



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Fédération internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja
الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

Development cooperation policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline how National Societies and the Federation secretariat work with each other to strengthen the programmes and the overall capacity of National Societies. It builds on the experience gained since 1990 in working with the Principles and Rules for Development Cooperation and is guided by the overall objective of working effectively as a Federation, one of the key underlying concepts of the International Federation's strategic planning.

This policy, together with the Development Policy adopted in 1995, replaces the Principles and Rules for Development Cooperation. The development policy indicates what is to be done and why it is to be done. This present development cooperation policy states how it is to be done, and by whom.

Scope

This policy applies to mutual assistance related to all development activities between National Societies and the Federation secretariat on the international, regional or sub-regional levels. International Federation policy related to relief situations is set out in the Principles and Rules for Disaster Response and the Emergency Response Policy. Definition of development and of development cooperation Development in the Red Cross and Red Crescent context is defined in the 1995 Federation Development Policy as the process by which communities, families and individuals grow stronger, can enjoy fuller and more productive lives, and become less vulnerable and the strengthening of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies so they can carry out their humanitarian mandate.

Development cooperation refers to the systems and procedures that National Societies use to plan, implement, monitor and evaluate the support provided to carry out development activities as defined above in line with Federation development cooperation objectives.

Objectives of development cooperation

The objectives of International Federation development cooperation are to:

- provide well planned assistance to strengthen the capacity of a National Society to improve the effectiveness of its programmes for the most vulnerable people in its country;
- provide well planned assistance to strengthen the capacity of a National Society to improve the effectiveness of its programmes for the most vulnerable people in its country;
- foster a sense of partnership and mutual learning between National Societies and the Federation secretariat through support for such programmes;
- promote long term sustainability by ensuring that external assistance not only supports programmes in sectors such as health, social welfare and disaster

- preparedness, but is harmonized with systematic efforts to develop a National Society's human and financial resources;
- promote the equal participation of men and women in National Society development activities at all levels;
 - ensure that development programmes are accountable to those they aim to assist, as well as to those who provide the financial and other resources for implementation.

Organizing principles

Development cooperation within the International Federation is provided in a spirit of partnership, mutual support and respect between the three main partners: the operating National Society (ONS), one or more participating National Societies (PNS), and the Federation secretariat. In addition, the ICRC is an important partner that will in many cases be active in supporting an ONS within its particular areas of competence. Furthermore, ONS have skills and competencies, not least in their network of branches and volunteers, which can be shared with others. Federation development cooperation therefore seeks to maximize opportunities for regional cooperation between National Societies.

Development cooperation can take many forms, ranging from limited project assistance from a single PNS to complex multi-PNS support over many years. The working as a Federation concept implies that PNS and the Federation secretariat view each other not as independent actors, but as integral parts of the overall effort to assist the ONS in its capacity building.

National Societies act as spokespersons for the populations, vulnerable groups and the National Societies they work with, drawing attention to their humanitarian and development needs and intervening in their favour. National Societies also encourage and foster commitment and solidarity on the part of society and the public authorities for enhanced development cooperation.

Governments are important partners in development cooperation. In its own country, the National Society has a recognized role as an auxiliary in the emergency and also health and social sectors. Similarly, many PNS work closely with their governments to mobilize financial support for international activities. In both cases, it is important that the National Society works actively to build up a positive but independent relationship with its government.

The Federation and National Societies also favour the involvement of other bodies — private companies, foundations, civic organizations — in international cooperation activities through twinning, sponsorship or other methods that help mobilize resources and promote social participation. In their relations with such bodies, National Societies shall ensure respect for their operating criteria and for this present policy.

An ONS may also receive support for its development activities from non Red Cross or Red Crescent international aid organizations in its country. The Federation secretariat can assist in fostering such linkages, and when an ONS enters into such arrangements it will inform the Federation secretariat and the National Society of the country concerned. Development assistance from a PNS should be channelled through the ONS of a particular country. A PNS should not, without the full consent of the concerned ONS, support a non Red Cross or Red Crescent partner outside its own country.

Roles and responsibilities of partners

The operating National Society

The ONS has the responsibility for planning and managing all aspects of its own development. It will work to ensure that all its activities are included in a strategic development plan, adapted to its situation, which sets out its main objectives and how they are to be achieved. For programmes seeking external assistance, it will produce specific programme plans and budgets based on the strategic priorities in its development plan.

In seeking external assistance the ONS will recognize the concerns of its partners, and will provide mutually agreed upon opportunities for their involvement in programme planning and monitoring. In order to ensure transparency, the ONS will provide timely narrative and financial reporting on all the external assistance it receives from its partners.

The ONS will give priority to ensuring that it is able to cover its core costs in terms of personnel and administrative expenditures needed to ensure the proper functioning of its organization. PNS and the Federation secretariat will support strategies and programmes designed to ensure the financial sustainability of the ONS.

Participating National Societies

Assistance offered by a PNS will always be in line with the priorities and objectives of the ONS as described in its strategic development plan. This assistance can be in the form of finance, material, training and technical assistance, and should include a balanced mixture of programme and institutional development elements. It is also important that PNS assistance be consistent and long-term. Each PNS should formulate a clear strategy for international cooperation in consultation with the Federation secretariat and its regional priorities.

The PNS will indicate any special reporting requirements for the assistance it provides. As far as possible, it should be prepared to accept the normal reporting provided by the ONS. Where there is more than one PNS working with the same ONS, the different PNS and the ONS should establish mutually agreed programme management and reporting systems.

Recognizing the desire of many PNS to be active partners in the development process, a PNS may become involved in one or more of the following areas as a partner to the ONS:

- assisting in the formulation of programme proposals;
- providing any required technical assistance, including training;
- advising on programme management procedures and reporting formats;
- participating in programme monitoring and evaluation.
- PNS recognize the need for coordination of the external assistance they provide to ensure effectiveness, coherence and sustainability. They agree not to impose their own priorities or programmes on an ONS, and accept that the Federation secretariat, or on occasions one of the PNS, has a coordinating role in advising on and guiding their assistance.

Federation secretariat

The main responsibilities of the Federation secretariat in development cooperation are to promote and facilitate assistance between National Societies, to encourage the appropriate involvement of ICRC, and to play a leadership role in coordinating such assistance. It should not primarily play a major implementing role in development assistance, but rather serve as the architect of cooperation bringing all partners closer together in a coherent and planned manner to meet the needs of the ONS.

In playing this architect role the tasks of the Federation secretariat at the global level are:

- assisting National Societies to carry out assessments of their capacities and needs in each region;
- designing approaches and standards in the main sectoral areas of National Society work;
- compiling data and setting priorities on a regional level for supporting the respective national strategic development plans;
- initiating and promoting well planned and coherent cooperation in support of an ONS, and reporting on all resources it receives for these purposes;
- leading efforts to identify new sources of support for development cooperation;
- monitoring cooperation and promoting learning between the various partners;
- representing the Federation in international forums regarding development issues.

At the field level, the Federation secretariat operates through its country and regional delegations. The key tasks that delegations will perform in partnership with an ONS seeking development assistance are:

- helping the ONS carry out an assessment of its capacities and needs;
- assisting the ONS to draw up a strategic development plan adapted to its situation;
- helping the ONS prepare specific programme/project proposals as needed, and actively encouraging the mobilization of appropriate and transparent external assistance;
- designing, coordinating and reporting on appropriate regional programmes;
- monitoring and advising on the support being provided by external partners;
- providing technical support in defined and agreed areas;
- promoting two-way cooperation between the ONS and other Societies in the region;
- helping the ONS organize periodic partnership coordination meetings.

Mechanisms for development cooperation

National Society development plan

Each National Society should produce a comprehensive and realistic strategic plan based on a prior analysis of its national context and its strengths and weaknesses. This plan should then be the basis for all development cooperation with that National Society. The length and complexity of such a plan should be adapted to the situation and needs of the National Society. It should as a minimum set out the basic mission of the National Society, identify the needs and capacities of the vulnerable populations to

be assisted, and describe the National Society's overall objectives and key programmes, including the steps needed to strengthen its organization to achieve these aims.

When an operating National Society does not yet have a strategic plan, early attention should be given by the Federation secretariat and interested PNS to helping that society with the process of developing a plan adapted to its context. All external projects and partnership activities should be developed on the basis of the National Society's assessment of its strengths and weaknesses and related to its strategy for what its key programme areas should be.

Specific programme or project descriptions

A National Society should develop specific programme descriptions and budgets for the activities for which it seeking external assistance, either on its own or with support from the Federation secretariat or a PNS. Such programme/project descriptions should be based on the priority programmes identified in its strategic plan. They should be formulated using sound programme planning methodology as outlined in the Federation's guidelines or similar approaches. Proposals developed in programme sectors such as health, social welfare and disaster preparedness should describe how they are linked to other programme areas. They must also take into account the institutional development needs of the society and address issues of sustainability.

Development cooperation agreements and development contracts

Development contracts should be established for all specific development assistance programmes between an ONS, a PNS, the Federation secretariat or any other external partner. The contract should set out the objectives, the roles and responsibilities of all the partners, the funding arrangements, reporting requirements, and evaluation and auditing provisions. The existing Federation guidelines provided guidance on the drafting of such contracts.

In situations where there are more than two PNS providing long-term support to an ONS, a defined cooperation mechanism will be established. Such a partnership grouping will be formalized by establishing a common development cooperation agreement. The purpose of such an agreement is to ensure the commitment by all partners to working towards common goals in a coherent and structured cooperation in the interests of increased effectiveness and cost efficiency. The agreement will link external assistance clearly to supporting the overall development plan of the ONS, and will outline the complementarity of the assistance to be provided by the different partners. It will also describe the coordinating responsibility of the Federation secretariat or any other designated external coordination agency, and the common standards and systems that all partners agree to follow. Such cooperation agreements will need to be supplemented by specific programme contracts between the ONS and its individual partners supporting different elements of its development plan.

Partnership coordination meetings

One element of such structured partnerships groupings is the holding of coordination meetings at suitable intervals. These will be designed to bring the partners together in a structured way to review progress in working towards the mutually agreed goals. The operating National Society should be responsible for organizing these meetings with support from the Federation secretariat. All partners should attend such meetings to

share experience, adjust programme approaches where needed, and work towards enhancing common approaches and continuity in the interests of the ONS.

Several other forms of regional cooperation can be developed. These may take a variety of different forms according to the needs of the respective National Societies including cross border cooperation, partnerships, etc. and should be implemented according to approved coordination procedures.

Monitoring, evaluation and auditing arrangements

Good systems for monitoring and evaluating progress in achieving objectives are an essential part of Federation development cooperation practice. Programmes should be monitored and evaluated not only to assess how far they are achieving their immediate objectives, but also in terms of helping the ONS develop its overall capacity and accountability.

All partners have a responsibility to ensure that proper monitoring and evaluation of programmes is carried out. However because of its responsibility for overall coordination, the Federation secretariat should always be involved with such exercises. Thereafter it has the responsibility for ensuring that the lessons learnt are shared with all partners, and for building institutional memory for the benefit of others working in similar situations.

Accounts and independent audits are essential elements of all development cooperation activities. If funds are transferred to an ONS by the Federation secretariat, an independent auditor shall be designated or approved by the Federation Secretary General.

References

This policy was adopted by the General Assembly of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, November 1997.