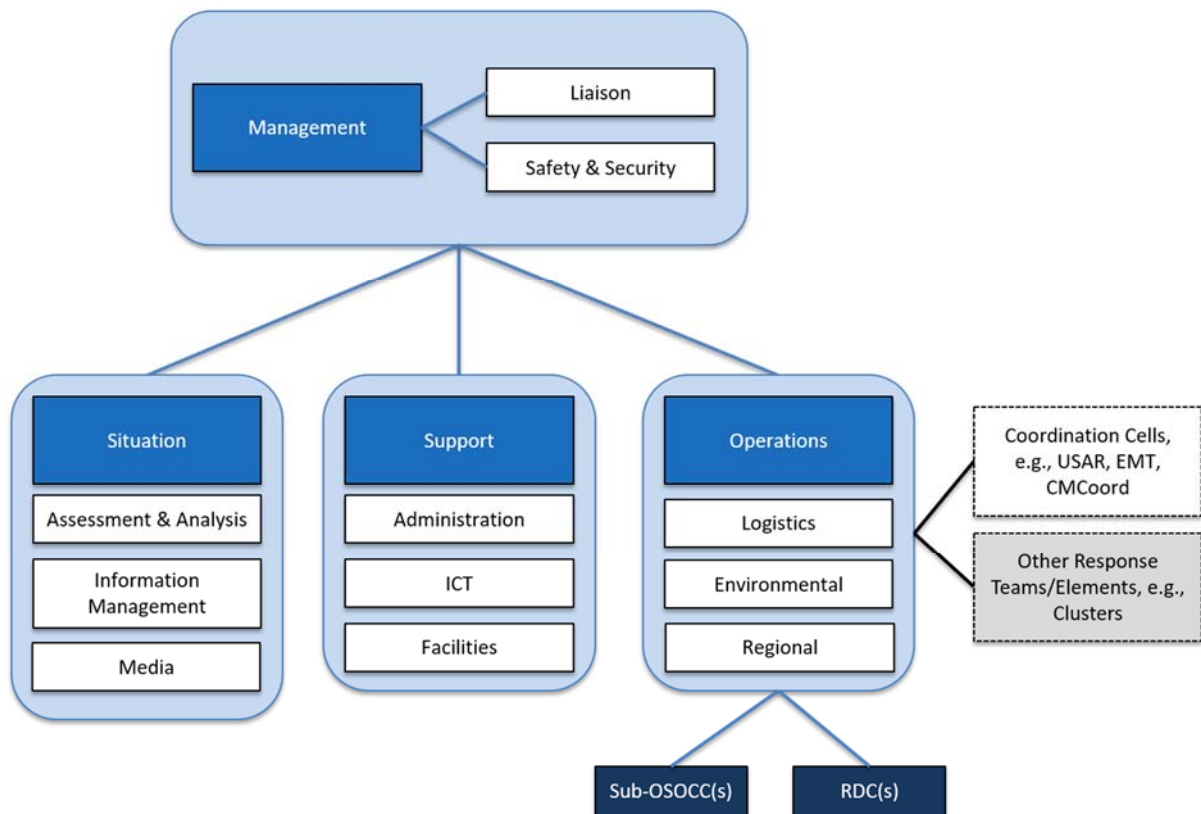
The principle of flexibility allows the structure to adapt to the operational requirements of the disaster. Depending on the magnitude of the event, situational demands and available resources, one person may manage multiple functions simultaneously while other functions may require a larger complement of personnel.

In large-scale emergencies, there may be a need to establish a separate function for HPC support, to include humanitarian financing and coordination of cross-cutting issues, e.g., gender, cash transfer programming, community engagement, protection, etc. Further advice on HPC support can be found in the UNDAC Field Handbook, Section L.3.

An organizational chart should be developed and displayed in the OSOCC to illustrate the reporting lines of OSOCC staff. The chart will need to be refreshed regularly to reflect the expansion/contraction of the OSOCC to meet the operational needs of the response. A sample organization chart can be found in Part III.

OSOCC Staffing
Staff for the OSOCC will come from the UNDAC team and partner organizations, OCHA, OSOCC support staff, international organizations, USAR teams, EMTs, regional response mechanisms and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). In large-scale emergencies,

volunteers and other types of staff may also support the OSOCC with specific tasks. As international relief teams arrive, they should be requested to support the personnel and equipment needs of the OSOCC, even if this may be a significant undertaking for them. Staffing should also be complemented and reinforced as additional specialists become available, e.g., through OCHA surge mechanisms.

The number of staff needed to perform OSOCC functions will depend on the volume and complexity of activities and the number of shifts per day. During the immediate life-saving phase, the workload will usually require a 24/7 commitment, thus a minimum of two work shifts to cover 24 hours. As relief operations continue and routines are established, the hours of the OSOCC will adjust to reflect the changing workload.

The same staffing philosophy should be applied to other components of the OSOCC system, particularly the RDC and sub-OSOCC(s).

B.3.3 Common Functional Responsibilities

Each function/cell within the OSOCC shares a number of cross-cutting responsibilities that serve to contribute to the overall effectiveness of the OSOCC. Of primary importance is ensuring that all operations are conducted in line with the humanitarian principles (see section A.2.1). The following additional responsibilities are common across all functions:

- **Liaison** – All functions will liaise with their respective counterparts in the Government of the affected country and the broader humanitarian response community. Liaison activities should be focused on relationship-building, information sharing and optimization of operational activities. This cross-communication is important for effective response coordination and supports a cooperative environment.

- **Safety and Security** – In line with the safety and security protocols that are established for the emergency (see section B.3.4), each function takes an active role in the personal safety of staff assigned to the OSOCC and contributes to the maintenance of a safe and secure operating environment.

- **Accountability** – The decisions and actions taken in an OSOCC, as well as their consequences, are a common responsibility across all functions. Accountability is supported by the use of trained and experienced personnel, functional procedures and operational guidelines. OSOCC accountability extends beyond OCHA and the United Nations to the affected country and population, donors and others involved in the response.

- **Analysis and information management** – All functions and cells contribute to OSOCC internal information flow with the information, data and observations acquired during their activities. Each cell should participate in shared analysis sessions conducted by the A&A Cell. Each OSOCC staff member contributes to the reporting of information of relevance not only to their function, but also other functions and/or the broader OSOCC. This information is compiled into reports and analytical outputs produced by the Situation Function.

- **Demobilization** – Each function needs to consider an appropriate transition and/or exit strategy for their role. The timing and particulars of handover to a local authority or other international organization, e.g., United Nations agency, Global Cluster Lead, will be specific to the function and how it is being carried out in-country.

In addition to the common responsibilities above, each function and cell has specific responsibilities outlined in the following sections.

B.3.4 Management Function

The Management Function coordinates the activities of other OSOCC functions, establishes routines for internal information flow between functions and cells, establishes formal liaison with national authorities and other response organizations, and works to ensure the safety and security of international responders. The OSOCC Manager leads this function.

OSOCC Manager
The OSOCC Manager coordinates all OSOCC functions and activities, including sub-OSOCCs and RDCs. Key responsibilities include conducting internal meetings/briefings, managing task allocation amongst OSOCC personnel and providing leadership to the OSOCC. The OSOCC Manager is focused on ensuring that the OSOCC meets the objectives and fulfils the terms of reference set out by the Government of the affected country, the UNDAC Team Leader and the RC/HC.

The OSOCC Manager is also responsible for developing and updating a Plan of Action (PoA) for the OSOCC in line with the objectives and agreed terms of reference. The updated PoA should be communicated to OSOCC staff (including those working in the RDC and sub-OSOCCs) at least daily to ensure clarity of future direction. The OSOCC Manager may wish to assign an individual to coordinate the PoA with the operational planning taking place in Operations cells.

The UNDAC Deputy Team Leader usually fills the role of the OSOCC Manager and reports to the UNDAC Team Leader. The UNDAC Team Leader, along with the RC/HC and Government, will determine the overall strategic and operational planning and direction for the mission, and by extension the OSOCC. The Team Leader is generally not directly involved in the operations of the OSOCC, leaving this to the OSOCC Manager.

In addition to the OSOCC Manager, the Management Function may include a Safety & Security Cell and a Liaison Cell. Other functions/cells can be established at the discretion of the OSOCC Manager, although these should not duplicate any of the other OSOCC functions described below.

In large-scale emergencies, a separate Reception Area may need to be established as part of the Management Function to serve OSOCC clients. This should be operated in close cooperation with the Information Management Cell and be a first point of contact for clients seeking OSOCC services and OSOCC information products.

Liaison Cell

As noted in section B.3.3, liaison is a cross-cutting responsibility of all OSOCC functions and personnel that supports an effective and collaborative approach to disaster response. The Liaison Cell establishes and maintains formal information exchange procedures between the OSOCC and other actors requiring a dedicated liaison resource not otherwise served by other functions. In some cases, the Liaison Cell may be activated when a large number of organizations send liaison staff to the OSOCC and specific liaison coordination is deemed necessary for ongoing OSOCC operations and effective information sharing. This is not intended to duplicate liaison already established by other OSOCC functions with their direct counterparts, e.g., USAR liaison, but rather to ensure that there are no gaps.

The Liaison Cell works to build and maintain relations with the LEMA, Government of the affected country and/or response organizations that are pivotal to cooperative and coordinated OSOCC activities. A Liaison Officer should be diplomatic with a strong ability to build relationships with a variety of different organizations through mutual understanding and consensus building. S/he should be able to communicate effectively and to see opportunities to strengthen collaboration and coordination among responding organizations.

Safety and Security Cell

The Safety and Security Cell works to support and inform the safety and security of all international humanitarian actors. The Cell works closely with the Chief Security Advisor of the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) and security officers from other relief teams and organizations, and under the authority of the United Nations Designated Official (DO) for safety and security which, in most cases, is the RC/HC as the most senior United Nations staff member in the country. The first-arriving teams, including UNDAC, will create a basic security plan, but staff from UNDSS will typically assume the lead of the Safety and Security Cell as soon as possible.

Key responsibilities of the Safety and Security Cell include developing, implementing and monitoring security and medical plans for the response, including for all personnel associated with the OSOCC.

The medical plan is developed based on existing protocols for the affected country, or in close liaison with the EMT Coordination Cell (see section B.3.5), national authorities and other medical resources present, e.g., those associated with USAR teams.

The security plan should be developed in accordance with the United Nations Security Risk Management model. This is a managerial tool for the analysis of safety and security threats that may affect United Nations personnel, assets and operations. Within the Security Risk Management model, a Security Risk Assessment (SRA) will have been conducted pertaining to the country and/or location. All security decisions, security planning and implementation of measures to manage security risks must be based on the SRA. The safety measures in the SRA apply to all United Nations entities in that country, including the OSOCC. Implementation is typically achieved through provision of security briefings to incoming responders and regular security updates for all OSOCC functions.

Further information on Safety and Security is available in the United Nations Security Policy Manual and the UNDAC Handbook, Chapter G.

B.3.5 Operations Function

The Operations Function is responsible for coordinating the activities of international response teams and other resources involved in providing relief to affected populations. This function consists of a variety of coordination cells, each focused on a specific functional area. Together, these cells respond rapidly to perform operational coordination functions in areas such as rescue, provision of emergency medical care, mitigation of environmental impacts, the movement of people and goods, and coordination with military/armed actors.

Each coordination cell is generally staffed by technical experts from the cell's functional area. In the immediate aftermath of a disaster, cells may be staffed by members of first-arriving teams trained in OSOCC methodology and UNDAC members. For this reason, cross-training of these individuals is done to provide maximum flexibility in the first phase of any major response.

In addition, the coordination cells work with each cluster that is active in the response. It is recommended that an inter-cluster coordination officer working within the Operations Function be appointed to carry out this role. A Cluster Coordination Cell may be established if warranted by the expansion of the coordination activities.

The various coordination cells are also the primary point of contact for the RDC(s). The RDC(s) work closely with most Operations coordination cells to provide information on arriving resources and to ensure implementation of processes related to logistics, safety and security, etc.

In addition to the coordination cells described below, cells can be created for any purpose at the discretion of the OSOCC Manager.

USAR Coordination Cell (UCC)
Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) teams work within a narrow window of opportunity to rescue those trapped in collapsed structures. To maximize the efforts of these specialized teams, coordination via the VOSOCC begins as soon as a potential deployment is recognized. The first-arriving USAR team trained in OSOCC and INSARAG methodology works in cooperation with the UNDAC team (upon arrival) and national authorities to establish an RDC and the UCC. In the event that national authorities have already established a UCC, incoming USAR teams and UNDAC work in support of them. The UCC uses INSARAG methodology to coordinate international USAR teams, in cooperation with other OSOCC functions and national authorities.

Staffing roles in the UCC, i.e., coordination, planning, information management and logistics, can be expanded based on the size and complexity of the response. UCC personnel will generally come from first-arriving teams who have been trained to fulfil this function and all arriving INSARAG-classified teams may be required to allocate staff to the UCC. Staff should have specialized USAR knowledge and experience with the complex task of coordinating multiple international USAR teams, as well as an ability to work as a member of the broader OSOCC team. Each arriving USAR team should also identify a liaison officer to work with the UCC.

As USAR teams begin arriving in the affected country, they will register at the RDC or through another point of entry mechanism. This includes indicating their capacity and capabilities according to their INSARAG classification. USAR teams are classified as Light, Medium or Heavy based on a set of INSARAG criteria.

When the UCC is activated, it is critical to begin the systematic planning and assignment of USAR teams based on available information on damage, geography and population, and where rescue efforts can have the greatest impact. A simple matrix is often used to track the availability and utilization of international USAR teams in each geographical sector of the affected area, as well as trends, i.e., where more resources may be required. This snapshot of USAR operations can be easily displayed in the OSOCC to inform overall situational awareness. See the USAR planning tool at https://vosocc.unocha.org (under Guidelines on login page).

When there is a large number of international USAR teams responding to an incident, dividing the impacted area into geographical sectors becomes essential for effective operational management. The UCC will work with incoming international teams and national authorities to allocate the most appropriate number of teams to each geographical sector. If necessary, a suitable USAR (preferably INSARAG-classified) team in each sector can be designated as the Sector Coordinator, coordinating the activities of the assigned teams and working under the direction of the UCC.

As Phase 2 of the OSOCC lifecycle begins to wind down, the activities of the UCC will turn to supporting teams in returning home and/or transitioning USAR resources to support other areas of the operation.

Detailed information on international USAR operations can be found in the INSARAG Guidelines, and in particular in Volume II Manual B – Operations or in the UCC Manual.
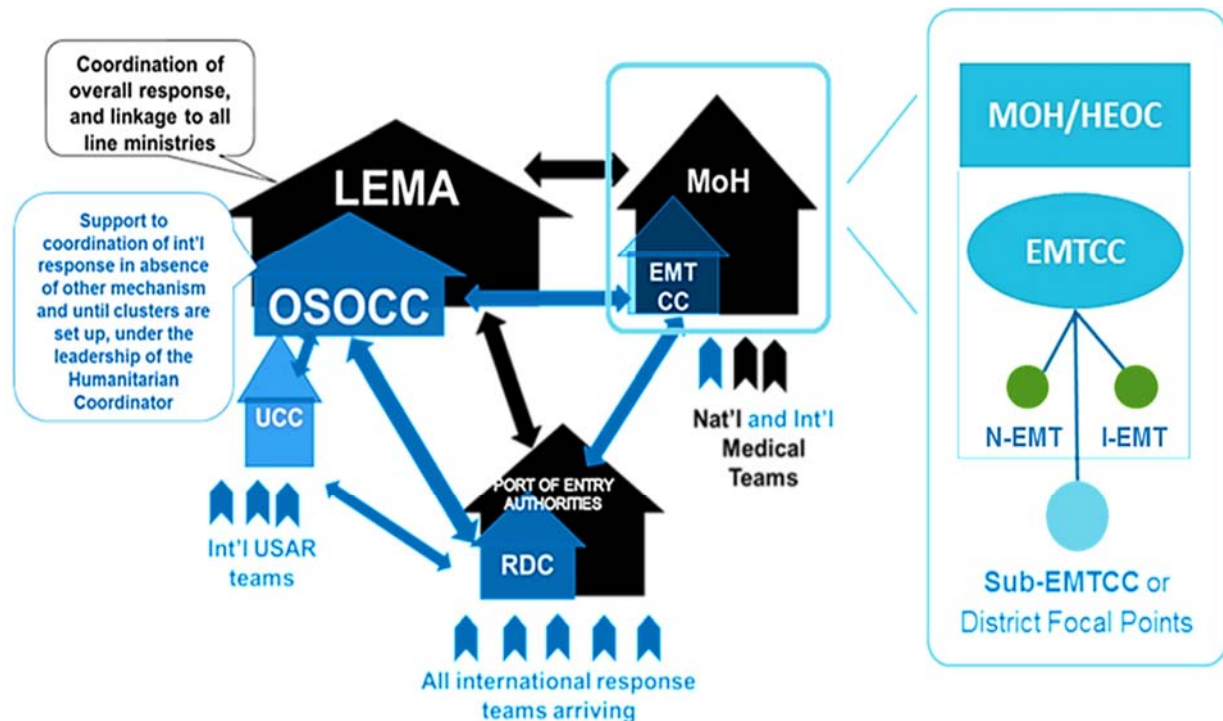
Emergency Medical Team Coordination Cell (EMTCC)
The core purpose of the EMTCC is the overall coordination of responding EMTs (both national and international) to best meet additional healthcare needs resulting from increased morbidity or from damage to existing capacity.

Ideally, the EMTCC should be entirely internal to the Ministry of Health (MoH) (or national authority equivalent) that is activated, managed, and staffed by trained and experienced MoH personnel. In many cases, the MoH may require external support and expertise to operationalize an EMTCC; however, even in these cases, the primary responsibility for coordination remains with the MoH or national authority. External support should be used to temporarily fill gaps in EMTCC functioning while working to build and transfer this coordination capacity to the MoH.

The expertise provided by the EMTCC relates to the operational and technical aspects of EMT response, the promotion and on-site verification of compliance with EMT guiding principles and minimum standards, and other national requirements to monitor quality of care provided to the affected population.

Successful EMT coordination requires clear linkages to be established with the wider coordination structure of the international humanitarian response. This includes information exchange with the OSOCC and the health cluster if activated. The visual below shows where the EMTCC sits within the humanitarian response system.

For further guidance on the EMTCC, refer to:
- Emergency Medical Teams Coordination Handbook (WHO, 2017)[3]
- Classification and Minimum Standards for Foreign Medical Teams in Sudden Onset Disasters (WHO, 2013)
- The "knowledge hub" on the Emergency Medical Teams website (https://extranet.who.int/emt/) where additional forms, templates and guidance documents can be accessed.

Logistics Coordination Cell

The Logistics Coordination Cell supports other cells in the Operations Function, e.g., the USAR and EMT Coordination Cells, while also potentially being required to support the overall humanitarian response over an extended period. In many cases, the coordination cell will serve as the early precursor to the Logistics Cluster led by the World Food Programme (WFP). Key responsibilities include working closely with national authorities to source, procure, move and store supplies (e.g., fuel and timber), moving people (e.g., relief team members within the affected country), securing access points, arranging for cargo handling and possibly customs clearances, and prioritizing incoming relief items for processing, e.g., prioritization of airplanes requesting landing.

The earliest staffing of the Logistics Coordination Cell will typically come from UNDAC, first-arriving relief teams or in-country WFP staff. These individuals will work closely with national authorities to establish an initial logistics plan/system to meet the immediate needs of the

---

[3] This publication can be obtained from the EMT Secretariat by contacting emteams@who.int.

response. At first, these needs will be very specific and urgent, e.g., getting teams where they need to go. They may also work with other partners, such as the DHL Disaster Response Team (who provide airport logistics support), arriving support module staff (see section B.3.7) or military actors (possibly through the Civil-Military Coordination Cell described below).

As the emergency evolves, so will the Logistics structure, where required. In some cases, a Logistics Response Team (LRT) will be sent by WFP to assess the situation and determine what logistics support might be needed in-country. If activated, the LRT usually initiates or takes over Logistics Cluster operations from the first-arriving responders.

Various tools and guidelines exist to support implementation of a logistics plan/system during the first phases of an emergency. A key resource is the Logistics Cluster's Logistics Operational Guide, which can be found at http://log.logcluster.org.

United Nations Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination Cell (UN-CMCoord Cell)
In humanitarian relief operations, coordination between humanitarian and military actors is essential to protect and promote humanitarian principles, avoid competition, minimize inconsistency and, when appropriate, pursue common goals. The need to coordinate is further amplified in complex and high-risk environments where a clear distinction between humanitarian and military actors is essential to maintain the civilian character of humanitarian operations. This ensures safe humanitarian access, the protection of civilians and security of humanitarian aid workers.

OCHA is responsible for establishing dialogue and facilitating interaction with military actors through the CMCoord function. Within the OSOCC, this is fulfilled through the CMCoord Cell, which establishes dialogue with military/armed actors to ensure the most effective and appropriate use of Military and Civil Defence Assets (MCDA). As with other Operations functions, this work is done in close cooperation with the affected Government and assisting militaries, where applicable.

When an UNDAC team deploys (or pre-deploys) in an emergency where military actors are present, the nominated UN-CMCoord focal point or dedicated officer in the team takes responsibility for assessing and establishing the initial interface with military actors, both national and foreign. As the international response operation scales up, the extent of the CMCoord function is influenced by the number of foreign military forces present or being deployed, and/or extensive involvement of national military forces. It is the responsibility of OCHA, in close consultation with the OSOCC, to determine the scale and structure of the CMCoord function.

Depending on the scale of the emergency, OCHA may deploy dedicated CMCoord officers to define the CMCoord strategy and coordinate humanitarian civil-military activities within the OSOCC and/or sub-OSOCCs. This will include liaison and establishing coordination mechanisms. These mechanisms are necessary to ensure appropriate interaction between humanitarian and military responders and agree a system for prioritizing the use of MCDA to support/complement humanitarian operations and/or temporarily fill humanitarian capacity gaps.

Should the number of military actors and identified needs increase significantly, a shift from the OSOCC-based approach to a dedicated Humanitarian-Military Operations Coordination Concept (HuMOCC) may be deemed necessary. This concept may be named differently depending on the emergency; however, the overarching value is a dedicated space where priority humanitarian capacity gaps are matched by available MCDA through a vetting process that reinforces cluster coordination and leadership. Civilian-to-civilian interaction will remain at the OSOCC and/or sub-OSOCC levels.

The HuMOCC is ideally led by the LEMA with support from CMCoord officers. Its main purpose is to promote information sharing for complementary analysis, coordinated planning and task division between humanitarian actors, through the clusters, and military actors. Key deliverables are to:

- optimize the use of available military assets to support humanitarian priorities and gaps;
- streamline and validate requests for military assistance at the national or sub-national level;
- produce and maintain common situational awareness;
- monitor and report on the use of military assets; and
- plan for the redeployment of foreign military assets to transition to more civilian capacity.

Further information is available on OCHA's UN-CMCoord website (including information on training courses) and in OCHA's Guidelines on the Use of Foreign Military and Civil Defence Assets in Disaster Relief and Civil-Military Guidelines and Reference for Complex Emergencies. The UNDAC Field Handbook (section N.4) also provides detailed guidance for those establishing the UN-CMCoord Cell early in an emergency.

Environmental Emergencies (EE) Coordination Cell
The potential release of hazardous materials and major secondary environmental impacts, such as landslides, may pose an acute risk to life, health and the environment. The complexities of a spill or other secondary environmental impact during a major emergency presents additional challenges related to identification and assessment of the incident, the safety of responders, access to locations and a potential shortage of specialized resources to address the situation. The purpose of the Environmental Emergencies (EE) Coordination Cell is to coordinate the response to such incidents with the national authorities to ensure an effective approach to assessing and managing them. The scope and scale of this role varies greatly depending on the capacity of the national authorities and international actors and the extent of the risk. In some cases, the entire reason for the OSOCC presence could be an environmental emergency. In many cases though, hazardous material releases are related to other causes, e.g., earthquakes, landslides and floods.

Following a disaster, the United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment)/OCHA Joint Unit can identify potential secondary risks posed by industrial facilities and major infrastructure located in the affected area to alert emergency responders to such potential risks. This information can be accessed via the VOSOCC. Initial on-site assessment can then occur by responders trained on the Flash Environmental Assessment Tool (FEAT).

Following this assessment, the Environmental Emergencies Roster (EER) can be triggered if required. EER members may then be integrated with the UNDAC team and/or can fully establish the EE Coordination Cell. The Cell will then work with available resources from the affected Government and first-arriving international response teams, e.g., USAR teams with hazardous materials response capacity, to identify and assess sites and risk levels. An initial response plan is developed and implemented through the EE Coordination Cell. Throughout this process, the cell will share information with the Situation Function and will work in direct cooperation with the Assessment and Analysis (A&A) Cell of that function.

Further information on Environmental Emergencies is located on the website of the Joint Environment Unit. For details on how to request environmental emergency assistance, please refer to the Environmental Emergencies Guidelines.

Regional Coordination Cell
In some situations where regional organizations deploy teams to coordinate assets deployed from their regional member states, it may be useful to establish a dedicated Regional Coordination Cell. Several regional organizations have trained teams, e.g., the European Union Civil Protection Mechanism (EUCP), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Emergency Response and Assessment Team (ERAT), the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), who may deploy and establish a local coordination mechanism to coordinate regional assistance, i.e., assistance from their respective member states to the affected country. Rather than setting up parallel structures, an integrated approach through a Regional Coordination Cell would be advisable.

The Regional Coordination Cell will complement the work of the other cells, offering a possibility to members of regional organizations to be fully included in the framework of the overall response, rather than establish their own coordination centre. This cell will not overlap with existing ones. It will be a service provider to the members of different organizations. It will ensure a structured information exchange from and to responders. At the same time, it aims at offering more tailored and coordinated operational services to aid providers and the recipient government and other responders. Members of regional organizations may still liaise directly with other cells within the OSOCC.

Being integrated into the OSOCC will allow regional organizations to be more proactive in operational coordination of their own interested members by offering liaison with requisite OSOCC cells or providing support with assessment, analysis, and information management, ensuring proper exchange of information in the OSOCC. This will facilitate interoperability between systems and discourage the establishment of parallel structures.

Standard Operating Procedures for interoperability between the OSOCC and regional organizations already exist within some regions and should be consulted when establishing an OSOCC. Chapter O. of the UNDAC Field Handbook offers further guidance on specific approaches per region.

B.3.6 Situation Function

The Situation Function is responsible for collecting, managing and communicating information about the emergency to provide an updated, common situational analysis. This analysis is used to directly inform decisions by responders, senior officials, donors and,

through mass media, the general public. Information is also displayed in the OSOCC for use by staff and visitors. This is achieved through the work of three cells:

- Assessment and Analysis (A&A);
- Information Management;
- Media.

Together these cells interact with numerous humanitarian actors who provide information about the situation and collaborate on communications. In many cases, these same actors become consumers of the Situation Function products, e.g., situation analyses, thematic reports, key media messages, situation reports and maps.

Those working in the Situation Function should have highly developed communication skills, attention to detail and a strong ability to analyse large quantities of information, including qualitative sociological information related to the needs of specific population groups. Immediately following a disaster, this function will often be established remotely with information being shared through the VOSOCC. This may include the collection, synthesis and analysis of secondary data to provide an updated and, ideally, common picture of the situation while international responders are mobilizing.

During the first phase, the Situation Function may be staffed by UNDAC members and partner organizations, OCHA, United Nations agencies, other rapid response mechanisms/teams, and the affected Government. Remote specialist support is generally available to assist each of the three cells, as described in the functional descriptions below. As the emergency progresses, OCHA or other specialists may be deployed as required, including information management officers, assessment experts, public information officers, etc.

Assessment and Analysis (A&A) Cell

The Assessment and Analysis Cell collects, synthesizes and analyses information that contributes to a common understanding of the situation. This includes identifying main challenges and impacts, root causes, size of the population affected and/or vulnerable groups. Socio-economic and gender analysis are critical to understanding differential impacts. This is done in close cooperation with humanitarian partners and the Information Management Cell.

The A&A Cell has the following purpose:

- To develop a shared understanding of the humanitarian situation, in particular current and forecasted humanitarian needs, priority areas, groups and sectors, and gaps.
- Support OSOCC management (and RC/HC as required) in developing an operational picture of the humanitarian situation and inform multi-sectoral strategic decision-making.
- Help coordinate ongoing assessments and facilitate joint analysis among humanitarian partners (Government, agencies, clusters, NGOs etc.).

The A&A Cell is largely dependent on remote support from staff from OCHA and/or support partners. Detailed guidance on set-up, main tasks and expected outputs can be found in Part III.

Information Management (IM) Cell
The IM Cell collects information related to the disaster (including information obtained by the A&A Cell), organizes and analyses the information, and develops a variety of products, e.g., situation reports, Who is doing What and Where (3W) data, maps, contact lists, schedules, databases, etc., which are then disseminated directly to organizations and/or made available through online platforms and channels when connectivity allows. It also oversees the flow of information into and between the various OSOCC components, as well as externally. These activities ensure a common operating picture that informs response decisions at all levels of the disaster.

During the initial hours and days of an emergency, the IM Cell is typically staffed by UNDAC members and representatives of partner organizations such as MapAction. A primary task is to issue situation reports, jointly developed with the A&A Cell, to inform the scale of the emergency and response levels. Given the importance of this task, it is often necessary to assign a dedicated report writer within the IM Cell in close cooperation with OCHA. If required, OCHA will deploy additional IM staff through its surge mechanisms.

As mentioned in B.3.4 Management Function, a separate OSOCC Reception Area may be needed in large-scale emergencies where OSOCC services are in high demand. Many of the IM products, e.g., maps, will be highly sought after and the IM Cell should consider having some staff co-located with the Reception Area to allow the IM Cell to become an information hub for the exchange of data with OSOCC clients. This also enables the IM Cell to promote sharing of datasets on the Humanitarian Data Exchange (HDX) which is an open platform for sharing data, advocate for registration on contact lists through Humanitarian ID, and inform visitors about other tools and resources.

More information on Information Management is contained in the Operational Guidance on Responsibilities of Cluster/Sector Leads & OCHA in Information Management and in Chapter H of the UNDAC Field Handbook.

Media Cell
During establishment of the OSOCC, the Media Cell should sit under the Management Function since the OSOCC Manager will often fulfil media responsibilities until an OCHA Public Information Officer (PIO) arrives on-site. Following his/her arrival, the PIO forms the Media Cell and works closely with all OSOCC functions, but particularly the Situation Function.

The Media Cell coordinates all external media relations, monitors the media, including for situational awareness, and prepares information products for the media and the public. The Cell develops a media plan for the OSOCC that indicates the main spokesperson (potentially the OSOCC Manager) and the role of the other team members with respect to media relations. The Media Cell also serves as the OSOCC focal point for both local and international media and supports site visits of donors and VIPs.

The work of the Media Cell enables the OSOCC to clarify/reinforce response activities being supported by the OSOCC, contributing to international awareness and advocacy for relief for the affected population.

B.3.7 Support Function

The Support Function ensures the ability of the OSOCC to operate under adverse and challenging field conditions. This includes establishing appropriate facilities, an information and communications technology (ICT) platform and applicable OSOCC administrative and internal logistics processes. These duties are often performed and/or led by one or more deployed support teams from the International Humanitarian Partnership (IHP), the Americas Support Team (AST), or similar. The support teams may be supplemented by additional resources, such as partner organizations, as required, e.g., Télécoms Sans Frontières for ICT support. While the Support Function is not generally broken into cells, the scale of an emergency may occasionally require a division of labour, as follows:

Facilities Cell
This cell ensures that the OSOCC and its component parts are established in adequate workspaces to enable current and future operations. As noted above, this is generally achieved through deployment of standardized service packages provided by the IHP or AST. Further guidance on OSOCC facilities is contained in section B.5.

Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Cell
The ICT Cell produces an ICT plan for the OSOCC in support of the overall response. The ICT plan ensures the availability of appropriate technology to enable the OSOCC to conduct its activities effectively. This includes facilitation of data and voice communications to link the various OSOCC system components with each other and the broader response, including deployed teams, the affected Government and humanitarian actors. As with the Facilities Cell, the equipment to support the ICT plan is deployed in standardized packages by partner organizations at the same time as other OSOCC staff.

Administration Cell
The Administration Cell is responsible for internal procedures and processes to support the day-to-day running of the OSOCC. This includes maintaining financial records in support of the OSOCC Manager, purchasing and contracting, staffing reception areas, developing a staffing roster, arranging translation/interpretation support, organizing physical files and resources in support of the IM Cell, and other support duties as determined by the OSOCC Manager.

In emergencies with a need for extensive administrative skills and knowledge of UN procedures, OCHA has trained several of its administrative staff on OSOCC functioning and can deploy them as part of an UNDAC team to staff the Administration Cell.

B.4 Reception Departure Centre (RDC)

A large-scale disaster generally results in a sudden influx of assistance from the international community to the affected country. Response teams and relief supplies will converge in the country at one or more points of entry, seeking access to the disaster area.

Depending on the geography of the affected country and the infrastructure damage, the point of entry may be an airport, seaport and/or land border. All incoming international resources will need to navigate key processes, such as immigration and customs, upon entry to the affected country, regardless of the type of entry point. Even in the best situations, the local authorities may be quickly overwhelmed by the sudden increase in volume of traffic, and at worst the airport, seaport or border-crossing facility may not be left standing to receive the international assistance. Additional resources are likely required to provide the necessary surge capacity and to facilitate timely and organized entry.

The RDC serves as the central intake hub for international relief traffic and is often the first OSOCC component established in the affected country. As such, it is usually set up by the first-arriving USAR, EMT or UNDAC team members. In some cases, national authorities may already have established an RDC in anticipation of incoming international relief teams (see section A.3.4), in which case incoming USAR teams, EMTs and UNDAC work in support of them.

The main objectives of an RDC are the following:

- Support authorities at the point of entry (airport, seaport, etc.) in managing arrival of international teams.
- Record and help coordinate the response of international teams and link them up with the coordination structure.
- Brief arriving teams on the situation and practical information that they need to know for immediate onward deployment to the affected areas, e.g., logistics, etc.

In the early hours and days, the RDC must be prepared to facilitate the basic services of an OSOCC including delivering situational and operational briefings, providing basic logistical support, facilitating the operational activities of response teams and tracking resources. The extent to which these services are conducted will shift as the OSOCC becomes established and/or the affected country gains the means to facilitate incoming/outgoing international resources.

As the first contact point for incoming international assistance, the RDC needs to be established in a systematic manner that imparts a level of organization in the chaotic environment of the disaster. To achieve this, the RDC requires a clear structure that mimics the functional approach of the OSOCC.

B.4.1 RDC Structure and Functions

The RDC is structured in three functions aligned to its key responsibilities, Management, Operations and Support. In line with the principles of flexibility and scalability, the RDC structure can be expanded or contracted to meet the demands of the situation and to align with the available staffing complement at any given time.

RDC Management
RDC Management is responsible for overseeing the RDC operation and providing leadership to assigned personnel. Along with ensuring that RDC operations run as effectively as possible, RDC Management is responsible for liaison with local authorities,

particularly those operating the point of entry, and for ensuring regular communication with the OSOCC. Management is the first function to be staffed when establishing an RDC and thus will usually be a member of an UNDAC, USAR or Emergency Medical Team.
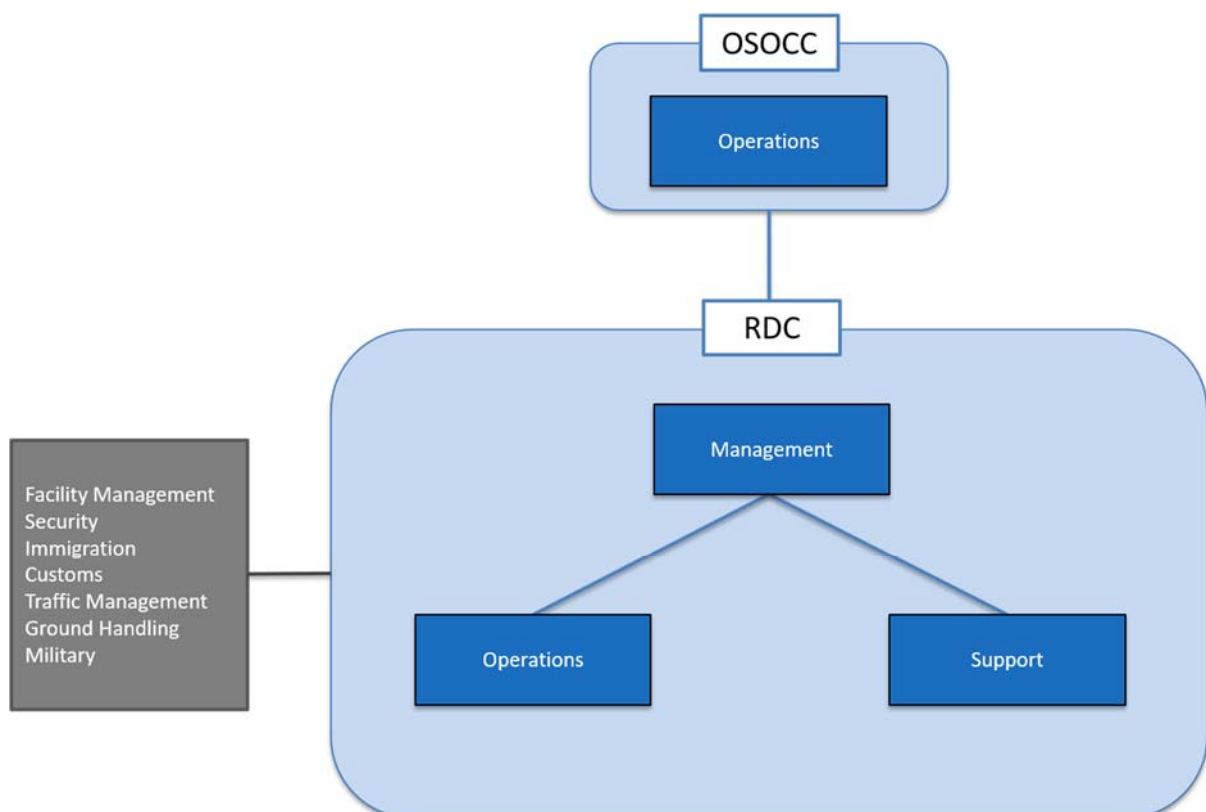
RDC Operations
RDC Operations is responsible for supporting the in-processing and out-processing of international response teams/relief supplies at the point(s) of entry (see section B.4.3). This can include immigration and customs procedures, registration and briefings. If the OSOCC is not yet established, RDC Operations may also assign incoming response teams to areas of operation in collaboration with team leaders, e.g., USAR, EMT, and the affected Government.

RDC Support
RDC Support is responsible for establishing and sustaining the systems that support the RDC, including sourcing and setting up materials for processing stations and ensuring available and functioning ICT including internet connectivity. Support is also responsible for the management of RDC information including maintaining files and establishing an information board. In conjunction with the Logistics Coordination Cell and/or the Logistics Cluster, RDC Support may arrange for the transportation of incoming relief teams to the OSOCC or to assigned areas of operations.

The RDC reports to the OSOCC through the Operations Function as illustrated below:

While all operational decisions should be made through RDC Management and OSOCC Operations, communication lines may be established with other OSOCC functions to

facilitate RDC activities. An ongoing information flow will allow the OSOCC to prepare for incoming resources, thus expediting the assignment of teams to the field.

B.4.2 RDC Coordination

The RDC often serves as the first coordination stop for international response teams and a well-functioning centre is a valuable asset. The OSOCC will require information about the capacity of incoming response teams and any identified logistical needs in order to plan and carry out operational activities. In turn, the RDC will need up-to-date information from the OSOCC on the situation and the realities of the operational environment in order to brief incoming teams effectively.

A priority for the RDC is to establish a system for information flow, including identified communication channels and processes between the RDC and OSOCC. While the specific set-up and routine for coordination will be dictated by the needs and pace of the crisis, common practices include:

- An established time for a morning briefing/coordination discussion between the RDC and the OSOCC.
- An established time for the provision of updated registration information.
- An agreed-upon protocol for daily communication, e.g., by email as frequently as possible, by phone if urgent.
- Regular updating of the VOSOCC.
- A procedure for organizing the departure of the various rescue teams and their travel arrangements.

In addition to daily coordination and information-sharing activities with the OSOCC, the RDC may also participate in similar activities at the point of entry. For example, daily meetings may occur with the point of entry authorities, local representatives and/or the military. The RDC is intended to support the affected country in managing incoming international response teams and the specific support model will be determined through discussions with the authorities responsible for the point of entry. In addition, the RDC may rely on other response or government organizations for elements such as electricity, water or a place to sleep. Refer to the UNDAC Field Handbook for information related to coordination methodology (Chapter L) and civil-military coordination tips (Chapter N).

The approach to an RDC needs to reflect it as an extension of the OSOCC coordination platform under the same principles as the OSOCC (see section A.3.3). Promoting cooperation with and amongst the organizations represented at the point of entry is crucial to the RDC being able to effectively facilitate the reception and departure of international resources.

B.4.3 Reception Activities

Setting up an RDC to receive incoming international response teams is often one of the first actions of the UNDAC or USAR teams upon arrival in a disaster-affected country. In situations that will see an influx of USAR teams and EMTs who will engage in life-saving

activities, it is important to establish a basic reception area as quickly as possible. Primary actions to consider include:

- Establishing liaison with the local authorities responsible for the point of entry;
- Establishing a visible presence at the point of entry facility;
- Establishing communication with the VOSOCC and OSOCC;
- Tracking incoming resources including capacity and contact information;
- Facilitating transportation of response teams to the field.

Speed is of the essence in incidents with significant damage to infrastructure and high numbers of casualties. Even before the OSOCC is set up, the RDC can move USAR teams and EMTs into the field quickly, enabling them to conduct life-saving operations. In these circumstances, coordinating the movement of teams from the point of arrival to the field can be done through RDC personnel or by setting up a coordination cell (UCC or EMTCC, see section B.3.5) with available experts in those functions. When the OSOCC is prepared, this responsibility will transfer to Operations and the RDC will facilitate the movement of teams to the OSOCC for assignment.

When establishing an RDC, strong linkages with key components operating the point of entry are vital. There are several entities which, if active, i.e., not impacted by the disaster, will be involved in handling incoming relief teams and resources:

- Facility and operational management;
- Security;
- Immigration;
- Customs;
- Traffic management, e.g., air, ground, harbour;
- Ground handling facilities;
- Military representatives (if the point of entry is a military-civilian complex).

All entities involved must be informed of the roles and responsibilities of the RDC to ensure cooperation.

The RDC is there to support the local authorities with the handling of incoming relief traffic and needs to work in conjunction with existing systems. In many situations, the various airport entities operate under different parts of a country's legislation and may operate independently of each other. While the specific division of responsibilities will be determined by the emergency and capacity of the local authorities, separate briefings and agreements may be necessary to establish methodical processing of incoming relief teams.

Initial reception
As teams begin arriving at the port of entry, it is beneficial to have RDC staff available to greet them as close to the point of arrival as possible. This immediate greeting helps to establish a connection with the teams and impart a sense of structure to the arrival process. Arriving teams should be given a brief overview of the reception process and specific guidance on the next steps. Depending on the type of response team and the set-up of the

RDC, this may include direction to a holding area for cargo, a safe area for canines, a decontamination station, e.g., boot wash, and/or proceeding to immigration.

Immigration

Immigration in the disaster-affected country is concerned with the arrival of staff who are not residents. Immigration authorities will be ensuring that responders are carrying appropriate documentation that permits them to enter the country, e.g., passport, visa, letter from deploying organization. Responders who work in specialized and regulated fields, e.g., medical staff, should also carry appropriate documentation to support their qualifications.

RDC staff should become familiar with the basic immigration practices of the local authorities as quickly as possible. While the country immigration authorities will lead this process, RDC staff will work in collaboration with them to facilitate the efficient clearance of arriving international response teams.

Customs

Customs is responsible for controlling the movement of goods (including equipment, vehicles and animals) into the country. During a disaster, this can implicate everything from communications, medical and rescue equipment to vehicles and supplies for humanitarian aid.

As for the immigration process, RDC staff should work to support the local point of entry staff in facilitating the customs clearance of arriving teams. The specific customs regulations of the affected country will need to be followed and RDC staff should aim to quickly learn the basics of the requirements, especially those relating to ICT equipment, canines and medicine which may have specific and more stringent regulations.

All containers being brought into the affected country should be labelled with the type of equipment/supplies, contents, weight and value. Certain goods and animals may need specific paperwork accompanying them to ensure that the items are permitted entry. For example, canines will need to travel with record of vaccinations and veterinary checks.

When cargo is being off-loaded from a plane or ship, it will likely need to be moved to a holding area prior to being transported onward to the disaster site. As more teams and supplies arrive, the logistics demands at the point of entry will become greater as responders try to move their materials to the affected area. RDC staff may be required to support the local authorities, military, Logistics Coordination Cell and/or the Logistics Cluster to ease the congestion.

Registration (recording)

Coordination of response activities relies on knowing who is active on the ground and how to contact them. All incoming international response teams should register prior to deployment using the established protocols through the VOSOCC and be confirmed upon arrival at the RDC. USAR teams will register using the USAR Team Fact Sheet that includes information regarding the INSARAG classification of the team, canine units, capabilities and support needs.

A similar form also exists for EMTs. Note that for medical teams, the term 'registration' includes a legal connotation whereby the team is allowed to provide health services, and medical staff granted temporary licence to practice, in the host country. The term "recording" is, therefore, preferred for EMTs arriving at the RDC. In addition to team registration/recording, individuals will also be asked to register on an in-country contact management platform, e.g., Humanitarian ID.

International response teams who did not register prior to arrival will need to do so at the RDC. Registration information can be collected using a simple table and should include the following:

- Name of the team;
- Type of assistance provided, sector/cluster;
- Number of people in the team;
- Contact person for the team;
- Contact phone number and email;
- Capacity;
- Material resource needs;
- Arrival date;
- Estimated departure date.

Registration information gathered at the RDC should be uploaded to the VOSOCC and shared with the OSOCC as frequently as possible. This information will serve as input to the OSOCC contact directory and to the Who is doing What and Where (3W) database. The details regarding the number, type and capacity of incoming teams is also necessary for the Operations Function to facilitate operational planning activities. If the information sharing is effective between the RDC and the OSOCC, incoming teams can quickly be deployed to the field in a coordinated manner.

Briefing

Arriving international teams should be given an initial briefing on the current situation, including practical information related to the response. The briefing should begin with an overview of the current situation. While teams will likely have some awareness of what has happened, they may not have the same level of detail as is available on the ground and/or additional information may have become available while they were in transit. Where possible, the situation overview should be supported by visual aids, e.g., maps.

Incoming teams should also be briefed on the response activities and elements currently in place at the emergency site(s). This could include the locations of key facilities, e.g., OSOCC, LEMA/Government operations centre, USAR Base of Operations (BoO), as well as the coordination structure in place and/or clusters active on the ground.

This initial on-site briefing should also include information related to safety and security. A standard briefing checklist for USAR teams can be found in the INSARAG Guidelines and can be used/adapted for all incoming teams.

Logistics and transport
Once teams have navigated the arrival process at the point of entry, they will be ready to move to the affected area. In the initial days of the disaster, this will likely mean transport to the OSOCC or UCC and BoO. RDC Support staff will need to work closely with the Logistics Coordination Cell, the Logistics Cluster, national authorities, local personnel and/or the military to facilitate the movement of people and of equipment/supplies. This may include negotiating for available transportation, keeping teams informed of the transportation process and/or ensuring the operational needs of the waiting teams are met.

If possible, the RDC should notify the OSOCC when teams are en route. This will allow the OSOCC to better prepare for their arrival and enable teams to begin their response activities as soon as possible.

B.4.4 Departure Activities

Discussions with the Government of the affected country and/or the LEMA will determine the appropriate time to begin to wrap up particular response activities, generally starting with the life-saving operations during Phase 1. When the first teams have completed their mission and begin demobilization, the RDC shifts its focus to the departure of teams from the affected country.

In many regards, the departure activities are a reverse of the arrival process, and include:

- Identification of support needed for departing teams, either through use of a specific form, e.g., USAR Team Demobilization Form, or other format;
- Coordination and/or arrangement of travel schedules;
- Collection of reports, e.g., USAR Mission Summary Report;
- Checking out the departing team.

Generally, response operations will be much more established by the time the first teams are preparing for departure, and aspects such as establishing relationships and acquiring resources will already be in place.

Personnel working in the RDC may be simultaneously receiving incoming teams and out-processing departing teams. Each of these processes should be established separately; however, opportunities exist to maximize the shared use of limited resources. For example, the registration desk may double as the check-out desk.

Transportation
As response teams and individuals near the end of their mission, they will begin to prepare to head home. Some teams will have arranged their transportation out of the country and will simply notify the OSOCC as to their plans. Others will work through the OSOCC to communicate their departure needs and preferences to the RDC so that arrangements can be made at the point of exit. Response teams should inform the OSOCC as to their preferred departure dates and provide their equipment and passenger manifests.

RDC staff will need to work closely with the OSOCC and the departing teams to coordinate transportation to the point of exit, and with the local authorities and others regarding

transportation out of the country. Given the likelihood of large amounts of incoming and outgoing traffic, RDC staff and departing teams will need to remain flexible. Provisions should be made in the event that teams are required to wait at the point of exit for an extended period of time. This could include food, water, telecommunications and a place to store equipment.

Check Out

Just as teams and individuals were registered upon arrival, they will also need to check out upon departure. Check out information can be tracked using the same mechanisms as registration and should include the departure date and any notes related to departure that could affect future response operations, e.g., if not all members of a team have left. This information should be uploaded to the VOSOCC and in-country contact management platform, as well as shared with the OSOCC in a timely manner as it is important for operational planning purposes. Check-out can also be conducted through Humanitarian ID.

RDC staff will continue to work with and support the activities of the local authorities at the point of exit as teams depart. This can include assisting with the handling of cargo and canines, ensuring teams are ready for departure and collecting reports, e.g., USAR Mission Summary Reports as per the INSARAG Guidelines. The extent to which RDC staff are involved in departure activities will depend on the ability of the local authorities to manage the flow of international response traffic.

B.4.5 Transition and Demobilization

The RDC is intended as a tool for use during the initial phases (1 and 2) of a disaster and is established at the request of the Government of the affected country. This is usually when assistance is needed to coordinate incoming international relief at one or more points of entry. In keeping with the principle of scalability, this assistance can be tailored to each emergency and to fulfil the need identified by the Government. As the Government establishes or re-establishes mechanisms to facilitate the arrival/departure of international aid, the functions of the RDC may transition to the local authorities and the RDC itself be demobilized. Alternatively, the RDC may simply be demobilized at a point when the influx of international assistance ceases.

In situations where the functions of the RDC (e.g., receiving of international assistance) will be transitioned, the RDC team will need to work closely with the local authorities to ensure ongoing operations during the changeover. Each component of the reception process may transition at a different time, depending on the capacity of the local authorities. Where possible, the transition planning should begin as early as possible and be done in consultation with the Operations Function.

As in all operations, demobilization should be considered from the onset. Whether the RDC transitions to local authorities or the operation is such that the RDC is no longer necessary, wrap-up activities will need to occur. Equipment and personnel may be reassigned to the OSOCC or another RDC, as appropriate, or may return to their home country. Further information on demobilizing the RDC can be found below in section B.5.4.

B.5 Establishing, Maintaining and Demobilizing OSOCC Facilities

OSOCC-trained USAR, EMT and/or UNDAC members will establish preliminary OSOCC services, particularly those associated with the work of international USAR teams and EMTs. If an RDC is required, this should be the first priority as the next arriving response teams are likely close behind. As soon as feasible, a suitable location for the OSOCC should be sought.

B.5.1 Selecting Facility Locations

The location of the OSOCC facilities (OSOCC, RDC and sub-OSOCCs) plays an important role in the coordination process. The establishment of the facilities is a priority, but each location should be carefully planned. The location must be readily visible and accessible to all who would benefit from its services and should have sufficient space to meet both the immediate needs and any projected expansion of the operation. The most suitable location for each facility is not necessarily in the midst of the disaster-affected area and consideration should be given to where coordination activities can be best facilitated.

RDC Site
The site for the RDC will need to be in close proximity to the point of entry and may be located near entry authorities or the LEMA. The RDC may be established in an existing facility or may be a separate temporary shelter, e.g., tent, close by. The facility itself will need to be adequate to set up office space with considerations such as power, space for displaying information, logical flow of incoming traffic, etc. Internet connectivity is paramount for RDC operations. Inside airport terminal buildings, establishing separate web-connection may be challenging due to lack of free line of sight to satellites or security measures in place (restricted areas). RDC staff should seek to gain access to the airport's own network or similar. In addition to the RDC facility, other parts of the site may need to be marked out, such as a cargo holding area. The RDC site should be well marked with arrows/signage to assist incoming and outgoing response teams to navigate the area and the RDC flag should be placed in a position that is highly visible for those entering the country.

OSOCC Site
The location of the OSOCC should ideally be in close proximity to the disaster site, the LEMA and other agencies/organizations providing humanitarian assistance. This will facilitate cooperation and information exchange. The site should maximize the effective use of communications equipment, e.g., be on higher ground and not surrounded by hills or other natural obstructions. It should also slope and drain effectively. Consideration should be given to a location that allows proper security measures including ease of access and evacuation and an easily guarded perimeter.

Depending on the type of emergency and if it is safe to do so, the OSOCC may be established in an existing building that meets the needs of the operation. Alternatively, it can be set up in one or more tents. There are advantages to each set-up and the type of disaster and available resources will often determine which model is most suitable. Regardless of the type of structure, the OSOCC facility should include several separate office spaces, a large meeting space, a general area for receiving visitors and allow for sufficient crowd management as more organizations work with or within the OSOCC. Once established, the

OSOCC flag should be placed in a location that ensures high visibility. A sample OSOCC layout can be found in Part III.

In large-scale emergencies, it is important to think big from the start as the OSOCC may need to provide operating space and services for a large number of people as OCHA surge capacity and other international organizations start to deploy.

The same considerations outlined above apply to the sub-OSOCC(s).

B.5.2 Establishing Facilities

A series of deployable service packages to support the OSOCC system are available through IHP and AST. These packages range from basic ICT and administration for use in an existing building to full tent-based OSOCC and base camp service packages. When deployed in a disaster, these service packages will be accompanied by support staff to establish and maintain facilities (see section B.3.7).

When establishing the OSOCC, consideration will need to be given to the varying space requirements of the different operational cells due to equipment or other needs.

It is important to note that some coordination cells may need to be forward-located, especially those within the Operations Function that are engaged in life-saving activities such as USAR and EMT. The latter will in most cases be co-located with the affected country's MoH.

B.5.3 Maintaining Facilities

The Support Function (see section B.3.7) is responsible for ensuring that the OSOCC facilities are maintained on a daily basis. For the continued operation of the OSOCC, the following will need to be maintained:

- Adequate internet connectivity;
- Access to a regular power supply (for example, through the use of generators or an existing power source);
- Adequate lighting to enable round-the-clock operations as necessary;
- Access to food supplies and maintenance of food preparation areas;
- Access to water for consumption, sanitation, cooking, etc.;
- Physical structures, i.e., tents and/or buildings, and the sites on which the facilities are established.

This can be a challenge in a disaster environment in which resources may be scarce, regular supply chains may be interrupted and field conditions may be harsh. In addition to these challenges, the OSOCC facilities need to retain a degree of flexibility. The facilities may need to be adjusted to accommodate changes in the size of staffing, the scope of operations and/or the flow of visitors/staff from other responding organizations.

B.5.4 Facility Demobilization

Planning for the demobilization of the OSOCC facilities should begin at the onset of operations and will become more concrete as the end of OSOCC operations comes into sight.

In general, the RDC will demobilize first, although sub-OSOCCs may demobilize before the RDC if their primary purpose was the coordination of international relief teams. The OSOCC itself may remain in one form or another well beyond the presence of international teams, including UNDAC.

Overall demobilization plans for OSOCC facilities are led by the Support Function in cooperation with international teams, partners and local authorities. They should consider whether any of the equipment is needed to remain in-country to continue to support the work of OCHA. All other modules will need to be packed up and returned to their home organization. In addition, efforts should be made to return the space and/or buildings to a usable state prior to departure.

In conjunction with physical demobilization, the OSOCC Manager should ensure reporting to relevant authorities to provide a summary of lessons learned to inform future OSOCC missions, guidelines and training.

PART III: OPERATIONAL TOOLS

C.1 Position Checklists

Specific responsibilities for the lead of each function or cell are described in position checklists:

- Assessment & Analysis Cell
- UN-CMCoord Cell Coordinator
- Environmental Emergencies Cell Coordinator
- EMT Coordination Cell Coordinator
- Information Management Cell Coordinator
- Liaison Officer

- Logistics Cell Coordinator
- Media Officer
- OSOCC Manager
- Safety and Security Officer
- USAR CC Coordinator
- RDC Manager
- RDC Operations Coordinator
- RDC Support Coordinator

Position checklists can be downloaded from the VOSOCC login page under Guidelines (https://vosocc.unocha.org).

C.2 Operational Resources

A set of resources to support OSOCC operations is also available on the VOSOCC as above (https://vosocc.unocha.org):

- OSOCC Set Up
- OSOCC Site Selection
- USAR Planning Tool

- Operational Cycle
- Organizational Chart

These tools will be maintained by FCSS and updated regularly based on the collective experience gained through OSOCC operations, training and exercises.

The INSARAG Guidelines and the UC manual contain a number of additional tools for OSOCC operations.

The INSARAG tools can be downloaded from http://www.insarag.org/methodology/ucc.

C.3 OSOCC Visualizations

Signage and information display is an important aspect of a well-functioning OSOCC. A set of commonly used visualization tools for use in the OSOCC/RDC can be downloaded from the VOSOCC (http://vosocc.unocha.org).

C.4 List of Acronyms

A&A	Assessment and Analysis
ASEAN	Association of South-East Asian Nations
AST	Americas Support Team
BoO	Base of Operations
CDEMA	Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency
DO	United Nations Designated Official (for safety and security)
EE	Environmental Emergencies
EER	Environmental Emergencies Roster
EMT/EMTCC	Emergency Medical Team/Coordination Cell
ERC	Emergency Relief Coordinator
ERCC	Emergency Relief Coordination Centre (OCHA Geneva)
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation (UN)
FEAT	Flash Environmental Assessment Tool
GDACS	Global Disaster Alert and Coordination System
HC	Humanitarian Coordinator
HCT	Humanitarian Country Team
HPC	Humanitarian Programme Cycle
HuMOCC	Humanitarian-Military Operations Coordination Concept
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross & Red Crescent Societies
IHP	International Humanitarian Partnership
IM	Information Management
IOM	International Organisation for Migration (UN)
INSARAG	International Search and Rescue Advisory Group
LEMA	Local Emergency Management Authority
LRT	Logistics Response Team
MCDA	Military and Civil Defence Assets
MoH	Ministry of Health
NDMO	National Disaster Management Organization
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OSOCC	On-Site Operations Coordination Centre
PIO	Public Information Officer
PoA	Plan of Action
RC	Resident Coordinator
RC/HC	Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator
RDC	Reception Departure Centre
SRA	Security Risk Assessment
UCC	Urban Search and Rescue Coordination Cell
UN-CMCoord	United Nations Civil-Military Coordination
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDAC	United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDSS	United Nations Department of Safety and Security
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

USAR	Urban Search and Rescue
USG	Under-Secretary-General
VOSOCC	Virtual On-Site Operations Coordination Centre
WFP	World Food Programme (UN)
WHO	World Health Organisation (UN)