

Virtual OSOCC is a real-time online coordination tool for disaster response professionals. In particular, it brings together OCHA, national disaster management authorities, UNDAC and USAR teams, as well as bilateral responders to share information in the initial phase of response to major natural disasters.

What does the Virtual OSOCC offer to the UNDAC team?

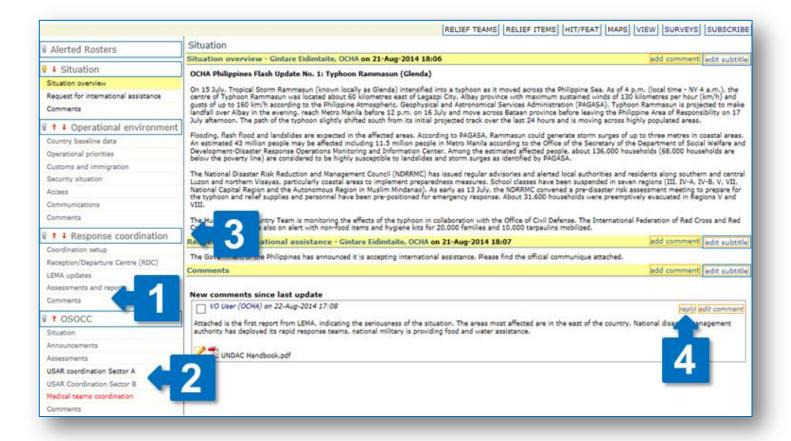
- 1. UNDAC teams are alerted and mobilized through Virtual OSOCC.
- 2. Immediately after a major disaster, the demand for information is great, but its supply is often unpredictable and patchy. Virtual OSOCC pulls together information from OCHA, national authorities and other organizations for a better **situational awareness**: the scale and scope of the disaster, if the affected country has requested or accepted international assistance, as well as the immediate response priorities.
- 3. Virtual OSOCC serves as a one-stop-shop for information about the **operational environment** in the field: basic country information, operational priorities, the rules and regulations for equipment entry and visas, security situation, logistical constraints, available and working communications systems, the location and contacts of the OSOCC, RDC and other relief teams, etc.
- 4. Especially in case of earthquakes, Virtual OSOCC is used as a planning tool for **search and rescue operations**. The team can see which USAR teams are arriving, when and with what capacity.
- 5. Furthermore, UNDAC teams can use the Virtual OSOCC to **broadcast announcements** and share information with bilateral responders in the field and at headquarters.

What kind of information is the UNDAC team expected to post, when and where?

- 1. UNDAC members are usually one of the first responders to be deployed to the affected area. We have learned from previous large-scale emergencies that many responding organizations are expecting the UNDAC team to **share information** as soon as possible, including priority areas of assignment for relief teams and the type and quantity of required assistance. At the same time, mobilizing teams can benefit greatly from timely information about the operational environment in the affected areas. The UNDAC team leader should nominate one team member usually the information manager to update the Virtual OSOCC with relevant information. [Illustration: 1]
- 2. The **structure of the Virtual OSOCC disaster discussion** will be tailored to the given disaster. The default setting foresees one OSOCC whereby the operational area is not divided into USAR sectors. The UNDAC team has to analyse the situation as soon as possible and decide how many OSOCCs need to be established, and where operational USAR sectors need to be assigned. This information should be posted as a comment under the title Relief Coordination. Virtual OSOCC discussion moderators will adapt the structure accordingly. [*Illustration: 2*]
- 3. During the operations phase, the UNDAC team should use the Virtual OSOCC to **broadcast important information** to other responders. This information includes: contact details of the UNDAC team, locations of the OSOCC and the RDC, planned assessments, daily situation reports, as well as updates on security situation, mobile and internet connectivity, logistical constraints and scheduled meetings. Comments and attachments should be posted under the appropriate title. [Illustration: 3]
- 4. **Questions or requests for the UNDAC team** or to the OSOCC should be posted as comments or in reply to previous comments, as appropriate. [*Illustration: 4*]

SUPPORT DURING DEPLOYMENT

If you experience any problems or need any support with the Virtual OSOCC during your UNDAC deployment, contact the Virtual OSOCC team at OCHA: virtual-osocc@un.org, cc. abalos@un.org, petert@un.org, eidimtaite@un.org. Lorena Abalos is the Virtual OSOCC focal point for the Americas and her phone number is +41794770826.



What if I want to learn more?

You can find a full Virtual OSOCC Handbook on our homepage (http://vosocc.unocha.org). There are many other ways in which UNDAC members can follow new developments and provide 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 OCHA 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. Our focal point for the Americas is Lorena Abalos (abalos@un.org).