## Background

Refugees Registration Information System (RRIS) is the core application used by Relief and Social Services Department (RSSD), on the program side of UNRWA. It holds and maintains civic information on Palestinian refugees such as births, marriages, deaths and location changes. RRIS also generates family registration cards. Furthermore, RRIS holds detailed socio-economic information on families and individuals enrolled in UNRWA's Social Safety Net (SSN) Program. The system is used in all fields, areas and some camp offices.

RRIS is supported operationally by RSSD, technically by Information Management and Technology Department (IMTD), and includes three key modules: Registration, SSN, and Emergency.

RRIS architecture setup includes outsourced servers hosted at UNGSC. The servers include database, application, backup, SharePoint and web servers. Access to RRIS is via a web-based portal and authentication is through use of single sign-on using user domain account credentials. The RRIS IT environment is governed by the overall IMTD policies and procedures as well as RSSD operational procedures.

In 2020, RSSD initiated the migration of data from PAS, which was used in the Gaza field office to house registration data, into the emergency module within RRIS.

Also, the RRIS modernisation project was initiated by RSSD in 2021 to address important shortcomings identified with the current system, including a need to ensure alignment to international standards for civil registration systems and restructuring of the refugee records to follow a person-centred approach where individual registration cards will be issued. This enhanced approach is expected to help strengthen the identity verification process.

## What DIOS did

DIOS conducted an advisory review to assess whether IT general controls of RRIS were in place and operating effectively over: data center and network operations, access security, system software acquisition, change, and maintenance, and program change. In addition, the review included an analysis of the controls in place governing the PAS migration into the RRIS emergency module. This review aimed to provide input for RSSD and IMTD in the planning and implementing the RRIS modernization.

## Results of the review PAS migration

DIOS identified various good practices in the PAS migration project, including the following:

✓ Business users (field office staff) were involved in obtaining the business requirements for the update of the system functionality. This ensured that the business expectations were incorporated in the system design. Additionally, business users were involved in the testing phases to validate the suitability of the implementations.

✓ Training to ensure that all new users were aligned to using RRIS for emergency and distribution services.

✓ Data verification process included manual onsite process undertaken by the field officers to ensure that only valid cases are registered in the RRIS system as part of the data clean-up process.

✓ Change management processes were incorporated in the project through consistent engagement with the field teams in key project milestones.

✓ New roles and responsibilities were developed and aligned to the RRIS user access rules.

✓ Use of agile methodology allowed for an iterative approach that enabled efficient execution of the project.

DIOS also observed however areas in need of improvement and provided management with the following recommendations:

- Establishment of data management protocol for legacy systems;
- Taking necessary measures to manage the un-migrated beneficiary records; and
- To conduct a post-implementation review in due course.

## Results of the review - ITGC

DIOS noted good practices in the IT general controls including documented policies governing the IT processes (access management, password management, vulnerability management); updated antivirus software; documented and approved changes to RRIS before production; segregation of duties between developers and IT staff, and effective monitoring of network and server performance.

DIOS also observed areas of improvement which may benefit in the anticipated modernization of RRIS as follows:

- The controls surrounding roles modification in RRIS should be enhanced:

- The workflow configurations in RRIS are not aligned with the documented workflow manual;
- There is a need to enhance the authentication method to access RRIS application;
- Management of mobile devices in use by field officers should be enhanced to ensure compliance with relevant policy;
- Backup processes and disaster recovery plan should be appropriately updated and enhanced;
- There is a need to safeguard confidentiality of RRIS data accessed by third parties; and
- Configuration should be hardened to secure the system settings, to reduce IT vulnerability.

## What management is doing to address DIOS recommendations

Management agreed with the recommendations, and moreover promptly took action including on PAS migration, the use of static tables upon data migration for tracking, a detailed review of un-migrated records, and moreover, the plan to conduct a post-migration review as relevant. DIOS was also informed that management action will be taken to mitigate the risks identified by tracking and de-activating RRIS user accounts without valid AD credentials. Furthermore, DIOS notes management's commitment to prepare new user manual will be prepared as part of RRIS modernization project. Lastly, upon DIOS notification, management promptly conducted the review of disaster recovery plan and is committed to conduct regular testing as well as update the policy as recommended.

Advisory assessment
IT General Controls over RRIS and PAS migration

department of internal oversight services

## Methodology, Approach and Disclosure

DIOS assessed whether IT general controls of RRIS were in place and operating effectively over: data center and network operations, access security, system software acquisition, change, and maintenance, and program change. In addition, the review included an analysis of the controls in place governing the PAS migration into the RRIS emergency module. The review aimed to provide input for RSSD and IMTD in the planning and implementing the anticipated RRIS modernization and is therefore conducted on an advisory basis.

The approach included review of control processes and relevant documents, selection of transaction samples for analysis and examination, enquiries and interview with staff, and other procedures deemed necessary.

The assignment was conducted in accordance with DIOS standards which are designed to conform to the International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing. It was completed in conformity with the approved work plan and took into consideration the risk assessment exercise conducted prior to the assessment.

Pursuant to OD14, this summary of findings and recommendations including management action taken to address recommendations is made publicly available on the DIOS internet page upon issuance of the report.