



OCHA United Nations Office
for the Coordination of
Humanitarian Affairs

Virtual OSOCC

Handbook and guidance

Volume I: User manual

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Foreword

The Virtual OSOCC was first launched in 1998 to facilitate information exchange among the UNDAC team and INSARAG USAR teams in earthquakes. Since then, the tool has evolved into an important information platform for the international disaster response community, which is used to facilitate information exchange not only in earthquakes, but also in all major sudden-onset emergencies as well as during preparedness activities such as training events, simulation exercises, meetings and expert discussion fora.

In 2004, the Virtual OSOCC was integrated into the Global Disaster Alert and Coordination System (GDACS) as GDACS' online coordination platform for first (bilateral) disaster responders. GDACS is a cooperation framework among OCHA, the European Commission, UNOSAT, and disaster managers worldwide, which provides automatic alerts, impact estimations, and an on-line coordination platform for disaster managers and producers of satellite-images and maps.

In 2014, which marks the 10th anniversary of GDACS, the Virtual OSOCC underwent a major revision to improve the support of information analysis and to provide a multi-lingual interface. Additional features will be added in the course of 2015 with the aim to adapt the tool to latest technological developments and to the needs of a steadily growing user community, which reached 19,000 subscribers in October 2014, at a yearly increase rate of 20 per cent.

The success of the Virtual OSOCC is a result of the constructive collaboration of its users. Since its creation, users have continuously made recommendations for improvements and participated in workshops and lessons learned exercises with the aim to further improve the tool to meet information and coordination needs in the early phase of major disasters and significant international response.

We thank all Virtual OSOCC users for their continuous support and contributions, in particular the Virtual OSOCC revision working group with participation of Argentina, Australia, Germany, New Zealand, Norway, the USA, and OCHA, who were instrumental in designing the most recent version of the tool.

Also in the future, it will be our primary objective to ensure that the Virtual OSOCC meets the needs of its users, and we are open for comments or recommendations for improvements. As in previous years, our policy will remain to implement useful suggestions informally and quickly, and to provide support and guidance to Virtual OSOCC users whenever needed with minimal delay.

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List of Abbreviations

IEC	INSARAG External Classification
IER	INSARAG External Reclassification
INSARAG	The International Search and Rescue Advisory Group
FCSS	Field Coordination Support Section
FTS	Financial Tracking Service
GDACS	Global Disaster Alert and Coordination System
HCT	Humanitarian Country Team
NDMA	National Disaster Management Authority
NGOs	Non-governmental organizations
LEMA	Local Emergency Management Authority
LogIK	Logistics In-Kind (online commodity tracking application)
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OSOCC	On-Site Operations Coordination Centre
RDC	Reception/Departure Centre
SC	Sector Coordination
UCC	USAR Coordination Cell
UN	United Nations
UNDAC	United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination team
USAR	Urban search and rescue
Virtual OSOCC	Virtual On-Site Operations Coordination Centre
VO	Virtual On-Site Operations Coordination Centre

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	5
1.1. Global Disaster Alerts and Coordination System	5
1.2. Purpose and scope	5
1.3. User community	5
1.4. Your profile.....	6
1.5. Structure.....	7
2. Disasters	10
2.1. Overview	10
2.2. Disaster information structure	10
2.3. Discussion elements	12
2.3.1. Relief teams.....	13
2.3.2. Relief items.....	15
2.3.3. Maps.....	16
2.3.4. Hazard Identification Table	17
3. Simulator	19
4. Training and Meetings	22
5. Discussions	25
6. Users and Statistics	27
7. Additional features	28
7.1. Languages	28
7.2. Subscription	28
7.3. Bookmarking	29
7.4. Workspaces	30
7.5. Surveys	30
8. Learn more	33

1. Introduction

1.1. Global Disaster Alert and Coordination System

Virtual OSOCC is an OCHA-managed [GDACS](#) tool. GDACS is a cooperation framework under the UN umbrella that brings together disaster information systems and disaster managers worldwide with the aim of filling the information and coordination gap in the first phase after major disasters. GDACS provides real-time access to web-based disaster information systems and related coordination tools.

GDACS sends automatic e-mail and SMS alerts to subscribers and provides impact estimations after major disasters through its on-line multi-hazard disaster impact assessment service. GDACS alerts and impact estimations are managed by the European Commission Joint Research Centre.

GDACS also coordinates the creation and dissemination of disaster maps and satellite images. This service is managed by UNOSAT. Many governments and disaster response organizations rely on GDACS alerts and automatic impact estimations to plan international assistance.

1.2. Purpose and scope

The primary purpose of Virtual OSOCC is to facilitate information exchange among disaster responders in order to establish a better situational awareness in the early stages of sudden-onset disasters, to inform deploying responders of the operational environment, and to track response to support decision-making and coordination.

The Virtual OSOCC also supports preparedness activities, including meetings, training events, expert discussion fora, and simulation exercises. The Virtual OSOCC is typically activated in major sudden-onset disasters and supports international coordination during the first weeks of the response.

1.3. User community

Access to Virtual OSOCC is restricted to disaster managers from governments and disaster response organizations. The platform was initially designed as a tool for bilateral responders; however, over the years increasing numbers of staff from UN agencies and NGOs have created accounts.

Users have one of the following privileges with regard to the system:

1. Guest: Read only
2. User: (default for new users): Access to discussion information, provide comments, and upload files
3. Moderator: Add and edit all information in a discussion
4. Account manager: Create user accounts and manage account requests
5. Workspace administrator: Configuration and data management of a given workspace
6. System administrator: Overall system configuration and data management

Some users are authorized to post information on behalf of their county or organization, and yet others can also edit information posted on behalf of their country or information. If you have any inquiries regarding user privileges, please contact us at virtual-osocc@un.org.

How can I request a Virtual OSOCC account?

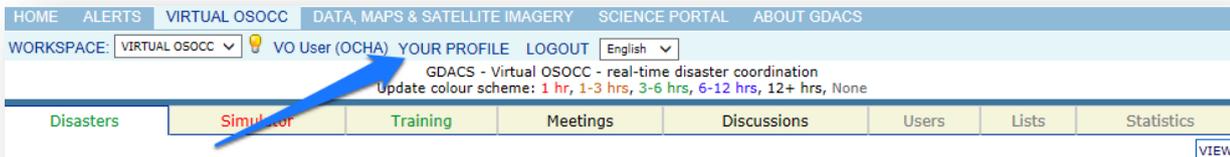
You can request an account on the Virtual OSOCC [homepage](#). You will need to fill out the short form and will receive a confirmation email once the administrators will have reviewed your request.

How can I delete my Virtual OSOCC account?

If you want to delete your account, you need to contact the Virtual OSOCC team at virtual-osocc@un.org.

1.4. Your profile

Every user of the Virtual OSOCC is encouraged to maintain their profile and contact details up to date on their profile page. To access your page, where you can add and edit your data, click on 'Your profile', as illustrated below.



Members of rosters and mechanisms mobilized through the Virtual OSOCC, such as UNDAC, the Associate Experts Pool and Environmental Experts network, should fill out additional information about their skills and experience:

The screenshot displays the 'Your profile' page with 11 numbered callouts (1-11) pointing to specific sections:

- 1**: Private data section, including Home country, Home phone, Home fax, Birth date, and Birth place.
- 2**: Passport data section, including Passport number, Passport issued on, Nationality, Passport issued at, and Expiry date.
- 3**: Alternative passport section, including Passport number, Issued on, Nationality, and Expiry date.
- 4**: UN admin data section, including UN Index, UNLP Certificate Number, UNLP Certificate issued on, UN contract start date, Contract signed, Medical certificate, UNLP Certificate issued at, UNLP Certificate expiry date, and UN contract expiry date.
- 5**: Comments section, including 'Not ready for missions from' and 'Until' dates.
- 6**: Attachments section, including 'Add file' and 'Add website' buttons.
- 7**: User resume section, including a text area for the user's resume.
- 8**: Languages section, including 'Add language' and 'Languages used on Virtual OSOCC'.
- 9**: Skills section, including a list of skills: chem, EE Skills, OTF Skills, Training, and UNDAC.
- 10**: Interface language, Content languages, and Translation languages sections.
- 11**: Your co-workers section, including a search bar, a 'FIND/ASSIGN' button, and a table of co-workers.

Person	Relief teams	Relief items	Maps	Contacts	Comments	Discussions	
J. Reiterer (OCHA/ESB/SCS)	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	X
Lorena Chazarreta-Abalos (OCHA)	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	X
T. Peter (ERCC OCHA-Geneva)	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	X

1. Start with your private data, including your date of birth and home country. This may be needed for OCHA to request visas and other documents for you;
2. Fill out your national passport details;

3. If you have a second passport, it may also be of use to enter this data;
4. UN staff members should also fill out details about the UNLP and UN contract;
5. Indicate dates you would not be available for deployments;
6. Attach your CV and/or copy of your passport;
7. You can additionally provide narrative information relating to your expertise;
8. Add languages you speak;
9. UNDAC members are strongly encouraged to list their skills by clicking on 'UNDAC' and ticking all applicable skills. If you are a member of a different roster, you may be instructed by OCHA to indicate your skills under a different set;
10. You can also choose a default language for the Virtual OSOCC interface (at the time of writing, English, Spanish or French);
11. You can also select your co-workers who would have the rights to edit the information you add on the Virtual OSOCC.

1.5. Structure

The Virtual OSOCC has the following structure:

1. **Tabs** are different sites within the platform, each serving a different purpose. Chapters 2 – 8 explain the features of each tab in depth.
2. **Sections** classify discussions, such as Breaking emergencies and Emergencies under the *Disasters* tab, or different training types (INSARAG, UNDAC, EU, etc) under the *Training* tab.
3. **Discussions** as a structural element include not only real or simulated disaster discussions, but also meetings and training opportunities.

Disasters	Simulator	Training	Meetings	Discussions
Breaking emergencies [MAIL SMS] [NEW EMERGENCY IN THIS SECTION]				
3-Aug-2014	Aug. 3 Yunnan Zhaotong City M 6.5 earthquake			[HTML] [RSS] ☆
24-May-2014	Earthquake Greece			☆
2-May-2014	Afghanistan landslide - 2nd of May 2014			☆
Emergencies [MAIL SMS]				
18-Jul-2014	Syrian Border Monitoring Mechanism			☆
15-Jul-2014	Cyclone RAMMASUN			☆
12-Jun-2014	Paraguay - floods			[HTML] [RSS] ☆

4. **Discussion elements** contain several non-narrative information tools and resources for each discussion, including relief teams' registration and directory, as well as the Hazard Identification Table (HIT).
5. **Titles** divide information in each discussion into structural elements, such as Situation, Operational environment, Response coordination and OSOCC. Users can comment on the content of each title.

6. **Subtitles** break down the information into more manageable snippets. Moderators can configure the discussion to allow users to comment directly under each subtitle.

The screenshot shows a web interface for a discussion titled "Ejercicio INSARAG Costa Rica: Juliandia". The top navigation bar includes tabs for Disasters, Simulator, Training, Meetings, Discussions, Users, Lists, and Statistics. A "VIEW" button is in the top right. Below the title, there are buttons for RELIEF TEAMS, RELIEF ITEMS, HIT, MAPS, VIEW, and SUBSCRIBE. A "Back to overview" link is also present.

The main content area is divided into several sections:

- Situation overview - VO User (OCHA) 23 minutes ago**: A yellow header for the first subtitle. Callout 4 points to this header.
- Operational Environment**: A section with a yellow header. Callout 5 points to this header.
- Status of request of assistance - Gintare Eidimtaite, OCHA on 1-September-2014 13:57**: A yellow header for the second subtitle. Callout 8 points to this header.

On the left side, there is a sidebar menu with categories: Alerted Rosters, Situation, Operational Environment, and Response coordination. Callout 6 points to the "Operational Environment" category, and callout 7 points to the "Operational Environment" section in the main content area.

At the bottom, there is a "Comments" section with a yellow header. Callout 8 points to the "Add comment" button. Below it, there is a "New comments since last update" section with a yellow header. Callout 8 points to the "Reply" button next to a comment.

7. **Summary updates** provide processed information updates under each discussion title, compiling key information from OCHA and other sources, as well as comments posted by users.
8. **Comments** provide the key information-exchange format on the Virtual OSOCC:
- Users add text comments, to which they can attach files. Comments are uploaded under respective titles, and are then incorporated into summary updates by discussion moderators. Once a comment has been processed, moderators hide the comment to reduce the information load on the page. In disaster discussions, the only subtitles allowing direct comments are those designated for USAR and Medical teams' coordination.
 - Users can reply to other comments by clicking on the 'Reply' button.
 - Users can edit their own comments by clicking on the 'Edit comment' button. That includes modifying the text, replacing the attachment, moving the comment to another title, or deleting it.

The close-up screenshot shows the "Comments" section with a yellow header and an "Add comment" button. Below it, there is a "New comments since last update" section with a yellow header. Callout 'a' points to the "Add comment" button. Below the header, there is a comment by "Gintare Eidimtaite, OCHA on 1-September-2014 13:58" with a "Reply" button. Callout 'b' points to the "Reply" button. Below the comment, there is a comment by "VO User (OCHA) 30 seconds ago" with an "Edit comment" button. Callout 'c' points to the "Edit comment" button.



TIP FROM THE VIRTUAL OSOCC TEAM

You can easily find the most recent information through the colour-codes. All discussions, titles, subtitles, summary updates and comments change their colour to indicate the time of update: **1 hour**, **1-3 hours**, **3-6 hours**, **6-12 hours**, **12+ hours**, none.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Surveys Alerted Rosters Situation Situation overview Status of request of assistance Additional information Operational environment 	<p>Situation</p> <p>Situation overview - Gintare Eidimtaite, OCHA min ago edit map file</p> <p>Rescuers on Sunday found four more bodies buried under mud as the death toll from landslides and flooding in Nepal climbed to 89, sparking fears of a cholera outbreak. Torrential rain last week triggered multiple landslides and flooding, stranding thousands of villagers and leaving a trail of death and destruction.</p> <p>New comments since last update</p> <p>Gintare Eidimtaite, OCHA min ago file website edit comment delete hide</p> <p>According to IRIN, several districts in the northern Indian states of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh were also flooded after heavy rain near Himalayan rivers and the release of excess water from barrages in Nepal.</p>
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2. Disasters

2.1. Overview

A separate discussion is opened for every major sudden-onset emergency. The Disasters overview provides a list of currently active discussions under two sections:

- **Breaking emergencies** are discussions on sudden-onset disasters which are of interest to the Virtual OSOCC community, but do not necessarily result in international response. Any user may open a discussion under Breaking Emergencies choosing 'New breaking emergency'.
- **Emergencies** contain disasters which require, or are likely to warrant, international response. Only moderators can open a new discussion in this section. Moderators can also move a discussion from the *Breaking emergencies* section, with all associated information.

Users can subscribe to alerts when new discussions are opened in either of the sections. To see how you can use the subscription feature, go to Chapter 9.2. [Subscription](#).

2.2. Disaster information structure

One of the key challenges in managing significant amounts of information in the early phases of disaster response is finding the right balance between predictability, standardization, and flexibility. To address this issue, the Virtual OSOCC disaster information structure has default titles and subtitles, but can be adapted to the needs in the given emergency. The table below provides an overview of the default structure.

TITLE Subtitle	Purpose Type and format of information posted
SITUATION	
Situation overview	Moderator-produced and constantly updated summary of the disaster situation: geographic extension and impact; trends, needs, disaster statistics and current response. In the very early stages, this summary would also provide an overview of media reports.
Status of request of assistance	Information on whether the affected country has requested or accepted international assistance, with any relevant documentation attached.
Comments	User comments and inquiries related to the disaster situation as described in the titles above.
OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT	
Country baseline data	Country name, time zone, population, capital, administrative division, ethnic groups, languages, religion, media landscape, currency, international dial code, medical advice and vaccinations.
Operational priorities	A moderator-produced summary with immediate response priorities in terms of type and geographical areas, to support decision-making at HQ level.
Customs and immigration	Relevant information about immigration (visa), customs, and associated contact details.

Security situation	Relevant information about safety and security, incidents, looting; UNDSS daily reports; time and place of security briefings in the affected country.
Access	An overview of the state of and constraints at entry points (airports, ports, border crossings), roads, waterways, railways, damaged infrastructure, alternative routes.
Communications	Updates on the availability and coverage of mobile network and internet access.
Comments	User comments and inquiries related to “operational environment” as described in the titles above.
RESPONSE COORDINATION	
Coordination setup	Overview of national and international coordination structures, as relevant to the emergency. It will include location(s) of OSOCCs and RDCs; civil-military coordination; key contact details and UNDAC team information
Reception - Departure Centre	Important information updates and announcements from the RDC
LEMA updates	Important information updates and announcements from LEMA
Assessments and reports	Recent and relevant assessment and other related reports (e.g. situation reports)
Comments	User comments and inquiries related to “response coordination” as described in the titles above.
OSOCC	
Situation	Moderator summary of the state of response: team activities, trends, gaps, lives saved so far, etc. Focused on information required for operational coordination in the field.
Announcements	Any announcements by the OSOCC or other actors, requiring immediate attention: meetings, briefings, key information.
USAR Coordination [Sector X]	Moderator summary of state of USAR in the sector: team activities, trends, gaps, lives saved so far, etc. This subtitle will allow for direct comments, thereby providing a discussion space for USAR teams on the ground.
Assessments	Reports covering the area of operations, with a moderator-produced summary of key highlights.
Comments	A space for responders in this area of operations to discuss and exchange operational information.

Crucially, however, the VO is adapted to each emergency to reflect its coordination and information needs. For example, more subtitles will be created if additional USAR coordination sectors are established in the field. An ‘OSOCC’ title will be added for each physical OSOCC or sub-OSOCC, to provide space for operational information exchange. The titles will be renamed to indicate their geographic location and will cover the areas of operation of the physical OSOCC. For example, in the Typhoon Haiyan response in the Philippines, there would have been three separate OSOCC titles: OSOCC Tacloban, sub-OSOCC Guiuan, sub-OSOCC Ormoc and OSOCC Roxas. If needed, separate subtitles for the coordination of Foreign Medical Teams can also be created.

COMMENT RESPONSIBLY



The amount of information entered on the Virtual OSOCC during large-scale emergencies can quickly become overwhelming. Before posting a comment, always consider carefully if the information is necessary. For example, after a USAR team status has been updated in the team fact sheet, there is no need to provide the same information as a comment. Comments and/or files should be posted under the appropriate title. Alternatively, generic situation updates about the disaster should be posted under subtitle "Situation overview". This will help other users to find relevant information more efficiently.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Where should the UNDAC team post the Contact List and Meeting Calendar?

As best practice, key information products should be posted under the 'Response Coordination' title. Discussion moderators will include them under the summary. If there is a separate contact list produced for an area of operations covered by a particular OSOCC or sub-OSOCC, upload it under the relevant 'OSOCC'.

What if there is more than one Reception-Departure Centre?

If there is more than one Reception-Departure Centre established in the affected country, OCHA Headquarters or the UNDAC team will add an additional subtitle for it under the relevant 'OSOCC' title(s).

Where should Foreign Medical Teams exchange information?

If Foreign Medical Teams are deployed to the area and wish to use the Virtual OSOCC for coordination and information exchange, OCHA Headquarters or the UNDAC team will create an 'FMT Coordination' subtitle under the relevant 'OSOCC' title.

Why can I no longer comment under specific subtitles?

In large-scale emergencies, the number of comments posted on the Virtual OSOCC is enormous. For instance, the Typhoon Haiyan discussion saw 530 comments posted, and 290 files uploaded. Very often, these comments end up in the wrong subtitle, making it difficult to find relevant information. Now, users post information under one of the four titles, and the discussion moderators process it into the relevant parts of the discussion. An exception to this is 'USAR coordination', as it provides a space for USAR teams to exchange information directly. Moderators can post information directly under the subtitles, and can activate/deactivate comments under particular topic.

2.3. Discussion elements

Non-narrative information – relief teams, in-kind relief contributions, maps and the hazard identification table (HIT) – is managed through discussion elements:

The screenshot shows a user interface for a discussion element. At the top, there are four navigation tabs: "RELIEF TEAMS", "RELIEF ITEMS", "HIT", and "MAPS". Below these is a "Situation" header. The main content area displays a "Situation overview" by Francesco Frezzetti (UNOCHA) posted 2 hours and 55 minutes ago. The overview text reads: "Please find the contact lists, the situation reports and the relevant links attached on the right. A page with constant updates about the provincial and municipal efforts is also attached". Below this, a date and time stamp indicates "4 Dec: A super-Typhoon, named 'Hagupit-14' (locally called 'Ruby') is reported to be heading towards the Philippines. Some of the island of Philippines are likely to be hit by storm surges at least one-storey high. (PAGASA)". On the right side, there are icons for "Philippine country coordination" and "Humanitarian". A blue arrow points from the "RELIEF TEAMS" tab towards the main content area.

2.3.1. Relief teams

One of the key elements of coordination offered by the Virtual OSOCC is coordination of relief teams. All relief teams should register by clicking on Relief Teams in the disaster discussion and choosing 'Add team'. All teams are requested to fill out the on-line fact sheet. Currently, fact sheets for USAR teams correspond with the INSARAG Guidelines. Customized fact sheets for other types of teams will soon be developed.

When should I add a team in an emergency?

Teams are encouraged to develop standard operating procedures (SOPs) outlining responsibilities and triggers for registering the team and changing its status. The team should register as soon as possible upon the receipt of the GDACS alert. The team's status of readiness can be indicated as follows:

1. **Monitoring.** The relief team is aware of the emergency, has not yet alerted its team members, and could be mobilized once more information becomes available and a request for assistance has been made.
2. **Stand-by.** The relief team has alerted its members and is ready for deployment, pending a request for international assistance. At this point, the data regarding the team capacity and size should be added to the team record.
3. **Mobilising.** The relief team is in transit, but has not yet arrived in the affected area. Arrival time, length of mission (if known) and any requirements should be added to the team record.
4. **Deployed.** The team has arrived in the affected area.

When the team has left the affected area, it should change its status to '**Mission completed**'. In cases where request for international assistance is not issued and/or the team has decided not to deploy, the status should be changed to '**Stand-down**'.

How can I add a team?

1. Hover your mouse over the *Relief Teams* button and select 'Add relief team' in the drop-down menu.
2. If you already have a template fact sheet for your team, choose 'Use template'. The form with a copy of the selected template will appear, and you can edit entries as needed. If a template has not been created, choose 'Type' and fill out the subsequent form. For more information about templates, see our tip below.
3. After filling out the details in the relief team fact sheet, save the record by clicking 'Submit'.
4. The next step is to add team members and/or attachments to the team record. By choosing 'All relief teams', you will see a shortcut to edit your own team record in the yellow banner:



Teams you can edit: UNDAC Team 2

Assessment (7):
 Deployed (1) UNDAC 3
 Standby (2) THW (Germany), EMERCOM of Russia "Global Radius" (Russian Federation)
 Monitoring (4) Italian Red Cross (Italy), Italian National Fire and Rescue Service (Italy), Japan Disaster Relief Team (Japan), Johanniter International Assistance (Germany)

Coordination (13):
 Mobilising (2) UNDAC Team 2 (OCHA), UNDAC Team 2 (OCHA)
 Standby (4) UNDAC (OCHA), IFRC Field Assessment and Coordination Team FACT (IFRC), MapAction (UK), IHP support modules (IHP)
 Monitoring (7) RAPID LA (Peru), ICT support module (Denmark), UNITAR/UNOSAT, UNDAC 20, UNDAC 20, EU MIC (Monitoring Information Centre) (EU), (CEPREDENIAC)

Environmental (1):

5. To add an attachment, such as the INSARAG Fact Sheet, choose to 'Add file' in the attachments section on top:



RELIEF TEAM TEMPLATES

A new feature of the Virtual OSOCC is the relief team template. Every team can create templates, which can be re-used to speed up the registration process in future emergencies. When adding a team fact sheet (in an emergency or simulation exercise), you only need to tick the box marking the record as a template and to fill out the fields “Donor” and “Template name”. The input into these

two fields should be meaningful (e.g. Donor: ‘Austria’, Template name: ‘Austrian Heavy USAR Team’) so that one can identify and find the template easily at a later stage. As a best practice, we recommend establishing only one template for each relief team, and reusing the same template whenever needed.

The screenshot shows a form titled "Please select the type of the team". It features a checkbox labeled "Use template" which is checked. To its right is a dropdown menu currently displaying "Belgium". Below this is another dropdown menu labeled "Type". A blue arrow points to the "Use template" checkbox.

The template will be saved under the name of the sending country or organization. Select ‘Use template’ when adding a team if you want to use a saved template.

2.3.2. Relief items

All organizations and countries using the Virtual OSOCC can communicate any in-kind or cash assistance to the affected country. This information is synchronized with [LogIK \(logistics in-kind\)](#), and [FTS \(Financial Tracking Service\)](#), which are OCHA-managed tools to track international assistance.

What kind of items should my organization add, and when?

National governments, international organizations and NGOs are invited to register any in-kind contributions to a given emergency on the Virtual OSOCC in these categories:

1. **Cash:** Any monetary contributions to the affected government or organizations working in the affected areas.

The screenshot shows the "In-kind relief contribution details" form. It includes fields for Type, Status, Relief item, Description, Country/organization, Value in USD, Value in other currency, Arrival (Day, Month, Year), Destination, Contact, and Remark. There is a "Submit" button and an "Attachments" section with an "ADD FILE" button. A "Your co-workers" section has a "Get persons:" label and a "FIND/ASSIGN" button. Three blue callout boxes with numbers 1, 2, and 3 are overlaid on the form: 1 points to the Type dropdown, 2 points to the Status dropdown, and 3 points to the FIND/ASSIGN button.

2. **Health:** Field hospitals, medical kits, medicines, etc.

3. **Logistics:** Transportation modules (helicopters, 4x4 vehicles, etc.), forklifts, storage facilities, etc.

4. **Shelter:** Tents, tarpaulin and rebuilding kits, etc.

5. **Water/sanitation:** Hygiene kits, water purification systems, water distribution kits, latrines, etc.

6. **Mixed:** Donations which include several categories of items.

7. **Other:** Anything that does not fall within the above categories.

As a best practice, items should be registered as soon as they are being considered for dispatch to support planning and coordination, and to allow the affected country to advise regarding required quantities and anticipated destination. The status of the item should be updated as appropriate.

How can I add a relief item?

To add a relief item, hover the mouse over the 'Relief Items' button and choose 'Add relief item'. Fill out the form, choosing the item type (1) and its delivery status (2). To allow other persons to edit or update the item details, add them as co-workers (3). For more information on adding co-workers, see Chapter 2.3.1. [Relief teams](#).

Can I see what in-kind contributions are being sent to the affected areas?

For an overview of all registered items in the disaster discussion, hover the mouse over the Relief Items menu again, and choose 'All items'. For a more comprehensive overview of in-kind contributions, visit [LogIK](#) – a global online database to support tracking of in-kind contributions in disasters, with information about sender, origin, destination, description, weight, value and quantity, etc.. LogIK also offers a series of analytical reports of in-kind assistance in the given disaster. In-kind information on the Virtual OSOCC, OCHA's [Financial Tracking Service](#) (FTS), and LogIK will be synchronized, where applicable.

2.3.3. Maps

The Virtual OSOCC also provides a space for its user community to share maps relating to the emergency. All users can upload maps; they can also request UNOSAT to provide on-demand maps and/or satellite imagery through the VO.

How can I upload a map?

You can either upload a map you have saved as a file on your computer, or provide a URL link to a map stored online. In both cases, hover your cursor over the 'Maps' menu, and choose 'Upload map' from the drop-down list.

Next, fill out the form: choose the category which best describes the content of your map (1) and provide a name which would describe the content and/or purpose of the map (eg. OSOCC and RDC location) (2). If necessary, provide a brief description of the map (3). If you are

uploading it as a file, browse for it on your computer (4) and leave the 'Map URL' field empty (5). If you want to share a link to a map on another website, copy and paste it into the 'Map URL' field (5). You can set a thumbnail (a reduced size image of the map) by either uploading it in JPEG format (6), or providing a link to one online (7).

Although not obligatory, the following information is useful for the classification of maps in the database: the country, institution or organization which uploaded the map (8), the country, institution or organization which created the map (9) and, in emergencies where more than one country is affected, which country the map is covering (10). Click 'Save' to upload the map.

The image shows a web form titled "Upload new map" with a yellow header. The form contains the following fields and controls:

- Status:** A dropdown menu set to "Uploading".
- Category:** A dropdown menu set to "Other".
- Map title:** A text input field.
- Description:** A large text area with a vertical scrollbar.
- Upload map:** A button labeled "Browse..." next to a text input field.
- Map URL:** A text input field.
- Upload thumbnail:** A button labeled "Browse..." next to a text input field.
- Map thumbnail URL:** A text input field.
- Provider:** A text input field.
- Source:** A text area with a vertical scrollbar.
- Country:** A text input field.

At the bottom right of the form are "Cancel" and "Save" buttons. Ten blue callout boxes with white numbers (1-10) and arrows point to the following elements:

- Category dropdown
- Map title input
- Description text area
- Upload map button
- Map URL input
- Upload thumbnail button
- Map thumbnail URL input
- Provider input
- Source text area
- Country input

How can I request a map?

Any user can request maps through the Virtual OSOCC. Hover your cursor over 'Maps' and choose 'Request map', then complete the form with the title and description of the required map (or satellite image). When

saving the form, UNOSAT's Rapid Mapping Unit will be notified and process the request. Once the map has been produced, it will be uploaded in response to the on-line request on the Virtual SOCC.

Where can I find all maps in a disaster discussion?

To access all maps that have been produced in a given disaster's discussion on the Virtual OSOCC, choose 'All maps' under the 'Maps' menu. You will find that the maps are grouped by category, such as baseline information, coordination or situation. Click on the relevant category to access related maps. Click on the thumbnail, the map will open in a different tab and you will be able to save it.

Available maps:					
Baseline information (3);, Country information (3)					
Coordination (1);, Coordination setup (1)					
Situation (5);, Situation overview (5)					
Requested maps:					
Other (1);, Other (1)					
Maps and satellite images, last update: 17-September-2014 09:40 (Show all)					
Map	Provider	Title	Description	Moderator remark	Date
Baseline information					
Country information					
	Source: Various data providers. Collected by SBTF. Provider: NetHope	Various datasets related to Ebola & Liberia	Collection of datasets related to Ebola and Liberia		
	Source: OCHA ROWCA Provider:	Liberia - administrative map	Liberia - administrative map with counties and districts		

2.3.4. Hazard Identification Table (HIT)

The Virtual OSOCC provides a Hazard Identification Table (HIT), which lists all large infrastructure and industrial facilities containing hazardous materials in the affected areas, detailing the potential risks to humans and the environment. The HIT is therefore a critical tool for USAR teams and other responders to identify potential secondary risks during operations. The technical information in the HIT table is provided in a simple and easy-to-read manner. It targets non-experts who can then request further expertise and inform national authorities.

OCHA activates HIT during major sudden-onset emergencies; responders on the ground are encouraged to complement the table with assessment results and other relevant information about the listed and other facilities. That way, the HIT serves a 'live' report. Once the HIT is activated, it can be accessed through the 'HIT' discussion element. Select 'View HIT' to see the table, as illustrated below.

ulator	Training	Meetings	Discussions	Users	Lists	Statistics
VIEW						
Back to disasters overview						
RELIEF TEAMS RELIEF ITEMS HIT MAPS VIEW SUBSCRIBE						
MAIL SMS						
Situation overview - Francesco Frezzetti (UNOCHA) on 29-October-2014 14:50 MAIL SMS						
Situation: Early in the morning of Wednesday 29 October, after days of heavy rain, a landslide buried the village of Meeryiabedda, Haldennmulla in Badulla district in the South of Sri Lanka (Sri Lanka Government). The village is approximately 150km east of the capital Colombo. Approximately 300 people are missing and the number of dead is not yet clear, so far 10 bodies have been recovered.						 Contact List  Situation reports  Sri Lanka Red Cross Sitrep

You can download the table as a Microsoft Word document through the 'HIT' discussion element. You can choose to either download:

1. a **HIT Report** featuring only facilities, which have been identified in the affected area and contain relevant information and recommendations; or
2. a **HIT Full Report**, which lists all facilities, even those which are not yet known to have been affected or posing a hazard.

What information does the HIT provide?

The HIT outlines the following information:

1. Facilities potentially present in the affected area;
2. Substances expected to be present in those facilities;
3. The hazard form, such as gas or liquid;
4. The related estimated impact on humans and the environment.

The 'Recommendation' section (5) contains regularly updated information about the facility, ideally including their GPS coordinates, status and situation. This information is either sourced from responders on the ground or OCHA headquarters.

HIT/FEAT						
BiH_flood affected areas_2014						
BiH_flood affected areas_2014						
Facility	Substances	Hazard type	Estimated impact type	Result	Recommendation	
Electricity distribution	Ammonia	Gas toxic to humans, gas toxic to the environment	Direct impact on Human Health, Direct impact on life-support functions and nature			Edit
Hospital sterilizing	Ethylene oxide	Gas toxic to humans, carcinogenic, mutagenic	Direct impact on human health			Edit
Food processing	Ammonia	Gas toxic to humans, gas toxic to the environment	Direct impact on Human Health, Direct impact on life-support functions and nature			Edit
Manufacture/repair (land-side, ie. parking lots, public transportation train stations, tank farms, access roads, etc.)	Hydrofluoric acid/cyanide	Liquid toxic to humans, liquid toxic to the environment	Direct impact on Human Health, Direct impact on life-support functions and nature			Edit
Agricultural services (including small storage)	Mixed chemicals (fire)	Gas toxic to humans (toxic smoke)	Direct impact on human health			Edit

How can add information to the HIT table?

EditHitRecord

Assessment Iron Gate Hydroelectric power plants:
 plant I: Danube River (44°40'15"N 22°31'45"E)
 Plant II: Gogosu, Mehadija County (44°18'16"N 22°33'54"E)

Recommendation

Cancel Save

To provide information on a particular facility, choose 'Edit' on the right side of the section. If possible, always provide GPS coordinates, the name of company/facility, latest actions, and whether the facility has been assessed.

3. Simulator

The objective of Virtual OSOCC simulation exercises is to familiarise users with the tool and to practice internal and international coordination procedures with other actors online. Any Virtual OSOCC user can create a new discussion under the 'Simulator' tab, and have full administrator rights to it. The Simulator is an exact copy of the Disasters tab, thereby providing a realistic simulation environment.

How can I create a simulation exercise?

Creating a discussion for your exercise is easy. First, go to the 'Simulator' tab (1). Simulated disaster discussions are classified by different categories, such as INSARAG, UNDAC, EU and the broader 'Simulation Exercises'. You can either choose to create a new simulation and choose its category later (2), or create one in an already existing one (3):

Disasters	Simulator	Training	Meetings	Discussions	Use
<div style="text-align: right;"> New Simulation .. </div>					
INSARAG					MAIL SMS
4-September-2014	SIMEX Costa Rica - INSARAG Americas 2014				☆
Simulation Exercises					
18-May-2015	SIMEX Count Down 2015 by Swiss Humanitarian Aid/INSARAG				☆
4-October-2014	ejercicio Ibérico			HTML RSS	☆
4-October-2014	CAIMEX exercise 2014, Portugal				☆
27-September-2014	SIMEX PUI-FRA01 PRE-IER TADJIKISTAN 27 SEPT 2014				☆

Next, you will have to fill out a form with details of your exercise. You can choose whether other people can see your discussion (1), which is useful if you are working on the injects and do not want them to be visible to the participants yet. You can always change this and all other settings in the discussion at a later stage. If you have not already done so, make sure you choose the category of your exercise (2). If you want to share the exercise discussion externally, you can create HTML and RSS files (3). Depending on the scenario and the skills you want to practice, activate or deactivate discussion elements as needed (4). In most cases, you will use the pre-selected discussion structure, so do not change this value until you are sure that another template is more suitable for your exercise (5), and you will be able to add or remove titles and subtitles at a later stage, as needed. Click 'Submit' to save your discussion (6).

Add Discussion	Discussion elements
Discussion title <input type="text" value="Name your exercise"/>	Has rosters <input type="checkbox"/>
GLIDE <input type="text" value="Provide the number if you have one"/> GLIDE finder	Has HIT <input type="checkbox"/>
1 Is public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Has relief teams <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Start date Day <input type="text"/> Month <input type="text"/> Year <input type="text" value="2014"/>	Has relief items <input type="checkbox"/>
End date Day <input type="text"/> Month <input type="text"/> Year <input type="text" value="2014"/>	Has maps <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Event status <input type="text" value="Confirmed"/>	Has contacts <input type="checkbox"/>
Location <input type="text" value="Where the exercise is taking place"/>	Information templates
Focal point <input type="text" value="Your name"/>	<input type="radio"/> Do not use information template
2 Tab Simulator	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Disaster discussion template
Section <input type="text" value="Simulation Exercises"/>	<input type="radio"/> Generic discussion template
Relevance <input type="text" value="Active"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Situation
Auto archive Day <input type="text"/> Month <input type="text"/> Year <input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Operational Environment
3 Create HTML and RSS files for sharing <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Response coordination
Access tag <input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> OSOCC
	<input type="checkbox"/> Background
	4
	5
	6
	<input type="button" value="Submit"/>

When should I add users to the discussion?

Add users	
Get persons: <input type="text" value="chaz"/>	<input type="button" value="FIND/ASSIGN"/>
Privilege for newly added users: <input type="text" value="Account Manager"/>	
Consultant	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Chazaly Catherine Mrs (Catherine Chazaly (Consultant))
OCHA	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Chazarreta-Abalos Lorena Ms. (Lorena Chazarreta-Abalos (OCHA))
Users with access to "[test]"	
Moderators of this discussion	
OCHA	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Eidimtaite Gintare Ms Moderator - +
	Peter Thomas Mr. Account manager - +

After you have created a private discussion, you need to give access to other users. If the discussion is public, you might wish to provide administrative rights for other users so they can assist with managing discussion contents (moderators) or to help to give access to other persons (account managers).

To add a person, type the person's last name into the text field and click the button "FIND/ASSIGN". Then select the person(s) from the list of search results and select the desired privilege. Then click "FIND/ASSIGN" once again to assign the person to the discussion.

To remove a person from the discussion, click the x symbol next to the person. To augment or diminish the privileges, use the +/- buttons next to the person.

Can I change or edit my simulation later?

Discussion structure	
Situation	
NEW TITLE 	
New subtitle	
Situation overview	<input type="button" value="Remove"/> <input type="button" value="Edit"/> <input type="button" value="↓"/>
Status of request of assistance	<input type="button" value="Remove"/> <input type="button" value="Edit"/> <input type="button" value="↑"/>
Operational Environment	
New subtitle	
Country baseline data	<input type="button" value="Remove"/> <input type="button" value="Edit"/> <input type="button" value="↓"/>
	New column
Country name	<input type="button" value="Delete"/> <input type="button" value="Edit"/> <input type="button" value="↓"/>
Time zone	<input type="button" value="Delete"/> <input type="button" value="Edit"/> <input type="button" value="↑"/> <input type="button" value="↓"/>
Population	<input type="button" value="Delete"/> <input type="button" value="Edit"/> <input type="button" value="↑"/> <input type="button" value="↓"/>

You can always edit your discussion settings later by clicking on the 'Edit' button on your discussion title in the overview. Once your simulation exercise is saved, you can tailor the discussion structure in accordance with your needs. You can create a new title (1), for example, if you want to create an additional OSOCC or USAR coordination area. You can add (2) and remove (3) subtitles and change their order. You can customize the subtitles to your needs: allow users to comment under the relevant subtitle, specify if the subtitle should be visible even if it contains no information, or change its name.

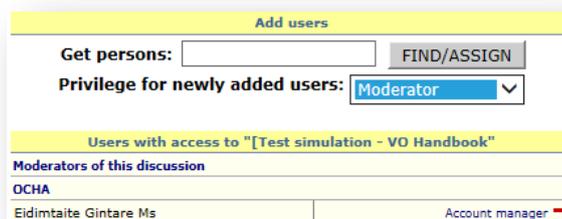
How do I upload injects?

You can share information and tasks for exercise participants through comment, or provide information (text, files or links to other websites) directly under the subtitles by choosing 'Edit subtitle'. You may wish to visit examples of simulation exercises in the discussion archives to learn from peers.

Situation	
Situation overview	<input type="button" value="Add comment"/> <input type="button" value="Edit subtitle"/>
Status of request of assistance	<input type="button" value="Add comment"/> <input type="button" value="Edit subtitle"/>
Comments	<input type="button" value="Add comment"/> <input type="button" value="Edit subtitle"/>

Can I assign other persons to upload and edit injects?

You can add additional moderators to your discussion to assist with editing summaries and moderating the contents. Select 'Edit' on the title of your discussion, and use the 'Add users' feature. Type in the name of the person you want to add, and click on 'Find/Assign'; select the correct person from the search results and select their privilege as 'Moderator'. Then, click on 'Find/Assign' again.



The screenshot shows a web interface for adding users to a discussion. At the top, there is a yellow header with the text "Add users". Below this, there is a search area with a text input field labeled "Get persons:", a "FIND/ASSIGN" button, and a dropdown menu labeled "Privilege for newly added users:" with "Moderator" selected. Below the search area, there is a yellow header with the text "Users with access to "[Test simulation - VO Handbook"]". Underneath, there is a section titled "Moderators of this discussion" with a sub-header "OCHA". A table lists the moderators, with the first entry being "Eidimtaite Gintare Ms" and a red "Account manager" icon to its right.

Moderators of this discussion	
OCHA	
Eidimtaite Gintare Ms	Account manager

4. Training and Meetings



ABOUT THIS CHAPTER

Although the screenshots used in this Chapter only illustrate examples of discussions under the tab “Training”, the same actions apply in discussions under tab “Meetings”. If you have any questions or need further assistance, contact us at virtual-osocc@un.org.

The ‘Training’ tab contains training events, including INSARAG exercises, and UNDAC, OSOCC and civil-military coordination courses. The ‘Meetings’ tab has a similar purpose, and hosts pages for meetings and workshops. Users can subscribe for e-mail notifications when new events are added by clicking on MAIL SMS (for instructions on subscriptions, see Chapter [Subscription](#)). Discussions under tabs “Training” and “Meetings” indicate if the event is still open for (on-line) registration:

How can I add a meeting or training event on the Virtual OSOCC?

1. Please note that only VO moderators can create new meetings or training events. If you do not have moderator rights, you can make a request at virtual-osocc@un.org and the discussion will be created for you with full admin rights. By clicking on the edit button next to the discussion, you can modify the following information:

Add Discussion

Discussion title

Is public If not ticked, the event will only be visible to you.

Start date Day Month Year

End date Day Month Year

Event Status

Display under "Announcements" on the discussion overview page Choose this if you want your event to be advertised on the homepage

Location

Focal point

Reply to auto reminder (e-mail)

Access tag

Create HTML and RSS files for sharing Tick if you want to embed this event in other websites

Publish dynamic update on VO homepage (does not apply for private discussions) Tick if you want information about this event to be visible on the homepage

Tab

Section New:

Has rosters

Has HIT

Has relief teams

Has relief items

Has maps

Has contacts Although you will always be able to see who applied and who has been denied, choose whether you want this information visible to all users

Has invitation

Has agenda

Has participants

Participants show applied show denied

Relevance

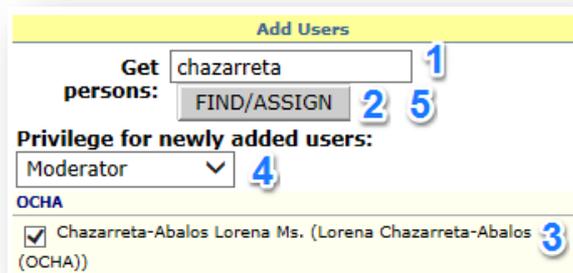
Auto archive Day Month Year

Setting an auto-archive date is optional, but helps us keep the tab tidy and up to date

Don't forget to save your event

- You may wish to select other users to manage the discussion and provide or modify its contents in the "Add Users" section on the right side.

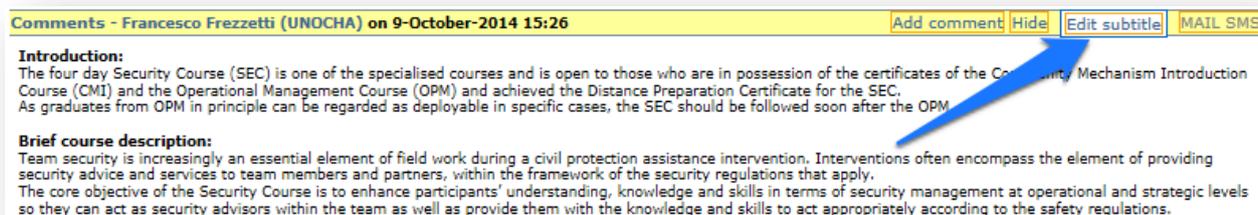
To find users, type the last name of the person in the search field (1) and click **FIND/ASSIGN** (2). Select the person(s) from the list of matching users (3) and select their privileges (4). Click **FIND/ASSIGN** again (5) to assign the user to the discussion. For more information about user privileges, see Chapter 1.3. [User community](#).



- You can customize the information structure of the discussion by adding titles and subtitles. The default structure for training events and meeting contain the titles "Invitation", "Agenda" and "Participants", as well as one for "Background information". To add titles (e.g. Training objectives) or a subtitles (e.g. Background documents) to the discussion structure, use "NEW TITLE" or "new subtitle" in the section "Discussion structure" in the right column. When adding subtitles, you can specify the format (input type) and if users are allowed to add comments directly under the subtitle.



- Once you have tailored the page structure according to your needs, proceed to input the content by choosing to edit the relevant subtitle and filling out the subsequent text field:



- As next step you can create an invitation with necessary details about the event. Choose "Get copy" to select a previous invitation as template. Otherwise, click 'New invitation', complete the form. Then you can choose to save the invitation (as draft) or publish it on the VO. Alternatively, you can send it online to a list of VO users.



- Then you can add the agenda for the event. You can also use an agenda as template from previous events, or create a new one by selecting the *Provisional agenda* title at the left and choosing the relevant option. After adding agenda items, you (or other VO users) can upload files or links to websites for that session.

Background	Provisional agenda					New agenda item ...Print ...
Course information	Time	Title	Purpose	Location	Presenter	Downloads
Comments	14-Sep-2007					
Invitation	00:00 - 00:00	Safety and Security training	All UN Staff members (including UNDAC members) are required to complete the Basic safety and security training program. You can access the program via the attached link		You can make your own password and then click 'logon' and then 'continue'.	Websites: UN Basic Safety and Security training program advanced Safety and Security training weblink
Provisional agenda	details add file add web-link edit delete					
Participants						

7. As a final step, go to the title *Participants* and select whether Virtual OSOCC should be able to apply on-line by clicking on 'Allow registration'. Alternatively you can manually add participants using 'New participant', then type the last name in the search box (1), click on the button on the right (2) and select the person you wish to add as participant (3). Then complete the form with additional information about the participant and save the record (4). You can send an e-mail or SMS to participants using the "EDIT LIST" button (5).

5. Discussions

The *Discussions* tab contains a forum for Virtual OSOCC users, to exchange information about a variety of issues on preparedness and emergency response. Most discussions are private and only visible to a selected group of users involved in a particular project or working group. To participate in a discussion, click on a chosen title and add comments or upload files.

How do I start a new discussion?

1. Start by creating a new discussion page. You can do so by choosing 'New Discussion' at the top of the overview, or 'New discussion in this section'. In each case, you will need to fill out a simple form and provide the key elements of your discussion – its name, visibility and start date.

Disasters	Simulator	Training	Meetings	Discussions	Use
					New Discussion ...
GDACS				MAIL SMS	NEW DISCUSSION IN THIS SECTION
18-Feb-2011	GDACS Documents, Guidelines and Reports				☆
INSARAG				MAIL SMS	NEW DISCUSSION IN THIS SECTION
16-May-2013	GCC Discussion on USAR Capacity Building				☆

2. Once you have created the discussion, set up its structure:

Discussions		MAIL SMS	NEW DISCUSSION IN THIS SECTION
19-Aug-2014	Discussion Example		EDIT DISCUSSION STRUCTURE ☆

Discussion structure		NEW TITLE
Background		
		new subtitle
Key issues		remove edit
Meeting preparation		
		new subtitle
Draft participant list		remove edit ↓
Suggested venues		remove edit ↑

You can add new titles (1) and subtitles (2), and later easily edit or remove them (3). Use the red arrows to move titles or subtitles up and down in the list (4, 5). Use the light bulb icon next to the title (6) to specify the title that is expanded automatically when opening the discussion. To add information and files to subtitles, choose 'edit subtitle' (7).

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↓ Background Key issues Comments ↑ Meeting preparation Draft participant list Suggested venues Comments 	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">Background</th> <th>add comment</th> <th>edit subtitle</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Key issues</td> <td></td> <td>add comment</td> <td>edit subtitle</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Comments</td> <td></td> <td>add comment</td> <td>edit subtitle</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Background		add comment	edit subtitle	Key issues		add comment	edit subtitle	Comments		add comment	edit subtitle
Background		add comment	edit subtitle										
Key issues		add comment	edit subtitle										
Comments		add comment	edit subtitle										

3. If your discussion is private, add users who will be able to participate and assign their admin rights (privilege) for the discussion. For more information about user privileges, see [Chapter 1.3. User community](#). To add users to your discussion, you need to open the editing menu:

Edit Discussion		NEW TITLE	
Discussion title <input type="text" value="Discussion Example"/>			
Is public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
Start date Day <input type="text"/> Month <input type="text"/> Year <input type="text" value="2014"/>			
Tab <input type="text" value="Discussions"/>			
Section <input type="text" value="Discussions"/> New: <input type="text"/>			
Has rosters <input type="checkbox"/>			
Has HIT <input type="checkbox"/>			
Has relief teams <input type="checkbox"/>			
Has relief items <input type="checkbox"/>			
Has maps <input type="checkbox"/>			
Has contacts <input type="checkbox"/>			
Relevance <input type="text" value="Active"/>			
Auto archive Day <input type="text"/> Month <input type="text"/> Year <input type="text"/>			
Create HTML and RSS files for sharing <input type="checkbox"/>			
Discussion structure			
Background <input type="text"/> <input type="text" value="new subtitle"/>			
Key issues <input type="text"/> <input type="text" value="remove"/> <input type="text" value="edit"/>			
Meeting preparation <input type="text"/> <input type="text" value="new subtitle"/>			
Draft participant list <input type="text"/> <input type="text" value="remove"/> <input type="text" value="edit"/> <input type="text" value="↓"/>			
Suggested venues <input type="text"/> <input type="text" value="remove"/> <input type="text" value="edit"/> <input type="text" value="↑"/>			
Add Users			
Get <input type="text"/>			
persons: <input type="text" value="FIND/ASSIGN"/>			
Privilege for newly added users:			
<input type="text" value="User"/>			
Users with editorial rights for "[Discussion Example]"			
Moderators of this discussion			
OCHA			
Eidimtaite Gintare Ms		Account manager <input type="text" value=""/>	



6. Users and Statistics

The *Users* tab offers three features:

1. **The VO contacts database.** As of December 2014, Virtual OSOCC has more than 19,100 users. This number increases by 20 per cent every year. You can easily search for their contact details by last name, country or email address.
2. **Current Users Overview.** You will see who is logged onto the Virtual OSOCC at that time.

The *Statistics* tab outlines key data about the VO, including the number of registered users and disaster discussions opened since the creation of the VO.

7. Additional features

7.1. Languages

One of the new features of the Virtual OSOCC is the availability of its static interface in English, Spanish and French. To choose the language you want to use, select it on the top of the page, as illustrated:

The screenshot shows the top navigation bar of the Virtual OSOCC interface. The language selection dropdown menu is open, showing 'English' as the selected option. A blue arrow points to the dropdown menu. The interface includes a navigation menu with options like 'Disasters', 'Simulator', 'Training', 'Meetings', 'Discussions', 'Users', 'Lists', and 'Statistics'. There is also a 'Your bookmarks' section on the right side.

7.2. Subscription

Sometimes information posted on Virtual OSOCC is very important and should be brought to the immediate attention of concerned users by e-mail or even SMS. Users can subscribe to receive e-mail and/or SMS alerts:

- every time when new information is added** to the discussion. This may be useful to, for example, discussion moderators so they can take immediate action if necessary;
- only when important information is added** to the discussion, such as the affected country issuing a request for international assistance.

How can I subscribe to alerts?

- Open the relevant disaster discussion and click on the **SUBSCRIBE** button:

The screenshot shows a disaster discussion page. The 'SUBSCRIBE' button is highlighted with a blue arrow. The page includes a 'Situation overview' section with a title and a 'GENERAL' section containing text about an Ebola outbreak. There are also several links and icons on the right side of the page.

- Choose preferred options in the pop-up window:

Specify the notification you wish to receive if new information is added to this discussion	E-MAIL	SMS
Do not notify me when new information is added	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Notify me only when the author of new information deliberately triggers notification	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Notify me always when new information is added	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

SUBMIT

How can I change my subscription settings or unsubscribe to alerts?

1. Click on the **SUBSCRIBE** button again and edit the alert settings.
2. In order to unsubscribe to alerts, choose 'Do not notify me when new information is added' for both e-mail and SMS:

Specify the notification you wish to receive if new information is added to this discussion		
	E-MAIL	SMS
Do not notify me when new information is added	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Notify me only when the author of new information deliberately triggers notification	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Notify me always when new information is added	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How can I alert other users of the discussion that I have added information?

When you add a comment, upload an attachment or edit a discussion summary, the following window will pop up. Select the appropriate option and, if needed, provide the text for the SMS. If no SMS message is provided, it will not be sent.

Please select if you want to notify other users about your input.
The recommended value is already preselected.

E-mail broadcast

- Do not send. Information was only modified or is not sufficiently important
- Send 4 e-mail [smsText] to users who wish to receive all updates.
- Send 2 e-mail and 2 SMS to users who wish to receive only important updates

SMS Message

SMS message (please only if important):

7.3. Bookmarking

Users can bookmark any discussion, simulation, meeting or event in order to easily access it any time from a sidebar on the right side of the page.

How can I add or remove a bookmark?

1. Click on the star next to the discussion title – it will change colour to yellow and you're the discussion will be moved to the sidebar.

Disasters	Simulator	Training	Meetings	Discussions	Users	Statistics
						ARCHIVED DISCUSSIONS VIEW HIDDEN INFO RSS
						Your bookmarks
Breaking Emergencies				MAIL SMS NEW EMERGENCY IN THIS SECTION	HTML RSS STAR	
3-Aug-2014	Aug. 3 Yunnan Zhaotong City M 6.5 earthquake				STAR Breaking Emergencies	
24-May-2014	Earthquake in Greece				STAR Earthquake in Greece	
2-May-2014	Afghanistan - landslide - 2nd of May 2014				STAR Emergency	
Emergencies				MAIL SMS	HTML RSS STAR	
18-Jul-2014	Syrian Border Monitoring Mechanism				STAR Emergencies	
15-Jul-2014	Cyclone RAMMASUN-14				STAR Emergencies	
12-Jun-2014	Paraguay - floods				HTML RSS STAR	
						Register for events
						Meetings IHP/APHF Annual APHP Focal Point Meeting (15-Jun-2014 - 17-Jun-2014) REGISTER

2. To remove it, click on the star again and the bookmarked discussion will disappear.

7.4. Workspaces

Virtual OSOCC supports dedicated Workspaces that can be used by countries and organizations for their internal information exchange and coordination. Workspaces are “virtual copies” of the Virtual OSOCC, with all features, accessible only to users that have been added by the Workspace administrator. The creation of workspaces does **not** require the installation of the VO application or database on the servers of the requesting country.

The screenshot shows the Virtual OSOCC interface. At the top, there are navigation tabs: HOME, ALERTS, VIRTUAL OSOCC, DATA, MAPS & SATELLITE IMAGERY, SCIENCE PORTAL, and ABOUT GDACS. Below the tabs, there is a workspace selection dropdown menu currently set to 'VIRTUAL OSOCC'. A blue arrow points to this dropdown. To the right of the dropdown, there is a lightbulb icon and the text 'Gintare Eidimtaite, OCHA YOUR PROFILE LOGOUT STOP NOTIFICATIONS'. Below this, there is a header for 'GDACS - Virtual OSOCC - real-time disaster coordination' and an update color scheme option: 'Update colour scheme: 1 hr, 1-3 hrs, 3-6 hrs, 6-12 hrs, 12+ hrs, none'. Below the header, there are buttons for Disasters, Simulator, Training, Meetings, Discussions, and Use. Below these buttons, there are links for ARCHIVED DISCUSSIONS, DELETED, HITS, HIT SOURCES, HIT TEMPLATE, and DEFAULT T. Below this, there is a 'New Emergency ...' button. Below the 'New Emergency ...' button, there is a section for 'Breaking Emergencies' with a table of events. Below the 'Breaking Emergencies' section, there is a section for 'Emergencies' with a table of events. The tables contain columns for date, event name, and action buttons like MAIL SMS, EDIT, HTML, RSS, and EDIT.

How can I create a Virtual OSOCC Workspace?

Only the GDACS Secretariat at ACSU can create Workspaces. Requests for new Workspaces are to be made to via email: virtual-osocc@un.org.

7.5. Surveys

Discussion moderators can create surveys to evaluate meetings or training sessions, as well as to capture lessons learned from a particular emergency response. Even if a particular Virtual OSOCC user is not assigned as a moderator for the platform, he or she will have full moderation rights to any simulation discussion, meeting or training they created.

How can I create a new survey?

1. Open a discussion, including those on meetings or trainings, to which the survey would relate.
2. Click on NEW SURVEY and fill out the form:

The screenshot shows the 'Virtual OSOCC Survey' form. The form has the following fields and annotations:

- Survey title:** A text input field.
- Description and purpose:** A text area with a scroll bar.
- Expected replies:** A text input field with '(participants: 0)' next to it. An annotation points to this field with the text: 'Choose who and when can see the results'.
- Publication of survey results:** A dropdown menu with 'Results accessible after end date' selected.
- Start date:** A date and time picker with fields for Day, Month, Year, hr, and min. An annotation points to this field with the text: 'Decide for when and for how long users can respond'.
- End date:** A date and time picker with fields for Day, Month, Year, hr, and min.
- Reply scale (from low to high, comma delimited):** A text input field. An annotation points to this field with the text: 'If you are planning to use the same scale (eg. 1-5), set default values here (optional)'. Below this field is a yellow highlight with the text: 'Default values for questions of this survey of type "Scale" or "Chart"'. Below the highlight are two more text input fields: 'Chart columns (comma delimited)' and 'Chart rows (comma delimited)'. An annotation points to these two fields with the text: 'Set default values for chart-type questions (optional)'. At the bottom right of the form are 'CLOSE' and 'SAVE' buttons.

3. Click **SAVE** and add questions in the form which will have appeared:

You can choose between several types of question forms:

- **Text.** Responders will reply with a narrative
Eg. What was the most useful thing you learned during this training?
- **One valid answer.** Multiple choice with only one selection possible
Eg. Did you use the UNDAC Handbook during your deployment?
 - Yes
 - No
- **Many valid answers.** Multiple choice with only several selections possible
Eg. Which of the following tools did you find useful during the response?
 - ReliefWeb
 - LogIK
 - SARWeather
 - HumanitarianResponse.info
- **Response scale.** Allows respondents to rate an answer
Eg. In a scale 1-5, with 1 being extremely bad and 5 being extremely good, how good was the internet connectivity in the area you were deployed to?
- **Chart with multiple responses.** Respondents can choose any amount of combined answers
Eg. Which of the following dates would you be available on?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
January	x														x
February			x	x	x	x					x				
March	x		x											x	

- **Chart with only one response allowed per column**
Eg. Which location should be prioritized for each need?

	WASH	Health	Shelter	Food	Fuel
Guiuan	x			x	
Tacloban		x	x		
Roxas					x

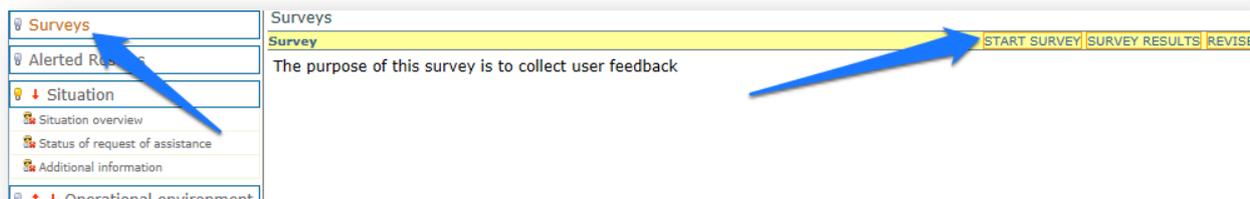
- **Chart with only one response allowed per row**
Eg. What is the single most pressing need in the area?

	WASH	Health	Shelter	Food	Fuel
Guiuan	x				
Tacloban			x		
Roxas	x				

- You may also introduce a **message** between questions
Eg. The following questions will focus on the last day of the meeting. Your answers will not be public.
4. You can change the order of the questions and edit them by clicking the **EDIT** button.
 5. You can view survey results by clicking the **SURVEY RESULTS** button.

How can take part in the survey?

Responding to surveys is easy – you need to click on the 'Surveys' title and then choose **START SURVEY**:



8. Learn more

Virtual OSOCC is a user-driven and highly adaptable platform. As such, changes are incorporated based on user feedback and lessons learned from disaster response and simulations. There are many ways in which the VO community can follow new developments and provide much-appreciated feedback:

- Subscribe to the [Virtual OSOCC](#) YouTube channel;
- Follow [@VirtualOSOCC](#) and [@GDACS](#) on Twitter;
- Attend events related to GDACS, INSARAG, UNDAC and the OSOCC concept where Virtual OSOCC is always presented;
- Contact the Virtual OSOCC team at ACSU if your organization would like a tailored training session on the platform through Webex. Subject to availability of funds, the team can also offer in-person training.



Should you have any questions or would like to request a training, do not hesitate to contact us at virtual-osocc@un.org.
