

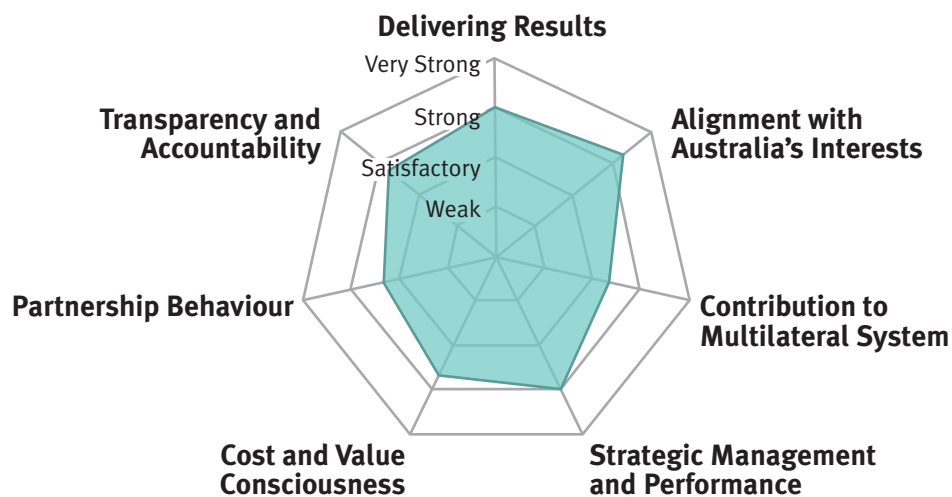


Australian Multilateral Assessment March 2012

# United Nations Office for the Coordination Of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA)



## OVERVIEW OF ORGANISATION RATINGS



## ORGANISATION OVERVIEW

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) is responsible for the coordination of humanitarian response in natural disasters and complex emergencies, information management, humanitarian policy development, humanitarian financing and advocacy. Its mission is to mobilise and coordinate effective and principled humanitarian action in partnership with national and international actors in order to: alleviate human suffering in disasters and emergencies; advocate for the rights of people in need; promote preparedness and prevention; and facilitate sustainable solutions.

Preparedness for emergency response is embedded in UNOCHA's mandate. UNOCHA helps the international humanitarian system prepare for and respond in situations where humanitarian needs exceed a government's capacity to respond. It finances its

activities through two main channels: the United Nations (UN) regular budget approved by the General Assembly (in 2011 this will comprise five per cent of UNOCHA's annual requirements); and voluntary contributions administered through trust funds.

In 2010, more than US\$11 billion in humanitarian programming was coordinated under UNOCHA auspices. Delivery against UNOCHA's 2011 annual plan was budgeted at US\$250 million.

The Australian Government has pledged \$26 million in core funding to UNOCHA through a four-year partnership framework agreement (2009–12) which outlines shared objectives. Australia provided \$30.0 million to UNOCHA in 2010–11, comprising \$9.0 million in voluntary core contributions and \$21.0 million in non-core funding.

UNOCHA manages funds provided to the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) which is a pool of standby funding to support humanitarian action that enables the fast delivery of humanitarian assistance to people affected by natural disasters and other crises. Australia announced a commitment of \$60 million over four years (2010–13) to the CERF.

## RESULTS AND RELEVANCE

**1. Delivering results on poverty and sustainable development in line with mandate**

**STRONG**

UNOCHA has a strong mandate for humanitarian coordination. Feedback from stakeholders during the Australian Multilateral Assessment field visit to Indonesia and from Australian overseas missions suggests UNOCHA is generally effective in fulfilling its mandate, often in difficult circumstances and with limited resources.

Given UNOCHA's coordination mandate, assessing and reporting on the impact and results from its work is more difficult than for many organisations. The annual report includes a range of reporting on results, but these focus primarily on inputs and processes, rather than the impact of UNOCHA's work. The indicators and targets used to report on progress against UNOCHA's objectives also relate mainly to inputs and processes.

As part of a range of reform initiated in the UNOCHA in 2012 and 2013 plan and budget, UNOCHA launched standardised two-year performance frameworks for regional and country offices.

The performance frameworks are designed to help communicate results through commonly agreed indicators. This includes measures to better assess the impact of UNOCHA's work in areas such as preparedness. The frameworks will also help improve the alignment between budgets and results.

UNOCHA works in some of the world's least developed countries and in places where the poorest are seeking emergency support and assistance. It has been effective in focusing on the poorest and most vulnerable people in humanitarian and emergency situations.

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| <b>a) Demonstrates development or humanitarian results consistent with mandate</b> | <b>STRONG</b> |
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UNOCHA has a unique mandate, providing coordination and advocacy in the humanitarian system and promoting greater effectiveness of humanitarian efforts.

In 2010, UNOCHA coordinated responses to around 250 natural disasters. Humanitarian emergencies were spread across 32 countries affecting 71 million people. The Haiti earthquake in January required the largest humanitarian response since the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami.

At global-level, it remains difficult for UNOCHA to demonstrate results, as it is reliant on partners for delivery against performance indicators. Reporting usually relates to the inputs of its work, such as how quickly staff were mobilised, rather than its impact. As UNOCHA's latest annual report includes no institutional-level aggregation of its results or impact it makes it difficult to accurately assess UNOCHA's overall effectiveness in delivering results.

Achievements for 2010 as reported in the annual report were mixed. Some emergency responses were affected by weak context analysis and uncoordinated needs assessments, pointing to the need to enhance country-level capacity and expertise and improve data analysis and information dissemination. Feedback from stakeholders during the Australian Multilateral Assessment field visit to Indonesia and from Australian overseas missions suggests UNOCHA is generally effective in fulfilling its mandate, often in difficult circumstances and with limited resources. Australian overseas missions did identify some concerns about UNOCHA's emergency coordination role in Pakistan and Burma.

UNOCHA has used its leadership role in promoting issues such as responses to the situation of internally displaced persons, the protection of civilians and developing more coordinated and coherent approaches to working with military and other uniformed agencies in emergency and disaster situations.

While UNOCHA's role as inter-cluster coordinator has had a positive effect, and in many countries the cluster approach has been embedded and accepted, UNOCHA's own assessments and independent reviews have identified the need to better define UNOCHA's role in the cluster system and for it to establish clearer linkages among members and to the national authorities. In some operations the cluster has not performed effectively reducing the success of emergency efforts. Haiti and Pakistan are examples of weak performance, though UNOCHA has used these experiences to quickly review its own performance and has begun to address the shortcomings identified in those situations. It should be noted that UNOCHA is not responsible for the cluster system and does not have a formal leadership role. Its role is to provide support to the humanitarian coordinator and the humanitarian country team.

UNOCHA has developed a number of systems and platforms, which provide current and reliable information on emergencies and disasters. ReliefWeb was launched in 1996 and now supports an extensive coverage of all current (and archival material on past) disasters and emergencies. Financial tracking service provides information on financial contributions, appeals and reporting on all emergency and disaster events. UNOCHA's integrated regional information networks has increased analytical coverage of policy

issues and global trends affecting humanitarian risk. UNOCHA's webpage OCHAOnline contains information on UNOCHA's activities and humanitarian situations worldwide.

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| <b>b) Plays critical role in improving aid effectiveness through results monitoring</b> | <b>SATISFACTORY</b> |
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UNOCHA had recognised weaknesses in its capacity to monitor and report on results. In response it initiated a rigorous approach to developing and implementing its strategic framework 2010–13. Planning and monitoring have been enhanced through the creation of cross-UNOCHA management task teams for each of the 11 strategic objectives. Led by senior managers, the teams undertook a comprehensive mid-year review of UNOCHA's performance framework, leading to more focused strategies and a more realistic performance framework for 2011–13. The aim is to draw on experience in implementing the objectives and feed this back into annual planning and further policy development.

The current *OCHA Strategic Framework 2010–2013* incorporates a forward-looking rationale pointing to the need for a more integrated and coordinated approach to developing country plans and partnerships. Each of the three strategic goals contain a number of objectives (11 in total) and for each of these there is a statement of rationale and a list of the expected results for 2013. UNOCHA has used a combination of both quantitative and qualitative indicators and it reports on these up to corporate-level. Reporting on the targets and indicators for each output under the objective is descriptive and it is therefore not easy to gauge overall performance. UNOCHA has developed an evaluation policy which now forms an integral component of its approach to learning and quality assessment. It prepares an action plan as part of the management response and follow-up to evaluations and these are used at the mid-year point and at year-end in the work-planning process.

UNOCHA uses external evaluations and audits to provide feedback on specific programs and improved its performance on the rate of implementation of evaluation recommendations from 37 per cent in 2009 to 78 per cent in 2010. It has introduced a requirement for all managers to report on implementation of audit recommendations.

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| <b>c) Where relevant, targets the poorest people and in areas where progress against the MDGs is lagging</b> | <b>VERY STRONG</b> |
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UNOCHA operates in countries where trends have led, or may lead to, rapidly increasing acute vulnerability requiring levels of humanitarian assistance beyond the capacity of the government to coordinate, and where the government has requested UN support. UNOCHA therefore works in some of the world's least developed countries and in places where the poorest are seeking emergency support and assistance.

UNOCHA has been effective in ensuring a focus on the poorest and most vulnerable people in humanitarian and emergency situations. Humanitarian support is a major source of support for poverty reduction in poor, fragile and conflict-affected countries where progress against the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is lagging. It helps communities reduce vulnerability to crisis and prevent them falling deeper into poverty.

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| <b>2. Alignment with Australia’s aid priorities and national interests</b> | <b>STRONG</b> |
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UNOCHA’s work aligns closely with the Australian aid program’s strategic goals of saving lives and humanitarian and disaster response.

UNOCHA is a strong and important partner for Australia in support to humanitarian and disaster risk management goals, including in the Asia-Pacific region.

UNOCHA has been responsive to issues raised by Australia in senior level talks under the partnership framework agreement signed with Australia in 2009.

UNOCHA is not an operational agency, and so crosscutting issues are less relevant than for some organisations. Nevertheless, a strong gender framework and guidelines are in place and UNOCHA collaborates with partners to mainstream gender equality in humanitarian efforts. It has been innovative in developing new gender monitoring tools and mechanisms to strengthen gender-sensitive approaches in humanitarian situations and it provides training and support to cluster partners.

UNOCHA has not developed guidelines and tools to support its partners in the areas of the environment and disability in the way it has in relation to gender issues. But it has effectively collaborated with relevant UN partners on the impact of environment and climate change in emergency and disaster situations.

UNOCHA has extensive experience in working in complex and fragile situations, where it has effectively undertaken its responsibility for coordinating international humanitarian responses. In addition to its own strategies it provides innovative strategies and practices for humanitarian partners and contributes to the way humanitarian organisations do business in these difficult environments.

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| <b>a) Allocates resources and delivers results in support of, and responsive to, Australia’s development objectives</b> | <b>STRONG</b> |
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UNOCHA is an important partner for Australia in the Asia-Pacific region, but also further afield in places like Africa and the Middle East where Australia’s presence is less marked.

In the Asia-Pacific, UNOCHA contributes to addressing humanitarian emergencies and coordinating responses to national or regional crises. Through its regional office in Thailand, country offices and the sub-regional office in Fiji, UNOCHA has coordinated responses to a number of major disasters in the region (for example, the Pakistan floods, the Asian tsunami, a volcanic eruption in Indonesia, and numerous cyclones). In particular, UNOCHA has strengthened cooperation and helped establish strategic links between the small island states in the Pacific, a region regularly subjected to cyclones and earthquakes. UNOCHA has collaborated with Australian defence forces in disaster simulation exercises in the Pacific and works with the International Federation of the Red Cross and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community to strengthen regional disaster risk management.

UNOCHA is moving in the right direction in investing in preparedness and contingency planning and in focusing on engagement with national authorities on disaster

management. However, feedback from Australian overseas missions suggests UNOCHA will need to invest more in strengthening its capacity to respond and to adjust its operations to reflect the different national approaches and needs across the region.

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| <b>b) Effectively targets development concerns and promotes issues consistent with Australian priorities</b> | <b>VERY STRONG</b> |
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UNOCHA’s work aligns closely with the Australian aid program’s strategic goals of saving lives and humanitarian and disaster response.

UNOCHA has been responsive to issues raised by Australia in senior level talks under the partnership framework agreement 2009–12 between AusAID and UNOCHA. The agreement outlines the shared objectives of assisting countries to reduce poverty and achieve sustainable development. Under the agreement, Australia is providing a total of \$26 million in core funding over the four-year life of the agreement.

The *OCHA strategic framework 2010–13* targets three issues that closely align with Australia’s aid priorities: providing a more rapid and effective response to humanitarian need through improved coordination and a needs-based approach; promoting strategic dialogue and advocacy on humanitarian issues and UN reform; and managing the cluster approach to humanitarian coordination.

UNOCHA’s support for countries and bodies in the region to develop coherent regional and national approaches to disaster risk management also aligns closely with Australia’s priorities. UNOCHA’s objective is to strengthen program activities in target countries and achieve better integration of disaster risk reduction strategies into UN and national planning.

UNOCHA’s management role of the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) also aligns closely with Australia’s objective of more predictable funding for humanitarian action. The fund is a pool of standby funding to that enables the fast delivery of humanitarian assistance to people affected by natural disasters and other crises. Australia provides significant support through the CERF—a commitment of \$60 million over four years (2010–13).

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| <b>c) Focuses on crosscutting issues, particularly gender, environment and people with disabilities</b> | <b>STRONG</b> |
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UNOCHA has a strong focus on gender and in promoting gender equality and has developed specific tools and methodologies to monitor and mainstream gender issues. It has targeted gender based violence and introduced policies and guidance to ensure gender sensitive approaches are adopted.

OCHA’s policy on gender equity and OCHA tool kit: gender equality were developed in 2005 and since then UNOCHA has made improvements in its approach to gender equity issues. The 2010 strategic plan stipulates that recommendations from the internal evaluation on gender equity be built into work plans. Inter-agency guidelines have improved the understanding of the differential impact of disasters on males and females and these have been better integrated into the humanitarian response. The gender capacity standby project (GenCap) provides practical support to humanitarian



coordinators and country teams on issues related to gender inequality and protection from sexual abuse and exploitation. Australia provides funding for GenCap and values its role. The Inter-agency Standing Committee gender gender standby facility is a valuable resource and provides effective support to the UN clusters.

In 2010, UNOCHA incorporated sex-disaggregated data collection into its policy guidance framework. Following the review, all field offices and headquarters branches are required to develop and submit a report on a gender action plan.

A number of concrete deliverables have been included in the 2011 country office work plans, including ensuring its field based tools include sex and age disaggregated data, and increasing the proportion of projects that strengthen gender equality. UNOCHA has an institutional commitment to address gender-based violence in conflict through its protection priorities and is focussing on practical measures to address the issues, such as strengthening coordination in the cluster, training field-based protection sexual exploitation abuse officers, and protection support for humanitarian coordinators.

A new tool, the gender marker, will integrate practical measures into proposals and appeals. The gender marker ‘grades’ whether a humanitarian project will ensure women/girls and men/boys benefit equally. In 2010, the gender marker was rolled out in 12 countries. An evaluation of the implementation of the gender marker in 2011 indicates that it was very successful. However, UNOCHA acknowledges further work is needed to improve consistency. From 2012, the gender marker will be used in all consolidated appeals processes and other humanitarian appeals.

UNOCHA does not have a climate change or environmental strategy but has commenced work on elaborating an action plan to identify activities to meet the immediate emerging challenges of climate change. UNOCHA works in the Advisory Group on Environmental Emergencies (AGEE). UNOCHA has also been active in deliberations on developing an international framework for environmental emergencies, response, recovery and preparedness. A study on the links between climate change, urbanisation and environmental emergencies was conducted jointly with UNEP during 2011. The study on preparedness and contingency planning for environmental emergencies is underway and will report to UNOCHA and UNEP in late 2011.

UNOCHA has not developed guidelines and tools to support its partners in the area of disability in the way it has in relation to gender issues. The integration of the needs of people with disability into humanitarian programming and needs assessments continues to require improvement. UNOCHA could do more to support this issue.

**d) Performs effectively in fragile states**

**STRONG**

UNOCHA has extensive experience in working in complex and fragile situations. Its mandate extends to fragile states where it has responsibility for the coordination of international humanitarian responses, such as in Sudan, Haiti, Somalia, the Democratic Republic of Congo and the occupied Pakistan territory.

UNOCHA published the report *To Stay and Deliver—Good Practice for Humanitarians in Complex Security Environments* in 2011. It provides innovative strategies and practices for

humanitarian partners and aims to contribute to the way humanitarian organisations do business in these difficult environments.

UNOCHA has a section focusing on protection of civilians. It provides advice to all UN staff on how to respond to specific issues affecting civilians in times of armed conflict. It is part of the steering committee for the protection standby capacity project, an inter-agency project that seeks to enhance the UN protection response and contribute to global and field-based protection capacity through the predictable and effective deployment of personnel with proven, broad protection expertise. Australia values the role of the project in supporting protection capacity building in humanitarian emergencies and advocating on behalf of vulnerable populations.

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| <b>3. Contribution to the wider multilateral development system</b> | <b>SATISFACTORY</b> |
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UNOCHA's main role is to coordinate humanitarian actors in response to emergency situations. This is a difficult task and UNOCHA must rely on other agencies to play their roles effectively, particularly in the cluster approach. Overall it has a good track record and a broad range of agencies depend on UNOCHA performing well. Its work makes a critical difference to the success of international emergency responses.

UNOCHA plays a leading role in the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), the key forum for coordination, policy development and decision making between UN humanitarian and non-UN humanitarian actors. Its Emergency Relief Coordinator is the Chair and UNOCHA provides the Secretariat function. UNOCHA is currently leading the IASC reform agenda which is expected to lead to improved results in responding to humanitarian crises. UNOCHA also co-chairs several of the IASC Subsidiary Bodies.

UNOCHA also provides effective leadership on issues such as responding to the needs of internally displaced persons and the protection of civilians.

UNOCHA has carefully examined criticism of its performance during recent emergencies and strengthened the capacity of its response teams.

UNOCHA provides strong analytical inputs into international debates in support of improved humanitarian practices. Its policies and guidance are widely used. An example of this is its ReliefWeb that provides relevant and extensive online information to support country-level relief work. Weaknesses in information management and dissemination are being addressed through improvements to its Humanitarian Dashboard and other data collection and reporting systems.

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| <b>a) Plays a critical role at global or national-level in coordinating development or humanitarian efforts</b> | <b>STRONG</b> |
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UNOCHA's main role is to coordinate humanitarian actors in response to emergency situations. This is a difficult task and UNOCHA must rely on other agencies to play their roles effectively, particularly in the cluster approach. Overall it has a good track record and a broad range of agencies depend on UNOCHA doing this well. It also provides effective leadership on issues such as responding to the needs of internally displaced persons and the protection of civilians.



Feedback from Australian overseas missions in the Pacific, however, indicates that UNOCHA has a limited presence and this affects its capacity to deliver timely or effective support.

The *OCHA Strategic Framework 2010–2013* includes the commitment by UNOCHA to work with partners to examine humanitarian challenges and threats and to ensure UNOCHA remains responsive to a changing world. UNOCHA provides leadership on issues such as response on internally displaced persons, protection of civilians, the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and coordinating appeals for the cluster approach. It has used its unique convening and coordinating role within the humanitarian system to promote the necessary changes in the international humanitarian system.

UNOCHA has commenced work to improve its approach and structures and to strengthen its leadership role. For example, the evaluation of the Haiti response identified the need for UNOCHA to facilitate discussion on relations with military forces in natural disaster situations and UNOCHA will review the guidelines by the end of 2011.

UNOCHA prepares and coordinates appeals including consolidated appeals, consolidated humanitarian appeals and flash appeals.

While clusters have contributed to a more coordinated humanitarian response, cluster performance continues to be patchy; inter-cluster coordination weak; and their effectiveness in large-scale disasters questionable. While acknowledging UNOCHA is not solely responsible for the success of cluster performance, UNOCHA must continue to develop with partners an accountability framework for cluster performance. UNOCHA has carefully examined criticism of its performance during recent emergencies and strengthened the capacity of its response teams. It needs to look further at how clusters can better include national and local actors, increase financing, and better align the functioning of the clusters to the approaches and needs of the affected government.

The emergency relief coordinator chairs the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC). The current coordinator, Valerie Amos, convenes the IASC Principals meetings and sets the agenda in consultation with IASC organisations. UNOCHA is currently leading the IASC reform agenda which is expected to lead to improved results in responding to humanitarian crises. The director of UNOCHA's Geneva office chairs the IASC Working Group. UNOCHA also co-chairs several of the IASC subsidiary bodies. The IASC Secretariat, hosted by UNOCHA in Geneva and New York, facilitates inter-agency consultations, and services the IASC principals and working group. It also monitors the work of the IASC subsidiary bodies and the implementation of the IASC's decisions. In 2010 UNOCHA monitored the implementation of guidelines at the country-level to promote humanitarian country teams. This resulted in more inclusive coordination mechanisms in all countries using this model. UNOCHA country offices reported progress on humanitarian country teams performance, including more coherent policy direction to the clusters. UNOCHA has indicated this is an area for ongoing monitoring, as humanitarian country team performance remains inconsistent.

**b) Plays a leading role in developing norms and standards or in providing large-scale finance or specialist expertise**

**SATISFACTORY**

UNOCHA plays a leading role in advocacy to support partners to give voice to vulnerable and voiceless people. In both functions UNOCHA is an effective and proactive player, providing strong and analytical inputs into international debates and in support of improvements in humanitarian practice.

A key objective in the strategic framework is to influence and shape the policy agenda and to highlight upcoming challenges within the international humanitarian system. UNOCHA has a role to provide policy advice and promote advocacy to improve the system. It is at the forefront of identifying trends and facilitating agreement on collective policy and advocacy issues.

The addition of gender specialists and protection advisers to support the clusters and humanitarian coordinators has improved the approach to incorporating gender and protection issues in preparedness and response programs.

UNOCHA has been successful in coordinating common humanitarian action plans and consolidated and flash appeals with a combined value in 2010 of US\$11 billion. More member states are providing financing to the Central Emergency Related Fund and country-based pooled funds.

The February 2010 independent review *Humanitarian Coordination in the Asia-Pacific Region* (Paul Harvey et al), and the January 2011 *Evaluation of UNOCHA Response to the Haiti Earthquake* (Abhijit Bhattacharjee & Roberta Lossio) both identified shortcomings in UNOCHA performance on needs assessment. In the management response to the Haiti evaluation UNOCHA confirmed that work has been undertaken at the global level to address the need for a more systematic, and standardised approach to building an evidence base for emergency action. The Inter-agency Standing Committee developed guidance and tools to support rapid assessments, and a more effective monitoring system through the humanitarian dashboard project is in development.

**c) Fills a policy or knowledge gap or develops innovative approaches**

**SATISFACTORY**

UNOCHA provides strong analytical inputs into international debates in support of improved humanitarian practices. Weaknesses in information management and dissemination are being addressed through improvements to its humanitarian dashboard and other data collection and reporting systems.

An example of UNOCHA providing effective support to national governments in disaster preparedness and management is UNOCHA's participation in the development of Indonesia's disaster management law and regulations. Through participation in the consultation process and organising a lesson learning workshop UNOCHA was instrumental in assisting the Government to prepare a consolidated and consultative approach to managing future disasters.

One of UNOCHA's objectives is to develop a more predictable and scalable suite of services and tools to support partners in response preparedness, humanitarian response

and transition. The revisions will deliver a more rigorous and standardised approach to supporting inter-cluster coordination, facilitate high-level situation assessments and better analysis to support advocacy and strategic decision making.

Following the review of its emergency services, tools and mechanisms in 2010, UNOCHA has done significant work on refining country information and data to support monitoring relief efforts. This includes developing a new humanitarian database and new stand-by arrangements for rapid response and surge, developing its global focus model as a recognised tool for ensuring countries have a strong contingency plan, and developing the ReliefWeb and other platforms to support country work.

However, there is evidence from evaluations and other field sources that though some of UNOCHA’s tools may be useful in delivering overview information they are not all as effective or useful, and some may be costly to develop and manage. For example, the evaluation of OCHA response to the Haiti earthquake highlights that the 3W (Who does What Where) did not deliver. It did capture the names of some of the organisations, but never moved beyond it to influence concrete planning. The same report also noted the failure of the ‘One Response’ tool with clusters and partners concluding that the tool was not user-friendly and the site complicated. UNOCHA needs to make its existing tools more user-friendly for field personnel, and improve accessibility on the website.

| <b>ORGANISATIONAL BEHAVIOUR</b>                |               |
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| <b>4. Strategic management and performance</b> | <b>STRONG</b> |

UNOCHA has put significant effort in recent years into improving its strategic framework and has invested a high degree of energy in ensuring improvement processes were highly consultative.

The current bi-annual plan is comprehensive and clear, incorporating a strong logical structure.

UNOCHA’s business planning process builds on its strategic framework. It does not have a formal governing board, but instead is governed by UN Secretariat financial rules and procedures. This poses significant challenges to its operations. Its mandate is determined by General Assembly and the UN’s Economic and Social Council resolutions.

The General Assembly has some oversight of UNOCHA’s performance, particularly with their response to briefings, evaluations and revisions of resolutions.

The OCHA Donor Support Group brings together the donors that provide an annual minimum of US\$500 000 in core funding to UNOCHA (including Australia). UNOCHA regularly seeks and follows advice from the support group, although the group operates with an informal ‘advisory’ structure and has no mandate to direct UNOCHA management on internal issues.

UNOCHA has a strong evaluation culture. Its evaluation policy aligns with its strategic framework enabling UNOCHA to systematically evaluate the impact of its work.

Leadership has been strong and effective in guiding reforms to respond to UNOCHA’s weaknesses, as identified by evaluations over the past few years.

UNOCHA has introduced innovative measures to ensure it can mobilise staff quickly when required through its strong surge mechanisms and establishment of the roster system. UNOCHA is also undertaking efforts in four key priority areas: staff development; ensuring gender balance among staff; managing mobility; development of tools and rapid deployment capacity.

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| <b>a) Has clear mandate, strategy and plans effectively implemented</b> | <b>VERY STRONG</b> |
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From 2009, UNOCHA began investing in significantly revising its strategic framework. Management task teams were established to drive implementation of the strategic framework and bring headquarters, regional and country staff together around each strategic objective. In July 2010, a mid-year review of the strategic plan led to further adjustments and prioritisation.

The *OCHA Strategic Framework 2010–2013* is very focused and has helped UNOCHA to become a more systematic, professional and transparent organisation that provides consistent, high quality services to partners and clients. It translates UNOCHA’s mandate into a set of performance statements which cover the broad sweep of the organisation’s reach, coordinating role and operational effectiveness. Each goal in the strategy is delineated into a set of objective statements, each of which has a manageable set of key outputs and indicators.

The annual plan *OCHA in 2011: Annual Plan and Budget* provides additional information on future work necessary to meet strategic goals. It contains targets and indicators, and reporting is made in terms of progress in delivering against these targets. The decision to biannualise the work plan and budget starting with the new *OCHA in 2012–13: Plan and Budget* should allow for more flexible resource mobilisation and better alignment with the UN biennium program.

UNOCHA’s internal evaluation policy incorporates a four-year implementation strategy to assess performance and impact. This is aligned with the strategic framework enabling UNOCHA to systematically evaluate the impact of its work.

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| <b>b) Governing body is effective in guiding management</b> | <b>SATISFACTORY</b> |
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As part of the UN Secretariat, UNOCHA does not have a formal governing board, but instead is governed by UN Secretariat financial rules and procedures. Its mandate is determined by the General Assembly and the UN’s Economic and Social Council resolutions. UNOCHA has a donor support group which brings together its biggest humanitarian donors (including the UK, Australia and the European Union). Even though the group has an informal ‘advisory’ structure and has no mandate to direct UNOCHA management on internal issues, UNOCHA regularly seeks and follows advice from the group.

Being part of the wider UN Secretariat does pose significant challenges for UNOCHA. For example, human resources, logistics and financial procedures are often not conducive to emergency situations and this can lead to problems with timely deployment. UNOCHA has introduced innovative measures to ensure it can mobilise staff quickly when required through its strong surge mechanisms and establishment of the roster system.

UNOCHA is also undertaking efforts in four key priority areas: staff development; ensuring gender balance among staff; managing mobility; development of tools and rapid deployment capacity.

The Fifth Committee of the United Nations General Assembly governs UNOCHA's financial and human resources procedures and policies.

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| <b>c) Has a sound framework for monitoring and evaluation, and acts promptly to realign or amend programs not delivering results</b> | <b>STRONG</b> |
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The *OCHA Strategic Framework 2010–2013* operates on a four-year cycle with yearly planning on work and cost plans conducted within the framework. This is translated into annual plans that are subject to mid-year review and an end of cycle review that looks back on performance over the previous year. These monitoring and reporting exercises should foster a culture of accountability and improved performance.

UNOCHA has developed a four-pillar approach to learning: evaluation, internal policy guidance development, staff development and training and strategic planning. Management has committed to spend one per cent of its budget annually on evaluation of UNOCHA work.

Through its biennial report on evaluations UNOCHA reviews lessons and draws on specific and common evaluation findings to inform revisions to operations or to management tools and procedures. The biennial report draws on inter-agency evaluation findings as well as specific UNOCHA managed studies and provides a comprehensive coverage of performance across operational areas.

At a systemic level UNOCHA uses findings from meta-evaluations in the revisions of the strategic plan and uses evaluation lessons to prepare guidance on critical topics and to identify priority areas for organisational development and learning.

The UNOCHA donor support group provides feedback on strategic priorities, initiatives and evaluations and reviews. It is a significant source of external and informed advice and feedback.

UNOCHA is developing a more systematic approach to performance monitoring, with the aim of standardising internal information management and how information is used for decision making. These strategies, in addition to staff training in the new performance framework should support more systematic and robust monitoring and reporting practices.

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| <b>d) Leadership is effective and human resources are well managed</b> | <b>STRONG</b> |
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As a UN Secretariat entity, UNOCHA is bound by the UN Secretariat's administrative instructions, rules and procedures. All staff have a work plan and complete an annual and mid-year performance appraisal. All vacancies are advertised through the UN's staffing system and staffing decisions are made against the publicly advertised criteria



and are vetted and approved by central review bodies to ensure full compliance with procedures.

One of the first priorities of then Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, John Holmes, was to initiate a wide-ranging ‘bottom-up’ exercise of consultations to revise the strategic framework. The new framework has clear and consistent expectations regarding the achievement of results by managers, their teams and individual staff members. UNOCHA actively consulted staff in this process.

The current Emergency Relief Coordinator, Valerie Amos, built on lessons from Haiti and Pakistan and identified the major weaknesses in the humanitarian response system. She has been working actively through the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) to address these issues.

The 2010 Dalberg management report recommended a number of organisational, structural and system changes to improve management efficiency and strengthen operational effectiveness. These included:

- > functionally separate Geneva and New York administrative offices to increase autonomy and strengthen ownership
- > develop reporting links between administrative staff in the field and those in head office
- > delineate roles and responsibilities between executive and administrative staff
- > establish a performance management process and communicate it to stakeholders, and
- > invest in information and communications technology (ICT) systems, infrastructure and tools to improve coordination across administrative functions and to support better integration across the organisation.

These recommendations continue to be implemented in accordance with the management response matrix. Donors are updated on progress through the donor support group.

There is strong leadership in the corporate response division with the new director travelling regularly to review field operations and making changes at headquarters to provide more support for UNOCHA teams and humanitarian coordinators in the field. It can mobilise staff more quickly when required.

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| <b>5. Cost and value consciousness</b> | <b>STRONG</b> |
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Since 2009, UNOCHA management have taken steps to bring budgetary growth in line with projected donor income by imposing rigorous budgeting and introducing ongoing budget oversight controls. Budget reductions, aligned with UNOCHA’s strategic framework, were made in 2010 to adjust expenditures to projected income. The office adjusts the budget in responding to new emergencies arising during the course of a year, frequently offset by reductions to other budget lines. All changes to the budget are immediately communicated to the donor community.

UNOCHA deploys staff for the coordination of humanitarian action and does not directly provide goods and services. However, within its limited capacity to influence costs,



UNOCHA consults with the donor support group on ways to reduce its cost structure and further improve field-level costs.

UNOCHA's central role in coordinating humanitarian affairs and the cluster system helps ensure a more effective use of funds through minimising duplication on the ground.

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| <b>a) Governing body and management regularly scrutinise costs and assess value for money</b> | <b>STRONG</b> |
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Since 2009, steps have been taken to bring budgetary growth in line with projected donor income by imposing rigorous budgeting and introducing ongoing budget oversight controls. Budget reductions, aligned with UNOCHA's strategic framework, were made in 2010 to adjust expenditures to projected income. Furthermore, all of UNOCHA's costs are on-budget. The office issues budget adjustments to reflect carefully-calibrated costs in responding to new emergencies arising during the course of a year. These limited increases are frequently partially offset by reductions to other budget lines at mid-year. All changes to the budget are immediately communicated to the donor community. The 2011 financial plan achieved a net reduction of US\$7.8 million against the mid-year budget as a result of closer alignment of the financial requirements to the strategic framework and the level of anticipated voluntary contributions. Some streamlining of functions and rationalising the work program translated into an US\$18.5 million reduction in extra-budgetary requirements compared to the 2010 budget.

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| <b>b) Rates of return and cost effectiveness are important factors in decision making</b> | <b>SATISFACTORY</b> |
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UNOCHA deploys staff for humanitarian action and does not directly provide goods and services. However, within its limited capacity to influence costs, UNOCHA consults on cost cutting with its donor support group and pursues ways to reduce its cost structure and further improve field-level costs.

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| <b>c) Challenges and supports partners to think about value for money</b> | <b>STRONG</b> |
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UNOCHA challenges partners to justify and prioritise their planning and resource requirements, in particular through consolidated appeal, UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), and flash appeals. This helps to reduce duplication on the ground.

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| <b>6. Partnership behaviour</b> | <b>SATISFACTORY</b> |
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UNOCHA works effectively in the cluster with its UN partners and through the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and Inter-Agency Standing Committee.

UNOCHA is taking action in response to identified needs to improve its performance. This includes: strengthening its leadership in humanitarian responses; strengthening coordination among clusters; and disseminating information on a more timely basis.

As a coordinating agency, UNOCHA works with partners to harmonise operations with partner government priorities and systems.

National participation of civil society and other stakeholders has been patchy and concerns have been raised that UNOCHA does not engage well with local non-government organisations in the early stages of an emergency. UNOCHA is taking steps to improve relationships with civil society organisations and local stakeholders.

**a) Works effectively in partnership with others**

**STRONG**

UNOCHA works closely with many actors in the humanitarian arena such as affected governments, UN agencies and other humanitarian actors, donors, individuals, and regional organisations. It has increasingly gained the trust of other UN agencies and collaborates well in cross-agency deliberations.

UNOCHA is taking action to improve its engagement with partners. This includes: strengthening its leadership in humanitarian responses; strengthening coordination among clusters, and disseminating information on a more timely basis.

While UNOCHA works effectively with its UN and non-UN partners and through the consolidated appeal process and coordination of the humanitarian programming cycle, as well as the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, it has identified the need to establish better structured and credible relations with actors outside of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) system, including national civil society actors and others working in humanitarian situations.

UNOCHA has consolidated its relationships with peace, security and peacebuilding actors within the United Nations. It focuses on mission integration, which is designed to streamline United Nations peace-support processes and ensure that the objectives of all United Nations forces and agencies focus on a common goal. It works to ensure that the perception of humanitarian assistance is maintained as neutral, impartial and independent. In the Asia-Pacific region it is also giving more attention to working with national military actors who often have the mandate to be the first responders in humanitarian emergencies. UNOCHA will need to build a more effective engagement with non-civilian forces and develop agreed guidelines and standards.

Public-private partnerships are developing; UNOCHA strengthened existing in-kind partnerships and renewed others. New partnerships are being explored, particularly in information management. These included discussions with the information systems for crisis response and management group to provide UNOCHA with training opportunities and research into new collaborative tools.

**b) Places value on alignment with partner countries' priorities and systems**

**SATISFACTORY**

As a coordinating agency UNOCHA does not deliver support through country mechanisms, but does work with partners to harmonise operations and work in concert with national actors. UNOCHA participates in the good humanitarian donorship initiative and the annual Montreux retreat on policy issues. Its central role in coordinating humanitarian affairs and the cluster system helps to minimise duplication on the ground.

Its management of pooled funds helps ensure a more effective use of funds and reduces duplication.

UNOCHA needs to tailor its role to take greater account of national capabilities. For example in the smaller, vulnerable countries, such as the Pacific Island states, capacity is very limited. Conversely many governments in Asia are increasingly able to play a larger role in preparedness and managing responses. UNOCHA needs to show greater flexibility in adapting to these very different contexts. UNOCHA has, however, submitted a proposal to Australia on how to move forward on these issues.

There have been some general criticisms of UNOCHA concerning delays in staff deployment, weak field leadership, poor cluster coordination and inadequate assessment capacity. These will need to be specifically addressed in the Asia-Pacific region through greater investment in contingency planning and preparedness and in establishing stronger dialogue with national partners on disaster management. Again, UNOCHA is aware of these issues and is working with Australia to address them.

UNOCHA's work through the inter-agency standing committee is trying to strengthen the gap between humanitarian and development assistance has been valuable.

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| <b>c) Provides voice for partners and other stakeholders in decision making</b> | <b>SATISFACTORY</b> |
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UNOCHA has an advocacy role (clearly articulated in its strategic framework) and aims to 'give a voice to the voiceless', so that acute vulnerabilities are reduced and needs are met. UNOCHA has been leading efforts on developing guidance through the inter-agency standing committee on accountability to beneficiaries.

UNOCHA emphasises the role of NGOs and communities in emergencies. UNOCHA plans to support country studies to collect evidence of NGO impact as first responders and to consider how their efforts can be integrated and strengthened.

UNOCHA has helped to bring more stakeholders, including NGOs, into the decision making process on humanitarian and emergency response. However, the February 2010 independent review *Humanitarian Coordination in the Asia-Pacific Region* (Paul Harvey et al) found that in many instances local NGOs were overlooked in the humanitarian coordination process and local expertise was not sufficiently incorporated in the response. In particular, briefings and meetings were not conducted in the local language which effectively excluded many local stakeholders. UNOCHA has agreed that in some emergency response situations it has weak capacity and expertise is not available to adequately engage with communities. The January 2011 *Evaluation of OCHA Response to the Haiti Earthquake* (Abhijit Bhattacharjee & Roberta Lossio) identified some negative side effects which could have been avoided with greater inclusion of affected populations and local actors in the planning of the response. This is an area that will require more effort and resources in order to build UNOCHA's response mechanism to adequately engage with local stakeholders, particularly in the early part of the surge response. UNOCHA is aware of these concerns and has since commissioned a report on crowd sourcing in disasters.

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| <b>7. Transparency and accountability</b> | <b>STRONG</b> |
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UNOCHA practices an open and transparent approach to information. Through a number of extensive databases and websites, reliable and updated information is available on all UNOCHA operations.

These databases and websites are effective channels for providing information on and enabling advocacy for humanitarian action. UNOCHA does not have a formal disclosure policy and is not a member of the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI), although an internal discussion paper has been prepared on engaging with IATI.

The basis for allocating resources is clearly articulated in UNOCHA's strategic plan.

UNOCHA has sound financial management systems in place and its handling of risk issues has been strengthened following a 2010 review of all work plans. UNOCHA identified and is addressing key risks. UNOCHA's financial and budgetary management systems are improving but are still vulnerable. Funds tracking and monitoring systems have been upgraded and UNOCHA is now able to track expenditure across all field offices and against each fund or budget category.

UNOCHA is leading work on improving system-wide accountability in humanitarian situations through the Inter-Agency Standing Committee on coordinating humanitarian assistance.

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| <b>a) Routinely publishes comprehensive operational information, subject to justifiable confidentiality</b> | <b>STRONG</b> |
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UNOCHA does not have a formal disclosure policy and is not a member of the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI), although an internal discussion paper has been prepared on engaging with IATI. It does practice an open and transparent approach to information. It contributes to greater transparency in global humanitarian aid flows through its financial tracking system.

UNOCHA publishes all policy and operational documents on its website including its annual plans, reviews and appeals. UNOCHA manages ReliefWeb which provides documents relating to all current emergency responses, including situation reports, evaluations, maps and appeals produced by United Nations agencies, NGOs, donors and others. ReliefWeb also contains a link to UNOCHA's financial tracking system.

UNOCHA has also developed the UNOCHA 3W website which provides information on who is doing what in which places. It is potentially an important and valuable addition to UNOCHA's role in coordination and advocacy among humanitarian players, although in practice it has not always worked well.

UNOCHA has created a number of websites and links to other relevant sites and through these is seeking greater engagement with social actors and community groups. It has a corporate website and in 2010 launched a Facebook page to mark World Humanitarian Day. It has established its own channel on YouTube and has a Twitter account. It works with country and regional offices to establish local UNOCHA sites and plans to use social

media to strengthen the voice of the Emergency Relief Coordinator to influence the public agenda and build social networks for action.

**b) Is transparent in resource allocation, budget management and operational planning**

**STRONG**

It is not possible to allocate resources in advance for rapid onset emergencies, but the basis for allocating resources for other programs is articulated in UNOCHA's strategic and annual plans. For example, the 2011 strategic plan states that UNOCHA will begin rolling out packages of preparedness support tailored to the needs of disaster-prone countries. It provides details of research, cluster strengthening, surge capacity improvements, and a range of specific work that will be undertaken over the year. Budget allocations, including targets for specific appeals, are set out in *OCHA in 2012–13 Plan and Budget*.

In 2010, UNOCHA brought its budget in line with projected income through strategic and measured budget cuts. UNOCHA has used the lessons of past years to introduce stronger alignment of the budget with the strategic priorities and projected donor income. For 2011 and 2012, UNOCHA has identified strategic investment areas to improve field effectiveness and strengthen its cash reserves. UNOCHA has also improved budget monitoring processes and is now able to provide managers with standardised costs for field costs.

**c) Adheres to high standards of financial management, audit, risk management and fraud prevention**

**STRONG**

UNOCHA has sound financial management systems in place and its handling of risk issues has been strengthened following a 2010 review of all work plans. UNOCHA identified and is addressing key risks.

UNOCHA's financial and budgetary management systems are improving but are still vulnerable. Funds tracking and monitoring systems have been upgraded and UNOCHA is now able to track expenditure across all field offices and against each fund or budget category. The financial tracking service database is an efficient and comprehensive tool that UNOCHA uses to record donor contributions.

**d) Promotes transparency and accountability in partners and recipients**

**SATISFACTORY**

UNOCHA is leading work on improving system-wide accountability and accountability to affected populations through the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC).

The cluster approach was developed in 2005 in an attempt to improve the accountability and predictability of humanitarian responses. Cluster leads are responsible for coordinating humanitarian assistance within and between clusters to ensure appropriate coverage and humanitarian assistance in line with international standards. UNOCHA facilitates the cluster coordination system for the Humanitarian Coordinator, including meetings, data and information management, and reporting. Cluster leads are also accountable, at the global level, to the emergency relief coordinator for building up a more predictable and effective response capacity in line with inter-agency standing committee agreements.

UNOCHA has developed an accountability framework outlined in the strategic plan.

In the recently completed five-year evaluation of the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) it is noted that improved information systems and the performance accountability framework have made the CERF more accountable, but that issues remain such as weak reporting in some cases and an over-dependence on United Nations agency monitoring processes. The CERF Secretariat has developed a management response plan to strengthen accountability.