

**HSOT** Humanitarian  
and Stabilisation  
Operations Team

# ANNUAL REPORT

1 October 2019 – 30 September 2020

# WHAT IS HSOT?



The Humanitarian and Stabilisation Operations Team (HSOT), implemented by Palladium, provides the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and the Stabilisation Unit (SU) with capacity and specialist expertise for effective UK response to sudden-onset disasters, protracted crises and complex emergencies.

The team also supports other UK government departments in their work with fragile and conflict-affected states.

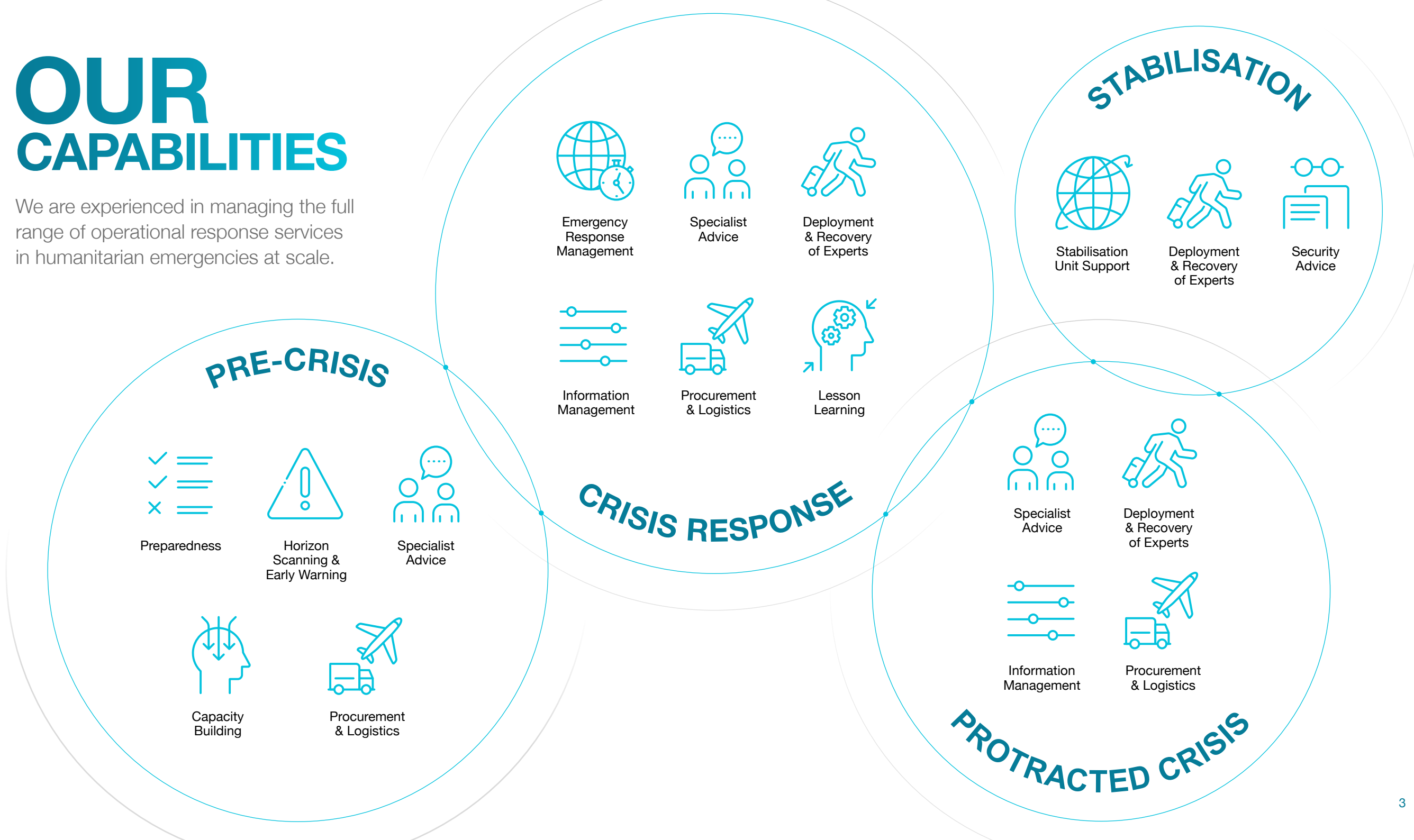
We are a team of over 70 dedicated core staff working closely with the FCDO and the SU in London with a procurement and logistics team located at our warehouse in Kemble, Gloucestershire.

Our response support services are designed to help manage rapid-onset humanitarian disasters, and to meet increased needs in protracted humanitarian crises and conflict-affected states around the world through a five-year programme.

Our primary objective is to ensure that the UK government has the right people in the right place at the right time to meet the needs of affected people.

# OUR CAPABILITIES

We are experienced in managing the full range of operational response services in humanitarian emergencies at scale.



# OUR STORY

**HSOT started in November 2017.**

In the last 3 years we have supported the UK Government to:



Deliver

**832**

projects



In

**130**

countries



With a value of over

**£76m**



Responding to

**36**

major crises



Managing

**1,830**

specialist deployments

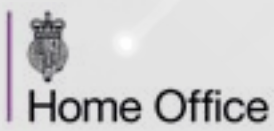
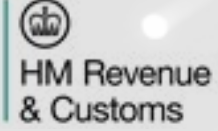
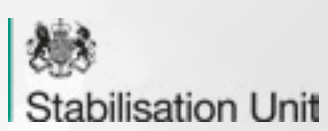


Procuring over

**369,037**

items

# OUR NETWORK



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# FROM THE LEADERSHIP TEAM

## MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



Palladium's Humanitarian and Stabilisation Operations Team has completed the third year of implementing the Humanitarian Emergency Response Operations and Stabilisation Programme (HEROS), providing support to the UK Government in pursuit of its policy priorities as laid out in the then-Department for International Development's (DFID) 2017 Humanitarian Reform Policy.

Programme implementation is led by four operational teams: the Humanitarian Emergency Response Team; the Operations Team; the Procurement and Logistics Team; and the Stabilisation Unit Support Team.

This report tells the story of our work over the last 12 months, a period of significant challenge and change. The onset of the Novel Corona Virus (Covid-19) at the start of 2020 required a rapid recalibration of operational priorities, the development and implementation of a business

continuity plan to enable continued delivery across the programme, and tighter coordination between the programme team and our clients in DFID and the SU. At the time of writing, the full impact of the merger of DFID with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) is still unfolding and will present opportunities and challenges for the forward trajectory of the programme.

The report provides a compelling picture of how HSOT has delivered significant impact against Government-articulated humanitarian and stabilisation priorities and contractual requirements, as well as how we have flexed in line with emerging needs, risks and opportunities; built on lessons learned in previous years in order to deliver a professional, efficient, effective and world-class set of services while demonstrating solid value for money.

As we look to the future and gain a better understanding of the implications of the far-reaching consequences of the events of 2020, Palladium and the programme team are enthusiastic to continue and enhance support to the British Government for the remainder of the programme period and beyond.

**Director: Oliver Hall**

# FROM THE LEADERSHIP TEAM



## HUMANITARIAN EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM

**Deputy Director: Siobhan Parnell**

A strengthened Early Warning and Risk Alert system engaged a broader group of stakeholders, creating a fuller picture of emerging risk contexts and generating evidence-based analysis. This informs FCDO decision-making, supports response operations and reaches an increasingly wide government audience. The newly established Emerging Risk Advisory Group solidifies the engagement and utility of HSOT's capability.

HSOT's advisors provide high-calibre humanitarian expertise, field experience and policy understanding, guiding FCDO humanitarian response from early strategic direction to adaptation, monitoring and learning, emphasising core policy priorities and upholding UK commitments.

Technical capability for safeguarding against sexual harassment, abuse and sexual exploitation has ensured that we fulfil FCDO's requirements and pursue our ambitious approach with practical action. Our technical expertise across humanitarian sectors has benefited multiple UK responses.

HSOT has increased FCDO capacity through rapid deployments, enhanced preparedness focus, exercises and training sessions, guidance contributions and the promotion of peer learning.



## OPERATIONS TEAM

**Deputy Director: David Northfield**

This year the Operations Team managed a diverse portfolio of humanitarian projects, deploying technical experts to support FCDO country teams from Albania to Zimbabwe and multiple crises in between. As the world was gripped by the Covid-19 pandemic, HSOT advisors supported the UK Government to adapt and respond to the challenge, working in the field and in Whitehall as we recruited new specialists in areas such as epidemiology and public health, while also expanding our core pool of humanitarian advisers and information managers.

The Team supported FCDO engagement with the United Nations (UN) through both the UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination mechanism and the Standby Partnership, responding to humanitarian crises while strengthening the international system. We also developed and deployed new partnerships to provide niche skills, including disability and inclusion experts and geographic information system (GIS) specialists.

Behind the scenes our team continues to organise and manage the welfare of hundreds of staff and contractors, providing pre-deployment training, medical clearance and security vetting to ensure the FCDO and the wider UK Government have access to the experts it needs whenever and wherever they are required. This is underpinned by a financial infrastructure that processes hundreds of thousands of transactions accounting for millions of pounds of government expenditure, and our team is constantly working to improve and enhance our efficiency, transparency and value for money.



# FROM THE LEADERSHIP TEAM



## PROCUREMENT AND LOGISTICS TEAM

**Deputy Director: Julian Neale**

Supply chain response activity provided clear advice to the FCDO, leading to more efficient utilisation of project resources for the Covid-19 response and August 2020 support to Lebanon, as well as for the wider humanitarian community.

A focus on the environment was operationalised in supply chain preparedness and response supply chains through an amendment to the supply chain strategy, in addition to work on reducing packaging and increasing recycling and carbon offset measures.

Procurement continued to be transparent and fair with increasing emphasis on environmental and safeguarding considerations. The team continues to provide traceability for goods in its care and has developed blockchain based tools to extend traceability post-handover to FCDO partners.



## STABILISATION UNIT (SU) SUPPORT TEAM

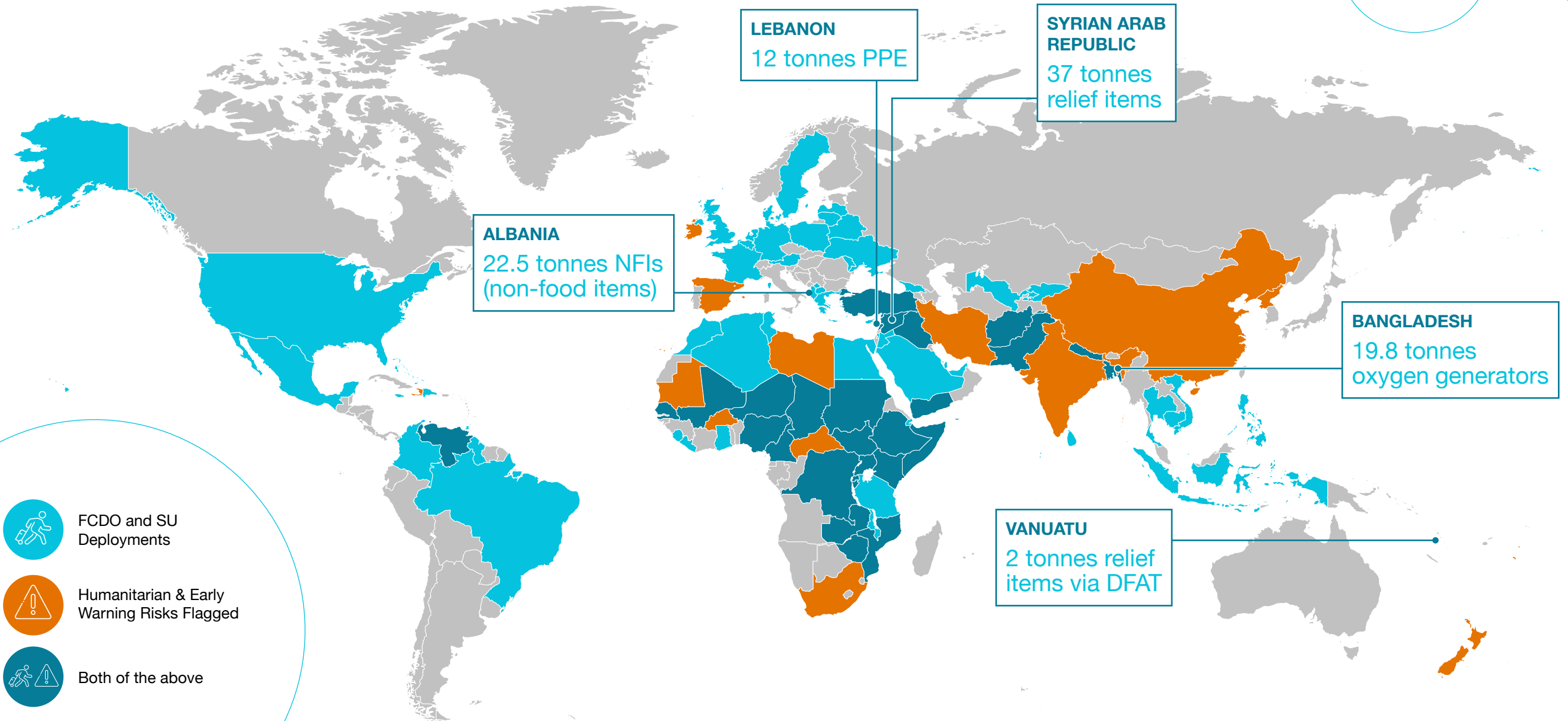
**Deputy Director: Mark Marshall**

Improvements were made in sustaining deployees by implementing robust welfare, medical and financial support mechanisms. Centralising project management this year improved working relationships and enhanced the services and support offered to our deployees.

The team implemented a rapid risk-based assessment of all overseas personnel to successfully mitigate Covid-19-related risks towards withdrawal or retention of personnel overseas, as well as a successful transition to remote working. A lessons learned and re-deployment planning process ensured operational outputs were not affected when re-deployment commenced.

Palladium worked closely with SU counterparts to better align working practices and policies. The outcome of this work was improved understanding, greater clarity over deliverables and improved operational activity. This improved clarity has paid dividends in output terms and has directly led to increased requests for a wider range of services in support of the SU's work.

# OUR GLOBAL REACH



FCDO and SU  
Deployments



Humanitarian & Early  
Warning Risks Flagged



Both of the above

An aerial photograph of a vast, green grassy field. A dark shadow of a helicopter is cast across the middle-right portion of the field. The image is overlaid with several thin, white, overlapping circles of varying sizes, some containing small white dots at their centers. The bottom of the image has a dark orange-to-brown gradient.

# PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHTS

# BEIRUT PORT EXPLOSION

On 4 August 2020, a massive explosion devastated Beirut. About 2,750 tonnes of ammonium nitrate had been stored in a port warehouse when a fire caused it to explode.

200 people were killed by the explosion, with 6,500 injured and 300,000 made homeless. The British Embassy was damaged, with staff displaced or injured. HSOT was asked to provide a field team to enable a response.

Within two days, the HSOT field team was in Beirut providing humanitarian expertise, operating on Palladium's own response platform.

The team delivered advice to DFID Lebanon, information analysis, and reporting whilst liaising with local and international partners, the Ministry of Defence (MOD), and the Embassy.

Procurement and logistics experts assessed the Port of Beirut, identified supply chain routes and air charter options, and procured personal protective equipment (PPE), ensuring airside access, the handover of supplies, and innovative distribution tracking through the use of [Sealr](#).

The response showed HSOT's ability to rapidly deploy an effective, self-supporting, multi-disciplinary, and independent field team operating in a high-risk environment affected by Covid-19. Despite the impacted security platform in Beirut, DFID benefited from Palladium's presence and services in Lebanon, which supported decision-making and helped ensure that the UK Government's response was in line with humanitarian best practice.

The field team provided regular analysis and briefings across government on the situation and emerging needs.

Humanitarian analysis and advice included funding recommendations, which are enabling the UN World Food Programme (WFP) to provide emergency food and non-food assistance to more than 12,500 affected households for six months. HSOT undertook an interagency safeguarding

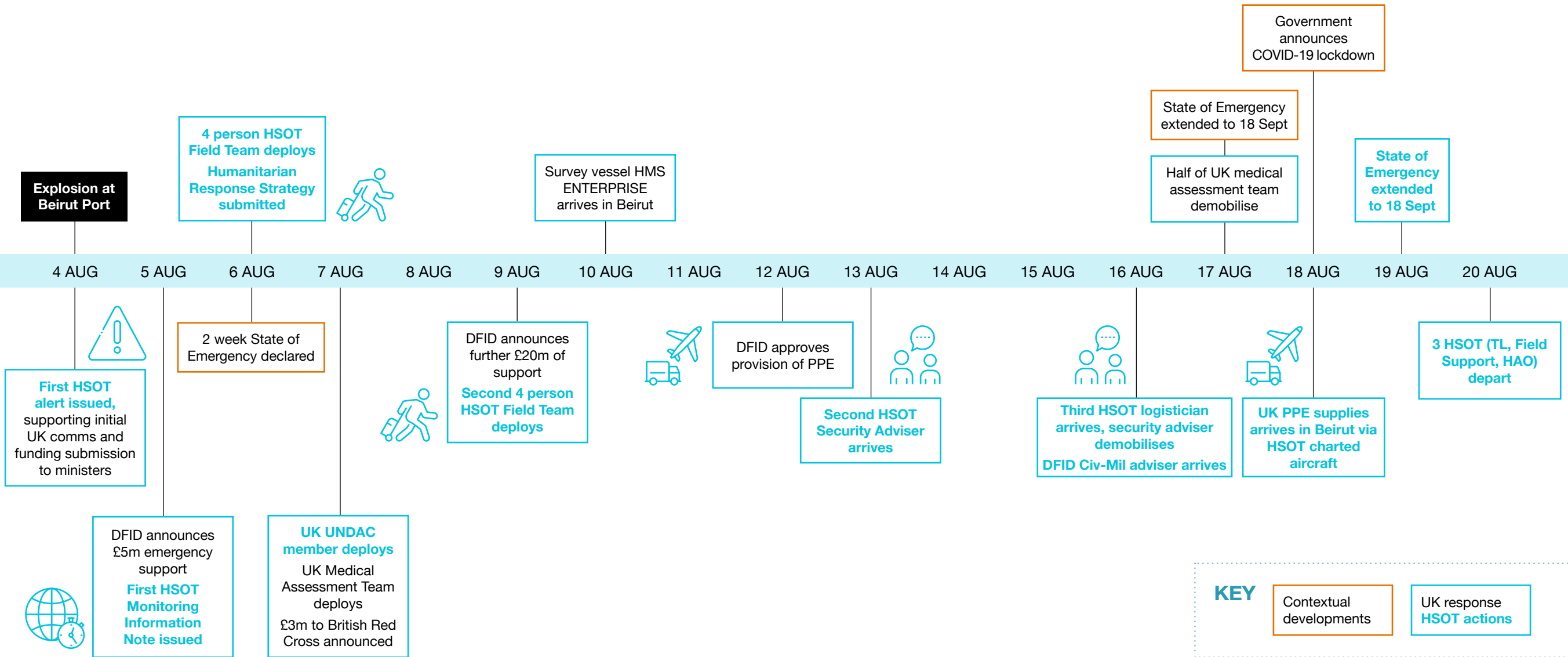
assessment which informed the Lebanon office decision to fund a Standby Partnership request for a safeguarding and accountability position in the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

HSOT delivered 258,530 pieces of PPE to the World Health Organization (WHO) so that Lebanese hospital staff and first responders could function safely.

HSOT's Beirut port assessment included recommendations for short- and long-term recovery and an impact analysis on food security and absorption capacities, which was shared with the World Bank, WFP and donors, further facilitating the international response.

4 PERSON FIELD  
TEAM DEPLOYED IN  
**48 hours**  
**258,530**  
PIECES OF PPE  
DELIVERED

# BEIRUT RESPONSE TIMELINE



# COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The Covid-19 pandemic led to the launch of a high priority response from the UK Government to support international efforts to address the impact, especially in affected countries with limited coping capacity.

Through an FCO-led joint task force, and thereafter via DFID's Covid-19 Hub, and the eventual incorporation of these structures into existing DFID teams, HSOT was asked to surge experienced professionals to fill key roles in the broader response architecture.

The team provided reporting and information management services, including support on developing a global prioritisation model. This modelling gave DFID an evidence base for prioritising funding decisions based on vulnerability, coping capacity, and other factors.

Support was provided to design, launch and manage the Covid-19 Rapid Response Facility (RRF) for NGOs, including designing an RRF proposal-sifting tool and contributing to other project management tools. Engagement with DFID's Inclusive Societies Department enabled synchronization with civil society organisations. Lessons learned activities on the use of the RRF and third party monitoring were supported.

Humanitarian expertise was provided, including an extended commitment for the provision of health and water, sanitation and hygiene priorities. Expertise was provided to the Covid-19 Task Force, Gender Equality and Violence Against Women and Girls teams on the gender-specific impacts of Covid-19 in humanitarian settings.

The team supported a detailed review of the United Nations Global Humanitarian Response Plans (GHRP) for Covid-19 and the related International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) appeal. This included logistics expertise, which also focused on engaging with key UN supply chain actors (WHO and WFP) and Supply Chain Task Force donors to maintain visibility on international multilateral supply chain developments and progress. Advisers disseminated key analyses and updates to DFID and its humanitarian advisors' network. Supply chain expertise was also provided to DFID in London and in country offices to strengthen decision making to related aspects of the multilateral response.

HSOT facilitated 27 deployments into the Covid-19 Hub, providing 11 different contractors, including a MapAction specialist. Eleven core HSOT staff provided support. By staffing close to the entire information management component of the Hub, HSOT ensured that DFID was able to produce quality situation reports. An epidemiologist was also surged, enabling DFID to make specialist expert contributions to the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies.

As the response operation unfolded, generalist humanitarian advisory support was provided to a central DFID unit for strategic decision making and coordination across DFID and thereafter the FCDO's country network.

Finally, technical inputs were provided to global and country monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) approaches, including sustained support for Covid-19 Business Case logframe design across multiple roles.

Support to the Stabilisation Unit focused on rapidly developing a risk-based approach to all existing deployments to determine whether to allow individuals to remain on task or return to their home locations. The security team and Deputy Director worked with the SU Director to make timely decisions, rapidly facilitating

the drawdown of over 25 deployees before borders closed. This was particularly challenging work given the multitude of international partners involved together with often precarious security environments. The HSOT team went on to support transition to home working for the majority of returning consultants before leading the lessons identified work and eventual returns to countries as and when conditions permitted.

The inputs provided by HSOT ensured the availability of flexible technical and staffing capacity to design and implement a high-scale response involving a variety of partners and initiatives. HSOT interventions made sure that emerging needs to support DFID/FCDO and the SU's work on Covid-19 across policy, operations, deployment management and advisory services were fully met, while the team retained the capacity to respond to other emergencies. This ability to provide flexible surge expertise as needed across multiple structures simultaneously is a unique asset.



The background features a teal-to-dark-blue gradient. On the left, there is a white grid of concentric circles and radial lines. On the right, there is a dark, jagged, vertical shape resembling a crack or a root in the ground. The text 'EMERGENCY RESPONSES' is centered in the lower-left quadrant.

# EMERGENCY RESPONSES



OCT 19

NOV 19

JAN 20

### Pakistan: Preparedness Technical Support

HSOT provided expertise to support the DFID Pakistan office in the scoping and design of a new multi-year humanitarian and resilience programme, providing technical support for development of a robust case for the Building Resilience and Addressing Vulnerability to Emergencies in Pakistan Programme (BRAVE).

Over six years, BRAVE was designed to meet the UK's strategic objectives of ensuring a stable and prosperous Pakistan, further bolstering the ability of communities and government institutions to prepare for and mitigate the effects of natural disasters and climate change through participatory and cross-cutting approaches.

### Albania: Delivering Urgent Relief Supplies

On 26 November 2019, a 6.4 magnitude earthquake struck Albania. Fifty-one people died and 2,500 people were displaced. In response to a request by the President of Albania, DFID tasked HSOT to purchase and deliver relief items to Albania.

Within seven days, 22.5 tonnes of relief supplies were delivered from Belgium. On 12 December, 4,350 high-thermal blankets and 2,000 kitchen sets were delivered to the Albanian Red Cross Society for distribution.

Two thousand affected families were provided with relief items, and HSOT made a significant, timely contribution toward meeting the response requirements articulated by the Albanian Red Cross Society.

### Zimbabwe: Health Advisory Support

The severe economic crisis in Zimbabwe resulted in a collapse in living standards, triggering a doctors' strike that led to hospital closures.

HSOT deployed a Humanitarian Adviser to Harare to advise on how to adapt current programming and to support the development of a detailed Health System Assessment. The adviser supported the approval of the programme by the Zimbabwe Ministry of Health and the provision of funding from DFID and USAID.

#### SERVICES OFFERED:

Strategic business case development

Theory of Change design

Engagement with key external contacts, including government, humanitarian and development partners

Scoping and appraisal of interventions and delivery options

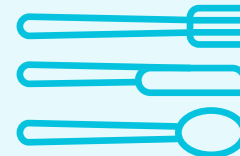
4,350

high-thermal blankets



2,000

kitchen sets







FEB 20

APR 20

JUN 20

### Syria-Turkey: Providing relief items

In response to a significant rise in conflict-related displacement in northwest Syria, flagged by the Humanitarian Early Warning Watchlist and the Early Warning, Analysis and Reporting (EWAR) team, HSOT scoped options for procurement and logistics, creating supply chain plans and load plans in coordination with the MOD.

HSOT's cross-functional approach saw 37 tonnes of relief items delivered to Turkey from strategically pre-positioned warehouse stocks in the United Arab Emirates. On 9 March, the Royal Air Force delivered tents, blankets, hygiene kits, solar lanterns, kitchen sets, and water purification cubes from the HSOT warehouse to the Turkish Red Crescent to support 280 families.

### Vanuatu: Delivering Shelter Support

On 6 April, Tropical Cyclone Harold made landfall as a Category 5 storm over Vanuatu, causing widespread damage to its northern islands.

Despite challenges posed by Covid-19 restrictions, HSOT's Australian counterpart, implemented by Palladium, and in liaison with DFID and the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), provided two tonnes of shelter support to 144 affected families to facilitate the construction of homes and temporary shelters. Additionally, HSOT and its partners provided four generators, ensuring electricity and improving operational capacity at remote Emergency Operations Centres.

### Bangladesh: Procuring Oxygen Supply

In response to Covid-19 in the Cox's Bazar refugee settlement, HSOT supported DFID, WHO, and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) to fill a gap in oxygen supply requirements for 370 beds in Covid-19 isolation and treatment centres.

Within 8 days of receipt of a request, HSOT delivered oxygen generators that enabled the production of 120 m<sup>3</sup> of oxygen per hour; enough oxygen for a continuous supply to 300 beds. Palladium's solution enabled the Severe Acute Respiratory Infection and Treatment Centres to begin oxygen therapy much sooner than implementing partners had projected, whilst garnering an overall reduction in cost and releasing funds for other urgent needs.



**2 tonnes**

of shelter support to

**144** affected families

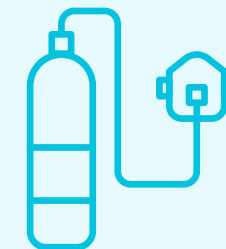


Australian Government  
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade



Within 8 days HSOT delivered a continuous supply of

**oxygen for 300 beds**



JUL 20

APRIL  
19-20

PROTRACTED

### WFP: Collaborating to deliver a Covid-19 Field Hospital

The Covid-19 pandemic had a huge impact on global air freight. OCHA requested military assistance for air transport on behalf of the humanitarian community through NATO, leading to DFID funding UK military flights to operate for the WFP.

Beginning in June, HSOT coordinated planning discussions between WFP and the MOD on the delivery of WFP's field hospital for humanitarian workers affected by Covid-19 to Ghana through the MOD. As a result, four Royal Air Force planes airlifted 80 tonnes of field hospital cargo to Ghana, with the remaining 50 tonnes delivered by sea freight.

### St. Helena: Delivering Essential Supplies During Covid-19

HSOT chartered a passenger aircraft to carry passengers and cargo, including Covid-19 test kits, PPE, laboratory equipment and diplomatic cargo from the UK to St. Helena and back, overcoming operational challenges including staging accommodation in the Ascension Islands, facilitating civil aviation authority agreement for cargo to be carried in the passenger cabin with passengers, and necessary flight tests to allow the airline to operate into St. Helena.

The HSOT team safely moved 41 passengers, including 3 medics, and medical supplies, enabling further charters to St. Helena.

### UNVIM Yemen-Djibouti: Deploying Security and Medical Support

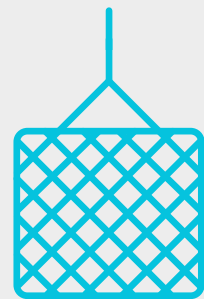
Supporting 500 ship inspections to date and facilitating the clearance of over 370,000 tonnes of cargo, HSOT enabled the SU to provide support to the humanitarian effort in Yemen through the delivery of vital food and fuel to the local population. This is a step beyond the monetary support DFID otherwise provides to the UN Mission in Djibouti.

HSOT facilitated continuous deployment, including adjusting employment terms to comply with UK law, and provided dynamic security and medical support. In March the team delivered rapid repatriation in light of Covid-19 developments.

HSOT helped coordinate  
4 RAF planes to airlift

**80 tonnes**

of field hospital cargo



First Comair Boeing 737-800 flight to Saint Helena Airport  
Photo courtesy of Paul Tyson





# HEARING FROM OUR EXPERTS

# SUPPORTING THE HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE IN LEBANON

## Protection and Cash Adviser, Lebanon

### What was the situation in the context of your deployment?

Protracted displacement and slow onset humanitarian crises due to the economic situation, as well as Covid-19, which dramatically escalated following the Beirut port explosion, creating significant new humanitarian needs.

### What interested you most about the role and what did you bring to the role?

The emergency response to the Beirut blast was particularly interesting and I felt that I could contribute my strong humanitarian experience and knowledge of the Lebanon context. I have good networks in Lebanon which I could tap into to support the British Embassy in Beirut.

### How did your actions/ response achieve a positive impact and lead to the FCDO's objectives being met?

The HSOT team were able to provide analysis and support to decision making at a difficult time as the embassy and its staff had also been directly impacted by the emergency.

### What was your greatest achievement?

Advocating for a cash task force to be set up to address some of the very challenging contextual issues around this important modality. There was a real need to look at harmonisation of methodologies and risks.

### What does the HSOT roster bring to this situation?

Due to the effects of the explosion, the Palladium team acted more independently of the Embassy, developing their own security platform using Palladium Lebanon office support and advice. This was an important learning experience. It showed the added value that HSOT can provide in challenging circumstances.

“THE HSOT TEAM WERE ABLE TO PROVIDE ANALYSIS AND SUPPORT TO DECISION MAKING AT A DIFFICULT TIME”



Emergency Response Management



Specialist Advice



Deployment & Recovery of Experts



Information Management



Procurement & Logistics



Security Advice



Lesson Learning

# REMOTE SUPPORT TO HEALTH PRIORITIES IN YEMEN

## Humanitarian Health Adviser, Yemen

### What was the situation in the context of your deployment?

Yemen is the world's largest humanitarian crisis and a major focus for UK diplomatic and humanitarian support. For security reasons, there is no Embassy in the country itself and no possibility to visit. I work remotely from the UK. Covid-19 and the risk of famine are key current concerns.

### What interested you most about the role and what did you bring to the role?

I am a humanitarian generalist with a health background, and in recent years I have worked on Ebola quite a bit. I was itching to put my disease outbreak experience to use during the Covid-19 pandemic. Yemen is tough because of the very remote way of working and the fact that accurate data and analyses are hard to come by.

### What was your greatest challenge and how did you overcome it?

The breadth of my advisory remit has certainly been a challenge. I cover health, nutrition and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), so Covid-19 was a huge challenge, and I even took on desert locusts! I've found this to be more challenging than any other job in 35 years. Data is often scarce and contradictory, and I also miss the informal dialogue with external colleagues to get a 'sense' for what is happening.

### What was your greatest achievement?

Drawing attention to the impending risk posed by Covid-19, getting this to the top of our office agenda and stressing the indirect impacts, including the need to protect non-Covid-19 health and nutrition services were my greatest achievements. We were able to contribute to some of the adjustments of the UN's response planning as a result.

### What does the HSOT roster bring to this situation?

As always, the input of an experienced humanitarian who has largely worked in front line response agencies, knows how things work in practice, and can add a quasi-independent voice.

"I'VE FOUND THIS TO BE MORE CHALLENGING THAN ANY OTHER JOB IN 35 YEARS"



Information Management



Specialist advice



Deployment & Recovery of Experts



Capacity building

# STABILISATION SUPPORT IN MOROCCO

## Conflict and Governance Advisers, Morocco

### What was the situation in the context of your deployment?

The conflict adviser deployed in 2018 to support the Embassy in deepening conflict sensitivity and developing a Joint Stability Analysis (JSA) for Morocco. The Governance Adviser deployed in 2019 reviewing Parliamentary reform and governance strategy. Both contracts were extended to address the stability challenges of Covid-19.

### What interested you most about the role and what did you bring to the role?

We each have three decades of experience in our sectors. This understanding, combined with the deep local knowledge of a very capable and forward leaning Conflict, Stability and Security Fund team, mutual respect, and enlightened leadership turned into a highly effective partnership that was on the cutting edge of achieving effect while maintaining value for money.

### How did your actions/ response achieve a positive impact and lead to the FCDO's objectives being met?

**Conflict adviser:** I supported the team in implementing the findings of the JSA and refreshing it to reflect the new environment since the pandemic started. This goes beyond programmes alone, working across all UK Government teams in Morocco.

**Governance adviser:** I worked with the team, contributing governance and stability expertise to Covid-19 governance challenges; re-programming; and governance implications of new UK Government strategies.

### What was your greatest challenge and how did you overcome it?

Covid-19 was and remains a very significant challenge everywhere. The Embassy designed a tracker to monitor the situation and provide early warning of any stability concerns. We supported the development of the tracker and its ongoing relevance and utility. It will inform a new Embassy-wide strategic planning process that we are also supporting.

### What does the HSOT roster bring to this situation?

**Conflict adviser:** I think it is really valuable to bring together advisers who have built a career in specific fields and seen policies, programmes and projects succeed or fail over time, and civil servants with broad experience and local staff with deep contextual understanding.

**Governance adviser:** Flexibility – ability to step up when needed and at short notice as crises emerge unexpectedly. The ability to work with other Deployment Civilian Experts (DCEs) in other disciplines and with different experiences.

“... A HIGHLY EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIP THAT WAS ON THE CUTTING EDGE OF ACHIEVING EFFECT WHILE MAINTAINING VALUE FOR MONEY”



Stablisation Unit Support



Specialist Advice



Deployment & Recovery of Experts



Capacity Building

# SECURITY PLANNING SUPPORT IN AFGHANISTAN

## Security Planning Officer, Afghanistan

### What was the situation in the context of your deployment?

After a major truck bomb explosion, NATO Resolute Support formed a planning team to work with the Afghan National Security Council and others to establish an Enhanced Security Zone (ESZ) for inner Kabul. The British Embassy Kabul offered to embed a civilian planner within the military team to provide subject matter expertise.

### What interested you most about the role and what did you bring to the role?

The unusual nature of the deployment and its genesis were both unfamiliar and attractive. I brought to the role my knowledge of Afghan Government and security force structure and capabilities, together with an understanding of diplomacy, international assistance and funding. Also important was my experience in building and developing donor and stakeholder relations and networks along with an ability to join the dots, seeing where areas of assistance were overlapping.

### How did your actions/ response achieve a positive impact and lead to the FCDO's objectives being met?

The immediate impact was that the ESZ was created in Kabul. Further serious attacks in early 2018, thankfully not within the ESZ, emphasized the need to develop Kabul security further. Working with military colleagues allowed us to develop a wider Kabul Security Programme, delivery of which continues.

The FCDO's ultimate objective was that security in Kabul was sufficient to allow the functioning of Afghan Government institutions and the work of the diplomatic/donor community.

### What was your greatest achievement?

Recognizing that the long-term sustainment of the programme was going to be an issue, especially in the event of troop drawdown, I built a partnership with an external partner who could take on management of the programme when the time came. This relationship, and the foresight in developing it, has proved its worth in light of the new timeline for troop drawdown. I was able to resolve several security issues previously considered too difficult.

### What does the HSOT roster bring to this situation?

Speed and flexibility. The deployment was one of the most rapid I have experienced as an SU DCE. One of its biggest strengths is its most obvious one, that it has people with a variety of skills and experience.

“THE FCDO’S ULTIMATE OBJECTIVE WAS THAT SECURITY IN KABUL WAS SUFFICIENT TO ALLOW THE FUNCTIONING OF AFGHAN GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS...”



Stabilisation  
Unit Support



Security Advice



Deployment &  
Recovery of Experts



Capacity  
Building



# STRATEGY, ADVICE AND OPERATIONS



# WORKING WITH THE UNITED NATIONS

The UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) Team and Standby Partnership (SBP) are two UN humanitarian surge support mechanisms managed by HSOT on behalf of the FCDO.

## ACTIVITIES

- Improved decision-making timeline for UK-supported UNDAC missions.
- Enhanced engagement with UK UNDAC roster, including a members' day in Whitehall and new in-person debriefs.
- Successfully lobbied for coordination staff to drive forward SBP Network agendas.
- Advocated SBP within FCDO through newsletters and training.
- Captured FCDO reporting requirements.
- Worked to improve monitoring of Standby Partnership.

## ACHIEVEMENT

- Successfully lobbying for increased UNDAC representation and membership in Africa resulting in FCDO co-funding a regional UNDAC course next year.
- Advocating for improved data and reporting across SBP network, supporting FCDO to demonstrate the value of the Standby Partnership.

## RESULTS

- HSOT managed a total of 449 new SBP requests and supported 35 FCDO departments to fund a total of 103 SBP posts into 9 UN agencies across 31 countries.
- 3 UK UNDAC Members selected for missions to Albania and Lebanon.
- HSOT activities opened channels to lobby for strategic developments in line with FCDO priorities (e.g. preparedness), raised the profile of UNDAC within the FCDO and improved knowledge sharing and feedback mechanisms.
- UK prepared for both in-person and remote support to UNDAC within context of Covid-19.

NUMBER OF COUNTRIES DEPLOYED TO:

**30** SBP  
**2** UNDAC

# HUMANITARIAN ADVISORY SERVICES

HSOT is contracted to provide professional advisory services to strengthen the delivery capacity of the humanitarian work of the FCDO and the activities of the Stabilisation Unit in the UK and overseas, as well as for the security of personnel deployed under this contract.

## ACTIVITIES

- Expert advice on humanitarian standards and practice.
- Advice on funding allocations for appeals issued by the UN and the Red Cross.
- Bespoke advice to the Government on humanitarian procurement and logistics issues.
- Increased FCDO oversight by developing tools to increase accountability by implementing partners.
- Improved timeliness and monitoring of deployed humanitarian experts.
- Strengthened engagement with Standby Partnership and UNDAC mechanisms.
- Monitored, evaluated and learned lessons across the FCDO's humanitarian work.
- Provided a risk based approach to safety and security of deployees through liaison with HMG, UN, EU and other partners.
- Delivered the UK's stabilisation effect by deploying, sustaining and recovering civilian experts.

## RESULTS

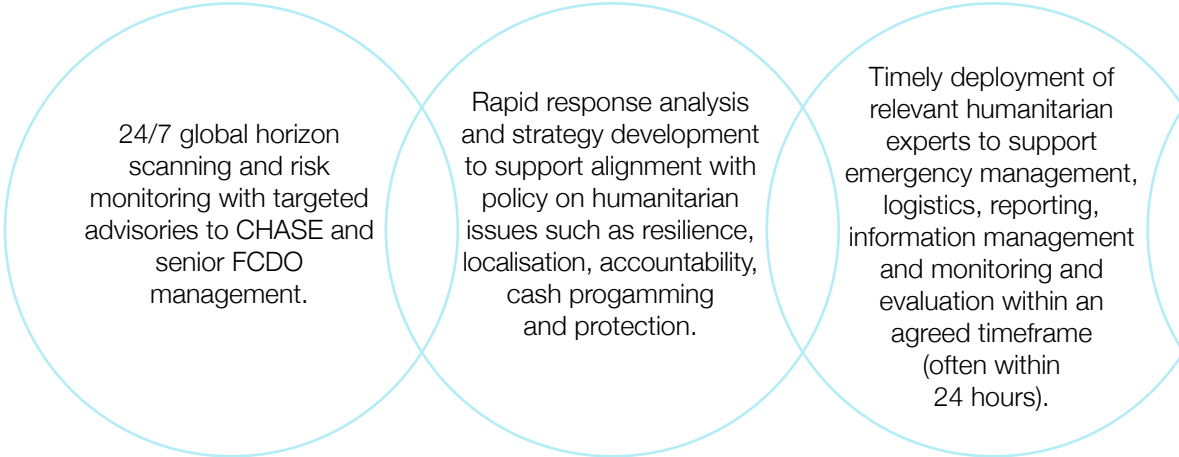
- Support to the FCDO and SU on optimising response to humanitarian and stabilisation needs around the world, while ensuring security of deployees.
- For Covid-19, HSOT's contribution supported business continuity during the UK's lockdown from March to June.
- For the response in Vanuatu in April, HSOT's services informed and delivered the UK's response with DFAT and support from Palladium's Australia office.

## ACHIEVEMENT

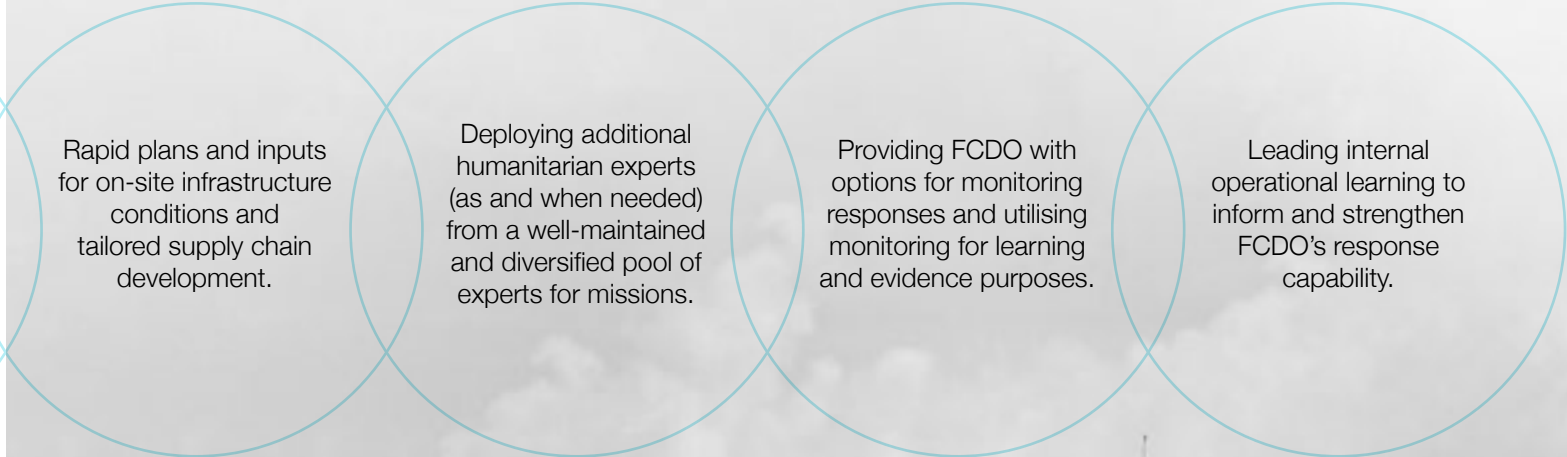
The advisory element of the contract, which combines multi-functional disciplines, enhanced efficiencies for the FCDO and SU in terms of time, costs and opportunities.

# FROM SURVEILLANCE TO RESPONSE

## ACTIVITIES



HSOT is contracted to support the FCDO to deliver a better informed and faster humanitarian response through provision of end-to-end surveillance to response support services.



## RESULTS

Through the delivery of these services, HSOT enables timely response decisions within the FCDO based on situation monitoring services, with 176 alerts and monitoring reports issued for 100 events covering assessments of needs, national capacity and other international actors response. HSOT provides a flexible service to manage a fast and timely response.

## ACHIEVEMENT

An end-to-end response support service for the FCDO and SU.

**176** ALERTS AND MONITORING REPORTS ISSUED  
FOR **100** EVENTS





# INNOVATION

## SEALR – BLOCKCHAIN DELIVERY REPORTING

HSOT identified a way to enable labelling to be incorporated into the provision of FCDO goods. Following research into off-the-shelf systems, a successful trial was undertaken of the proposed system (Sealr) using DFID/FCDO shelter marks and QR Codes.

### ACTIVITIES

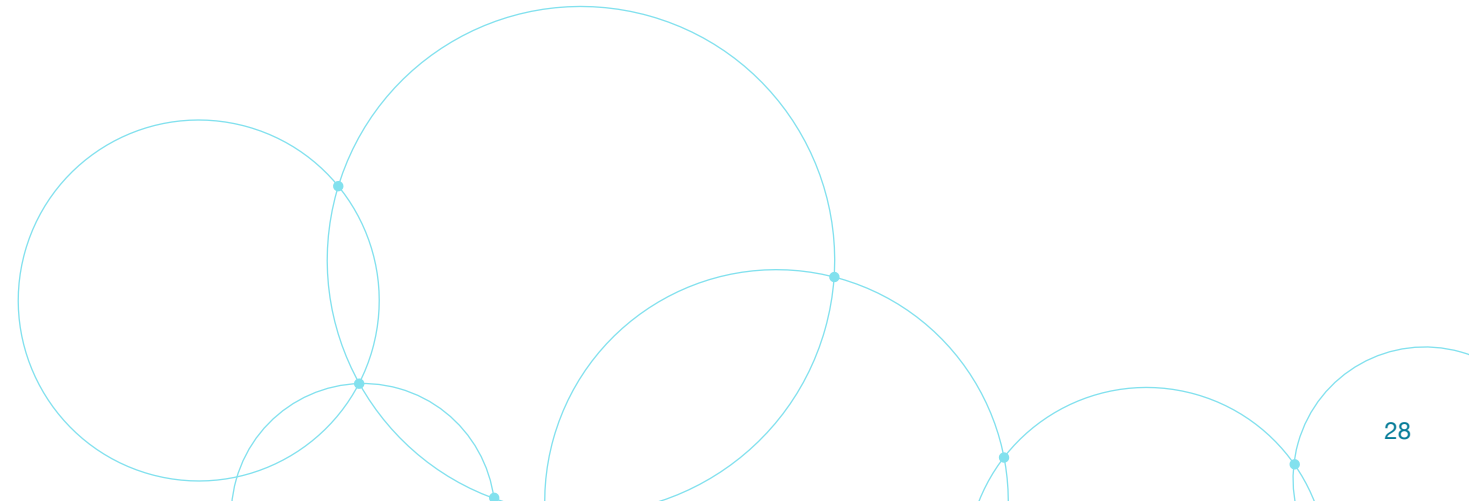
- Following trials of Sealr, it was deployed to Lebanon to track the delivery of UK-donated PPE.
- The setup and use of Sealr enabled PPE deliveries to be traced to end delivery locations through photographs and the associated metadata, which were uploaded through Sealr. The system recorded the timings and locations to which the PPE had been delivered. These images and locations correlated with WHO's distribution list.

### RESULTS

- This was the first time HSOT and DFID used Sealr with deliveries during a response. As a result of the success, other organisations are interested in the capability it offers.

### ACHIEVEMENT

The innovation augments supply chain tracking, ultimately increasing accountability by ensuring that relief items reach participants quickly and efficiently.



# INNOVATION

## EARLY WARNING AND RISK MONITORING

HSOT's early warning team strengthened the methodology for horizon scanning, analysis, and early warning services to inform FCDO's decision makers through independent, quality and timely analysis.

HSOT's risk monitoring methodology has shifted focus allowing for the delivery of both regular and flexible evidence based outputs.

### ACTIVITIES

- Strengthened risk methodology based on mixed methods including quantitative/qualitative data and expert judgement, supports independent assessment.
- Systematic tracking of trends based on set criteria allows for high-level comparisons across contexts.
- The Risk Watch online platform provides a global risk overview through monitoring of anticipated impact and tracking changes in risks.
- A product suite supports decision making while allowing for tailored outputs for different purposes, audiences and timings.
- Establishment of global prioritisation models, including Acute Food Insecurity Risk Monitor (AFIRM), an innovative approach to risk monitoring of food security to address knowledge gaps on Covid-19 induced increase of acute food insecurity.

### RESULTS

- Improved analytical humanitarian early warning analysis for decision making and response analysis across HMG, including National Security Council.
- AFIRM supported decision making and funding allocations for the design of the UK's famine prevention campaign.
- Increased the credibility of HSOT analysis and engagement within FCDO leading to improved governance.

### ACHIEVEMENT

- Support more principled and evidence based humanitarian responses
- Enable identification of priority contexts for the UK's famine prevention campaign through establishment of AFIRM

# EARLY WARNING AND RISK MONITORING

**RISK CLASSIFICATIONS**

- Medium Risk
- Medium-High Risk
- High Risk
- On watch
- Flagged in September

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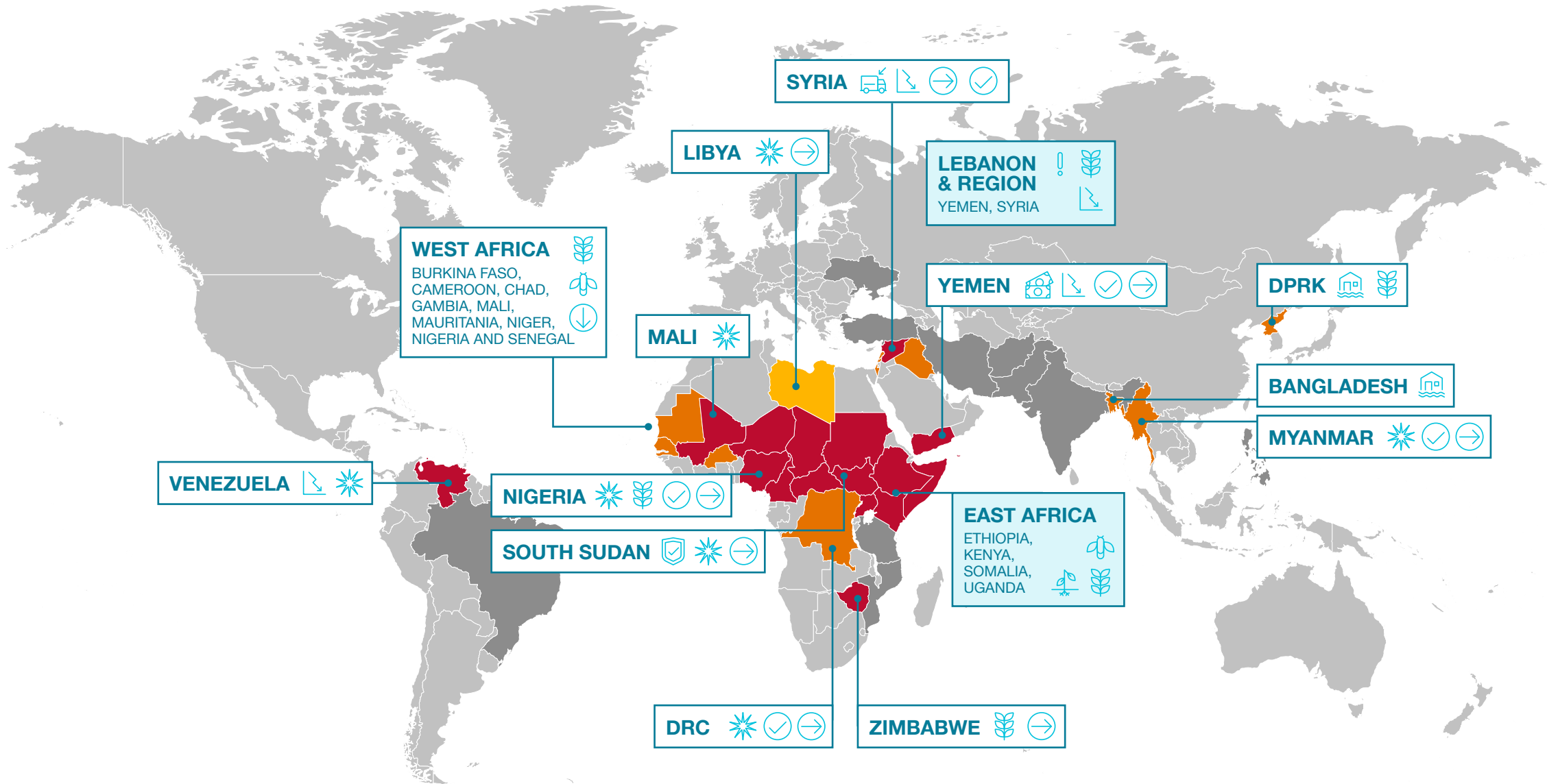
**RISKS**

- Conflict
- Humanitarian access
- Drought
- Economic deterioration
- Floods
- Food insecurity
- Funding
- Other incident
- Pest
- Protection

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**RISK UPDATE**

- Risk reduced
- Risk remains
- Risk realised
- Risk increased



DRC KEMBLE  
INSTALLATION OF:  
SOLAR PANELS  
CHARGING  
STATION  
RAINWATER  
CAPTURE

# INNOVATION

## ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

The HSOT Supply Chain Strategy was amended to include a focus on reducing environmental impact. HSOT has improved the sustainability and green credentials of the programme and will offset a significant amount of carbon.

### ACTIVITIES

- Generated a list of recommendations to reduce the use of single use plastics in Non-Food Items (NFI) packaging at time of purchase.
- Finalised an air charter agreement which included carbon offset provisions.
- Awarded a courier framework to international courier service, DPD due to their strong environmental policies.
- Implemented initiatives at the UKAid Disaster Response Centre in Kemble (the programme's UK procurement and logistics operations hub) including development of a solar charging station, installation of solar panels and establishment of a rainwater capture system.

### RESULTS

- Three of nine non-food commodities can now be supplied free from single use plastic packaging.
- Recommendations have been prepared on recycling NFIs in the field. Data from 20 agencies identified reuse/recycling options for 95 percent of NFI volume considered.
- The air charter to Beirut to transport PPE in August resulted in 74,250kg of carbon dioxide being offset through the mechanism.
- DPD ensure that all parcel deliveries are carbon neutral for no additional cost. Thus courier and air charter movements will be carbon offset.

### ACHIEVEMENT

HSOT is reducing the carbon footprint generated by the programme through the air charter offsetting mechanism and the courier framework for no additional cost and reducing single-use packaging for NFIs that requires disposal. Between 2015-2019, the FCDO moved almost a million NFIs via land, sea and air, so this work will significantly reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill and will offset a significant amount of carbon.

# WORKING IN COMPLEX ENVIRONMENTS

## DRC EBOLA

In response to the Ebola outbreak in DRC, DFID identified a need to better understand conflict dynamics in order to reduce attacks targeting response efforts. The UN Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) requested security coordination, stabilisation and strategic communications expertise through the SU, which resulted in HSOT deploying five specialists to support the UN Ebola Emergency Response Coordinator (EERC).

### ACTIVITIES

- HSOT Specialists kept the security situation in North Kivu under regular review by assessing MONUSCO's security management system.
- Sustained five conflict experts and provided medical, travel, accommodation and security support.
- Pioneered a new approach to security assessments, enabling greater operational freedom.
- Delivered dynamic welfare support within DRC across multiple challenging locations.
- Supported humanitarian programming by fulfilling a real-time learning request from the DFID DRC Ebola team for rapid analysis to inform their design of response exit.

### ACHIEVEMENT

Ebola was identified as a UN and DFID priority. The EERC recognised the capabilities the SU, with HSOT support, could provide to address the multifaceted nature of this crisis.

### RESULTS

- Revised approach to security assessments enhanced the operational freedoms of advisers in-country.
- Tailored welfare support that improved the sustainment of deployees.
- Delivered successful rapid withdrawal of all five advisers and their switch to remote working while navigating national and multilateral politics.
- Improved coordination between MONUSCO and Congolese military and police forces facilitated improved counter-Ebola and counter-insurgency operations.
- Allowed advisers to continue contributing remotely to Mission objectives following their repatriation in March 2020.





# WORKING IN COMPLEX ENVIRONMENTS

## TRANSNATIONAL THREATS

HSOT demonstrated contract flexibility by rapidly seconding a member of the team into the SU Transnational Threats Team (TNT) to build a research database and contribute towards reporting on Serious and Organised Crime (SOC).

### ACTIVITIES

- HSOT provided administrative and analytical support to the Covid-19 International Serious and Organised Crime Analysis Team (CISAT).
- Provided analysis services on threats.

### RESULTS

- Significant contribution to the management of cross-government, operational and open source reporting with over 1,000 research entries informing report production, offering an invaluable source for future decision making. The HSOT individual selected for this work has been commended by her civil service peers for an outstanding contribution.

### ACHIEVEMENT

CISAT reporting helps inform wider DFID decision making on the immediate and longer-term international SOC policy. All-source database is a groundbreaking piece of work representing a leading cross-government resource sharing capability.

SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO OVER

# 1,000

RESEARCH ENTRIES

# IMPLEMENTING THE UK'S HUMANITARIAN REFORM AGENDA



HSOT includes Humanitarian Advisers (HA) and Humanitarian Affairs Officers (HAO) who support the delivery of the UK's humanitarian reform policy by promoting policy priorities in response operations and supporting coherence between policy development and operations.

## ACTIVITIES

- Represented DFID at Call to Action for Protection from Gender Based Violence (GBV) in emergencies.
- Delivered the UK's Annual Self-Report; Analysed the UN's 2020 humanitarian needs overviews (HNOs) and Humanitarian Response Plans (HRPs).
- Provided technical advice to DFID as a key donor in Grand Bargain Workstreams on localisation, drawing on research with DFID country offices and sectoral best practice via UK INGO engagement.
- Enabled operationalisation of localisation via Covid-19 Rapid Response Facility (RRF) funding design and launch.
- Provided input to workstreams on participation and harmonisation of reporting.
- Reviewed humanitarian-peace linkages for DFID Syria.
- Provided technical feedback on policy papers and strategic documents on cash assistance, humanitarian access, gender and inclusion.

- Led revision of the humanitarian funding guidelines, engaging thematic and programme management expertise.
- Supported Covid-19 monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) workstrands at global and country level in line with global best practice on humanitarian MEL.

## RESULTS

- The UK humanitarian reform policy aims to drive change in the international humanitarian system. HSOT's support to the FCDO with its continued development and operational implementation adds value to this work.

## ACHIEVEMENT

Through HSOT technical leadership and support to operations, FCDO has been able to position itself as a key actor in humanitarian policy forums and initiatives, drawing contributions from the field on policy in action.

# SUPPORTING THE OSCE SPECIAL MONITORING MISSION IN UKRAINE AGENDA

Following a complex event in 2017, a security review of the Ukraine Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) was conducted by the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) with UK support. HSOT security input continues to be relied upon to review operational activity and recommend changes.

## ACTIVITIES

- Provided ongoing focused security advice to SMM through the SU.
- Regular remote and physical assessment visits to the region, including to Kyiv and Donbas.
- With the SU team, helped develop cross-Whitehall policy on the conflict in Ukraine and determine future government support.
- Supported security review and input to multiple papers and briefs for a variety of cross-Whitehall audiences, including up to Permanent Under Secretary and Ambassadorial level.
- Via the Security Team, provided a point of focus for Whitehall thinking and response options for security challenges, including Covid-19 and wider security management matters such as ceasefire violations.
- Acted as the SU lead within the 'Quad' security partnership (Finland, Germany, Sweden and the UK), sharing relevant information and gaining international support for Mission matters.

## RESULTS

- SMM has instituted some of the recommended security measures.
- Monitors are safer despite working in a challenging environment.
- Provided another view of the conflict and SMM's role, allowing a more objective overall SU understanding.

## ACHIEVEMENT

HSOT provides the SU with dedicated security advice tailored to the Mission, mitigating risk faced by UK secondees working in the Donbas and ensuring staff safety and wellbeing.



Photo courtesy of U.S Embassy in Ukraine

# HUMANITARIAN EMERGENCY RESPONSE INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (HERMIS)

HERMIS is the Humanitarian Emergency Response Management Information System. It is a bespoke database that is built to facilitate HSOT in managing every aspect of humanitarian and stabilisation responses, from presenting early warning data to recruiting new experts and tracking goods. HERMIS modules continue to be expanded with design input from FCDO and SU partners.

## ACTIVITIES

- Worked with clients and our developer partners, SkotKonung to launch and refine new tools on the HERMIS platform.
- Operationalised the Recruitment to Roster (R2R) and Recruitment from Roster (RFR) tools, which are now in use by the SU.
- Developed a warehouse management system (WMS) and suite of procurement and logistics tools.

## RESULTS

- SU staff can now process applications more effectively and have a more robust and efficient system to recruit deployable civilian experts to key tasks. They also have a richer and quicker means to access key data and reporting about those employees.
- The WMS and suite of procurement tools will enable the procurement and logistics team to quickly identify stocks, track items worldwide, and determine when an end-user has received them.

## ACHIEVEMENT

The development of the HERMIS platform is a key component of HSOT's commitment to our clients. It brings increased efficiency, time and cost savings, and provides a much-improved reporting functionality.

# RECRUITMENT

HSOT operates an end-to-end recruitment and deployment service that offers FCDO an efficient and scalable service.

## ACTIVITIES

- Expanded a pool of specialist technical advisers and grew the roster of deployable experts by 22 percent this year to reach 360 active members.
- Focused on the diversity of roster members to ensure a talent pool with a variety of skillsets, languages and backgrounds.
- Set-up subcontractor arrangements to meet niche demands.

## RESULTS

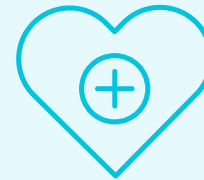
- Diverse background of individuals with thematic expertise in areas such as but not limited to Health, Nutrition, Cash, Food security, Civil Military, Procurement, Protection (including GBV, VAWG) and MEL available to deploy within constrained timelines during an onset response and for protracted crises situations to provide policy and programming advice.

## ACHIEVEMENT

- HSOT roster members have experience working across the FCDO and UK Government in 181 countries, speaking 40 languages.
- The pool of talent offers a flexible resource to work in both short term assignments and long-term posts which may require skills akin to civil servant competencies.
- Individuals are security cleared to deploy on UK Government platforms and all receive pre-deployment security and first aid training.

### Areas of expertise include:

#### HEALTH



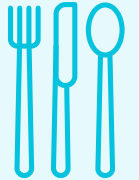
#### NUTRITION



#### CASH



#### FOOD SECURITY



#### CIVIL MILITARY



#### PROCUREMENT



#### PROTECTION



#### MEL



HSOT have worked in

**181**  
countries

speak

**40**  
languages

Roster of experts increased by

**22%**  
to 360 members



# TRAINING

HSOT provides a range of specialist training for core team, roster members and FCDO counterparts. HSOT's training offerings include technical and operational training, emergency response and crisis simulation, contractor inductions and pre-deployment Hostile Environment Awareness Training (HEAT).

## AREAS OF OPERATIONAL AND SPECIALIST TRAINING:

Civil-military engagement, Monitoring Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL), procurement practice and due diligence, project management and delivery, airside safety, pharmaceutical regulation and compliance, safeguarding, GBV, and programme localisation

## ACTIVITIES

- Workshops and development sessions held on key areas of humanitarian policy and FCDO strategic priorities. Areas of operational and specialist training delivered include civil-military engagement, Monitoring Evaluation Accountability and Learning (MEAL), procurement practice and due diligence, project management and delivery, airside safety, pharmaceutical regulation and compliance, safeguarding, GBV, and programme localisation.
- Trainings have been enhanced to include Covid-19 safety protocols allowing for face-to-face training, while other sessions are increasingly being developed into online or remotely delivered content, expanding potential access for new global participants.

## RESULTS

- Training is constantly reviewed and refined to capture emerging policy and best practice across all areas of operation, as well as ensuring compliance with all legal and procedural requirements.

## ACHIEVEMENT

The flexible and tailored approach ensures core team, roster members and FCDO are equipped with up to date sectoral knowledge and best practice.

# THE YEAR IN NUMBERS

THIS YEAR WE HAVE  
SUPPORTED THE UK  
GOVERNMENT TO...



Deliver

**357**

projects



In

**86**

countries



With a value of over

**£27m**



Issuing

**176**

alerts and  
monitoring reports



Responding to

**15**

major crises



Managing

**470**

specialist deployments

Procuring over

**70,000**

items



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