

Frequently Asked Questions – Oversight Readiness Capacity Assessment (ORCA) Tool

Q. What is the purpose of the tool?

A. The purpose of the tool is to help UNDP effectively monitor and manage risks involved in performing its **oversight** role, which UNDP is legally bound to provide as part of its Quality Assurance (QA) function as accredited entity to donors across its portfolio of Vertical Fund projects during the entire project lifecycle i.e. origination, design, approval and implementation and closure stages.

Q. How does the tool work?

A. The tool is designed to assess the adequacy of current resources and provisions needed at the Country Office (CO) to effectively perform its OVERSIGHT responsibilities when deciding to take on request for development of additional VF projects. The results generated by the tool are aimed at i) identifying potential risks, ii) providing general recommendation for consultations between Country Offices (COs), the Regional Bureaus and the Nature, Climate and Energy (NCE) Team; and iii) development of an action plan to manage/mitigate risks - to be monitored by the NCE team in consultation with the Regional Bureau.

Q. Who will be responsible for administering the tool?

A. The Nature Climate and Energy (NCE) Team will be responsible for the administration of the tool. However, the Regional Bureau Desks, CO and other business units within BPPS will be consulted in line with the RACI matrix.

Q. Who initiates the administration of the tool?

A. The ORCA assessment will be applied once a year in alignment with the IWP cycle. However, in cases where the Regional Bureaus have cited pending Audit and/or other issues that require to be resolved prior to undertaking new VF programming initiatives, the respective CO will require to address the same after which the ORCA can be applied pending confirmation from the Regional Bureau on the resolution of cited issues in a satisfactory manner. Upon confirmation from the Regional Bureaus, the Regional Team Lead of NCE (RTL) will initiate the process of administering the tool - based on programming request from the CO. The RTL will instruct the focal Regional Technical Advisor (RTA) for the CO to complete the tool in collaboration with the CO, Bureau and other responsible colleagues within the NCE team.

Q. Who in the CO is responsible for providing inputs for the Country Office Section?

A. The focal RTA from the NCE unit will coordinate with the Environmental Focal Point in the CO/Head of the Environment Portfolio for completing the CO section on the tool. The EFP shall be responsible for providing inputs for the CO in consultation with other business units in the Country Office.

Q. Apart from the CO, who else is involved in the administration of the tool?

A. Apart from the CO Environment Focal Point, the following entities are involved in administering the tool – (i) The Desk Officer (responsible for the CO) on behalf of Bureau; (ii) Focal NCE/MPSU (responsible for the CO); Focal point NCE/ Safeguards & Risk team (responsible for the CO); and Focal RTA (responsible for the CO).

Q. What is the role of different entities in the administration of the tool?

A. The NCE/BPPS will be responsible for the administration of the tool. The focal RTA for the concerned Country Office will lead the process and complete the tool with assistance of CO, Bureau and NCE team.

The CO is expected to respond to 14 questions (interview format) which only they will be able to answer. The focal RTA will coordinate with the Environment Focal Point to receive these inputs. The Environment Focal Point may consult with other members of the CO team to respond to the questions.

The Bureau Desk, NCE/RTA, NCE/Safeguards & Risk team and NCE/MPSU are expected to respond to a set of 3-6 questions. It is critical to have inputs on over-arching risks in COs that the above entities are concerned about.

Q. How do you ensure that feedback of all RTAs overseeing VF portfolio projects in the CO are incorporated in the tool?

A. The focal RTA for the CO will be required to coordinate/consult with other RTAs overseeing VF projects in that CO and provide combined feedback in the tool in agreement with each other.

Q. What happens if there isn't a focal RTA assigned for a CO?

A. In such cases, the NCE/RTL will assign a focal NCE/RTA for the CO in order to administer the tool. A consistent approach needs to be institutionalized across all Regional Hubs.

Q. What is the difference between VF Programming Needs Assessment Tool (VF-PNAT) and Oversight Readiness Capacity Assessment (ORCA) tool?

A. ORCA tool is the digitized version of VF-PNAT. After the pilot phase, the VF-PNAT was re-branded as ORCA and was revised based on feedback received from all stakeholders. The Procurement module, which was part of VF-PNAT has been removed from ORCA. Based on discussions with Bureau of Management Services, this module may be integrated into ORCA at a later date.

Q. What resources are used as inputs in the tool?

A. Several inputs have been used to inform the design of the tool. These include:

- Policies of vertical funds - Global Environment Facility (GEF), Adaptation Fund (AF) and Green Climate Fund (GCF) as they relate to oversight functions as well as execution support expected of UNDP.
- Information/data from existing resources and databases and platforms available within UNDP such as the ERM, OAI, HACT, Procurement management dashboards and platforms such as ATLAS and PIMS+.
- Inputs from Regional Bureau, Country Office and NCE Directorate to triangulate inputs from CO based on their practical experiences and expertise in relation to VF project/portfolio management.

Q. How will the results of the tool be used?

A. The tool will suggest a list of recommendations based on gaps and/or needs triggering the risks. The purpose of these recommendations is to initiate discussions between NCE, Bureau and CO to assess the relevance of these triggers and decide on corrective actions through an action plan to mitigate the risks.

Q. Who is accountable for implementing the action plan?

A. The Action Plan developed in consultation with the Bureau Desk Officer and NCE/RTA will outline measures to address pertinent risks and will additionally include the person/unit responsible for implementation of the respective measures as well as the frequency of monitoring the implementation of measures prescribed. Therefore, the accountability to implement the action plan will lie collectively with the Country Office, the Regional Bureaus and the NCE unit. The Action Plan will have to be signed off

by the RR/DRR of the Country Office, the Regional Bureau Director and the NCE/RTL. Thereafter, the NCE unit will monitor the AP at least three times a year in consultation with the Regional Bureau.

Q. What is the frequency/how often will the tool be administered?

A. As part of the roll out process in 2022, the tool is expected to be administered prioritizing CO that have requests for programming Vertical Fund projects. Eventually, the tool must be updated on an annual basis (i.e. at least once every 12 months) and aligned with the IWP process. However, administering the ORCA is subject to Bureau confirmation for the COs eligibility to undertake programming. In cases where the Regional Bureaus have cited pending Audit and/or other issues that require to be resolved prior to undertaking new VF programming initiatives, the respective CO will require to address the same after which the ORCA can be applied pending confirmation from the Regional Bureau on the resolution of cited issues in a satisfactory manner. The NCE unit, BPPS will only administer the ORCA pending confirmation from the Regional Bureaus on eligibility of the CO.

Q. How often will the tool be updated?

A. The auto-generated CO Snapshot section (STEP2) of the tool will be updated on a daily basis. However, the sections that require manual inputs from different colleagues (i.e. STEP 3 & STEP 4) will be updated on an annual basis. In case there are significant changes in the CO's operating context or changes in risk levels that are observed based on STEP2 (i.e. the CO Snapshot section), the tool may also be administered again on an as-needed basis to ensure results and, if required, the Action Plan are updated.

Q. Does the administration of the tool entail additional workload for Bureaus and COs?

A. The tool requires minimal inputs from the Bureau Desks in responding to a set of 3 questions which only the Bureau Desk can answer. It is critical to have inputs on over-arching risks in COs that Bureaus are concerned about.

The Country Offices are also required to provide inputs for a set of up to 14 questions - on materiality of local risks/localized inputs. These questions pertain to identification/assessment of programming needs and insights that are not possible to gather from existing online resources within UNDP.

Q. Will the tool assess CO programming needs for projects other than Vertical Fund projects?

A. No, the tool is specifically targeted towards assessment of programming needs for vertical fund portfolio only.

Q. Will the tool assess capacity of Implementing Partners?

A. No, the tool is not meant to assess capacity of the partners/implementing partners. The partner capacity is assessed through administration of other tools such as Partner Capacity Assessment Tool (PCAT) and HACT Assessment.

Q. Will the tool be administered every time a new project is included in the Country Office pipeline?

A. No, the tool will not be administered for every new project that is proposed in the CO pipeline. The tool has been designed to generate results for the overall VF portfolio of the CO. The CO is expected to utilize the existing results, unless there is a requirement to administer the tool again due to the changing context in the CO.

Q. Will inputs provided by one entity be visible to others and vice versa?

A. Yes, inputs provided are visible to all to ensure transparency. However, inputs made by one entity is "read only" and cannot be adjusted by others.

Q. Some of the responses/inputs requested from different entities are similar. What is the rationale behind this?

A. Some of the inputs requested are deliberately duplicated across different entities. The rationale behind this is to triangulate data in the auto-generated CO Snapshot tab and response from CO.

Q. Has the ORCA tool been developed in consultation with the RBx?

A. Yes, an inter-bureau task team was set up to review the tool and feedback received from RBx have been incorporated in the final digitized version. Bilateral conversations are ongoing at the moment to streamline the tool into Quantum as part of risk management.

Q. Who is responsible for coming up with the Action Plan?

A. The Action Plan must be prepared collectively by the CO, Regional Bureau and NCE, based on risks identified and based on results and recommendations generated by the tool.

Q. Who takes the final decision on the contents of the Action Plan?

A. The contents of the Action Plan are based on a collective decision of the RR (on behalf of CO), Desk Officer (on behalf of Regional Bureau) and RTL (on behalf of NCE). In case of disagreement in the contents of the Action Plan, the issues must be elevated to RBx Deputy Director and NCE Executive Coordinator.

Q. Who will be responsible for monitoring the Action Plan? Who will be accountable for the Action Plan?

A. The NCE/BPPS will be responsible for monitoring the Action Plan at least three times a year in consultation with the Regional Bureaus. In case of issues/non-compliance, NCE/BPPS will inform the Regional Bureau and CO.

Q. Is the ORCA tool applicable to regional and global VF projects?

A. The ORCA tool is not applicable to global and regional VF projects. A separate workstream will be required to assess capacity needs of business units that take on regional and global projects.

Q. What is the purpose of including the “Exclusionary criteria” in the tool?

A. The exclusionary criteria is included to serve as a reference for the PISC process. They are not considered in scoring the risk ratings and therefore has no implications on the results. These criteria are merely presented to trigger discussions between the CO, RBx and NCE team to adjust programming priorities in the action plan.

Q. If a Country Office does not fulfil one of the “exclusionary criteria” does this mean there will be no programming pursued in that Country Office?

A. The exclusionary criteria is part of the SOP for new programming and will be dealt with through the Pre-investment Steering Committee (PISC) process.

Q. What if the results and recommendations generated by the tool are not perceived to be in alignment with actual situation in the CO?

A. The OCRA tool is developed using a ‘conservative principle’ and highlight gaps and needs perceived to be high risk in nature and/or impeding the performance of oversight function of VF projects by the CO. Additionally, the tool extracts ready information from various sources within UNDP to summarize datapoints relevant to oversight of VF projects. The tool may generate different results in case there have been updates to the data in the interim and/or if the data extracted is incorrect. E.g. OAI audit data used

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to highlight ratings and recommendations, the status of completion has not been captured due to confidentiality reasons. In such cases while the tool may assign a high-risk, these issues may have already been addressed. In such cases the CO and NCE/focal RTA are requested to note this in the Action Plan section of the tool. Further, users can also provide feedback to the ORCA team using the “Feedback” button available on the tool so that inconsistencies are highlighted and can be addressed by the team.