

Plan 2009-2010



Financial Tools and Training

Executive summary

The International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) global finance team consists of 120 financial professionals working in country offices, zone offices and in Geneva. The majority of these are locally recruited staff. The overall goal of the Finance function is to provide accurate, timely and reliable financial information thus enabling programmes to be prudently managed whilst providing transparency and accountability to donors in terms of how their funds are spent.

The finance function was one of the first to decentralise many of its operations to the regions with the establishment of four Regional Finance Units starting in 2000. With the implementation of the New Operating Model and more specifically the setup of the seven zone offices, the four Regional Finance Units have now become seven Zone Finance Units (ZFU). The role of these ZFUs includes:

- Provision of support to programme managers, both indirectly by supporting the country finance staff, and directly with the programme managers at zone level.
- Ensuring on-going implementation, application and enhancement of IFRC financial processes and procedures.
- Provision of a control function in relation to the financial information recorded at the country level to ensure that it is in compliance with IFRC financial procedures and accounting policies and that reporting is therefore accurate and reliable.
- Provision of assistance in emergency operations by providing initial human resources support and assistance in setting up operations.

All zone finance manager positions have now been filled. Most of the other ZFU positions have also been filled. Now that the structure is in place, the focus for the global finance team for 2009 and 2010 will be to:

- Further develop and implement the financial tools and processes required to support the ZFUs in fulfilling their new functions
- Develop a finance syllabus with specific training modules targeted at project managers and different levels of finance staff: from finance assistants, through to finance managers, in order to ensure locally recruited staff are properly trained and also to assist in retaining good staff by offering them development opportunities within the organisation

The total 2009-2010 budget is CHF 827,621 (USD 756,509 or EUR 527,147). [Click here to go directly to the summary budget of the plan.](#)

Context

Tools & Processes

1. Implementation of financial tools in field locations

The IFRC's web based accounting system - CODA, has an add-on, CODA-XL which permits the automated upload of accounting transactions directly from an Excel spreadsheet into CODA. This provides great savings in terms of efficiency when processing large volumes of transactions e.g. it allows working advance data from National Societies to be recorded in pre-defined spreadsheets which are then directly uploaded into the IFRC CODA system. This also increases the accuracy of the financial transactions recorded by reducing the occurrence of manual input errors.

In order to implement this tool in the field locations, the tool needs to be installed and training provided to 30 people.

Finance Training and Development

1. Establish a financial training syllabus for project managers and finance staff

There is an emerging need to have a more coherent and systematic approach for the development of financial skills of project managers and the professional development of the finance teams in the organisation.

The planned activities during 2009 – 2010 will be around development of specific finance training modules to different target groups; introduction of an online skills assessment and finance training courses, and development of a Training of Finance Trainers (TOT) course. The TOT would enable the department to have a group of trained finance trainers to disseminate the 'financial management message' across the organisation. It is also planned that a bi-annual finance summit is held in each of the seven zones to update finance staff on new developments and maintain an emphasis on financial management.

All these training and development activities would improve the overall level of financial management skills across the organisation, enable the Secretariat to provide opportunities for personal and career development of its finance staff, maintain finance teams up to date and, most importantly, retain them within the Movement.

Priorities and current work with partners

Current work with National Society finance professionals which has focused until now on recipient National Societies being trained in IFRC's financial processes and procedures will be further developed by:

- Making available to them the financial tools described above, thus increasing the efficiency and accuracy with which financial information is shared between partners
- Developing financial training opportunities in order to further improve financial management skills and retain quality finance professionals within the Movement.

Secretariat programme in 2009-2010

Financial tools and training

a) The purpose and components of the programme

Programme purpose

The purpose of this programme is to support the field finance team, both at the Zone Finance Unit level and in country offices by providing them with additional tools and a tailored, targeted training package. This in turn will enable the field finance team to better support National Society programmes and the New Operating Model.

The financial tools and training budget is CHF 827,621 (USD 756,509 or EUR 527,147).

Programme Component 1 – Tools & Processes

Component Outcome: CODA-XL is fully implemented and in everyday use in all seven zone offices and 8 field locations. Roll-out to subsequent locations to occur in 2011-2012.

Specific outcomes

- CODA-XL implemented in 15 locations by the end of 2010
- National Societies use the tool for the reporting of working advances in 15 locations

Programme Component 2 – Finance Training and Development

Component Outcome: Establish a financial training syllabus for project managers and finance staff.

Specific outcomes

- Training modules developed for each target group – project managers, finance assistants, finance managers
- 14 trained Finance trainers are in place by the end of 2010 – two in each of the seven zones
- Skills assessment and training course available via online application system
- Bi-annual finance summits held in each of the seven zone offices for finance teams

b) Profile of target audience and final beneficiaries

Through a target audience of project managers and finance professionals in the Secretariat, the Finance department's programme during 2009-2010 will further facilitate better management of financial processes of the organisation; improve internal and external reporting, which in its turn will contribute towards better performance of the Federation to achieve the Global Agenda goals.

c) Potential risks and challenges

Timing is crucial to implement the outlined activities to meet the evolving requirements of the organisation. However, the programme will depend on the availability of resources to implement sufficiently quickly in order to keep up with developments in other areas of the organisation. One of the specific challenges will be to retain skilled finance professionals.

Role of the Secretariat

a) Technical programme support

The IFRC professional finance staff in its Secretariat, including the newly established and resourced zone offices will facilitate communication with, and potential assistance to, their National Society counterparts.

b) Partnership development and coordination

The success of this strategy calls for partnership development at a number of levels;

- With National Society finance professionals through an improved and collaborative work relationship.
- Through a variety of global networks centred around existing donor society and global finance seminar attendees.
- The establishment of finance professional networks across the organisation.
- Engagement with professional organisations outside the Movement with the aim of identifying and importing suitable best practices.

Promoting gender equity and diversity

A fundamental part of the Finance department programme will be to better identify and develop skilled professionals from under-represented groups at all levels in the Federation and in the Movement as a whole. This will include appointing more talented women and maintaining the high level of national diversity that currently exists in finance positions in field locations.

Quality, accountability and learning

The components and component outcomes described above have been designed to facilitate monitoring and evaluation of the programme. Formal updates against the achievement of objectives and budgetary performance will be conducted on a regular basis.

Alongside this programme, the Finance department is committed to establishing a matrix of normative measurement criteria to monitor achievement against objectives and success in the application of continuous improvement goals.

How we work	
The International Federation's activities are aligned with its Global Agenda, which sets out four broad goals to meet the Federation's mission to "improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity".	Global Agenda Goals: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduce the numbers of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters.• Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies.• Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability.• Reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion and promote respect for diversity and human dignity.
Contact information	
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