

MATRIX: Follow-up to the recommendations of the United Nations Board of Auditors in its reports on UNHCR's 2016 and previous years financial statements

This matrix has been prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for the United Nations Board of Auditors.

It is being shared with the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme for information purposes only.

UNHCR

July 2018



Please note that main recommendations of the Board of Auditors are reflected in bold.

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2016	39	The Board recommends that country operations determine the numbers and types of vehicles needed to meet operational needs and document the underlying assumptions and how country operations arrived at their estimates. In case country operations need assistance with respect to an accepted methodology to estimate the number and types of vehicles needed for the operation, the Board encourages them to liaise with the assets and fleet management section at Headquarters for advice or additional guidance. BoA Assessment (April 2018) The Board noted the progress made by UNHCR and confirms that a guidance note on fleet planning for the 2018 vehicle requirements and an ordering document has been issued by UNHCR. Furthermore, the Board also noted that planning sheets for vehicles, maintenance/repair and disposals have been issued and will be reviewed for each operation. However, the implementation of these tools will take place in 2018 and could not be reviewed by the Board. Observations made during the Board's field visits also confirmed that in 2017 visited country operations could not provide an adequate fleet planning. Therefore, the recommendation is considered to be under implementation.	4 th quarter 2017	4 th quarter 2018	DESS (SMLS) Regional Bureaux	In line with recently issued guidance, country offices were required to fill in country planning sheets for their fleets. These sheets were then reviewed and aggregated by the Global Fleet Management Unit, shared and discussed with the bureaux and used in support of the annual programme review (APR) process for 2019. Meetings are set up with those operations which currently have fleets of 100 or more vehicles, in order to discuss their final figures for 2019 and the corresponding actions to be taken with regards to fleet and asset management. Through the use of the tools described above, UNHCR expects that country operations will be better equipped to determine the number and types of vehicles needed in order to meet the operational requirements for 2019.
2016	59	The Board recommends that UNHCR consider the possibility of long-term investments to cover risk-	1 st quarter 2018	3 rd quarter 2018	DFAM (Treasury)	UNHCR has carried out a comprehensive Asset Liability Modelling (ALM) study to assess matching criteria between liabilities and assets, establish asset risk



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		adequate financing of after-service health insurance liabilities. BoA Assessment (April 2018) The Board acknowledges the results of the Asset Liability Modelling Study, namely the assessed liability profile and the developed funding scenarios. The Board welcomes UNHCR's ongoing participation in the Working Group on Common Treasury Services. The Board encourages UNHCR to continue the review of the various strategic asset allocation options and the collaboration efforts with other United Nations' agencies, funds and programmes. The Board also positively notes that UNHCR intends to conclude on the long-term strategy at the latest until the end of 2018. The recommendation is considered under implementation.				limits for an adequate investment strategy and confirm expected long-term investment returns. The study has now been completed and the resulting information has also allowed UNHCR to assess opportunities to collaborate with other United Nations agencies to harmonize best practices in long-term investment management and to leverage contractual arrangements for the provision of investment management and legal services across the United Nations system with a view to reducing service fees due to economies of scale. Joint investment approaches are also being evaluated with the support of the United Nations Working Group on Common Treasury Services. UNHCR will prepare a long-term investment strategy and governance structure for the ASHI reserve to be approved by the High Commissioner.
2016	71	The Board recommends that UNHCR pay close attention to the fact that high quality reviews and verifications of partners' financial reports are essential to control the implementing partnership expenses when implementing key recommendations of the HQ review. **BoA Assessment* (April 2018)* The Board has noted UNHCR's change strategy 2017 – 2019 and the progress made by UNHCR in facilitating the change process, e.g. by creating a Division of Resilience and Solutions. However, at the time of the Board's field work the Board did not obtain an update on the status of the implementation of endorsed recommendations	4 th quarter 2018	Implemented	DFAM	Through the current structures in place for the management of partnership, UNHCR achieves high quality reviews and verifications of partners' financial reports in order to obtain adequate assurance over expenses incurred. Any future potential changes in partnership management occurring as a result of subsequent HQ reviews will be implemented with particular attention to maintaining the high quality of reviews and verification of partners. UNHCR, therefore, considers this recommendation as it relates to current operations as fully addressed.



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		from the Headquarters review. Therefore, the Board considers the recommendation as under implementation.				
2016	76	The Board recommends that UNHCR review certain templates related to partnerships such as agreements, project descriptions, project work plans, monitoring plans and project risk registers/catalogues and assess if they might be enhanced to better assist country operations to use them in more consistent way and, where appropriate, with less duplication of information.	4 th quarter 2018	4 th quarter 2018	DFAM (IPMS)	Having completed most of the key processes and adopted relevant policies, guidance and tools, the focus is directed towards refinements of project management tools and quality enhancements. A workshop is planned in the third quarter of 2018 for mapping out business requirements for further streaming and digitalising of partnership management processes.
		BoA Assessment (April 2018)				
		The Board noted additional measures taken by UNHCR to improve consistency in project management and reduce duplication of information. The Board also positively noted an ongoing capacity-building for operations' and partners' staff to apply templates as they are intended. With regard to the ongoing efforts the Board considers the recommendation as under implementation.				
2016	81	The Board recommends that country operations ensure coherent risk assessments within operations and to regularly review the quality of the risk assessments for individual project partnership agreements. The risk assessment template recently provided by Implementing Partner Management Service could support such exercises.	4 th quarter 2018	4 th quarter 2018	Regional Bureaux DFAM (IPMS)	DFAM/IPMS has provided the guiding principles, tools and arrangements for enhancing knowledge related to the project risk assessment (e-learning, webinar, FAQ, face-to-face guidance, phones, emails). An increasing number of operations is using the risk-based approach coherently. UNHCR expects that overall improvements will materialise through the end of the year 2018.



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		BoA Assessment (April 2018) The Board positively noted the roll-out of the Implementing Partner monitoring and control toolkit in June 2017. This toolkit connects risk assessment and monitoring activities for project partner agreements. The use of the toolkit is voluntary. The Board also recognized that UNHCR had offered online training sessions and started a series of workshops to increase capacity on risk-based monitoring. 2018 is the first full Implementing Partner budget cycle in which the toolkit is used. The training sessions are still ongoing. The usage as well as the effects will only be visible in 2019. Thus, the Board considers this recommendation as under implementation.				
2016	87	The Board reiterates its previous recommendation and encourages country operations enhance the quality of their monitoring activities for project partnership agreements and pay greater attention to developing risk-based monitoring plans for individual agreements as well as overall monitoring plans covering all project partnership agreements in an operation. The Board also advised that these plans specifically consider the risk of fraud and enhance checks to ensure accountability for the use of assets. *BoA Assessment (April 2018)* The Board recognized that UNHCR kept on assessing project monitoring and verification and noted the	4 th quarter 2018	4 th quarter 2018	Regional Bureaux DFAM (IPMS)	In addition to guidance and monitoring provided to country operations to apply risk-based monitoring and enhance quality, a series of workshops on risk-based monitoring have taken place with participation of an audit firm. The model was piloted in Kenya, the United Republic of Tanzania and the Southern Africa Region and has resulted in notable improvements in the quality of monitoring of agreements with partners. Similar workshops are being offered to other operations that need such support.



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2016	88	improvements made. The report for 2017 was still outstanding at the time of the audit, for which reason a further quality enhancement could not be verified by the Board. The Board further noted that UNHCR initiated a series of workshops on risk-based monitoring together with an audit firm. The expected output is the development of a risk-based monitoring plan. UNHCR especially highlighted experiences from former fraudulent actions as risks to be taken into account. The Board encourages UNHCR to assess the outcome of the workshops and eventually expand the exercise to other country operations. Thus, the Board considers this recommendation as under implementation. The Board also recommends that management in country operations and the regional bureaux regularly review the quality of financial and performance monitor-	4 th quarter 2018	4 th quarter 2018	Regional Bureaux	Increasing the quality of financial and performance reviews made by country operations relating to projects implemented with partners is a continuous
		ing for projects implemented with partners. BoA Assessment (April 2018) The Board recognizes the compliance and quality assessment of project monitoring and verification reports conducted by the Implementing Partner Management Service since 2015. The recommendation advises to perform a quality assessment of partners' reporting on operations or bureaux level to identify country or region-specific weaknesses and possible corrective measures. Therefore the Board considers the recommendation as under implementation.			DFAM (IPMS)	endeavour. The level of support extended to partners and application varies as the operations across UNHCR have different degrees of complexity and are not uniform. Outcomes of in-depth analysis and compliance checks performed in higher-risk countries are shared with other country operations to draw lessons learned and integrate those lessons in the subsequent operational cycles.



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2016	105	The Board recommends that UNHCR document good practices and lessons learned from the MSRP upgrade project and, where appropriate, use them for other information technology projects. The Board expects this exercise to assist UNHCR in managing its projects in a more efficient way. BoA Assessment (April 2018) The Board confirms that UNHCR made progress in implementing this recommendation. However, the board also noted that UNHCR is planning to set up a database to carry forward best practices and lessons learned starting with the managing system resources and people upgrade project. The Board suggests promoting the database once finished to ensure use of the newly integrated tool. The Board, therefore, considers the recommendation as under implementation.	3 rd quarter 2017	1 st quarter 2019	DIST	UNHCR is in the process of updating both the administrative instruction for ICT project governance and the internal "project management lifecycle" (PMLC) document, which describes the process for delivering ICT projects. As part of the updated PMLC, a database will be put in place to enable UNHCR to collect and report on the lessons learned in respect of project management. Emphasizing that the responsibility for providing and analysing the information in the database rests with the business coordinator/project manager of each project, UNHCR believes that this database will constitute a valuable resource to inform future projects.
2016	113	The Board recommends that country operations monitor non-purchase order purchases on a regular basis and assess whether further efficiency gains could be realised by compiling individual non- purchase order purchases into framework agreements. The Board also advises that Headquarters divisions liaise with country operations to explore how the monitoring and oversight of non-purchase order purchases could be facilitated. BoA Assessment (April 2018) UNHCR has launched a pilot project consisting of monthly country supply reports in order to improve the	3 rd quarter 2018	4 th quarter 2018	DESS (Procure- ment Service)	UNHCR reached the final stage of developing the monthly country supply report, which is designed to track key information regarding supply management by country operations, including the level and number of non-PO vouchers. The fine-tuning of the report is ongoing based on feedback received from the pilot operations. Its global launch is planned during the fourth quarter of 2018.



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		communication between the field supply units and the Procurement Service at headquarters level. Moreover, the new system shall enable the procurement service to assess areas of non-purchase order purchases where frame agreements and other tender procedures deem more suitable. The roll-out is planned for June 2018. The report is based upon the results of a specific managing system resources and people query for non-purchase order purchases and data delivered from the procurement service unit at country-office level. However, during its field visits the Board observed that UNCHR contracted single vendors on the occasion of non-purchase order purchases, purchased goods and services per category on multiple occasions and with an annual value of more than \$16,000. Moreover, in several cases UNHCR even contracted vendors within a quarter of a year on several occasions exceeding the value of \$4,000. Furthermore, country offices had no ad-hoc overview on their non-purchase order purchases. Thus, the Board considers the recommendation as under implementation.				
2015	14	The Board recommends that UNHCR develop a set of processes, tools and reports that can be applied at the field level to enhance the financial management of programme budgets and expenditure. This should include stronger links between finance and programme staff in the field through joint analysis and review processes.	1 st quarter 2018	1 st quarter 2019	DPSM DFAM	To complement the tools that were mentioned in the previous updates on this recommendation, UNHCR is continuing the process of updating the programme manual, which will provide additional guidance, including on direct implementation as previously noted by the auditors. UNHCR, through its Global Learning Centre (GLC), is also initiating webinars, to train colleagues on



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		BoA Assessment (April 2018) The Board noted that UNHCR had developed a tool to link budget management (FOCUS) to the enterprise resource planning system (managing systems resources and people). By using the tool staff involved is in a position to analyse budget changes. The budget analysis is part of the budget review and approval processes. The obligatory use of the tool fostered the communication of staff involved. The Board also positively noted that UNHCR had reviewed the guidance on direct implementation to incorporate the multi-functional team approach. The UNHCR manual also included responsibilities for monitoring of budgeting and planning activities. Since the reviewed manual will only be fully implemented in 2018, the Board considers the recommendation as under implementation.				UNHCR's systems, tools and essential skills for programme management. The syllabus of these webinars includes a self-study component on FOCUS Insight, FOCUS Reader, FOCUS Client, Hyperion and MSRP Financial Reporting.
2015	55	The Board recommends that risk registers be reviewed on at least on a quarterly basis as a standing item at senior management meetings. Country office representatives should take a cyclical approach to scrutinizing risks and their mitigations to ensure that the risk process is fully embedded in their local business processes and utilized in the development of country office plans. BoA Assessment (April 2018) The Board noted that the office of internal oversight services suggested a revision of the UNHCR's enterprise	1 st quarter 2018	2 nd quarter 2019	ERM	UNHCR intends to revise its ERM policy to incorporate further suggested improvements, with the aim of completing the policy revision in 2019. The revision of the ERM policy has to give due consideration to the updated standard on risk management (ISO 31000) which was only recently issued by the International Organization for Standardization. The revision will also address the gaps and reflect the good practices identified under the recently launched Risk Management 2.0 initiative.



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		risk management policy in its advisory report. The office of internal oversight services also advised that any action taken on the suggested improvements are done with due consideration to the revised ISO 31000. UNHCR is expected to revise its enterprise risk management policy after the revised ISO 31000 will be available. Therefore, a revised policy will not be available before 2019. In addition, the Board noted during its field visits that the risk management approach of some operations is not yet as mature as it could be. The recommendation is considered to be under implementation.				
2015	65	The Board recommends that UNHCR Headquarters develop a formal reporting mechanism on the frequency and comprehensiveness of verification exercises, enabling it to obtain assurance as to the accuracy of the data regarding its existing population of concern, and provide a stronger link between the results and the deployment of resources. BoA Assessment (April 2018) The Board noted that UNHCR has developed a standard reporting template for verification activities and provided the template to the operations. However, UNHCR did not yet develop a formal reporting mechanism. The frequency of verification exercises is decided by the operations. In general, a verification	1 st quarter 2018	1 st quarter 2019	DPSM	UNHCR plans to continue conducting verification exercises for 18 additional countries during 2018. In doing so, UNHCR will consistently make use of the standard reporting template that was developed and tested in the previous year and utilize the data quality script linked to the registration system (proGres). This script is run before and after each verification exercises in order to compare the change in population demographics and quality of data and to assess the integrity of the registration systems. Additionally, UNHCR has set up, for two of the ongoing verification exercises, data portals displaying live the progress of verification exercises. It is intended to expand such portals to other verifications. It is expected that, through the consistent use of such tools, the organization will be



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		exercise should take place at a minimum every 24 months. In 2017 UNHCR did conduct 21 verification exercises in 20 operations (out of 130). The Board takes the view that more effort is needed. For instance, UNHCR Headquarters needs to develop a formal reporting mechanism on the frequency and comprehensiveness of verification exercises. This will also improve assurance that continuous verification is accurate or verification exercises are not deemed necessary according to criteria agreed in advance. Therefore, the Board considers the recommendation as under implementation.				better able to ensure the accuracy of the population data.
2015	88	The Board recommends that UNHCR (a) assess whether the level of scrutiny applied during its annual budget process is at an appropriate level and, in doing so, determine the costs involved at all stages of preparation; and (b) assess the merits of a multi-year planning approach to resource allocation decisions, as well as other models, such as targeted "deep dives" for the highest risk operations, and assess where these approaches should be rolled out further and where a lighter touch can be applied. BoA Assessment (April 2018)	3 rd quarter 2017	(a) Implemented (b) 1st quarter 2019	DPSM DFAM	(b) A lessons learned process stemming from the pilot initiative to develop multi-year multi-partner strategies in 22 operations with support by relevant HQ entities, has highlighted that UNHCR's business processes and systems are not yet fully set up to support multi-year planning. Therefore, the current focus will be to support the 22 operations in implementing and monitoring their strategies, before deciding whether to expand this approach to other countries.
		The Board considered part (a) of this recommendation as overtaken by events in its last year's report. With regard to part (b) of this recommendation.				



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		The Board recognized that UNHCR has conducted practical tests in 22 pilot countries and assessed the experiences made. A decision about if and where the approaches will be rolled out has not yet been made. Therefore, the Board considers the recommendation as under implementation.				
2015	106	The Board recommends that UNHCR further scrutinize the cost drivers and value for money within items of significant expenditure. In doing so, it should assess the opportunities for efficiencies to be found in the way they are delivered. *BoA Assessment (April 2018)	1 st quarter 2018	1 st quarter 2019	DPSM DFAM	UNHCR is currently reviewing the conceptual design for its future RBM. As part of this review and as the further development of future results frame-work advances, UNHCR will articulate how the future results framework can support the cost-efficiency analysis.
		The Board noted that UNHCR has assessed its policies, procedures, manuals and guidelines to get an overview where the organization requires cost efficiency. During the annual programme review efficiencies are analysed and shared with the bureaux and operations. However, UNHCR did not systematically scrutinize cost drivers within items of significant expenditure. The Board recognized that the review of the results-based management seeks to implement tools that enable a proper link of results to budget, expenditure and revenue. The Board encourages UNHCR to further develop such tools as a basis for further scrutiny analysis of costs drivers. The Board considers the recommendation as under implementation.				



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2014	68	The Board recommends that UNHCR review the existing scrutiny process, as there is an opportunity to further challenge and document the cost-effectiveness of proposed interventions at the headquarters level. In doing so, UNHCR should review opportunities to include performance metrics which enable cost-effectiveness to be measured.	1 st quarter 2018	1 st quarter 2019	DPSM	UNHCR is currently reviewing the conceptual design for its future RBM system. The organization intends to link the information related to programme monitoring and financial implementation, in order to facilitate a cost-effectiveness analysis focusing on country operations, while allowing global aggregation of relevant information at the outcome and impact level.
		BoA Assessment (April 2018) The Board noted that the established working group further assessed the possibility to improve cost-effectiveness at headquarters level. The working group concluded that it would not develop a standalone guidance to assist operations. The working group further stated that the inclusion of performance metrics to facilitate measurement of cost effectiveness will be part of the ongoing results-based management revision project. The Board encourages UNHCR to include performance metrics in the results-based management revision project to enable cost-effectiveness to be measured. The Board considers the recommendation as under implementation.				
2014	82	The Board supports the plans of UNHCR to use its FOCUS system to better link costs and outcomes in each of its business sectors. UNHCR needs to take a tougher, clearer stance on the importance of information on costs and service performance, particularly on linkages between enrolment in education, delivery and retention, and the impact of achieving	1 st quarter 2018	1 st quarter 2019	DPSM	This recommendation will be addressed by the same actions taken in response to the recommendation 68/2014 above.



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		good-quality education qualifications. Without such information, fully informed judgments on the value for money achieved, or the cost-effective targeting of assistance, are not possible. BoA Assessment (April 2018) The Board noted that the results-based management revision project aims to link results to budget, expenditure and revenue. This will improve information and costs and service performance. The Board encourages UNHCR to include performance metrics in the results-based management revision project to enable cost-effectiveness to be measured. The Board considers the recommendation as under implementation.				
2014	83	The Board recommends that UNHCR Headquarters issue central guidance to country teams on cost-effectiveness criteria in education services as an aid to decision-making and resource allocation in education programmes. **BoA Assessment (April 2018)* The Board noted that the established working group further assessed the possibility to improve cost-effectiveness at headquarters level. The working group concluded that it would not develop a standalone guidance to assist operations. The working group further stated that the inclusion of performance metrics to facilitate measurement of cost effectiveness will be part of the results-based management	1 st quarter 2018	1 st quarter 2019 (conceptual framework) 1 st quarter 2022 (roll-out)	DPSM	The future guidance on cost-effectiveness analysis will be developed based on decentralized, multi-year and multi-partner operations management system, in line with the new results framework. The mechanism of how to include performance metrics which support cost effectiveness analysis will be firstly developed as part of the conceptual design and content development of the new results framework, scheduled to be completed by the first quarter 2019. The actual data processing and analysis will start after the rollout of the new RBM system planned for 2022.



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		revision project. The Board encourages UNHCR to include performance metrics in the results-based management revision project to enable cost-effectiveness to be measured. The Board considers the recommendation as under implementation.				
2012	105	The Board recommends that UNHCR include in the new fleet management manual guidance on how to assess alternatives to the use of distant garages when remote servicing can result in excessive mileages, extended vehicle downtime and high transit costs. Guidance should include requirements for: (a) Periodic testing of local markets for the availability of closer commercial maintenance facilities of the requisite standard; (b) Periodic review of the scope for United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations and implementing partners to procure maintenance collectively, to leverage greater bargaining power or attract reliable operators to open facilities nearby; (c) Consideration of maintenance of a stock of oil and filters at the field office level to enable the most basic (Category A) servicing to take place in the field. [Rec. 61 in acc. with Annex 1 of A/69/5/Add.6]	1st quarter 2018	4 th quarter 2018	DESS (SMLS)	Subsequent to previous updates provided, it is to be noted that by the end of June 2018, the consultant that was hired for an assessment of the maintenance and repair arrangements had visited the workshops/garages, including those managed by commercial maintenance facilities and those managed by implementing partners in Bangladesh, Ethiopia, South Sudan and the United Republic of Tanzania and submitted his observations to UNHCR. UNHCR's Global Fleet Management Unit (GFM) has captured these observations and further developed a checklist to be used in the process of assessing suitability of garages/workshops selected for maintenance/repair of UNHCR vehicles. This checklist will be used by the field operations as of August 2018, initially on a test basis. It is expected that once the use of this checklist is expanded, it will result in better guidance to all offices in making decision on most efficient modalities of fleet maintenance.



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		BoA Assessment (April 2018) The Board noted further progress being made with the maintenance and repair initiative. The Board noted the ongoing assessment by a consultant who assesses maintenance and repair arrangements in the 10 countries with the biggest fleets within UNHCR. In addition the consultant plans to use the lessons learned from the assessment to provide a questionnaire. The questionnaire shall give guidance to operations on how to test local markets for the availability of closer commercial maintenance facilities of the requisite standard. Therefore, the recommendation is considered to be under implementation.				Simultaneously, a mapping exercise of distances between offices and workshops/garages has been undertaken in top 10 operations, with fleets of more than 100 vehicles in order to determine the average distance between offices and vehicle workshop. This will help to avoid excessive mileage, vehicle downtime and high transit costs. UNHCR (GFM) has also joined a United Nations working group on joint maintenance/repair services, recently established by UNOPS and is part of the ongoing United Nations joint tire procurement. Maintaining stocks of oil filters at the field office level, to allow basic servicing, has not proven successful in the past, as offices procured filters, lubricants and spare parts, beyond their requirements. However, with the standardisation of vehicles, some of those stocks became obsolete and are now disposed of by the Asset Management Unit. Instead, UNHCR now checks that garages and workshops servicing UNHCR vehicles are sufficiently equipped with such material and in a few places uses mobile workshops to assist offices in remote locations.