

PROGRAMME UPDATE



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

EVALUATION AND ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING

27 July, 2001

This Programme Update is intended for reporting on Annual Appeals.

Appeal No. 01.79/2001

Appeal Target: CHF 1,367,000

Programme Update No. 1; Period covered: January - 30 June, 2001

“At a Glance”

Appeal coverage: 57.3%

Related Appeals: N/A

Outstanding needs: CHF 578,747

Summary: Reasonable progress and substantial groundwork has been achieved in all five objectives of this global programme. Building on these foundations in the next six months and ensuring that there is good coverage financially will be the main focus for the coming period. Sufficient resources were pledged for this programme in the first half of the year, but support is required from other donors to ensure that the planned activities can be implemented as foreseen.

The Context

This programme was introduced at the start of 2000, and has been designed to address some of the priority areas identified in Strategy 2010 for the Federation to improve its overall performance and accountability. Thus it brings together a number of activities to strengthen the Federation Secretariat's evaluation, programme coordination and knowledge sharing capacities.

The year 2000 saw good progress in several of the areas identified in the first phase of this programme, including increasing knowledge of and commitment to the priorities of Strategy 2010, guidelines for better cooperation and preparing the information technology platform for the Federation Secretariat and National Societies. In 2001, the focus of this programme has shifted towards a greater emphasis on evaluation and knowledge sharing systems, together with new initiatives to enhance coordination and cooperation within the Movement in order to improve operational effectiveness.

Objectives, Achievements and Constraints

Objective 1: To develop a Federation-wide system to monitor the integrity and performance of National Societies and learn systematically from our collective experience.

Achievements

Following on from the initial self-assessment process piloted in 2000 with 15 National Societies which are members of the Governing Board, the first part of 2001 has seen further follow-up of this first phase, together with progression through to phase two of the process.

After presenting the initial findings of the self-assessment process to the Governing Board in November 2000, the early part of 2001 saw individual follow-up with the 15 National Societies participating in the pilot phase of the self-assessment in terms of analysis and preparation of a preliminary findings report for each of the 15 Societies. This has included in depth discussions with/visits to 3 National Societies from the pilot phase to identify and agree on points of action to improve National Society functioning.

Developing, testing and further refinement of the methodology and operational framework for the National Society self-assessment for monitoring performance against Strategy 2010 has been the main focus of activity in this period. This has resulted in the reformulation of the self-assessment questionnaire based on analysis of the responses and feedback from the pilot experience and further consultation. The contents of the questionnaire focuses on: governance and democratic structure, integrity and image, capacity and performance in the core areas as defined in Strategy 2010.

In 2001 40 National Societies have been selected for participation in the self-assessment process. Short lists were prepared based on a criteria of several factors such as:

- country socio-economic factors or level of risk from conflicts or natural disasters, size of population at risk, in-country capacity to respond and status of civil society,
- National Society commitment, track record and capacity (organizational and other resources), Federation expertise and support systems, and
- balanced representation from various regions.

The new questionnaire was sent to the 40 National Societies in April; to date, 23 Societies have responded. The next period will see detailed analysis of this second round of self-assessment. The Evaluation Department will also start focusing on developing a framework for peer review within the self-assessment approach.

Objective 2: To develop and implement an evaluation system to support Secretariat efforts to improve the effectiveness of its humanitarian work and strengthen shared accountability and learning from the outcomes.

Achievements:

The Federation Secretariat regularly evaluates its work, both in terms of the impact of its disaster response operations and its longer-term capacity building programmes. However, as was identified in *Learning from the Nineties* it has lacked a systematic and rigorous approach to how it carried out evaluations/reviews of its work. The period under review has seen intensive efforts to create an evaluation system, with some key steps being put in place. These have included:

- The provision of a help desk facility by the Evaluation Department which has attracted more than 30 inquires and requests for assistance since it was established in mid May 2001, all of which were responded to. The nature of these requests has included practical assistance with the preparation of terms of reference and presentations at meetings;
- An operational framework for the evaluation function at the Secretariat has been drafted. Discussion, consultation, dissemination and the process of editing is underway;
- The evaluation of the International Federation response to the India earthquake is being initiated with considerable support being provided to the regional department. Preparation and agreement of terms of reference, identification and selection of the consultant was achieved during June;
- A tracer study exercise to examine the status of recommendations from previous evaluation reports has commenced and will be completed by the end of July;
- The Evaluation Department is continuing to provide input and support to the development of a results oriented culture throughout the Federation Secretariat. Participation in various organizational development and human resource initiatives is active, including support to such areas as project cycle management, country assistance strategies, identification of indicators, action research, and performance appraisal;
- Planning for an analysis of the achievement of Strategy 2010 will commence in August.

Objective 3: To produce high quality inclusive country and regional assistance strategies (CAS/RAS) with National Societies receiving assistance from external partners, with the full participation of all stakeholders (participating National Societies, ICRC and the Federation Secretariat).

Achievements

Two significant events related to CAS and RAS took place in the first part of 2001. The first was a meeting to review the strengths and weaknesses of the first round of CAS and RAS and to sketch out an approach to developing their next generation. This meeting resulted in a re-framed purpose statement for the CAS and an outline of a learning approach to develop expertise and experience of CAS for the International Federation. Focusing on developing CAS in 30-35 countries with maximum participation by all Red Cross and Red Crescent partners, a new set of guidelines were developed and circulated to all stakeholders in February.

In June 2001 a two-day CAS workshop was held, involving representatives from all stakeholder groups - National Societies (including those participating in the programmes of sister Societies), ICRC and Federation Secretariat staff from both Geneva and delegations. This workshop focused on CAS as a process for building effective, strong and durable partnerships. All workshop participants shared a common view that the CAS is perhaps the key platform for building a strong Federation collectively. The priority next steps in CAS development during 2001 were identified and progress was made in developing the outline for some of the tool and training materials to be disseminated later in the year. It was also a great opportunity for a range of CAS practitioners (people involved in developing CAS around the world) to share their approaches, experience and enthusiasm for CAS.

Development of the CAS and RAS is the central platform to an action research approach being adopted in three sub-regions of the Federation Secretariat - Central Europe, South East Asia and Southern Africa. These three regions are experimenting with new ways of working to create optimal field conditions for the CAS/RAS process and have been given 'protected space' to try out new things on behalf of the Secretariat. The research is part of a continuous process of learning, listening and changing the Secretariat to better lead and serve its members.

Throughout the period a number of opportunities were taken to increase knowledge and understanding of the potential of CAS to the International Federation. This has included presentations to the Governing Board, at all Federation partnership meetings (such as those in E Africa, W Africa, SE Asia for example), to meetings of key donors of the Federation etc.

Plans are underway to create an Internet-enabled learning network to allow all those involved in CAS processes around the world to share approaches and best practice in developing inclusive CAS/RAS with all stakeholders.

Objective 4: To provide the needed information technology (IT) infrastructure and develop knowledge management systems to make the most of being a global network, in terms of sharing of knowledge and learning to improve programme quality within the Federation.

Achievements

The roll out of Lotus Notes was completed in the Secretariat head-office in Geneva. This involved preparation and implementation of a new standard client image for the computer desktop. The implementation also required extensive data conversion from the earlier systems to Lotus Notes/Domino, and involved around 220 users. Training courses and additional help-desk facilities were provided during this phase. Work has now started in identifying solutions for the field, and it is expected that we will complete a pilot-test with the proposed solution by end-2001.

Telecommunications tests were carried out to study the availability/reliability of Internet connections from various field offices. Over 30 field offices were selected for conducting these tests, and various tools were used to measure the latency and bandwidth availability over the public Internet as well as some other private carriers. These tests have highlighted the problems the organization is facing in this area, affecting our ability to communicate fast and reliably, to provide information through exchange of documents, e-mail and financial and other computer data.

A survey sent to all National Societies on their current computer capacity was organized at the start of the year in order to get information on their computer infrastructure and communications facilities. Results are being collated and appropriate initiatives will result during the next period.

The Intranet requirements for the organization have been drafted. These are currently being reviewed by senior management and some related initiatives, coordinated by the Information Systems Department, are underway, for example:

- Collation of the overall requirements for a “contacts database/application” that will enable sharing information between the various players within the Secretariat and outside. This was coupled with an evaluation of standard tools available in the market. One tool has been selected and is currently being tested for its utility.
- A new application was developed for managing and publishing the various events organized by the International Federation. This is already put into use and available over the Web to various delegations and National Societies.
- Work has started in building web pages / site for disaster management information systems, whereby information and best practices would be made available to all. This will use the infrastructure and technology currently available. However, it is recognized that a full scale development will require significant resource investment, not currently available to the organization.

Objective 5: To mobilize the Federation’s input into the building of a common strategy for the Movement through a process that builds on lessons from the field and leads to improved operational performance.

Achievements

The draft Movement Strategy document was completed in March and circulated to all National Societies, the ICRC and the Federation Secretariat in April. This draft strategy has been presented to date to over 120 National Societies by members of the Strategy Working Group using a standard overhead presentation set developed by the Standing Commission Secretariat. National Societies, the ICRC and the International Federation Secretariat were invited to comment on the draft and by the end of June, 52 written comments had been received. The document will be finalized in August 2001, presented in its final form to the Standing Commission in September and submitted to the Council of Delegates in November as scheduled.

Parallel to the Strategy process, the Standing Commission Ad Hoc Group on International Operations has also finalized its report, with key recommendations from the Group being incorporated in the Movement Strategy document. However, it has been decided that the report itself will be tabled and discussed as a separate item at the Council of Delegates meeting in November 2001.

Both documents make some important recommendations on how the Movement should work more closely together to be more effective in providing services and support to vulnerable people. Whilst Strategy 2010 and the ICRC L’Avenir study give a good framework for our work in the coming years, the Movement Strategy document fills an existing gap in designing a path for working together to accomplish our common goals. The challenge to act upon this Movement Strategy will impact not only on the two Geneva institutions, but also on the 176 National Societies that make up the International Federation.

The past six months saw an intensification of dialogue and cooperation between the Federation Secretariat and the ICRC in a number of areas, including cooperation in the field. The senior management of both institutions agreed on a strategic framework for the harmonization process and identified key areas where concrete projects are under way. These include logistics, (probably the most advanced), planning and evaluation, human resources and information technology. Joint instructions were issued in both headquarters to specialized staff to identify particular initiatives and, subject to resource availability, proceed with implementation. The projects vary in their scope and include areas such as preparation of a joint catalogue for food and non food items, vehicle fleet and spare parts management, and a joint switchboard for both institutions.

A joint National Society Cooperation working group has been established, and planning guidelines for both institutions are being finalized to streamline field cooperation in the current planning round. The ICRC cooperation programmes are expected to be integrated into the CAS/RAS framework.

Two field missions aimed at reviewing our cooperation were carried out in the period under review. The first mission, to Latin America, has resulted in a senior management decision to carry out a joint mapping exercise, to determine strategic priorities of the two Geneva Institutions, review the geographical coverage by our delegations and also address the issue of bilateral cooperation arrangements within the region. The second mission undertaken more recently to Yugoslavia, Kosovo and Bosnia, looked at operational relations in the three countries with particular reference to the implementation of the Seville agreement and the Lead Agency concept. Findings from the mission will inform the review of the Lead Agency concept called for by the Strategy Group.

Overall Constraints

Generally good progress against the objectives of this programme have been achieved during the last six months. It is worth noting that the implementation of a system replacement for field e-mail continues to be affected by the lack of operational resources available in the field and/or Geneva. Although an ideal solution would be to implement a similar system as in the head-office, it is recognized that this is currently not feasible because of the ongoing operational requirements of such a system. Hence, an acceptable compromise is actively being researched.

Resourcing, both in terms of appropriate funds and the delayed recruitment of the position of director for the Knowledge Sharing Division, has delayed the full scale implementation of knowledge sharing. With the new director now in place, a long term strategy and business case for building a knowledge sharing approach is currently under preparation.

Outstanding needs

Further support is required to ensure that the planned activities can be implemented as foreseen.

Contributions

See Annex 1 for details.

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All International Federation Operations seek to adhere to the Code of Conduct and are committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (SPHERE Project) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

For further information concerning Federation operations in this or other countries, please access the Federation website at <http://www.ifrc.org>.

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Evaluation and organisational learning						ANNEX 1
APPEAL No. 01.79/2001		PLEDGES RECEIVED				26.07.2001
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
CASH						
REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->				1'353'818		TOTAL COVERAGE 57.3%
CASH CARRIED FORWARD				279'276		
AMERICAN - RC		20'000	USD	35'000	15.06.2001	EVALUATION FUNCTION
BRITISH - GOVT (DFID GRANT)				400'000	03.02.01	PARTNERSHIP IMPLEMENTATION PLAN 2001
SWEDISH - RC		350'000	SEK	60'795	28.02.01	EVALUATION & STRATEGY, PROMOTING NS COOPERATION, KNOWLEDGE MGT SYSTEMS, STRATEGY FOR MOVEMENT
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH				775'071	CHF	57.3%
KIND AND SERVICES (INCLUDING PERSONNEL)						
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN KIND/SERVICES				0	CHF	0.0%