Office for the Coordination
of Humanitarian Affairs

ON-SITE OPERATIONS COORDINATION CENTRE

OSOCC Guidelines

United Nations

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2026

OCHA United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

Contents

INTRODUCTION

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The On-Site Operations Coordination Centre (OSOCC) is a rapid response concept 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 utilised by other organisations when responding to emergencies, including Governments, international and regional response organisations. It is a concept that can be internalised entirely by national emergency management structures that 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), organisations or response teams who may be establishing and managing an OSOCC, e.g., United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) teams, organisations or teams who may work within an OSOCC, e.g., regional inter-government organisations with response mechanisms, 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, 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 and templates for practical use during OSOCC operations. These will be maintained electronically to allow for periodic changes as they are improved with experience.

The Guidelines have been developed by OCHA, 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 organisations, 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.

PART I: CONTEXT AND FRAMEWORK

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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 USAR operations. The United Nations General Assembly Resolution 57/150 of 16 December 2002 "Strengthening the Effectiveness and Coordination of International Urban Search and Rescue Assistance" endorsed the INSARAG Guidelines and stressed the importance of member states following the INSARAG Guidelines for coordination of international USAR assistance, thereby also endorsing the OSOCC concept. The GA Resolution also commended the work UNDAC teams in facilitating rapid need assessments and assisting Member States to organize the on-site coordination of international urban search and rescue operations.

The functional organisational model on which the OSOCC is built can draw its lines back to the Roman Empire, through the Napoleonic wars, and numerous emergency management organisations 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 search and rescue 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.

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Many Governments have integrated the OSOCC concept or components of it as parts of their national emergency management plans, establishing an Emergency Operations Centre (EoC), 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. Several regional organisations with a disaster risk management mechanism are also using the OSOCC concept as a tool when supporting internationally within their region.

The OSOCC Guidelines were last published by OCHA in 2018. Since that time methodologies have moved forward in functional areas such as assessment and analysis, information management, 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 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 mobilisation 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 established in the 19th century by Henri Dunant and endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly resolutions 46/182 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 organisations. 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.

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Further information on the humanitarian principles can be found at

https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/world/ocha-message-humanitarian-principles-enar

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, among other 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 The United Nations General Assembly Resolution 46/182 of December 1991 "Strengthening of the Coordination of Humanitarian Emergency Assistance of the United Nations" when responding to emergencies. The resolution outlines an enhanced framework for humanitarian assistance that includes establishment of the ERC position, authorization 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 for coordinating humanitarian assistance of the United Nations System. 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 mobilise 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 UN Resident Coordinator (RC), as the highest-ranking UN official in country, 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.

In case of a sudden onset disaster and/or where an existing humanitarian situation worsens in scale or complexity, the ERC may appoint a Humanitarian

Coordinator (HC). The functions of an HC are separate from an RC, but these positions are often combined in one person – the RC/HC. In a limited number of situations where the Resident Coordinator is not considered to have the necessary humanitarian profile, the Emergency Relief Coordinator may, following consultations with the IASC, choose to appoint a separate person as HC.

United Nations General Assembly resolution 46/182 explains 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 organisations. 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.

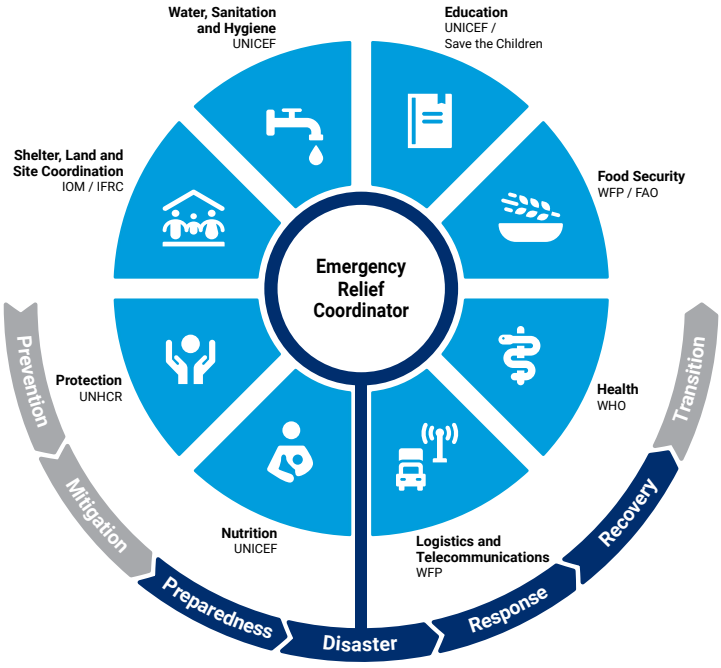
A.2.4 Humanitarian Coordination

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 this system, recognised sectors of humanitarian activity are organised into clusters where humanitarian organisations collaborate on shared goals. This approach aims to achieve agreed-upon humanitarian objectives at the global and national levels. The cluster approach promotes clear leadership, predictability, and accountability in international responses to humanitarian emergencies. It clarifies the division of labour among organisations and better defines their roles and responsibilities across different areas of response.

Cluster partners may include United Nations agencies, national organisations, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs). At the country-level, government ministries/departments will ideally co-lead their 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 eight sectors of humanitarian activity:

Figure A.2.4: Global clusters and their cluster leads



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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. Activation of clusters is based on specific needs, meaning that not all clusters need to be activated depending on the context. The decision to activate clusters is made as part of the international emergency response, following analysis of humanitarian needs and coordination capacity in-country, and in consultation with the Government. The RC/HC recommends cluster activation only when there is an identified need that is not being adequately addressed.

At the country level, cluster leadership should be assigned to the organisation best suited for the role, which may not necessarily be a UN agency or the Global Cluster Lead agency. In some cases, other organisations may be better placed to take the lead and, where possible, it does so in co-leadership with Government bodies and NGOs. A Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) will be formed, including all cluster leads, heads of UN agencies, major international and national NGOs, and the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement. Donors may also participate. The HCT develops the overall humanitarian strategy, agrees on common policies, and promotes adherence to humanitarian principles.

When two or more clusters are activated, the RC/HC and HCT are responsible for establishing an inter-cluster (or inter-sector) coordination group (ICCG). The ICCG is composed of each cluster's coordinator (and co-coordinator, if applicable). OCHA is responsible for the functioning, including secretariat, and chairing of the ICCG. This role will often be based in an OSOCC within a separate Humanitarian Coordination Cell (see also B.3.6 Operations Function).

As a coordination platform, the OSOCC provides an opportunity for clusters to plug into an established coordination mechanism when they arrive on-site. In some cases, functions that initially were being carried out under the umbrella of the OSOCC may transfer to a Cluster Coordinator when they become established on-site. Other coordination cells may already from the first days be carried out under the umbrella of national coordination mechanisms, like 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 reflects the principle of flexibility (see section A.3.3 OSOCC Principles).

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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.

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. In some cases, the OSOCC will be established and run by a regional organisation and the UNDAC will only support with specialised functions (see also A.3.4 Regional arrangements relevant to the OSOCC).

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.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 of the affected country and various relief providers in a disaster receiving international assistance, 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 facility supports on-site coordination and information exchange and facilitates a broader coordination platform that extends well beyond the physical OSOCC.

To optimise its effectiveness, the OSOCC should be established in the immediate aftermath of a disaster requiring international assistance or when indicated by a change in the 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. 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.

It is crucial to understand that an OSOCC is distinct from an OCHA (sub)office. While it may share similarities and could transition into one, the functional model underpinning the OSOCC concept allows it to better address the requirements of disaster management and humanitarian coordination.

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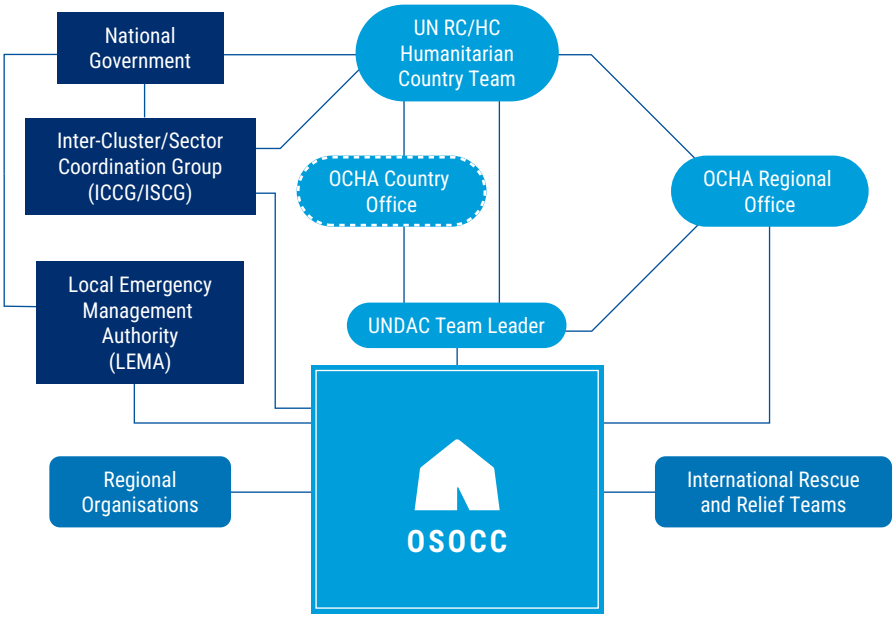
A.3.2 OSOCC Context

When established, the OSOCC works within the existing humanitarian system both internationally and in the affected country, as illustrated below:[1]

Figure A.3.2: OSOCC context



1 This is a generic model showing how an OSOCC may look like when established by an UNDAC team. When an OSOCC is established by NEMA/LEMA or a Regional Organisation, it may be named differently, e.g., EoC, or similar, and reporting lines will be contextualized.

The OSOCC always works in support of the affected government in coordinating the efforts of international response organisations. Within the affected country, the Local Emergency Management Agency (LEMA)[2] 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 and should adapt to any emergency structures put in place by national entities.

When mobilised by OCHA, 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 United Nations RC/HC and the HCT and supported by OCHA Country or Regional Office. In cases when the OSOCC is established and operated by regional coordination teams or bilateral relief teams, they may report directly to the Government, and their sending organisation.

In addition to the entities within OCHA as well as governmental bodies, the OSOCC assists and collaborates with humanitarian cluster/sector coordinators and responding teams. This can be done through integration in the OSOCC structure, including physically being located within the OSOCC facility, and/or through formal or informal liaison. Further details on this can be found in sections B.3.4 Common Responsibilities and B.3.5 Management Function.

A.3.3 OSOCC Principles

The OSOCC is an effective response tool that facilitates coordination amongst international response organisations, providing 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 the OSOCC operations, the following principles are fundamental to with the OSOCC concept.

2 LEMA is a generic term used by the international community in referring to organisations that may in reality work at a variety of levels of governments and take various forms. For example, a national disaster management authority, state or provincial emergency management organisations and/or local emergency responders.

- **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, the United Nations organisation/entity, in a disaster situation.
- **Coordination**
  The strength of the OSOCC is derived from its ability to encourage agreement and foster trust between all parties to cooperate on a common ground 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 utilising the resources available while ensuring functional responsibilities are met.
- **Flexibility**
  The functions of an OSOCC may expand and contract throughout its period of existence. All functions may not be activated during a response and will be based on the specific requirements of the disaster and response objectives. The responsibilities of the functions that are 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 suit the requirements 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 the success of it as a rapid response tool in a period

characterized by chaos, uncertainty and lack of adequate information. The practical application of these principles through the operational aspects of the OSOCC system is outlined in Part II of the Guidelines.

A.3.4 Regional arrangements relevant to the OSOCC concept

Several regional organisations have adopted (parts of) the OSOCC concept into regional disaster risk management arrangements.

The Southern African Development Community (SADC), since 2016, has worked on enacting regional disaster preparedness and response mechanisms. Key in this regard is the SADC Disaster Preparedness and Response Strategy and Fund 2016-2030, with the overall goal to build a culture of safety and disaster resilience. Key elements of this strategy include the SADC Humanitarian and Emergency Operations Centre (SHOC), based in Mozambique, which includes a component of the Emergency Response Team (ERT) with Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) developed in 2020 and the first cohorts trained in 2024 and 2025.

The SADC ERT is composed of staff from SADC Member States that are trained based on UNDAC methodology, building upon the participants' existing experience in disaster and humanitarian response, concentrating on the core competencies and approaches. SADC ERT core focus areas include coordination, emergency assessment and analysis, information management and reporting, among others, and it embraces the OSOCC approach.

The Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) has a Coordination Unit which is based in Barbados and coordinates the regional response support to an affected Participating State through the National Disaster Office. The Regional Response Mechanism (RRM) was established by CDEMA as the vehicle to deliver timely and coordinated response support to affected Participating States. Amongst the mechanisms most relevant to the OSOCC concept you will find:

- Rapid Needs Assessment Team (RNAT) – Intended to support the affected Government with a rapid assessment of damage and impact. The initial RNAT assessments are to be completed within 72 hours from deployment, providing an analysis of the early emergency phase of the humanitarian situation.
- CARICOM Damage Assessment Coordination (CDAC) – Intended to increase the national capacity of an affected state to undertake Damage Assessment and Needs Analysis (DANA).
- CARICOM Operational Support Team (COST) – Intended to provide surge capacity to directly support the National Emergency Operations Centres (NEOC) in coordination of response efforts. The concept of the COST is firmly grounded in the context of strengthening existing national capacity to coordinate response.

During emergencies, UNDAC can be deployed to support CDEMA and provide surge capacity where needed, for example through establishing a joint operations centre following the OSOCC concept.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) operates a Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre) in Indonesia, to facilitate coordination and cooperation among ASEAN member states and is responsible for operational coordination, as well as with relevant UN entities and other international organisations, to promote regional collaboration.

The ASEAN Emergency Response and Assessment Team (ASEAN-ERAT) is a pool of trained and rapidly deployable experts on emergency management able to support National Disaster Management Organisations (NDMOs) in the earliest phase of an emergency, to perform the following core functions:

1. Conduct rapid impact and needs assessment.
2. Facilitate the reception of incoming assistance, both response teams and relief items from ASEAN member states and the AHA Centre, including support to RDC.
3. Assist in coordinating humanitarian response.

ASEAN-ERAT uses guidelines modelled on those of UNDAC, outlining the roles, responsibilities, and detailed mission phase, including the OSOCC concept. ERAT, when deployed, may establish a Joint Operations and Coordination Centre of ASEAN (JOCCA), which is a place for all ASEAN member state response entities to converge and coordinate, and is modelled on the OSOCC. If ASEAN-ERAT sets up coordination support for an NDMO, it will not be called JOCCA.

JOCCA provides a direct coordination interface between an ASEAN response and the NDMO/local disaster management office of the member state affected by the disaster within ASEAN. The AHA Centre will set it up upon the request or consent of the Member State and provide information and coordination to the incoming ASEAN response teams. JOCCA also coordinates and facilitates the demobilisation of ASEAN response teams.

When both UNDAC and ASEAN-ERAT are deployed, wherever possible, the OSOCC and JOCCA should be co-located, although separate physical structures are likely to be maintained, to ensure the interoperability of global and regional response mechanisms. By preference, the site of the OSOCC-JOCCA should be at or near the LEMA. A joint Situation and Planning Cell/Section will work together to process and analyse information to ensure that reporting, if not joint, is consistent. Other functional areas may be joint if possible and must coordinate their work in all cases. Regular communications between respective functional areas will be established. ERAT may deploy staff to operational coordination cells as required. Where sub-OSOCC(s) and/or sub-JOCCA(s) are established, similar consideration will be given to co-location.

In addition to information exchange through the Virtual On-Site Operations Coordination Centre (VOSOCC), the ASEAN-ERAT members are keeping their contact information and employment status updated through the ASEAN-Web Emergency Operations Centre (WebEOC). The WebEOC allows information exchange between the ASEAN member states, the AHA Centre, and the ASEAN Secretariat, including on indications of their offer of assistance. WebEOC is exclusive to ASEAN member states; however, ASEAN-ERAT will

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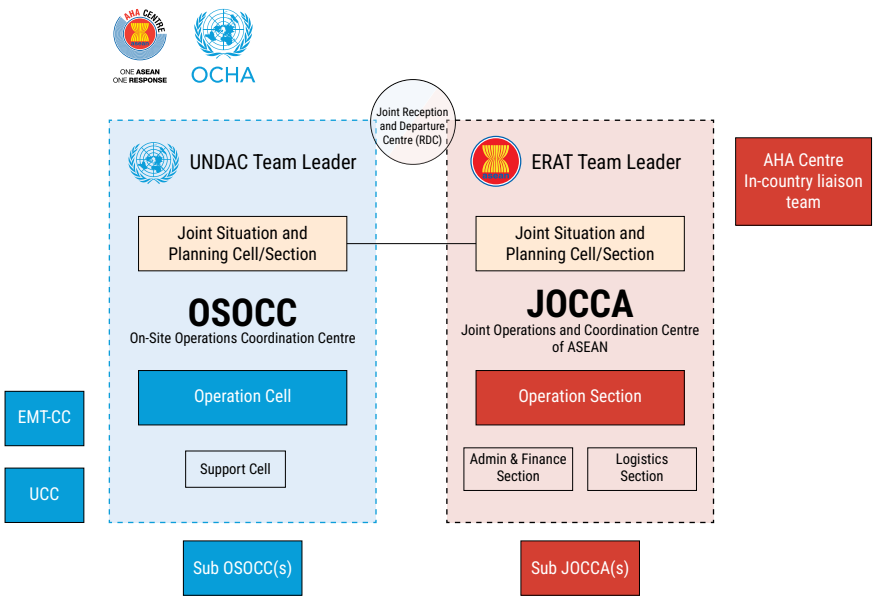
post the summary on the VOSOCC so that international responders can follow the updates on ASEAN.

Where deployed to support either the UNDAC or ERAT and where the OSOCC and JOCCA are co-located, support partners such as Télécoms Sans Frontières (TSF), MapAction, Deutsche Post AG (DHL) and/or the International Humanitarian Partnership (IHP) – all of which have partnership arrangements with both UNDAC and ERAT – will jointly support both teams.

Figure A.3.4: Operational interoperability between JOCCA & OSOCC



The European Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) is established to facilitate cooperation in civil protection assistance interventions in the event of major emergencies. An Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC) was set up in Brussels to support a coordinated and faster response to disasters both inside and outside Europe using resources from the countries participating in the UCPM. The ERCC is operational 24/7 and serves as the European focal point for information management, offers of assistance and the coordination of deployed assets.

An EU Civil Protection Team (EUCPT) is usually deployed to facilitate the arrival of EU assistance and interact with the national authorities, UNDAC, and the wider humanitarian coordination system. In emergency responses within the European Union, it is understood that the ERCC will lead the international response to the affected EU member state. An EUCPT will often use the OSOCC concept to organise its activities. In emergency responses outside the EU, the EUCPT will work with OCHA/UNDAC and ensure that the coordination of the UCPM response is fully integrated in the overall coordination provided by OCHA/UNDAC.

EUCPT members have often reinforced functions and cells in the OSOCC in emergencies outside Europe. Upon request, the ERCC makes available technical experts who join the UNDAC team as embedded members who may work out of an OSOCC. Such expertise can include structural engineers, dam engineers, environmental experts, volcanologists, etc.

The relationship between OCHA/UNDAC and the UCPM is regulated in a set of SOPs between the ERCC and UN OCHA, and Administrative Arrangement between DG ECHO and UN OCHA, and the Operational Guidelines for Field Cooperation Between EU Civil Protection and UNDAC teams.

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A.3.5 OSOCC as a national emergency management tool

Disaster response capacities vary by region and individual Member States. Many disaster-prone countries face coordination, communication and information management challenges at national, provincial and field levels, particularly after the impact of a disaster. Economical, technological factors, and human resource limitations often found in developing countries contribute to this. Equally problematic are systemic barriers to effective coordination related to rigid national disaster management systems and their constituting bodies.

Government and other emergency management-related organisations tend to be structured in a traditional command and control format with defined, vertical reporting lines. For countries that have them, National Emergency Operations Centres (NEOCs) 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 for disaster management as it, in theory, enables swift, decisive action. However, as the number of non-governmental actors involved in larger response efforts continues to grow, the importance of inter-agency coordination increases, and collaboration enabled by systemic flexibility and adaptability become imperative for effective action. Organisations with closed, vertical systems are then often challenged when having to interact laterally with actors that fall outside their command structure.

In multi-agency emergency responses, “siloed” organisational 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. Especially in developing country contexts where communications and reporting links within and between underfunded organisations and across sectors are often weaker, inter-agency coordination can present significant obstacles.

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 and operations.

National authorities in many countries have adopted and implemented (elements of) the OSOCC concept to coordinate domestic disaster relief and humanitarian assistance at a field level. The decision to deploy the OSOCC, or use its concepts, would come from the NDMO but staffing would endeavour to be representative of the local context and 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 utilised.

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 LEMA and non-government response organisations. The purpose of a local OSOCC would be to provide the NDMO with an instrument to implement policy decisions and facilitate coordination of relief resources at a disaster site. International teams, including UNDAC, should engage with this effort and provide support to the OSOCC.

PART II: OSOCC OPERATIONS

Contents

PART II: OSOCC OPERATIONS

Part II of the OSOCC Guidelines provides specific guidance for those operationalising the OSOCC concept in the field.

B.1 Components of the OSOCC System

The OSOCC system consists of five main components:

- GDACS and the Virtual OSOCC
- 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 GDACS, the Global Disaster Awareness and Coordination System

International emergency responders must quickly understand and predict the effects of an adverse event to enhance preparedness, improve response, and make informed operational decisions, especially in large-scale disasters.

The European Commission (Joint Research Centre (JRC) and the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations - DG ECHO), OCHA and United Nations Satellite Centre (UNOSAT) operate the Global Disaster Alert and Coordination System (GDACS) as a cooperation platform to provide early notification and coordination services to all stakeholders.

Immediately after major sudden-onset disasters triggered by natural hazards, the affected country and international actors collect and analyse information to plan a response. This activity is often carried out simultaneously with

varying speed, relevance, and accuracy, using multiple information channels and applying different procedures. This stage may result in duplication of efforts, information gaps, overlaps, or even an inappropriate response, occasionally associated with high costs and delays.

GDACS services aim to facilitate information exchange among all actors, supporting decision-making and coordination. GDACS builds on the collective knowledge of disaster managers worldwide and the joint capacity of all relevant disaster information systems. It provides real-time access to web-based disaster information systems and related coordination tools.

GDACS provides:

- Near real time disaster notifications rapid impact estimations via its Multi Hazard Early Warning System component (MHEWS)
- A system for online operational coordination of disaster managers known as the Virtual OSOCC (VOSOCC)
- A service for coordinating among providers of satellite-derived analyses of the event via its Satellite Mapping Coordination System (SMCS)

GDACS services are activated in response to major sudden-onset disasters that may overwhelm the affected country's response capacity and require international assistance. GDACS services are most relevant in the initial disaster phase (usually two to three weeks), until formal coordination mechanisms have been established by the government of the affected country and/or the international community.

GDACS MHEWS

The multi-hazard and early warning system is the component of GDACS that monitors, in real-time and near real-time, potential disasters or ongoing disasters around the world, covering seven hazards: droughts, earthquakes, tsunamis, floods, forest fires, tropical cyclones, and volcanic eruptions.

One of GDACS's main tasks is the dissemination of automatic notifications in case of an upcoming/ongoing major event. The goal is to ensure timely information in case of severe events that may require international assistance.

GDACS events are generated automatically or semi-automatically for each hazard independently, using dedicated algorithms and available data, with expert supervision. Every event on GDACS features a score and colour coding, based on the estimated risk that the given event poses to the exposed population and affected area. The following risk components are considered:

1. The intensity of the physical hazard, such as wind speed, earthquake magnitude, wildfire extent, etc.
2. The exposure to this hazard in terms of the population and infrastructure potentially affected by it.
3. The vulnerability of the potentially affected countries or subnational units (when available), estimated with socio-economic variables.

Aiming to provide a quick and clear estimate of the impact of disasters, including their severity and potential humanitarian consequences, GDACS MHEWS classifies any relevant event using a three-colour-coded scale and a related numerical score ranging from 0 to 3. The colours are harmonised and applicable to any type of hazard, with a focus on the need for international humanitarian support:

- **GREEN** – Moderate event with potential or minor impacts, but unlikely to require international humanitarian aid. Monitoring is needed to detect any worsening, even in the absence of impacts.
- **ORANGE** – Severe event with potential serious impacts, so that some degree of international humanitarian assistance may be needed.
- **RED** – Major event with heavy impacts and possibly resulting in a humanitarian crisis. International assistance is likely to be needed.

Beyond these general definitions, each hazard type has its own specific characteristics, and the interpretation of the numeric score and colours is further explained in the sections dedicated to each hazard.

GDACS MHEWS notifications are not meant to override or replace alerts or information from local or national civil protection authorities. Expert assessment of the situation and evacuation and response plans must always be carried out by competent decision-makers in designated positions of authority. Instead, GDACS MHEWS provides the international humanitarian response community, as well as any other national or international entity, and interested citizens, with a global situational awareness platform regarding ongoing or imminent natural disasters.

See more at GDACS and further details are available in the Multi Hazard Early Warning System User Manual version 2.

GDACS Virtual OSOCC

The VOSOCC is a GDACS component that is activated in major sudden-onset disasters to support international coordination during the first phase of a disaster and managed by OCHA. The platform's primary purpose is to facilitate information exchange among disaster responders, to encourage real-time information exchange during emergencies, allowing better coordination of the international response operations to disasters and avoiding duplication while ensuring complementarity.

Access to Virtual OSOCC is restricted to disaster managers from governments and disaster response organisations worldwide. Information updates from the affected country and international responders are moderated by a dedicated team.

Specific features of the VOSOCC allow responders to exchange information, including baseline country information, relevant socio-economic and demographic data, entry points and other logistical aspects, relief team status, assessment details, civil-military coordination arrangements, environmental risks, and safety and security information.

See more at Virtual OSOCC, including a VOSOCC User Manual.

GDACS SMCS

The GDACS Satellite Mapping Coordination System (SMCS) offers a communication and coordination platform that allows multiple providers to share maps and satellite imagery, as well as monitor and update stakeholders on their completed, ongoing, and planned mapping activities for ongoing emergencies. See more at https://smcs.unosat.org/home.

B.1.2 Reception and Departure Centre (RDC)

The RDC is generally the first OSOCC component established at the entry point of an affected during a major emergency, and thus the first on-site coordination point. It facilitates the efficient arrival of international relief teams and assists in coordinating their deployment to the field. It can also support the receipt 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 air/ground traffic control, ground services, storage, procedures and liaison.

The RDC is set-up at major entry points for international assistance, such as an international airport, by the first arriving UNDAC team members or INSARAG-classified USAR team. Some USAR teams also operate specially trained RDC support modules that may deploy independently to establish and run RDCs.

As a minimum, two team members should staff the RDC. As the first in-country component of the OSOCC system, it is vital that the RDC is well organized, informed and facilitating as it sets the tone for the arriving teams.

It is also important that RDC maintains its self-sufficiency so that it functions properly throughout the response period.

Where indicated by the realities of the emergency, more than one RDC can be established. 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 must be made based on operational realities.

During demobilisation of international response teams, the RDC facilitates their departures to their home bases by facilitating a coordinated and appropriate release of international resources. RDC also reconfirm the number of international relief teams in the country by recording the departures of international teams so that OSOCC maintains a good overview of international response assets in the country. The RDC itself demobilises when all teams have returned.

Detailed guidance on RDC operations can be found in section B.4 Reception Departure Centre (RDC).

B.1.3 OSOCC facility

Closely aligned with the efforts of the LEMA, or other national authorities, the OSOCC facility provides a common platform for the coordination of international response efforts and serves as the centre of the OSOCC system. It is simultaneously a place and a methodology, similar to a national Government's EoC 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 requires it.

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 the coordination or support of 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 The OSOCC.

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, although carries them out 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. Agreement will also be reached on the specific functions and staffing levels of the sub-OSOCC to meet its assigned tasks.

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

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

Once the decision is made to establish a sub-OSOCC, it must be communicated to all OSOCC functions and good working relationships must be established with officials in the vicinity of the sub-OSOCC. Other established functions continue to operate within the same reporting structures. For example, any established RDCs would continue to work through the OSOCC, which would liaise with the sub-OSOCC to prioritise and coordinate relief team deployments into the sub-OSOCC's area of operations.

B.1.5 Other coordination cells linked to the OSOCC

Part of the OSOCC methodology that distinguishes it from other functional organisational 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 UNDAC Team Leader, RC/HC and HCT. Especially coordination cells linked to the Operations Function of an OSOCC, will in many cases be separated from the main OSOCC facility.

Many countries have adopted components from the OSOCC concept and integrated them in their national contingency plans (see also section A.3.5 OSOCC as a national emergency management tool). For example, the EMT coordination will, in many cases, be nationally led as part of the 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, may also be operational 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 Governmental 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 overly much

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. In sudden onset disasters, there will a be a need for frequent and rapid information exchange, and cells may need to meet with team leadership or cell coordinators as often as 1-2 times a day.

See also section B.3.6 Operations Function for more on individual coordination cells and B.3.7 Situation Function for more on the A&A Cell.

B.2 The OSOCC Lifecycle

While no emergency response situation is identical, operations (USAR, OSOCC, humanitarian assistance, etc.) tend to follow a general mission cycle. The figure below illustrates response periods following a natural hazard-related disaster along a timeline.

Figure B.2:Natural hazard-related disaster timeline

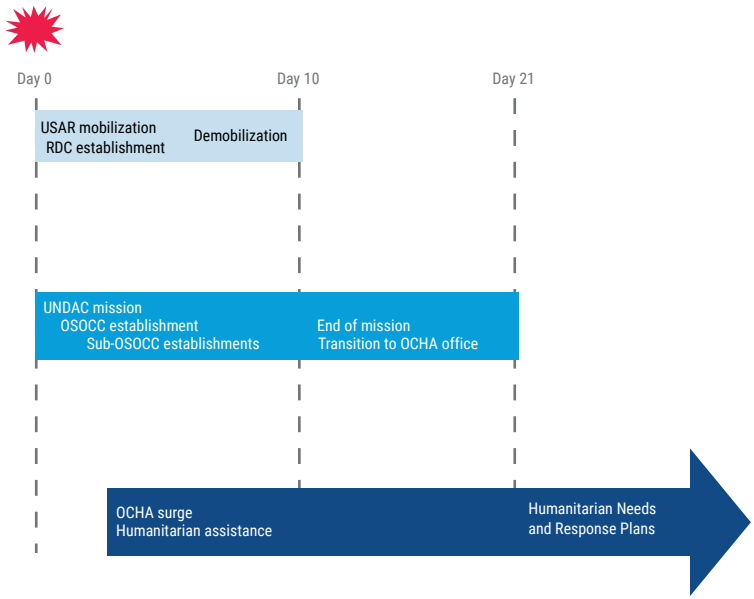
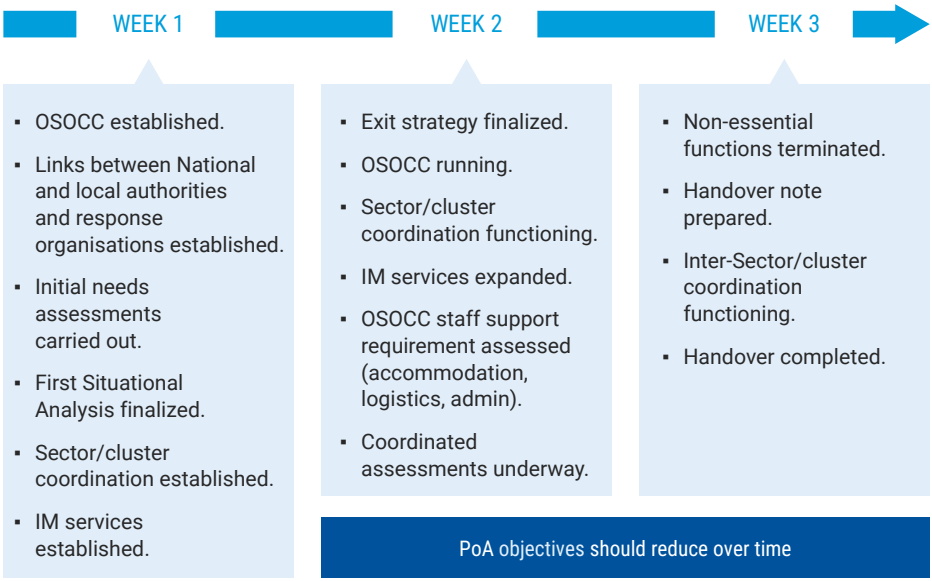


Figure B.2: Example of mission objectives timeline



The following sections outline typical response activities that occur during these periods in most emergencies.

0 – 10 days

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

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

With the arrival of the first international OSOCC-trained USAR 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, regional organisations, or specific RDC modules deploying alongside USAR teams. The initial RDC may consist of only one or two people, but the functions remain the same as described in detail in section B.4 Reception Departure Centre (RDC). 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 to share arrival and situational information required by incoming resources.

As soon as possible, OSOCC-trained USAR and/or UNDAC members will establish preliminary OSOCC services – particularly those associated with the work of international relief teams, e.g., RDC, USAR and EMT. This may consist only of specific Operations Function cells with basic support (see section B.3.6 for more on the Operations Function). As quickly as possible, processes are established to coordinate incoming team assignments to maximize life-saving activities for those trapped and/or injured. The primary activity of the OSOCC in this period is to work in close cooperation with the NDMO and LEMA, to support and coordinate the life-saving activities of incoming international relief teams.

As soon as practical, all the OSOCC functions will be staffed. Early on, generalists such as UNDAC members, members of regional response organisations, and the affected Government may need to perform multiple functions to ensure coordination, assessment, analysis, and early reporting are carried out. While initial life-saving activities are a 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.3.7. In the first days, this function will coordinate or support the initial assessment and the publication of regular situation reports and situation analyses.

While initial activities are underway, OSOCC support partners will also be deploying and may be able to set up service packages (see section B.3.8 Support Function). At minimum, basic support will arrive with teams, and initial communications infrastructure can generally be established. As a part of an early assessment, a determination will be made as to what further support is needed.

The OSOCC will be brought to full staffing supported by adequate facilities/modules as quickly as possible. 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 a presence together with the requisite national authorities. Where necessary, sub-OSOCCs will be established during this phase (see section B.1.4 Sub-OSOCC).

After a few days, more OCHA surge will start to arrive and key humanitarian coordination structures will be established and supported by the OSOCC. Based on continuous situation analyses, a Flash Appeal will generally be developed within 5 to 7 days after the onset of the emergency. Until this is issued, the situation analyses from the OSOCC inform the mobilisation of the broader international humanitarian response.

In parallel, cluster staff may arrive and begin to establish operations and coordination functions for their respective clusters. This may trigger the separation of early OSOCC Operations cells into 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 Group (ICCG) is established early on to coordinate efforts between clusters and the affected Government and various international actors. The OSOCC will also coordinate or support coordinated assessments and inform humanitarian programs.

In addition, the OSOCC establishes a number of support services to the humanitarian community. This includes 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 continuing to support the VOSOCC.

The beginning of the end of the USAR phase usually coincides with a Flash Appeal being published and international teams either depart or are well established in their operations. The life-saving phase of a USAR operation usually lasts from 7 to 14 days after an earthquake. The decision to cease life-saving efforts by international responders is made by the NDMO and LEMA, based on recommendations from the UNDAC Team Leader in close consultation with the international USAR teams. Based on these consultations, the UNDAC Team Leader can advise the NDMO and LEMA of the appropriate time to end this phase but the final decision rests with the LEMA. This is a difficult decision for the LEMA to make as it often has political implications for the local authorities.

10 – 21 days

The UNDAC mission would normally start to wind down, and members will start going home or be replaced by longer-term staff. The OSOCC may or may not continue to operate in this period. In some cases, where the emergency is of more limited scope and duration, the OSOCC may simply not be needed anymore, and its functions would be absorbed into existing structures. 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 demobilisation.

21 days – onwards

There is often a need for continued humanitarian assistance from the international community, with humanitarian coordination structures and tools. A Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan (HNRP) may be issued based on the Flash Appeal. What started as an OSOCC will have transitioned into a traditional OCHA Country or Sub-Office.

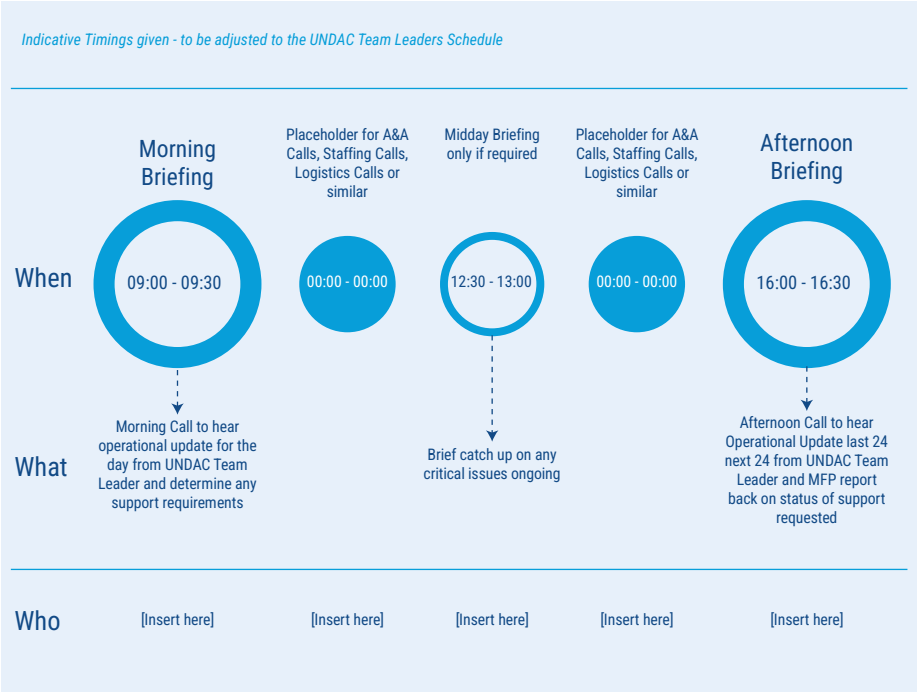
B.2.1 The OSOCC operational cycle

The OSOCC itself as well as its component parts, such as the RDC, needs to establish its own operational cycle. In many cases, this will initially be based on a 24-hour schedule/clock with activities occurring at set intervals. For example, a set time for the OSOCC to send a daily situation report to the RC/HC or OCHA HQ, briefing times for international relief teams and deadlines for establishing and distributing daily operational priorities/work locations. The operational cycle also contributes to regular internal information sharing for the OSOCC 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 shift 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. Daily cycles of meetings, briefings, and other team activities can also be visualised, supporting a structured approach to work planning.

B

Figure B.2.1:Daily operational rhythm template for UNDAC missions



B.3 The OSOCC

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

B.3.1 OSOCC Terminology

Standard terminology is used throughout the OSOCC Guidelines to assist with building an understanding of 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 organisational 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 organisation of personnel required to fulfil its responsibilities.
- Cells are components under functions that can be used to further organise the OSOCC into common sub-groups that reflect the key areas of responsibility of that function. The use of cells is particularly beneficial in circumstances where the OSOCC has a large number of staff and additional layers of reporting are necessary for effective management. In most cases, particular areas of expertise are needed to focus on performing response activities rather than on coordination/leadership, e.g., using a USAR Coordination Cell or EMT Coordination Cell. A coordinator or manager leads a cell. In Part III Operational Tools, you will find specific responsibilities for the lead of each cell, summarised and described in a one-pager for each position.
- 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. Partner organisations such as the International Humanitarian Partnership (IHP) or the Americas Support Team (AST) often provide service packages. Service packages provide the basic material and equipment that enable response teams to carry out their activities at a disaster site. Other UNDAC operational partners, such as Atlas Logistique, may provide logistics and infrastructure support, including coordination of resources embedded into the OSOCC and Sub-OSOCCs.

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

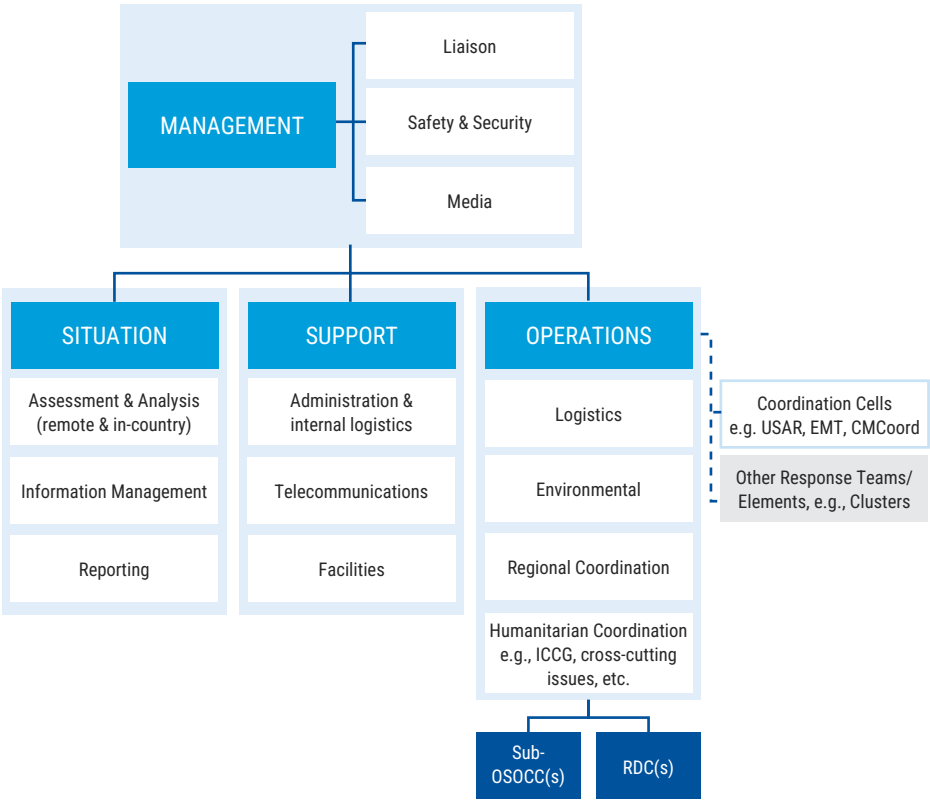
B.3.2 OSOCC Structure

As outlined in Part I, the OSOCC concept consists of both the physical OSOCC facility and the broader coordination platform that is developed as a result of the activities of the OSOCC. The broader platform can include United Nations agencies, clusters and international humanitarian organisations. 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 other 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 and other functions may require a larger complement of personnel.

Figure B.3.2: OSOCC structure



An organisational 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 organisation chart can be found in Part III Operational Tools.

B.3.3 OSOCC Staffing

Staff for the OSOCC will come from the UNDAC team, OCHA, OSOCC support staff, operational partners, USAR teams, EMTs, regional response mechanisms and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). In large scale emergencies, volunteers and interns from UN organisations or other entities involved in the humanitarian relief operation, may also support the OSOCC with specific tasks. The agreement and willingness to commit personnel and equipment to an OSOCC may be a significant undertaking for a relief team. It is crucial that as more international relief teams arrive, they should be requested to support the personnel and equipment needs of the OSOCC. 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 lifesaving 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 shift 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.3.4 Common Responsibilities

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

- **Liaison** – All functions will need to 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 optimisation 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 mission (see section B.3.5 Management Function), each function and cell needs to take an active role in the personal safety of staff assigned to the OSOCC and contribute 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. Trained and experienced staff, functional procedures and guidelines support accountability. OSOCC accountability extends beyond OCHA/UNDAC and the United Nations to the affected country and population, donors and others involved in the response.
  However, overall accountability will depend on which organisation has established and is managing the OSOCC, whether it is the UN, a Regional Organisation, or a Government, as each may have different policies, aims, and objectives.
- **Analysis and information management** – All functions and cells contribute to the OSOCC internal information flow with the information, data, and observations acquired through their activities. Each cell should endeavour to participate when a joint analysis session is being conducted within the A&A Cell. Each OSOCC staff member contributes to reporting information of relevance to their function and cell, and the broader OSOCC system. This information will be compiled into reports and analytical outputs produced by the Situation Function.
- **Demobilisation** – Each function and cell must consider the appropriate transition and/or exit strategy for their role. The timing and specifics of handover to a local authority or other international organisation, e.g., a United Nations agency or a Global Cluster Lead, will be determined by the function and how it is carried out in-country.

In addition to the common functional responsibilities outlined above, each Function and Cell has specific responsibilities outlined in the following sections.

B.3.5 Management Function

The Management Function coordinates the efforts of other OSOCC functions, establishes routines for internal information flow between functions and cells, establishes formal liaison with national authorities and other response organisations, 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 among OSOCC personnel, and providing leadership to OSOCC. The OSOCC Manager should ensure that the OSOCC meets the objectives and fulfils the terms of reference (ToR) set out by the Government of the affected country, the UNDAC Team Leader and the RC/HC, or other organisations such as Regional Organisations.

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 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.

In an UNDAC mission, 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.

It is not recommended that the UNDAC Deputy Team Leader/OSOCC Manager assume external coordination responsibilities, such as liaison with authorities, inter-cluster coordination, etc., as this may severely affect the smooth running

of the OSOCC. The UNDAC Deputy Team Leader/OSOCC Manager should focus solely on internal coordination of the OSOCC, as a well-functioning OSOCC is essential for coordinating international response operations in disasters.

In addition to the OSOCC Manager, the most common functions within the Management Function are Safety & Security, Liaison, and Media. Other functions 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 the first point of contact for clients seeking OSOCC services and OSOCC information products.

Safety & Security Cell

The Safety & Security (S&S) Cell supports the safety and security of all OSOCC personnel. While the UNDAC Team Leader is formally responsible for the Safety & Security of the UNDAC team, they can delegate this responsibility to the OSOCC Manager, appoint a S&S focal point or an S&S Cell as part of the UN Security Management System (UNSMS) framework in-country. Staff from the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) will typically assume the lead of the Safety and Security Cell as soon as possible.

The first arriving teams, including UNDAC, should create a context-specific security plan for OSOCC staff as a subset of the PoA. The S&S plan should be updated regularly and communicated to OSOCC staff frequently to ensure awareness of S&S procedures.

The S&S Cell is responsible for ensuring that all OSOCC staff receive an appropriate security briefing upon their arrival in a new location and upon any significant changes in the situation; for preparing, maintaining, and

monitoring the S&S Plan and medical plans for the UNDAC mission (including all personnel associated with the OSOCC); and for ensuring the consideration of S&S elements in the strategic and operational decisions and actions of 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.3.6 Operations Function), national and local authorities and other medical resources present, e.g., medical resources associated with USAR teams.

Further information on Safety and Security is available in the United Nations Security Policy Manual and the UNDAC Handbook, Chapter E.2.

Liaison Cell

Liaison is a crosscutting responsibility of all functions and personnel in the OSOCC that support an effective and collaborative approach to disaster response. The Liaison Cell establishes and maintains formal information exchange procedures between the OSOCC and other actors that require a dedicated resource and/or are not otherwise being served by the other functions.

In some cases, the Liaison Cell may be staffed when a large number of organisations send a liaison to the OSOCC and coordination of these representatives is necessary for continued OSOCC operations and effective information sharing. This is not intended to duplicate existing liaisons between other OSOCC functions and their appropriate counterparts (e.g., USAR liaison), but rather to ensure there are no gaps.

The Liaison Cell works to build and maintain relationships with LEMA, the Government of the affected country and/or response organisations that are pivotal to cooperative and coordinated OSOCC activities. Individuals taking the role of Liaison staff should possess diplomatic skills, coupled with a strong ability to cultivate relationships with diverse organisations through mutual understanding and consensus-building. They should be able to

communicate effectively and to see opportunities to strengthen collaboration and coordination among responding organisations.

Media Cell

During the establishment of the OSOCC, the Media Cell operates within the Management Function, as the OSOCC Manager typically assumes media responsibilities until an (OCHA) Public Information Officer (PIO) arrives on-site. Upon the PIO's arrival, they establish the Media Cell and collaborate closely with all OSOCC functions, particularly the Situation Function.

The Media Cell is responsible for coordinating all external media relations, monitoring media channels for situational awareness, and preparing information products for both the media and the public. It develops a comprehensive media plan for the OSOCC, outlining the primary spokesperson (often the OSOCC Manager) and defining the roles of other team members in media relations. Additionally, the Media Cell serves as the central point of contact for both local and international media and facilitates site visits for donors and VIPs.

The efforts of the Media Cell play a crucial role in clarifying and reinforcing OSOCC-supported response activities, thereby enhancing international awareness and advocacy for relief efforts aimed at assisting the affected population.

B.3.6 Operations Function

The Operations Function oversees the coordination of international response teams and other resources involved in delivering relief to affected populations. This function encompasses several coordination cells, each dedicated to specific functional areas. Collectively, these cells swiftly respond to carry out operational coordination tasks, including rescue operations, emergency medical care provision, environmental impact mitigation, transportation of individuals and supplies, and collaboration with military or armed actors.

Technical specialists from the respective functional area staff each coordination cell. In the initial stages following a disaster, these cells may be staffed by members of the first-response teams trained in OSOCC methodology and UNDAC members. Additionally, the different coordination cells serve as the main interface for the RDC. The RDC collaborates closely with most coordination cells to relay information regarding incoming resources and to oversee the execution of procedures related to logistics, safety, security, and other relevant aspects.

Some coordination cells may operate semi-detached from the OSOCC, i.e., the USAR Coordination Cell (UCC), the EMT Coordination Cell (EMTCC), and the UN Civil-Military Coordination (UN-CMCoord) mechanism. In some cases, these cells may be set up and operated by the Government itself.

Other coordination cells found in the Operations Function may include:

- Humanitarian Coordination Cell
- Logistics Coordination Cell
- Environmental Coordination Cell
- Damage Assessment and Coordination Centre (DACC)
- Regional Organisations Coordination Cell

Other 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 maximise the efforts of these specialised teams, coordination via the VOSOCC begins as soon as a potential deployment is recognised.

The first INSARAG USAR teams set up the USAR Coordination Cell (UCC) and are responsible for coordinating international USAR teams for the USAR operations on behalf of the teams. The purpose of the UCC is to provide LEMA

with a single point of contact for USAR coordination, with skilled coordinators, thus helping LEMA coordinate international USAR teams, not taking over the operations. The deployment of an INSARAG classified team is done under bilateral agreements between the Government of the responding country and the affected Government - making the country sending the team accountable for the team's performance.

The in-country international USAR coordination structure is organised according to the INSARAG Guidelines and the USAR Coordination (UC) Handbook and is part of the United Nations suite of international coordination systems.

The UCC will report to the OSOCC Manager for coordination purposes. The OSOCC manager reports to the UNDAC Team Leader, who ensures that the OSOCC (and therefore the UCC) activities are aligned with the strategic direction of the Government and the UN in-country (RC/HC, HCT). The UCC will also directly coordinate with LEMA at the USAR operations level.

The UCC may or may not be set up in the same location as the OSOCC. It is more likely that the UCC will be at a USAR teams' base of operation (BoO), away from the main OSOCC. The UCC manager strives from the onset of the operation to have a direct link to a LEMA liaison officer throughout USAR operations to discuss objectives and plans.

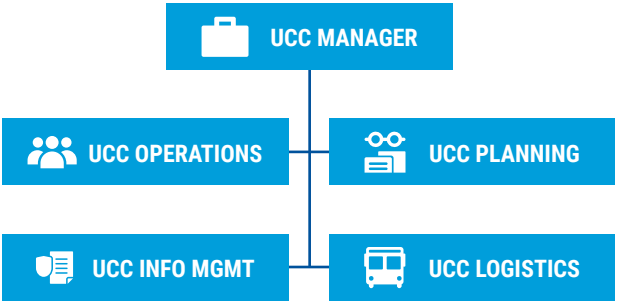
The primary responsibilities of the UCC can be summarised into the following 10 points, derived from the UC Handbook:

1. Communicate with OCHA, the LEMA, UNDAC team members, OSOCC, and international USAR teams.
2. Liaise with LEMA on finding locations for a BoO, UCC, and for Sector Coordination Cell(s) (SCC(s)).
3. Manage UCC team meetings.

4. Post information and updates to the VOSOCC and the INSARAG Coordination and Management System (ICMS)[4].
5. Share information on basic logistical support with in-country international USAR teams.
6. Receive information from the RDC about team arrivals and inform the RDC where to direct teams.
7. Develop a Plan of Action in line with the LEMA's objectives, while deploying the arriving international USAR teams to ensure even coverage of the disaster areas.
8. Divide the area into sectors, in line with sectors developed by the LEMA.
9. Prioritise worksites.
10. Take charge of the use of the ICMS, assign and reassign teams to worksites and monitor their accomplishments.

The UCC has five functions and is scalable to the demands of an event. The number of people working in each function can vary throughout the mission.

Figure B.3.6: UCC functions



4 ICMS is an INSARAG-developed GIS-based software that supports the USAR coordination by providing a real-time overview of the USAR teams' activities to inform the UCC's decision-making process. UNDAC and others have viewing access.

When there is a large number of international USAR teams responding to an incident, dividing the impacted area in geographical sectors becomes essential for effective operational management. During large-scale operations, the UCC might assign a USAR team to set up a Sector Coordination Cell (SCC) that becomes a coordination link between the UCC and the teams in specific geographic sectors, reducing the number of teams that the main UCC needs to communicate with.

In keeping with the hierarchical structure, USAR teams in the geographical sector communicate with the SCC which then communicates with the UCC. In the event that a sub-OSOCC is established in the same sector as an SCC, and when relevant, "horizontal" communication will be held in addition to the "vertical" communication with the UCC. In most cases, SCC - Sub-OSOCC communications will be limited to information sharing and local level support matters whereas USAR operational and technical issues will be dealt by the SCC with the UCC.

Given that the UCC is part of the OSOCC structure under the Operations Function, the UCC reports USAR activities (coordination, operations, rescues, etc.) to the OSOCC. This information is communicated by the UNDAC team as needed, but at least once a day, through different communication channels and reports (e.g., situation updates, media message, communication with the LEMA, Donors, HCT, etc.). Vice versa, the OSOCC also shares relevant information with the UCC.

Emergency Medical Team Coordination Cell (EMTCC)

The Emergency Medical Team Coordination Cell (EMTCC) plays a critical role in emergency medical responses, actively collaborating with government authorities to effectively coordinate the surge of national and international EMTs. By doing so, the EMTCC ensures these teams are deployed where they can best meet healthcare needs arising from increased morbidity or damages to existing healthcare infrastructure.

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

The EMTCC is essential for assigning EMTs to specific sites and making strategic decisions based on team capabilities and field needs. These are based on leveraging comparative advantage to maximise resource effectiveness, ensuring complementarity to bolster existing services and fill identified gaps, and maintaining predictability by anticipating and promptly addressing needs.

The expertise provided by the EMTCC encompasses operational and technical aspects of EMT response. This includes monitoring compliance with EMT guiding principles and minimum standards, ensuring quality of care. Supportive activities by the EMTCC involve:

- Providing remote or in-country technical support.
- Advising on available EMT capabilities within the Global EMT Classification.
- Activating and managing the EMT section of the Virtual OSOCC and disseminating essential information about arrival and registration procedures to all international EMTs.
- Making information available at potential contact points with EMTs, including the World Health Organization (WHO) EMT website.

The coordination of EMTs presents unique complexities, especially in large-scale emergencies. This complexity stems from the increasing number of EMTs and the wide variations in their size, experience, service standards, and medical and logistical capabilities. Effective coordination in such scenarios transcends the simple matching of supply to demand, requiring a

nuanced understanding of the varied elements needed to balance healthcare needs and available resources.

When International EMTs are deployed, coordination involves additional layers of complexity. Effective integration of these teams with the host country's existing national health system, which may vary greatly in structure, quality, and capacity, is crucial. Moreover, deploying I-EMTs must seamlessly connect with the broader international response coordination, mechanisms, and methodologies.

The effective coordination of EMTs may require different coordination models, given the variability in emergency scenarios. These models are designed to incorporate and streamline the involvement of various in-country and international actors in the response coordination mechanism. The four options below are identified for EMT coordination from most ideal to least ideal:

1. The EMT coordination cell is established and completely run by the MoH within the existing National Health Emergency Operations Centre.
2. The EMT Coordination Cell is established within the National Health Emergency Operations Centre but supported by WHO and partners.
3. A trauma or clinical care working group is established under another coordination mechanism.

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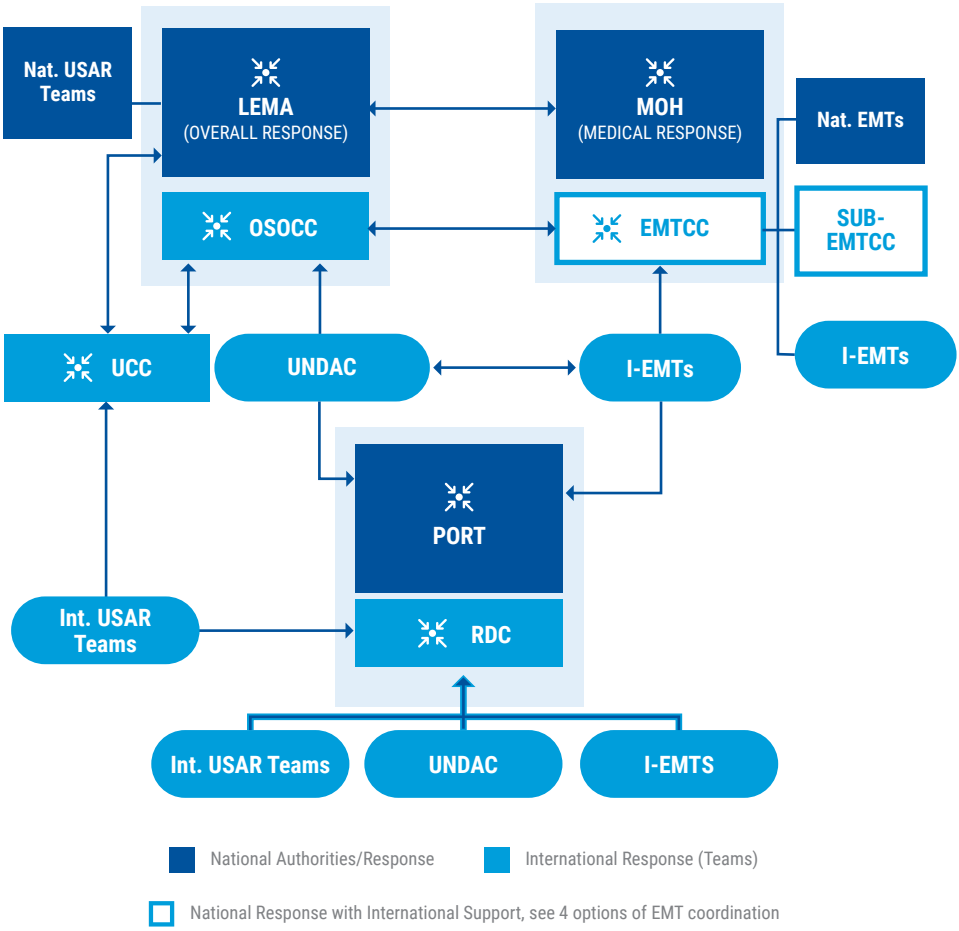
Figure B.3.6: EMTCC linkages



A critical element is establishing clear linkages with the wider international humanitarian assistance structure. This involves creating effective connections and ensuring information exchange with the OSOCC, RDC, UCC, MoH/LEMA, and the Health Cluster when activated.

Further guidance on EMT coordination can be accessed on the WHO Emergency Medical Teams website, which also offers additional forms, templates, and guidance documents.

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, and 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 the OCHA Civil-Military Coordination Section, in close consultation with the field, to determine the scale and structure of the UN-CMCoord function.

Subject to the scale of the emergency, OCHA may deploy dedicated UN-CMCoord officers to define the CMCoord strategy and coordinate humanitarian civil-military coordination activities within the OSOCC and/or sub-OSOCCs. Liaison and establishing coordination mechanisms between the humanitarian and military communities will be undertaken.

In a peacetime and permissive environment, it may be necessary to roll-out the Humanitarian-Military Operational Coordination Concept (HuMOCC) in support of the affected Government to provide key services such as:

- Facilitating information sharing, task division (identification and allocation) and coordinated planning.
- Promoting and maintaining common situational awareness.
- Appropriately using national and/or foreign military assets.
- Supporting humanitarian priorities as identified and determined by humanitarian actors.
- Establishing a request for assistance and/or a request for information mechanism, as needed.
- Monitoring, documenting, impact analysis and reporting

The HuMOCC could result from expanding the CMCoord Cell in an OSOCC based on needs and the number of military actors on the ground. It also has the flexibility to be rolled out in support of Government coordination structures even in the absence of an OSOCC and is ideally led by the affected Government's NDMO or sub-NDMO with the support of UN-CMCoord Officers, as needed. This concept may be named differently in different emergencies. However, the overarching value of this concept is to have a dedicated space where the available MCDA matches priority humanitarian capacity gaps through a vetting process that reinforces cluster coordination and leadership.

Civilian-to-civilian interaction will remain at the OSOCC and/or sub-OSOCCs. In such cases, the HuMOCC is ideally led by the sub-NDMO with support from CMCoord officers.

Further information is available on OCHA's UN-CMCoord website (including information on related courses) and in OCHA's Guidelines on the Use of Foreign Military and Civil Defence Assets in Disaster Relief and the UNDAC Handbook Chapters G.10.3 also provides detailed guidance for establishing the UN-CMCoord Cell early in an emergency.

Humanitarian Coordination Cell

In many emergencies, there will be a need to establish a separate cell for humanitarian coordination, with staff supporting humanitarian financing, quality programming and coordination of cross-cutting issues, e.g., Inter Cluster Coordination, Gender, Cash transfer programming, Community Engagement (CE), Protection, etc. The Humanitarian Coordination Cell is typically in the best position to collaborate with response partners (Government, organisations, clusters, private sector) to ensure quality programming. This involves highlighting and addressing protection issues, meeting the needs of vulnerable groups, promoting community engagement, and implementing gender programming. Further advice can be found in the UNDAC Handbook, Chapters G2 to G9.

Logistics Coordination Cell (LCC)

The Logistics Coordination Cell supports other cells in the Operations Function, e.g., the USAR and EMT Coordination Cells, while potentially being required to support the overall humanitarian response over an extended period. Sometimes, the LCC will serve as the early precursor to the Logistics Cluster led by the World Food Programme (WFP).

Key responsibilities include working closely with the 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 prioritising incoming relief items for processing, e.g., prioritisation of airplanes requesting landing.

The earliest staffing of the LCC will typically come from UNDAC Operational Support Partners, like AST, IHP, Atlas Logistique, first arriving relief teams or in-country WFP staff.

See also UNDAC Handbook, Chapter G.11, Disaster logistics.

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 specialised 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 vary 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 materials releases are related to other causes, e.g., earthquakes, landslides and floods.

Governments in countries affected by environmental emergencies may seek expertise and resources from the international community to manage such crises. International support can be provided bilaterally, directly from supporting countries to the affected country, or through multilateral channels such as the UCPM, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) / Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Joint Environment Unit (JEU) and/or the UNDAC system.

Guidelines, tools and further information can be found on Relifeweb's dedicated page for Environment and Emergencies.

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 directly with the Assessment & Analysis Cell of that Function.

Further information on environmental emergencies can be accessed in the UNDAC Handbook, Chapter G.12, Environmental hazards and emergencies

Damage Assessment and Coordination Centre (DACC)

The DACC is a crucial mechanism, often supported by UNDAC or a Regional Organisation and international teams, that rapidly gathers, analyses, and coordinates information on disaster-struck areas to help local authorities manage response and recovery. It integrates international engineering expertise with local knowledge to support efficient rebuilding and safety assessments of damaged structures. It serves as a hub to connect national and international efforts, ensuring data is effectively utilised to inform decisions on infrastructure safety and resource allocation, and to advance the return to normalcy after events such as earthquakes or floods.

The DACC aims to:

- **Integrate expertise** – Brings together local structural engineers and international Urban Search & Rescue (USAR) teams to assess building safety.
- **Coordinate data** – Collects and analyses damage data from various sources (field reports, remote sensing) to create a unified picture.
- **Support local authorities** – Empowers governments with the information needed for quick decisions on resource deployment, demolition, and reconstruction planning.
- **Speed up recovery** – Improves coordination and analysis, which helps accelerate the return to normal living conditions for affected populations.

Regional Organisations Coordination Cell

In instances where regional organisations dispatch teams to manage assets deployed by their member states, establishing a dedicated Regional Coordination Cell can prove beneficial. Many regional organisations, such as the ASEAN Emergency Response and Assessment Team, CDEMA, the EUCPT, and the SADC Emergency Response Team, have trained teams capable of deploying and establishing local coordination mechanisms. These mechanisms facilitate the coordination of regional assistance, i.e., assistance from their respective member states to the affected country. Instead of creating parallel structures, adopting an integrated approach through a Regional Coordination Cell is advisable.

The Regional Coordination Cell will enhance the efforts of existing cells by providing a platform for full inclusion of regional organisation members within the overarching response framework, negating the need for separate coordination centres. This cell will operate independently without overlapping with existing structures, serving as a centralised service provider for members of various organisations. It will facilitate structured information exchange between responders, offering tailored and coordinated operational services to aid providers, the recipient Government, and other responders. While members of regional organisations can liaise directly with other OSOCC cells, the

Regional Coordination Cell will streamline and enhance collaborative efforts across the response landscape.

Integration into the OSOCC framework enables regional organisations to proactively coordinate their member states' operations by liaising with relevant OSOCC cells and assisting with assessment, analysis, and information management. This ensures seamless information exchange within the OSOCC, promoting interoperability between systems and discouraging the creation of redundant structures. Existing SOPs for interoperability between the OSOCC and regional organisations should be consulted during OSOCC establishment. See also section A.3.4 Regional arrangements relevant to the OSOCC.

B.3.7 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 two cells:

- Assessment & Analysis (A&A) Cell
- Information Management (IM) Cell

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.

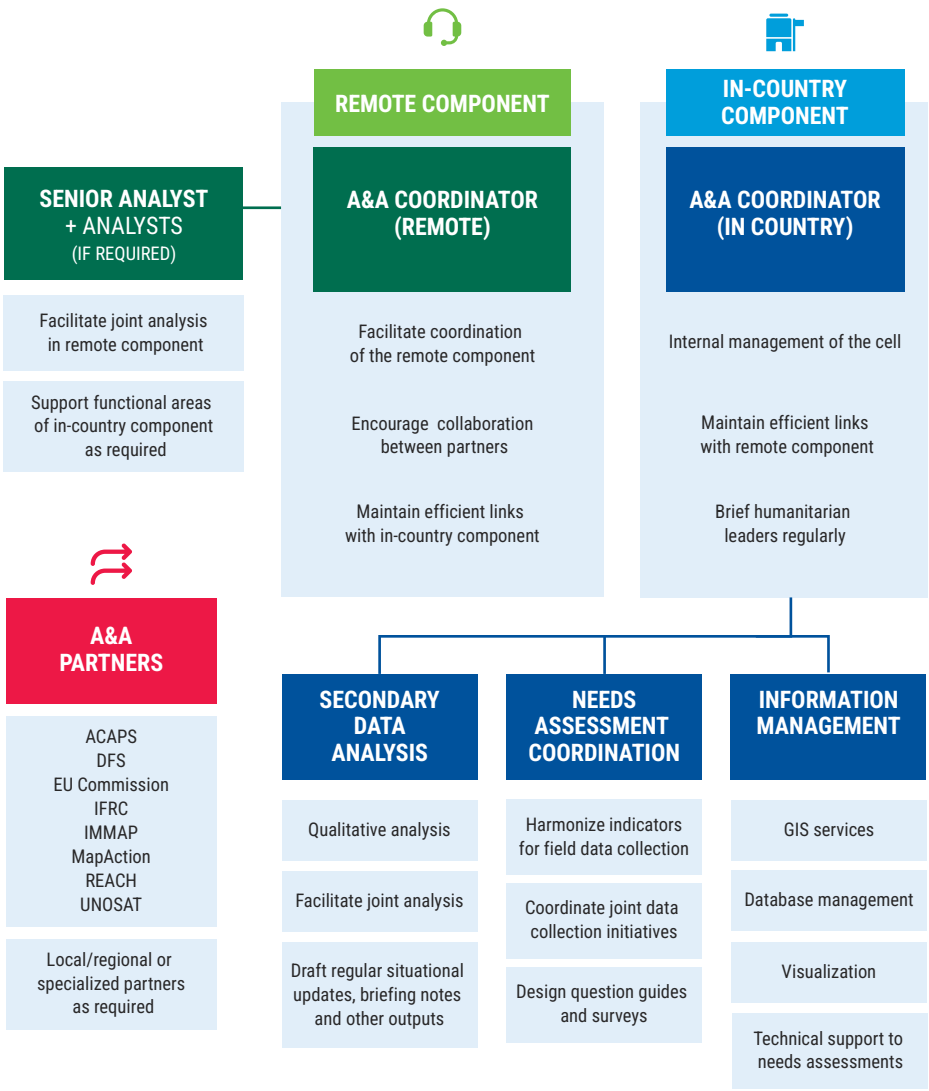
Those working in the Situation Function in the first phase of the emergency should have highly developed communication skills, attention to detail and a strong ability to analyse large quantities of information, including qualitative sociological information that can have relevance related to the needs 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 mobilising. The Situation Function will usually be staffed by UNDAC members – often with support from other rapid response mechanisms/teams, United Nations agencies and the affected Government. During this first phase, remote specialist support is generally available to assist each of the cells, as described in the functional descriptions below. As the emergency progresses, specialists will be physically deployed as required. This may include OCHA's regional Information Management Officer(s) (IMOs) or staff from OCHA's Field Information Services (FIS) Section, assessment experts from OCHA's Needs and Response Analysis Section (NARAS), or partners with specific IM and A&A subject matter expertise.

Assessment & Analysis (A&A) Cell

The A&A Cell collects, synthesises and analyses information that contributes to a common understanding of the situation. This includes identifying main challenges and impacts, root causes, and the 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 visual below shows a generic structure of an A&A Cell.

Figure B.3.7: A&A Cell organization



Independent of the capacity on the ground, the A&A Cell will always have a remote component coordinated by a (remote) A&A coordinator and a Senior Analyst. The remote component is facilitated by OCHA and supported by OCHA/UNDAC partners with an A&A profile, like ACAPS, DFS, EU Commission, IFRC, iMMAP, MapAction, Pacific Disaster Center, REACH, UNOSAT, WFP, and local/regional or specialised partners as required. The A&A Cell is dependent on the support from these partners, and it is vital to recognise that the remote and in-country components are equal parts of the A&A Cell.

It is important to note that even if the A&A Cell is an integral part of the OSOCC methodology, it will, in most sudden-onset disasters, be established regardless of whether the OCHA/UNDAC mission establishes an OSOCC.

Following a sudden-onset disaster, OCHA will activate the remote A&A cell to initiate cooperation and coordination among the partners listed in the visual above. Partners will inform each other about their individual plans and see if there are any synergies and possibilities for collaboration. OCHA and partners will produce analytical outputs like initial briefing notes, impact estimations, scientific modelling, and maps. OCHA/UNDAC and the partners can deploy experts to establish a physical A&A Cell in-country if a field component is needed. The remote component will remain operational for 2 to 3 weeks as part of the cell and support with data collation, interpretation, scientific advice, and data processing. Remote-sensed data will be requested by the Cell as the primary source of information prior to any field deployment and OSOCC establishment.

The aim of the A&A Cell is to:

- Develop a shared understanding of the humanitarian situation following a sudden-onset disaster, in particular:
  - Scope (how large) and scale (how many) of the crisis.
  - Most affected/impacted geographic areas, population groups, and humanitarian sectors.

  - » Priority needs by the humanitarian sector, and inter-sector, i.e., combined needs.
  - » Drivers, i.e., the underlying factors or root causes that are driving the crisis and its most acute problems, or possible chain of events forward.
  - » Vulnerabilities, risks, and operational constraints.
- Communicate regularly and frequently information that is needed for ongoing and future operations.

When an OSOCC is established, the A&A Cell is part of the Situation Function of an OSOCC where all assessment and analysis processes are being managed. It focuses on the consolidation and analysis of remote sensing data, secondary and primary data, and works closely with all other information management roles from other functions and cells. Its main tasks are to:

- Facilitate coordination of A&A Cell analyses to guide strategic and operational decision-making during sudden-onset disasters.
- Produce regular situational updates/briefings and other analytical outputs as required in consultation with the national Government, humanitarian decision-makers, and the RC/HC's office.
- Facilitate external coordination of assessments and analysis with clusters, agencies and the Government, e.g., through establishing and facilitating a broader Assessment and Analysis Working Group (AAWG) and participation at cluster and NGO coordination meetings.

Pending on the size of the emergency, the UNDAC team, the OSOCC, and the set-up of the in-country component will vary. While A&A Cell members will have to be flexible with regards to how roles are distributed or organised, it is important to clearly assign functions within the Cell. For medium-sized emergencies it is recommended to have at least two persons assigned to the in-country component, one assessment coordinator in charge of managing the Cell, liaising with the remote component and with external partners, and one person, ideally sheltered from the daily coordination activities, focusing on collation of pre- and in-crisis secondary data and analysis. For larger scale

emergencies, a minimum of four persons are needed, but usually more, to the in-country component assisted by partners.

See UNDAC Handbook, Chapter F.2 for more on A&A methodology and processes.

Information Management (IM) Cell

The IM Cell collects information related to the disaster (including information obtained by the A&A Cell), organises 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 organisations 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 staff from operational partners such as MapAction and iMMAP. As required, OCHA will deploy additional IM staff through surge mechanisms or directly from the Field Information Services (FIS) Section.

The IM cell works closely with A&A cell and can support various tasks for assessment coordination such as creating or adapting assessment/survey forms for use on tablets or smartphones, e.g., KoboCollect, visualising progress and/or assessment preliminary results, assessment data cleaning and analysis etc.

Besides supporting the A&A cell, the IM cell also creates and maintains contact lists, meeting calendars, the ReliefWeb Response page, 3W, maps and infographics, and other products to support coordination.

The IM cell also supports the OSOCC with managing a shared workspace, e.g., Google Drive, etc., and ensures the team can access it. IM is also in charge of supporting the management of other communication channels, e.g., Signal and/or WhatsApp groups, etc., for formal and informal communications (Community of Practice events and data sharing spaces).

In large-scale emergencies where demand for OSOCC services is high, it may be necessary to establish a separate OSOCC Reception Area. Many of the information management (IM) products, such as maps and the logistic services operated by the Logistics Cluster, will be in high demand, prompting the IM Cell to consider co-locating some staff with the Reception Area. This arrangement facilitates the IM Cell's role as an information hub for exchanging data with OSOCC clients. Additionally, it allows the IM Cell to encourage the sharing of datasets on the Humanitarian Data Exchange (HDX) at https://data.humdata.org/, an open platform for data sharing. The IM Cell can also advocate for registration on contact lists and inform visitors about other useful tools and resources.

B.3.8 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 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 IHP, Atlas Logistique, AST, or similar. The support teams may be supplemented by additional resources, such as partner organisations, as required, e.g., TSF for ICT support. While the Support Function is not generally broken into cells, the scale of an emergency may occasionally require such a division of labour as follows below.

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. Further guidance on OSOCC facilities is contained in section B.5.

Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Cell

The ICT Cell is responsible for executing an ICT plan tailored to the needs of the OSOCC and its overall response efforts. This plan aims to provide the necessary technology infrastructure for the OSOCC to perform its functions efficiently. It encompasses establishing data and voice communication channels to connect different components of the OSOCC system with each other and with external stakeholders, such as deployed teams, the affected Government, and humanitarian actors. Similar to the Facilities Cell, equipment required to support the ICT plan is deployed in standardised packages by operational partners with other OSOCC personnel.

Administration Cell

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

In emergencies requiring extensive administrative skills and knowledge of UN procedures, OCHA has trained several of its administrative staff in OSOCC operations 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 and personnel 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/national 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 organised entry.

The RDC, typically the initial OSOCC component established in the affected country, serves as the central intake hub for international relief traffic. As such, it is usually set up by the first-arriving USAR team for international USAR coordination or UNDAC team members (to support and oversee incoming international humanitarian assistance teams other than USAR). Some USAR teams also operate specially trained RDC support modules that may deploy independently to establish and run RDCs.

In some cases, national or local authorities may already have established an RDC in anticipation of incoming international relief teams, in which case incoming USAR teams, UNDAC team members work in support of them. A representative from the EMTCC may also be present to provide additional support in recording EMT teams at the RDC.

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, access, safety/security, 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 itself gains the means to facilitate incoming/outgoing international resources.

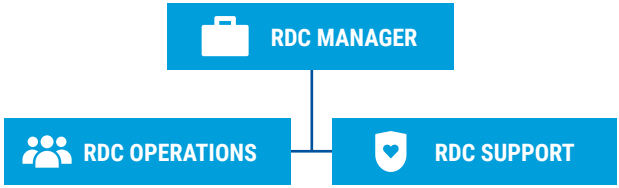
As the first contact point for incoming international assistance, the RDC needs to be established in a systematic manner that imparts a level of organisation in the chaotic environment of the disaster. To achieve this, the RDC requires a clear structure that mimics the functional approach of the OSOCC.

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.

All operational decisions should be made through RDC Management and the requisite OSOCC Operations Cell. This ongoing information flow will allow the OSOCC to prepare for incoming resources, thus expediting the assignment of teams to the field.

Figure B.4.1: RDC functions



RDC Management

RDC Management is responsible for overseeing the RDC operation and providing leadership to assigned personnel. Along with ensuring 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 UNDAC, USAR or specialised RDC module.

RDC Operations

RDC Operations is responsible for the processing of international response teams/relief supplies arriving in and departing from the affected country. Staff working within Operations will facilitate the in-processing and/or out-processing of relief teams/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, and LEMA.

RDC Support

RDC Support is responsible for establishing and sustaining the systems that support the RDC operation. This can include sourcing and setting up materials

for processing stations and ensuring available and functioning ICT and Internet connectivity. Support is also responsible for the management of RDC information including maintaining files and establishing an information board. In cooperation with LEMA, 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.

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 for the OSOCC. The OSOCC will require information about the capacity of incoming response teams and any identified logistical needs 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 to brief incoming teams effectively. See section B.5.1 for selection of RDC facilities

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 rhythm of the incident, 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 or chat as frequently as possible, by phone if urgent.
- Regular updating of the VOSOCC.
- A procedure for organising the departure of the various rescue teams and their travel arrangements.

In addition to its daily coordination and information-sharing functions with the OSOCC, the RDC may engage in similar activities at the point of entry. This could involve daily meetings with point-of-entry authorities, local representatives, or military personnel. The RDC's role is to assist the affected

country in managing incoming international response teams, and the specific support model will be determined through discussions with the authorities overseeing the point of entry.

Please note that there is rarely one single point of contact for airport authorities. Most airports operate with a system of several organisational entities and authorities, with specific mandates, collaborating on airport operations. The various airport entities in many contexts operate under different parts of a country's legislation and may operate independently of each other. 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. 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)

An RDC should operate as an extension of the OSOCC coordination platform, adhering to the same principles as the OSOCC itself. Fostering cooperation with and among the organisations present at the point of entry is essential for the RDC to facilitate effective reception and departure of international resources. The RDC must ensure that it has contacts with all relevant counterparts to inform them about the RDC's role and tasks. See UNDAC Handbook for information related to coordination methodology (Chapter G.1) and civil-military coordination tips (Chapter G.10.3).

B.4.3 Reception Activities

According to the INSARAG Guidelines, the first arriving USAR team (or teams) will set up an RDC for USAR teams and will therefore manage the processing of the USAR teams. If there is no USAR-RDC, and teams are still arriving when UNDAC arrives, the UNDAC team should establish the RDC and start coordination activities.

Primary responsibilities of an RDC, specifically for USAR:

1. Contact port authorities, ask permission to set up an RDC, and decide how and who is needed for collaboration.
2. Facilitate immigration and customs procedures for incoming teams.
3. Post location information and updates to the VOSOCC and ICMS
4. Register arriving/departing teams.
5. Deliver briefings on the disaster situation and USAR operations.
6. Share basic logistical information to incoming and outgoing teams.
7. Update the UCC about incoming team information.
8. Obtain information from UCC on where to direct incoming teams.
9. Direct teams to the UCC, and/or a Base of Operations (BoO), and if requested by the UCC or LEMA, to rescue sites.
10. If possible, brief non-USAR resources, e.g., teams offering other types of relief, humanitarian NGOs, etc., on the situation and refer them to UNDAC or other relevant entity.

Speed is of the essence in events with significant damage to infrastructure and high numbers of casualties. In advance of the OSOCC being set up, the RDC can quickly deploy USAR teams and EMTs to relevant sites, enabling them to conduct life-saving operations.

Initial reception

As teams begin arriving at the port of entry, it is beneficial to have an 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 setup of the RDC, this may include directions to a holding area for cargo, directions to 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 ensure that responders are carrying appropriate documentation that permits them to enter the country, e.g., a passport, a visa, or a letter from the deploying organisation. Responders who work in specialised 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 the immigration authorities 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 offloaded 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 endeavour to move their materials into the affected area. RDC staff may be required to support local authorities, the military, the Logistics Coordination Cell, and/or the Logistics Cluster to ease congestion.

Registration

Coordination of response activities relies on knowing who is active on the ground and how to contact them. All incoming international response teams should be registered prior to deployment using the established protocols through the VOSOCC and 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.

International response teams who did not register before 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 on 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 3W database. The details regarding the number, type and capacity of incoming teams are necessary for the main OSOCC and UCC to facilitate operational planning. If information sharing between the RDC and the OSOCC/UCC is effective, incoming teams can be deployed to the field in a coordinated manner.

Briefing

Arriving international teams should be given an initial briefing to orient them to the current situation and provide practicalities 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 that 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 BoO, 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 both 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/UCC when teams are en route. This will allow the OSOCC/UCC to better prepare for the teams 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 LEMA will determine the appropriate time to begin to wrap up particular response activities, generally starting with the lifesaving operations. When the first teams have completed their mission and begin demobilisation, the RDC shifts its focus to include 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 Demobilisation 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 when 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 individual responders near the end of their time on 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/UCC 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/UCC as to their preferred departure dates and provide their equipment and passenger manifests.

RDC staff will need to work closely with the OSOCC/UCC 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 large amount of traffic likely moving into and out of the country, RDC staff and departing teams will need to remain flexible. Provisions should be made if teams are required to wait at the point of exit for an extended period. 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 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.

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 Report 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 Demobilisation

The RDC is intended as a tool for use during the initial period of a disaster support the Government of the affected country 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 demobilised. Alternatively, the RDC may simply be demobilised at a point when the influx of international assistance ceases.

In situations where the functions of the RDC, e.g., reception 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 OSOCC/UCC.

As with all operations, demobilisation 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/UCC or another RDC as appropriate or may return to their home country.

B.5 Establishing, Maintaining and Demobilising OSOCC Facilities

OSOCC trained USAR staff or UNDAC members will establish preliminary OSOCC services. 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 near entry authorities or the LEMA. The RDC may be established in an existing facility or a separate, temporary shelter nearby, but should be located in a visible place along the flow of arriving passengers and cargo/luggage. For example, next to immigration, or between immigration and customs, etc.

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 however, 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 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, LEMA and other agencies/organisations providing humanitarian assistance. This will facilitate cooperation and information exchange. The site should maximize the effective use of communication equipment, e.g., on higher ground and not surrounded by hills or other natural obstructions. It should 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.

The location of the OSOCC will, to some extent, depend on the situation. In an earthquake, the OSOCC is best situated close to the site of the disaster, but in a widespread flood situation it might be best to find an easily accessible location just outside the affected area.

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 operational needs. Alternatively, it can be set up in one or more tents. There are advantages to each set up and the type of incident and available resources will often determine which model is most suitable

OSOCC in a building

If a building is chosen for an OSOCC, it should be structurally sound and not damaged during the emergency. The building should be large enough to accommodate the co-location of staff from the Government and other agencies that wish to operate within the OSOCC structure. Ideally, there will be several separate rooms to use as offices and the following features:

- A general area for receiving and registering visitors, preferably providing a welcoming ambiance, e.g., a coffee area/machine.
- A general situation room with tables and chairs sufficient for meetings of 12-15 people (larger, if possible).
- There should be some private offices where confidential discussions may take place.
- Possibility to install generators or access to a grid with stable voltage and frequency or stabilised with uninterruptible power supply/source (UPS) or stabilisers, and 1-3 phases with correct fuses, circuit breakers and earthing.
- Preferably access to adequate hygiene or sanitation systems with safe handling of sanitary waste.
- Communications equipment should be in a secure communications room.
- Office equipment, e.g., photocopiers, printers, should be accessible but not in general meeting space areas.

OSOCC in tents

Constructing the OSOCC using several tents is often the best solution. Designing the OSOCC to maximise its purpose as a service provider requires that tents are set up in a way that considers both crowd management and proximity of functions and OSOCC cells.

UNDAC operational partners like the IHP, AST and Atlas Logistique can provide the necessary equipment to set up a tented OSOCC.

The base camp site selection guidance in the UNDAC Handbook Chapter H.5.2 may be helpful when designing an OSOCC as many of the considerations are applicable for both types of tented environments.

Maximising the OSOCC's effectiveness as a service provider necessitates consideration of diverse functional requirements and operational needs, ensuring its capability to respond adeptly to emergencies and deliver essential support services.

- The OSOCC Reception Area should be located so it is easily visible from a distance, clearly marked with flags and designed to serve a large number of people without coming into conflict with other OSOCC cells.
- Meeting areas / tents may be located in the vicinity of the OSOCC Reception Area but outside of the OSOCC. This may facilitate both external and internal meetings, e.g., cluster and team meetings.
- OSOCC Management may want to be centrally located to easily attend to all cells throughout the working-day.
- Components of the IM (Information Management) Cell may often want to be close to, or co-located with, the Reception Area and its clients, e.g., MapAction may want to be in a position where they can easily serve clients with map requests.
- Analysis and reporting functions may prefer to be in a more private area to facilitate the focus needed for this kind of work.
- Administrative and internal logistical functions rarely need to be in close contact with OSOCC clients.
- If the OSOCC also includes accommodation areas for its staff, these tents should be secluded and not accessible to the public.
- Plan for office space and service areas for a large number of people and consider OCHA surge capacity and other international organisations' needs. Thus, plan for more space than originally thought to avoid limitations during emergencies.

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 Operational Tools.

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 maintained by and available through IHP, AST, and Atlas Logistique. The packages provided by these support partners 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.3.8 Support Function).

OSOCC equipment

The first team to arrive at the affected area will need a basic set of office equipment to coordinate relief efforts and communicate with other stakeholders

- Portable printers are crucial for printing critical documents, such as incident reports, maps, and resource lists.
- Projectors can be used to display maps, charts, and other visual aids during briefings, meetings, and training sessions.
- Whiteboards and flipcharts are essential for brainstorming, taking notes, and facilitating discussions. They provide a flexible and accessible medium for capturing ideas and sharing information. They can also be used for displaying public information to the OSOCC clients.

When establishing the OSOCC in particular, consideration will need to be given to the varying space requirements among the operational cells. For example, USAR teams carry large amounts of equipment that will need a designated space.

It is important to note that some coordination cells may need to be forward located to minimize the time between the onset of the disaster and the operational activities of response teams. This is particularly true for Cells 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.3.8) is responsible for ensuring that the facilities are maintained on a daily basis. For the continued operation of the OSOCC facilities, the following needs to be maintained:

- Adequate internet connectivity.
- Access to a regular power supply, e.g., 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 organisations.

B.5.4 Facility Demobilisation

Planning for the demobilisation 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 demobilise first, although sub-OSOCCs may demobilise 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 demobilisation 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 organisation. In addition, efforts should be made to return the space and/or buildings to a usable state prior to departure.

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

PART III: OPERATIONAL TOOLS

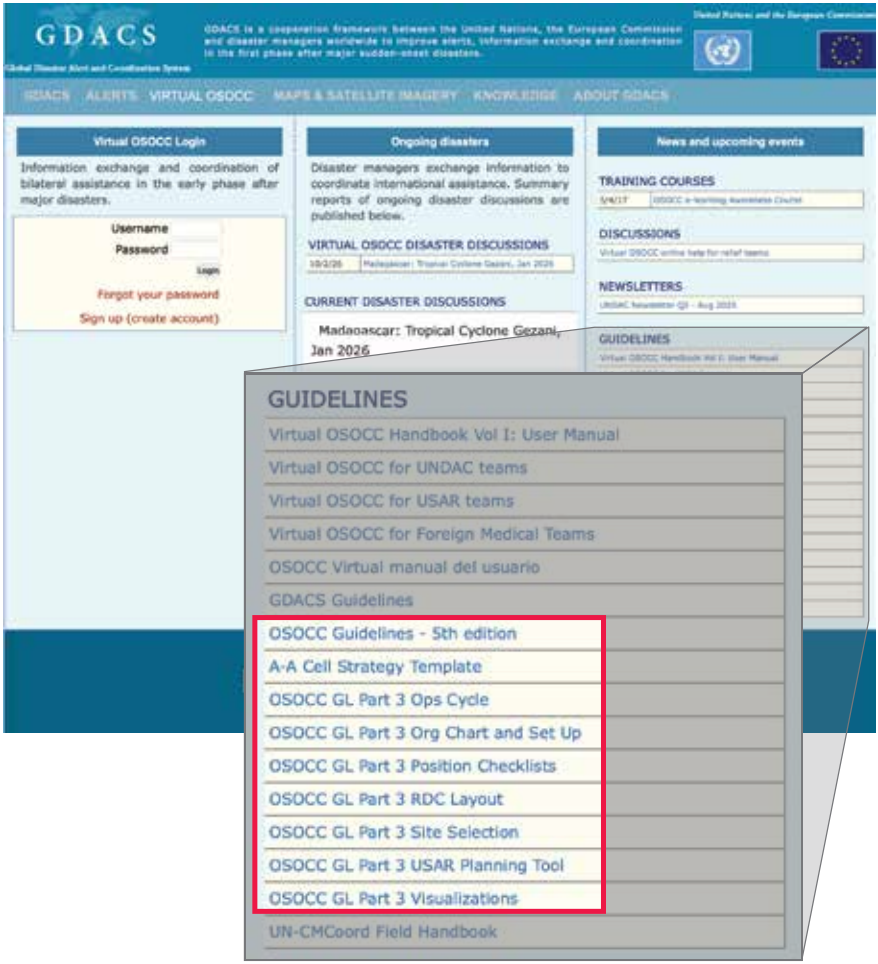
Contents

PART III: OPERATIONAL TOOLS

C.1 Tools and templates

Operational tools and templates can be found on the login page of Virtual OSOCC.

Figure C.1: VOSOCC website



Here you can find specific responsibilities for the lead of each function or cell, summarised and described in a one-pager for each position:

- Assessment & Analysis Cell Coordinator
- 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

A set of resources to support OSOCC operations:

- OSOCC Set Up; a design map of a medium sized and a large sized OSCC
- Organisational Chart; a template for an OSOCC organigramme
- OSOCC Visualisations; a set of commonly used visualization tools for use in the OSOCC/RDC

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

C.2 Acronyms

The following table lists some of the most commonly used acronyms associated with OSOCC.

Acronym	Full name
3W	Who is doing What and Where
AAWG	Assessment and Analysis Working Group
A&A	Assessment & Analysis
ACAPS	Assessment Capacities Project
AHA Centre	ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance
ASEAN	Association of South-East Asian Nations
ASEAN ERAT	Emergency Response and Assessment Team
AST	Americas Support Team
BoO	Base of Operations
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CDAC	CARICOM Damage Assessment Coordination
CE	Community Engagement
CDEMA	Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency
COST	CARICOM Operational Support Team

Acronym	Full name
DACC	Disaster Assessment Coordination Centre
DFS	Data Friendly Space
DHL	Deutsche Post AG
ECHO	European Commission Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
EE	Environmental Emergencies
EER	Environmental Emergencies Roster
EMT	Emergency Medical Team
EoC	Emergency Operations Centre
ERC	Emergency Relief Coordinator
ERCC	Emergency Relief Coordination Centre
ERT	Emergency Response Team
EUCPT	European Civil Protection Team
FEAT	Flash Environmental Assessment Tool
FIS	OCHA Field Information Services
GDACS	Global Disaster Awareness and Coordination System
HC	Humanitarian Coordinator

C

Acronym	Full name
HCT	Humanitarian Country Team
HDX	Humanitarian Data Exchange
HNRP	Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan
HuMOCC	Humanitarian-Military Operations Coordination Centre
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICCG	Inter-Cluster Coordination Group
ICMS	INSARAG Coordination and Management System
ICT	Information Communications Technology
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross/Red Crescent
IHP	International Humanitarian Partnership
IM	Information Management
iMMAP	Information Management and Mine Action Programs
IMO	Information Management Officer
INSARAG	International Search and Rescue Advisory Group
JEU	Joint Environment Unit
JOCCA	Joint Operations and Coordination Centre of ASEAN

Acronym	Full name
JRC	European Commission Joint Research Centre
LCC	Logistics Coordination Cell
LEMA	Local Emergency Management Authority
MCDA	Military and Civil Defence Assets
MoH	Ministry of Health
MHEWS	Multi Hazard Early Warning System
NARAS	OCHA's Needs and Response Analysis Section
NDMO	National Disaster Management Organisations
NEOC	National Emergency Operations Centre
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
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

C

Acronym	Full name
RDC	Reception Departure Centre
RNAT	Rapid Needs Assessment Team
RRM	Regional Response Mechanism
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SCC	INSARAG Sector Coordination Cell
SHOC	SADC Humanitarian and Emergency Operations Centre
SMCS	Satellite Mapping Coordination System
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
S&S	Safety & Security
TSF	Télécoms Sans Frontières
ToR	Terms of Reference
UCC	Urban Search and Rescue Coordination Cell
UCPM	Union Civil Protection Mechanism
UN-CMCoord	United Nations Civil-Military Coordination
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDAC	United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination Team

Acronym	Full name
UNDSS	United Nations Department of Safety and Security
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNOSAT	United Nations Satellite Centre
UNSMS	United Nations Security Management System
USAR	Urban Search and Rescue
USG	Under-Secretary General
VOSOCC	Virtual On-Site Operations Coordination Centre
WebEOC	ASEAN-Web Emergency Operations Centre
WHO	World Health Organization
WFP	World Food Programme (UN)

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